

FIGHTING THE MID-YEAR EDUCATION BLUES

# Brooklyn family

JANUARY 2019

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WINTER VEGGIES

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# letter from the publisher

## JANUARY IN THE CITY

The holidays are over and we're all slowly getting back into our routines. Everyone had a break, or at least a mini-break, and will be adjusting to a return to normalcy, or trying to. In this issue there is an interesting article about the mid-year blues we all experience, especially our children. That said, it's really important that parents continue to create the atmosphere and expectation for their kids' personal achievements, in spite of these blues.

Staying healthy is a big part of the equation and we typically present good ideas and plans for healthy eating and daily living that will accomplish just that. This



issue is no exception. Eating winter vegetables (eating whites) is such a helpful topic, and as she does every month, our contributing nutritionist Christine Columbo has shared ideas for keeping our kids nutritionally balanced.

We're heading into Catholic School's Week, and with that in mind, we once again present a special advertising section highlighting many of the schools and their upcoming Open Houses. We've been doing this for many years, and moving forward we'll be showcasing other specialized schools, whether religiously affiliated or not. Again, all of this is motivated by our strong attempt to be as helpful as possible and letting you,

our readers, know what options are out there for your kids.

So Happy New Year to all! It's the 21st year of our publishing these parent guides and we are looking forward to yet another year of being, both in print and online, an integral source of information and support to parents across our city. Wishing all of you a great year!

Thanks for reading.

Susan Weiss-Voskidis,  
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## HIP MUSEUM

### Museum of Illusions

Officially opened this past November, the Museum of Illusions is the coolest new attraction in the Meatpacking District. Perfect for kids ages 6 and up, the Mol is an interactive museum that offers a totally unique visual and educational experience—it's made up of illusionistic rooms, optical illusions, and a playroom with didactic games and puzzles. Kids and parents are welcome to laugh, scream, run, take tons of photos for the 'Gram. With over 70 exhibits all based on science, mathematics, biology, and psychology, visitors will be encouraged to learn why our eyes see things that our brain does not understand.

[museumofillusions.us](http://museumofillusions.us)



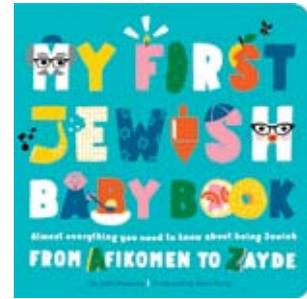
## MOM TO MOM

Join our New York Family Mom to Mom Facebook sisterhood and find moms in your neighborhood for advice, community, and support. [facebook.com/groups/nypmoms](https://www.facebook.com/groups/nypmoms)

## SPECIAL NEEDS

### Wolf + Friends

Designed especially for millennial parents raising children with special needs (like autism, anxiety, ADHD, sensory processing issues, developmental delays, mental health issues, and down syndrome), Wolf + Friends is a new app aimed helping moms and dads connect with one another on their parenting journeys. With the goal of functioning as a modern and inclusive lifestyle platform, Wolf + Friends lets members create a peer to peer support system via direct messages and group chats; the app also gives members access to curated content and tips from occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, child psychologists, behaviorists, financial advisors, and other experts. [wolfandfriends.com](http://wolfandfriends.com)



## B IS FOR BAGELS

### My First Jewish Baby Book

Best-selling children's book author Julie Merberg (*My First Book of Girl Power*, *My First Book of Feminism for Boys*) has a knack for choosing and tackling subjects that appeal to the baby-preschool set as well as to adults. Her latest "cross-over" board book is designed for the littlest "people of the book"—*My First Jewish Baby Book*. This irresistible board book gives little ones (ages 0-3) an alphabetical introduction to Judaism — the delicious foods, meaningful rituals, lively holidays, expressive language, and more. Hip illustrations by Beck Feiner accompany snappy, rhyming text in a package that is destined to be the perfect gift for any bris or baby naming party on your calendar. "My First Jewish Baby Book" is now in stores.



## FAMILY COOKING

### The Culinistas

Looking for an easy (and tasty) hack to week-night meal planning and preparation? Enter the Culinistas. The Culinistas is a newly launched in-home private chef service that offers family-friendly weekly cooking for households, as well as one-off special occasions in New York City and the Hamptons. Their services include menu planning, grocery shopping, cooking, and clean up; plus, they make private chef services approachable and customizable for families and make sure that their clients are served well-balanced, professionally home-cooked meals. It's a perfect option for busy families who want to still make family dinner a priority without the stress of meal planning. [theculinistas.com](http://theculinistas.com)



## SWEET TREAT

### Nutella Café

Calling a dessert fans! Union Square recently got a whole lot

sweeter! Opened this past winter, the Nutella Café offers foodie fams an authentic Nutella experience all year-round. The menu features Nutella-centric dishes (including the NYC exclusive Brioche sandwich, which features a dollop of Nutella Gelato between two small pieces of brioche caramelized to perfection) and specialty espresso beverages, and guests can experience an assortment of all-day dishes like freshly baked breads, pastries, breakfast specials, desserts, and gelato — all incorporating the iconic Nutella Hazelnut Spread as a key ingredient. [facebook.com/NutellaCafeNewYork](https://www.facebook.com/NutellaCafeNewYork)



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# Responsibility—and Response

Book spotlights moms helping children through co-occurring disorders

By Allison Plitt

In the 1960s and '70s an American psychiatrist named Theodore Lidz wrote several books about schizophrenia based on research he conducted with families of children diagnosed with the disorder. In their 2016 book, *I Didn't Cause It, I Can't Change It*, authors Mary Ryan Woods and Adrienne Murray state that Lidz believed the behavior of the mother and father were responsible for “creating” a schizophrenic son or daughter.

The authors suggest that parents of schizophrenic children may have “felt isolated and alone for a long period of time.” Perhaps they experienced “guilt and shame because they felt that they had failed as parents.”

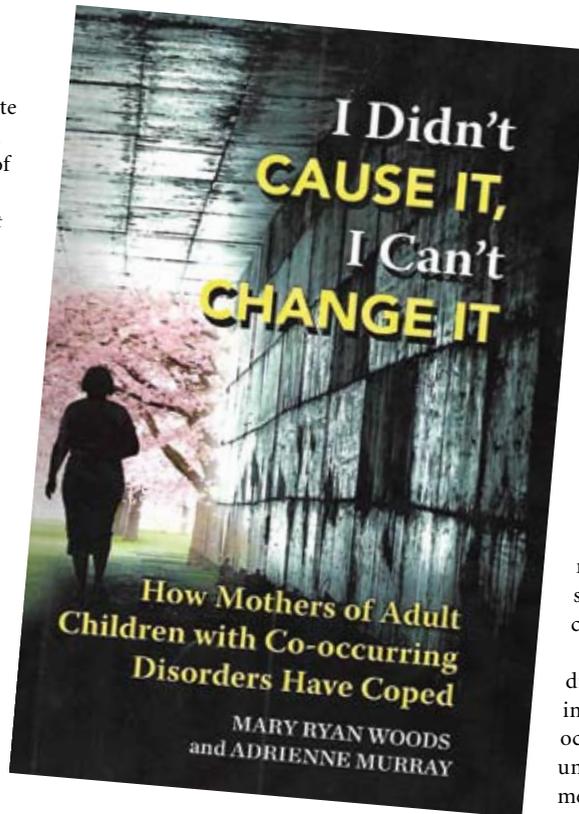
## Co-occurring disorders

The forward of the book is written by Lorelee West, whose son became an addict as a teenager. As she writes: “It wasn't until he was diagnosed with schizophrenia at the age of 21 that we learned about co-occurring disorders — two major mental illnesses affecting an individual simultaneously.”

When West and her husband tried to find a treatment facility that would treat her son's addiction and schizophrenia, they found rehabs claiming to deal with co-occurring disorders. After enrolling their son in several such programs without much success, West ended up seeing her son being treated for either his mental illness or his addiction — not both.

As a result, she helped create WestBridge, “a treatment program for individuals with co-occurring disorders headquartered in Manchester, New Hampshire.” Author Woods is the creator and CEO of WestBridge and “has spent her career working in the fields of addiction and mental health treatment.” The WestBridge program is based on the idea that a patient cannot recover unless the mental illness and the substance abuse are both being treated simultaneously.

In the preface of the book, Woods writes, “Over 20 million adults suffer from substance use disorders. Of these numbers, 7.9 million adults suffer from co-occurring substance



use disorders and mental illness. That's an average of one in every 30 people.”

While Woods adds that “parenting a child with a co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorder is a lonely and taxing journey,” the book is devoted to mothers who bear “much of the burden of these illnesses.”

## The journey

According to Woods and Murray, “there is a mound of research” that backs up the fact that mothers cannot create a child with co-occurring disorders just because of the way she parents. They add, “What we do know is that genetics, epigenetics, diet, exposure to toxins, and more all contribute to COD. There is no know single cause.”

Even if a mother can point to a “genetic reason for a malady,” she can still feel guilt and remorse for not being able to make her son or daughter healthy. Sometimes mothers are in a position of just trying to keep their children alive.

It can be “an emotional rollercoaster”

for a mother whose once seemingly sweet child starts exhibiting abusive behavior. She fears death for her child when she doesn't know where her child is and what choices he or she is making.

Woods and Murray acknowledge that almost every mother has hopes and aspirations for their children. It is easy for “her identity to become wrapped up in the perceived successes and failures of her son and daughter.” If her child excels, a mother can feel like a victor.

On the other hand, a mother can be held responsible “for her son or daughter's seemingly defiant refusal to fit into societal norms.” A mother can feel embarrassed when her child is not “measuring up to the community's standard.” She can also feel angry at her child for not fulfilling her dreams.

Many young adults experiment with drugs and alcohol and view it as a “stage” in their lives. The teenager with co-occurring disorders, however, is probably unknowingly using substances to treat his mental illness. Unlike his peers, he will be not be able to progress developmentally until he is clinically diagnosed. To watch their child's friends move forward in their lives while their own child remains in a viscous cycle of self-destruction, many mothers feel hurt and even grief-stricken.

## Dealing with stigma

As the first responders to their children's illnesses, mothers have divulged living with “shame, secrecy, and stigma.” As the authors explain, “Take the myth that people with mental illnesses are more prone to violence. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, only three to five percent of violent acts are attributed to people living with mental illness. And they are over 10 times more likely to be victims of a violent crime.”

As the authors explain, “The behaviors that someone with COD may exhibit might look frightening or different, but it is preposterous to assume just because of the behavior that anyone will be harmed.” Despite these statistics, mothers still admit

to fearing for their own lives because of the behavior of their child with co-occurring disorders.

The authors discuss the societal influence that impacts a mother who learns that her child being diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder, schizophrenia, alcoholism, heroin addiction, or other mental illnesses. These mothers live in pain as their society stigmatizes and villainizes their son or daughter instead of seeing their child as being afflicted with a disease.

Mothers recount losing friendships because of “prevailing stigma,” while others interviewed said “one of the things that hurt them the most was when their own family members lost sight of who their child really was. They seemed to only focus on the symptoms and behaviors of co-occurring disorders and often forgot about the true nature of the individual.”

### Support groups for mothers

While it is imperative for a mother to support her child through his or her treatment, it is important for a mother to have a life of her

own. The authors list a number of support groups where mothers can meet and talk with others who are having similar experiences with their children. Many mothers talk about the importance of these support groups and the relief of being able to express themselves without feeling judged by others.

Some of these groups include the National Alliance on Mental Illness and Al-Anon, as well as parents’ groups provided by treatment centers. Most of the mothers that the authors interviewed began to see their experiences as a spiritual one.

“Faith and prayer were common coping tools for the moms that we interviewed,” the authors observed. “Being able to turn their fears and frustrations over to the God of their understanding sustained many of them through the difficult times on their journeys.”

Parents feel mortified when their well-behaved and excelling son or daughter turns into a grown child unable to cope with co-occurring disorders, as the community around them can make comments such as: “Johnny has always been good at sports and

now all he cares about is getting high. What a waste. What a loser. What is wrong with the parents that they let them do that?”

Even if a parent does everything right, there are extreme situations in which Al-Anon calls the three Cs: You didn’t Cause it, you can’t Control it, and you can’t Cure it. As mothers “once paralyzed by embarrassment and shame,” begin to speak out and educate their families and friends about the “realities of co-occurring disorders,” they are quietly changing society’s views of how we think about these diseases.

As one mother recounted: “I felt so unprepared but found education to be the key in the journey. And other moms who are going through this need to remember to take care of themselves. Don’t isolate yourself, and find support from others who have gone on this same journey. Now, I share with friends and meditate. These tools have proven to be a huge help to me.”

*Allison Plitt lives in Queens with her 12-year-old daughter and is a frequent contributor to this publication.*

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[theworldsfare.nyc](http://theworldsfare.nyc).

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## Cold Weather Safety

Recognizing the signs of frostbite in an infant, and how to treat it

*As a new mother, I'm concerned about how cold this winter already is. I want to expose my infant to the world and also keep her safe and healthy. So, how cold is too cold? When should I worry about frostbite and my infant?*

Cold, dry air can extract moisture out of a baby's sensitive skin, causing her round rosy cheeks to quickly become leathery and wind burned. Exposing an infant to extremely cold temperatures can be a serious health risk, as infants are more prone to frostbite than adults because they lose heat from their skin faster. It's important to know the signs of frostbite, its severity, and how to treat your baby.

Frostbite is caused by prolonged exposure to temperatures below 32 degrees Fahrenheit, and occurs in a series of stages. Babies and toddlers should never be outside in wind chills or temperatures of -15 degrees Fahrenheit or colder, because skin exposure can cause damage in just a few minutes. Babies should only be out in the extreme cold for a few minutes at a time at most, and toddlers should only play outside for 20-30 minutes before taking a break.

Remember that it takes infants a lot of calories to maintain body heat in frigid weather, so ensure your baby has been fed recently before taking her outside in the cold. As a general rule, babies and toddlers require one more layer of clothing than adults to protect them from the elements. Dress your baby in many layers—for example undershirt, shirt, sweatshirt, and coat — so that they can be removed one-by-one once inside. While outside, your baby should also be covered with a hat, mittens, warm socks, boots, and a warm coat or snowsuit.

To keep an eye out for frostbite, it is important to pay attention to color changes in the skin. The first stage is frostnip, a mild form of frostbite in which skin turns red and first feels very cold, and then prickly or numb. Frostnip alone does not require medical attention, but should you notice the symptoms on your daughter, be sure to remove wet clothing and wrap your baby in warm blankets. Also warm the affected area as soon as possible by soaking it in warm (not hot) water, and give your baby warm fluids, either by nursing or feeding



her a warm bottle. Do not rub or attempt to massage the frostbitten area as it may cause more damage.

The second stage is superficial frostbite, during which redness turns pale yellow or white and may appear hard or waxy. The skin may start to feel slightly warmer, but that is the body compensating for the freezing process. If you notice these symptoms, take her to an emergency room. Additionally, do not warm the affected area unless you can keep it warm, as warming and re-exposure to the cold can worsen the damage.

Severe frostbite reaches further into the skin's layers of tissue, making the skin appear very hard and cold. It can cause complete numbness in the affected area. If it

is very severe, the skin will turn black. If you suspect that severe frostbite has occurred, take your child to a warm area and call 911 immediately.

You can protect your infant from the dangers of extreme winter weather, but try to stay indoors during drastically cold temperatures and make any trips outside as brief as possible.



*Pramod Narula, MD is the Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics at NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital.*



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# Life Insurance and Your Estate Plan

*What role does life insurance play in my estate plan? Is it part of my taxable estate and is it subject to probate?*

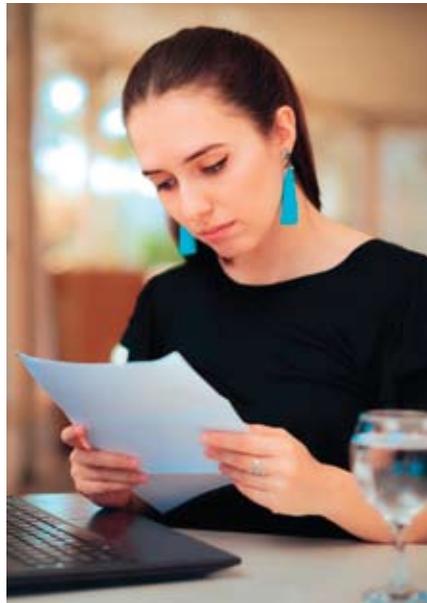
This is an important conversation to have. It is so important, in fact, that the column will address some of the considerations of life insurance in two parts, so be sure to check in next month for part two.

First, you must make a distinction between a “probate estate” and a “gross taxable estate.” Probate is the process in which your will is admitted and approved by the court. Probate assets are collected by the Executor and subject to the claims of your creditors. Typically, you would not want your insurance proceeds payable to your estate. Life insurance is transferred to your beneficiaries by a designation of beneficiary form properly filled out and delivered to your insurance company. In other words, regardless of what your Last Will and Testament says, if your beneficiary designation on a life insurance policy says something different, it will pass to the individual(s) identified on that designation form.

Similarly, although New York State law provides for the severance of beneficiary designations to a spouse upon divorce, that rule does not necessarily apply to certain pension plans. You must take care to update your beneficiary designation forms to ensure that they are current and consistent with your intentions.

Life insurance can serve different purposes for different people. Among the common purposes of life insurance are:

1. To provide your loved ones with immediate liquidity to pay estate taxes and funeral expenses until your estate is administered through probate or a trust. This is especially helpful where an estate consists primarily of illiquid assets like real property, artwork, or even wine collections.
2. To equalize beneficiaries who have received other assets (say, the family business), or to leave disproportionate assets to beneficiaries if that is your intention.
3. To “buy out” a business partner, so that you need not remain in business with your partner’s spouse when your partner dies, if you cannot afford to buy your partner’s shares in the business from his or her estate.
4. To pay any outstanding mortgages or



maintain properties until other assets can be liquidated, to avoid having to sell the asset in a down-market or in a “fire sale.”

5. To ensure that your beneficiaries have funds available to pay other potential future tax liabilities, such as estate, annual estate income, or capital gains taxes.

There is a common misconception that insurance is not taxable in your estate. If you own an insurance policy, or have the incidents of ownership (i.e., the right to change the beneficiaries on the policy), then the entire insurance proceeds would be taxable in your estate when you die. A taxable estate includes both probate and non-probate assets. Assets which avoid probate do not necessarily avoid estate taxation. In addition to insurance owned by the decedent, IRAs and other retirement assets, annuities, joint bank accounts, and other joint interests may avoid probate and pass directly to your beneficiaries but they are still included in the estate for estate tax purposes.

If estate taxes are a problem, you can create an insurance trust which owns the life insurance policy, which I will discuss in next month’s column. As noted above, life insurance also provides a way to equalize bequests to beneficiaries or to provide additional funds to certain beneficiaries. For instance, if your

estate plan provides for one of your children to take over a family-run business, you can use life insurance to achieve an equitable result by naming those children who are not involved in the business as beneficiaries. Conversely, you may want to provide for your children equally in your Will, but provide additional funds to a particular child through the use of life insurance.

Before purchasing a life insurance policy, you should give careful consideration as to who will be listed as the owner of the policy. There is a common misconception that life insurance proceeds are not taxable in your estate. However, if the insured person owns an insurance policy, or has “control” over the policy, (i.e., the right to change the beneficiaries on the policy), then the death benefit of the policy will be added to the value of the insured person’s estate, and may therefore be subject to estate taxes. In contrast, if the policy is owned by someone other than the insured, then the insurance proceeds will not be included in the insured person’s taxable estate. There are other planning techniques that may allow you to transfer an existing life insurance policy to another person or to an irrevocable trust and potentially avoid future estate taxes for those insurance proceeds provided you live an additional period of three years after the transfer of the policy.

As you can see, there are many potential benefits of life insurance. In order to figure out the benefits to your particular estate plan, you should consult with your estate planning attorney, financial advisor, and insurance agent.



*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, and Nassau and Suffolk Counties. You can find her on Twitter @estatetrustplan and on her website at besunderlaw.com. If you have a question that you would like to see answered in this column, please email alison@besunderlaw.com.*

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## Feng Shui Your Child's Bedroom

A new year is a good time to make positive change, whether in our own personal lives, our minds, our bodies, or our homes. Your home reflects your inner spiritual life. You've heard it before. While all of our homes can get a little messy with small feet scampering about, there is a difference between the mess that results from a playdate vs. starring in an episode of "Hoarders." Even when our homes are not in a state of disarray, there are still ways to improve the peacefulness in a living space. Practicing the ancient Chinese art of feng shui allows us to align our minds and usher tranquility, abundance, and serenity into our homes and hearts ... and it doesn't stop with your living room.

The design and decor of a child's room can help promote better sleep and a sense of harmony within themselves. It is this positive flow of energy, also known as qi (or ch'i) that works so beautifully when not pushed out by a mound of mismatched Legos and headless dolls.

Here are some tips to balance your child's qi:

**1. Place the bed in the farthest corner of the room, facing the door**  
It's a power of position so whenever the door

is opened, your child can see who is coming in, without having a door opened above their heads (from a powerless position).

**2. Paint the room a soothing and bright, yet calming color**

Color scheme can make a big difference. Soft calming colors with coordinating storage units for the books and toys can help reduce the "visual clutter." The less visual clutter, the more calming the room.

Pick plain patterns over busy designs. Think earth tones, rather neon, but let your child's personality shine through. Have your child take part in the creative process, because she knows herself better than anyone else.

**3. Set up a system so the room can stay tidy**

Offer several bins, baskets, or other creatively designed storage options for easy clean-up. If you want your child to be able to pick out or put away his own clothing, it needs to be at a height that he can reach, and organized in a simple, easy-to-follow order, such as pants in one drawer, shirts in another. Little kids will not distinguish between a "sweater drawer"

versus the pile of short-sleeve shirts. Just put all shirts in one drawer, and only enough for them to choose from on a daily basis. The more you stuff in a drawer (or any space) the more opportunity for disorder.

Same is true with toys. Bins are easy for kids to get toys in and out of. Keep it simple: cars and trucks in one, books in another, balls in another.

**4. Make sure fresh air flows freely**

A child's bedroom should have plentiful air flowing in from the window in nice weather. When it's too cold, offer an air purifier to ensure that fresh air is always circulating.

By instituting these simple feng shui tips into your child's bedroom, you will help balance her harmonious feelings and keep away negativity and unbalance. The more tranquility in a home, the better, especially during those terrible twos and turbulent teen years.



*Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.*

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# Have Faith

## Religious schools make the case for infusing faith into learning

By Mia Weber

For many families, a religious school makes a great education option, whether or not faith is a major part of their home life. In fact, a Catholic or Jewish education can be a fantastic way to expose your child to different ways of thinking about the world and interacting with their community.

### Values lead

“First and foremost, agnostic families should know that their children will be welcomed on an equal footing with every other child. Our fundamental belief, rooted in thousands of years of tradition, is that each of us is loved equally by God. As a result, our school culture is one that is welcoming to all,” says Hope Mueller Lippens, principal of St. Ann, The Personal School in east Harlem. “Families should know that we look for ways to incorporate character education at developmentally appropriate stages. For example, we know that fostering empathy is an important gateway to social intelligence growth for kindergartners. Accordingly, we focus on the Catholic value of ‘service’ at this stage, to help children move out of their natural egocentrism to one that recognizes their responsibility to the larger community.”

In a similar vein, choosing a religious school can mean opening up your child to a values’ system that can inform all aspects of their education. The key takeaway is that it’s about shared human values, not just about one specific faith.

“Judaism is not just about God and prayer. Judaism offers us a history, a community, and a set of values and ethics to guide our lives. Even if your family chooses not to celebrate holidays or follow ritual practices, you can still be guided by Jewish values and ethics,” explains Rabbi Rena

Rifkin, the director of the Religious School at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, a Reform congregation on the Upper West Side of New York City. “Things like: Standing up for those less fortunate or powerful in our society (zedakah); caring for our planet and all of the creatures on it (bal tashchit); or even working to make ourselves better people by learning from our mistakes (teshuvah). And Jewish history is a rich story that can help families feel connected to a larger community and peoplehood.”

### What to keep in mind

For parents considering a religious school, there are some important factors to keep in mind throughout the decision-making process. Parents should consider their own feelings about faith in their family – is it something that’s very important in daily life, or that they’d like to make more prominent in their child’s upbringing? They should also consider the educational goals they have for their kids, the curriculum elements that resonate with them, and whether other aspects of an independent education (for example: uniforms, tuition costs, etc.) are right for them.

“Like any private school, parents should consider the tuition requirements and investigate whether there would be financial aid or scholarship opportunities. Parents should also be comfortable with any uniform or dress codes that would be required,” Mueller Lippens says. “More specific to a religious school, I would recommend that parents choose one whose values align with their own family’s beliefs. Parents should also make sure they are comfortable with any religious classes or services that would be included in the curriculum.”

In order to get a clear view of the scope of religion in a school’s mission and day-to-day classroom experience, parents should plan to meet with school officials at any religious

schools that are of interest to them. Like with any step in the school admissions process, they should do their research and come to meetings armed with thoughtful questions.

“Parents should feel comfortable with the philosophy of the community and the religious school, and be on board with the expectations. You should meet with the staff of the school and feel comfortable talking to them about your child,” Rifkin says. “It’s important that you feel like your child will connect with the place and the people-and that you will, too!”

Finally, the primary guiding principle parents should keep in mind when considering a religious school is whether they feel at home in the school community—the element of faith is likely to play a big part here, as both the Catholic and Jewish education traditions emphasize community and connectedness heavily.

“Our Catholic faith is used as a foundation for imparting virtues which are essential not only to academic achievement, but more importantly to leading a meaningful life beyond high school and college. Emphasis on individual virtues-like self-discipline, courage, and perseverance—is joined with communal values such as service, generosity, and compassion to help our students live their best life long after they graduate from our school,” Mueller Lippens notes, adding: “Encouraging these communal values has the added benefit of creating a warm and welcoming school culture. Virtues such as friendship, responsibility, and honesty become the focus of not just an individual lesson but of every interaction. These values are a unifying force that create common connections and make us all feel safer to take risks and try our best.”

*Mia Weber is the Executive Editor of New York Family magazine.*





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# Mid-Year Elementary School Blues

How to keep kids motivated the entire school year

By Sarah Lyons

Packing lunches, doing nightly homework, studying for spelling tests, and scrambling about during the morning rush; the thrill of a new school year has worn off and kids start to drag their feet a little more on school mornings as they return for the start of the second semester. How do you keep kids motivated to finish out the last months of the school year strong?

## Set goals

It's important to let your child know you have high expectations for them throughout the year, not just the first semester. Work with your child to set goals for success and reward her for meeting the goals. Some kids may need an academic goal, while others need goals such as no tardies for the quarter or turning all assignments in on time. Communicate with your child's teacher to come up with some beneficial goals for your child. Rewards could include a special outing as a family, going out for ice cream, picking out a special toy, or extra screen time.

## Stay positive

As parents who are tired of packing lunches and reminding children to put their shoes on for the fifth time in one morning, it can be hard to stay positive. However, a positive attitude can go a long way for both parents and kids. Focus on the excitement of learning, seeing friends, and upcoming events to encourage your child that school is still as fun as it was back in August. Your positive attitude will become contagious and your child will also start to get excited about school again.

## Show an interest

One thing that can have a huge impact on your child's excitement about school is his parents' interest. When your child returns home from school, ask him about his day, his friends, and the highs and lows of the day. Listen attentively and ask questions. When it is homework time, be available to help and answer questions. When parents are excited and interested in the goings on at school, kids will be, too.

## Get involved

Kids who are involved in school activities tend to be more excited about school. Encourage your child to join clubs and after-school



activities where she will be around school friends. Parents can also get involved at the school to break up the mid-year blues. When kids see their parents working at the school, it shows them that you value their time there. Check with your school to see what volunteer opportunities are available.

## Continue healthy habits

Encourage your child to get a good night's rest, eat a healthy breakfast, and focus on good study habits. An after-school routine to complete homework and chores will help your child fall back into the school schedule after winter break. Set aside time for free time as well. Host a play date, have a movie night, go to the park if weather allows, and schedule time for fun and relaxation so kids don't get too bored with their routine.

If the mid-year blues are still getting to your child, don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher to discuss a plan to get your child back on track. Soon enough the days will begin to get longer, the temperatures warmer, and school will be out for summer once again.

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# Overcoming People-Pleasing to Stand Up for My Kids

I have always avoided confrontation. In my younger years, the thought of speaking up and asking for what I wanted or even needed was a lost trait in my character.

When I was a very young child, I had no trouble speaking my mind, but somewhere around puberty, like so many other girls, I became a people-pleaser. And pleasing others often means denying yourself your true feelings, wants, and wishes because they are the very things that might offend.

There are a lot of us out there.

At work, as a manager, I quickly realized how many of our female employers would apologize, not speak up for themselves, and settle for less than wanted, whether it be workload or salary. In stark contrast, male employees, even those with little experience, would rally for themselves consistently.

So what made me, after so many years of being non-confrontational, finally learn how to stand up for myself? My kids.

When my oldest was just four months old, she acquired a horrendous, whooping sounding phlegmy cough, fever, diarrhea, runny nose — the works.

“Just give her nose drops,” the doctor told us, “there’s no infection.”

A few days passed and she only got worse. When I told the doctor this on our next visit, he condescendingly told me to not overthink things. Surely, she just needed some cough medicine, yet my little girl continued to choke and suck in air day and night.

Bleary-eyed and worried, I told the arrogant doctor he was wrong and left his office. I found another pediatrician, who saw her the same day. He said she had a very serious infection and gave us a combination of antibiotics, steroids, and fever reducers. When her cough was still scaring me two days later, he admitted her to the hospital, and saved her life.

That was an urgent situation, but many others, thankfully less serious, would follow. When a girl in my daughter’s class began stealing her snacks, I had to force myself to speak to her mother. I put a whole lot of unnecessary thought into the exact words I was going to say because back then, the thought of confronting someone was literally painful to me.



Then there was a teacher who marked a test wrong, the relative who insisted on my child kissing her hello, and a friend who smoked in front of our kids. Through taking baby steps in these minor situations, and calmly explaining why my daughter deserved credit for number 4, why she had the option to choose who she would kiss and hug, and why they could not smoke in front of my child, I slowly began to gain a voice.

It was a tiny whisper at first, but it grew each time I used it. While I would let so many things slide when it came to myself, once I had kids, I knew that I had to change that because they had no one to speak up for them. It had to be me.

Learning how to speak up didn’t happen fast or right at the beginning as my first child was born. Only through practice did I learn how to stick up for my kids and myself ...

and honestly, it continues to be a work in progress.

I still have those days when I let things slide that I shouldn’t. I still would much prefer to avoid conflict, but I choose to face it head-on, even when it makes me so uncomfortable I want to melt, because I want to show my kids that they need to learn to how to stand up for themselves and ask for what they want.

As moms, we have to be our child’s advocate, and if that makes other people uncomfortable, or gives them extra work, or simply makes them annoyed, so be it.



*Danielle Sullivan is a writer living in New York City. Follow her on Instagram @Deewrite.*



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## Good Start

The importance of everyone eating a nutritious breakfast

By Jamie Lober

**B**reakfast food—some people love it, while others are not hungry when they wake up, or may be rushed to get out the front door. Regardless, it is important to make sure you and your family have a good breakfast between 60-90 minutes after you wake up. There is no better way to nourish your body and get the fuel necessary to complete the tasks of daily life.

“A child needs breakfast to help supply the brain with the nutrients it needs to support brain and cognitive health, so the child can go to class and retain the information the teacher is providing, and an adult needs breakfast to power the body so they can have enough energy to be productive,” says Lorraine Kearney of Lorraine Kearney Nutrition.

The meal got its name because it is the break in the fast since the last meal you had the night before.

“It helps balance blood sugar and hormones upon waking up after a night’s rest and helps decrease the stress response that can also decrease anxiety,” said Kearney. There are great physiologic effects from this first powerful bite of the day. “The stress hormone, cortisol, is at its highest in the morning, and if we do not fuel our bodies accurately, blood sugar can drop, causing an increase in more cortisol production and adrenaline,” Kearney says.

Skipping breakfast can spoil your whole day.

“If we skip breakfast and the cortisol hormone is elevated, it produces more adrenaline that puts the body into a mode of fight or flight, which can be described as a feeling as always ‘on’ or wired,” said Kearney. This is negative, as it causes anxiety and stress levels to be raised.

You want to plan your breakfast carefully so it has the nutrients you need on the cellular level to rejuvenate and repair the body from stress it may endure.

“Think of a meal consisting of cereal, juice, Pop Tarts, sugared donuts, or blueberry muf-



fins—as this amount of excess sugar can cause a spike and crash in blood sugar levels that can make you feel like you are on a rollercoaster ride of an energy rush,” Kearney says.

If you find yourself tight on time in the morning, you can begin to prepare breakfast the night before. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests hard-boiling eggs, or setting aside your child’s favorite cereal along with pre-sliced fresh fruit. It also suggested trying sliced apples, homemade muffins, or a bagel with low-fat cream cheese. Once you find food items that your child likes, he will be more likely to look forward to breakfast.

When it comes to planning breakfast, all the food groups matter.

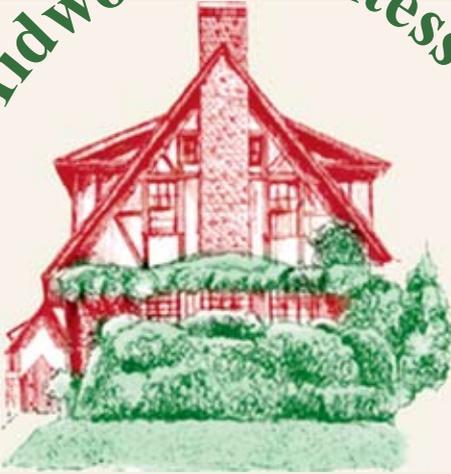
“If we fuel the body right and nourish it with fresh fruits, whole grains, eggs with spinach and toast, overnight oats, chia pudding; then we are eating foods that will not cause a spike and crash in blood sugar

levels, thus providing the body with even sustained energy levels throughout the morning that will help keep the body and mind clear, leading to increased cognitive function so you can retain information easier,” Kearney says.

If your child does not have an appetite first thing in the morning, talk about why it is important to have a small bite and what it does for his mind and his grades. When you have a motivation for doing something, you are more likely to do it. Once you recognize the benefits of consuming this beneficial meal and make sure it is balanced, you will be kicking off the new year with a great start.

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

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# BLENDED Blessings

Mashonda Tiffrere's *Blend* (complete with a forward by Alicia Keys) is a modern guide to happy co-parenting

By Mia Weber

When Mashonda Tiffrere's book *Blend* dropped this past fall, she celebrated in style—think: Champagne, music-industry A-listers, and a towering custom cake set against the splendor of Donna Karan's Urban Zen event space in lower Manhattan. There were impromptu bursts of song (from Tiffrere herself, along with her friend and son's step-mother Alicia Keys); there were plenty of festive cocktails and lavish snacks and desserts. But revelry and glamour aside, the heart and soul of the party was the message of Tiffrere's tome devoted to peaceful co-parenting, and inspired by her own experience with divorce from her son's father (the musician Swizz Beatz, who penned a chapter on fatherhood) and establishing a positive relationship with his new wife, Keys (who actually wrote a foreword to the book).

"The book started out as a series of journals. I started to journal everything from the moment I had my son and I journaled about being a mother. Then, when my marriage started to dissolve, I started to journal about what it felt like to go through that separation and then it went into divorce," Tiffrere—who has a longtime background in the music industry as an accomplished singer and songwriter—says of *Blend*'s origins, which stemmed from her own divorce with Swizz Beatz. After feeling hurt and confused as she navigated the separation, she also knew she had to find a way to co-parent with her son's father and his new partner, Keys.

"I literally had an epiphany one day: 'This needs to be a book!' Because I was looking for books to help me get through what I was feeling and I couldn't find anything, specifically



Mashonda Tiffrere with Swizz Beatz, Alicia Keys, and their children.

about healing and getting through it, but also about trying to figure out a way to work with the new woman involved," Tiffrere says. "I got to a point where I really wanted to understand my relationship with Alicia."

That desire for understanding and common ground, for the sake of healing and for the best interests of the children involved, is at the core of *Blend*. Over nearly eight years, Tiffrere worked on perfecting her message, sharing her journey, and thinking about what separated parents and new co-parents really needed. The end result is a book that's true to her original mission of helping parents going through a divorce or separation to be open to healing so they can blend their family in a balanced way with any new adults in the equation.

"The primary mission [of *Blend*] is opening people up to the fact that, if they just allow themselves to feel and let go of the hurt and the pain that they struggle with after a divorce or a separation, they can move forward and heal, and provide an emotionally and mentally healthy future for their children," she explains. "[Having a blended family] means peace of mind; it means a level of open communication that would not be possible if we did not trust each other, and didn't feel the need to protect our family and give our children what we consider a true chance at living a healthy life."

If any proof is needed that Tiffrere, Swizz Beatz, and Keys have developed a loving and balanced co-parenting partnership, it was right there in the room on the night of the *Blend* book launch. The family was all smiles as they posed for photos—there were hugs, laughs, and

happy tears. Most notably, Tiffrere and Swizz Beatz's son Kasseem was on hand to celebrate his mom, and it was obvious how proud he was.

"He was there—he watched me go through everything and he witnessed the writing part and he'd go to sleep and be like: 'Okay, are you going to go write now, mom?' He knew what I was doing for a really long time," Tiffrere says. "So for him to see [the book] manifest, his mind was blown, especially when he saw it at Barnes & Noble, because that's our favorite store. When he walked in there and saw my poster up and books all over the place and my picture—he just couldn't believe it. And he wrote a letter in the book to himself, so he's in Barnes & Noble too, and he's pretty excited about that."

At the end of the day, Tiffrere hopes readers will turn to her book as a tool to set themselves and their kids up for peace of mind and a road to happiness.

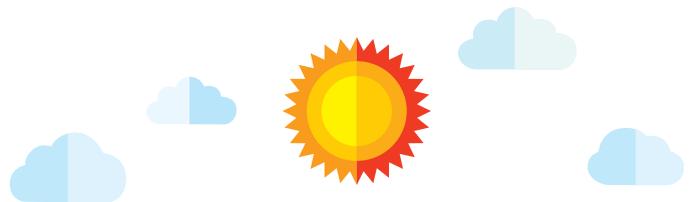
"The first thing would be to tell [readers] would be to open their heart and try to put all the pain aside for a moment and think of your child and the future of your child—and also think of yourself, and of your healing and your peace," she says. "I'd tell them to get in tune with their ego, and really learn how to check it, and to understand the difference between operating from that place of ego and operating from a place of love. That means to allow yourself to be more vulnerable and those are the first ingredients to truly being able to co-parent and blend and create a new, healthy relationship with your ex."

To learn more about Mashonda Tiffrere, visit [theblendedfamilybook.com](http://theblendedfamilybook.com)!

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## How to Choose a Dance Studio

By Charlotte Reardon

There's no shortage of dance studios in New York City—this is the dance capital of the world! The number of studio options here can easily make any parent feel overwhelmed. I encourage parents to consider their kid's unique interests before selecting a studio, which will help you narrow down the choices, as there's no uniform "right" studio. There's no style of dance a local studio near you isn't offering, including theater, modern, ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, ballroom, Bollywood, improv—you name it!

Here are some of my top suggestions for parents to consider, based on my years of experience teaching dance at a variety of studios:

### Decide how serious your child is about dance

Does your tot just want to twirl, or is she expressing serious interest in learning the fundamentals of dance technique? There are major differences in studios that are performance-focused versus technique-focused studios.

If your tween starts randomly performing for you and guests around the house showing a clear eagerness to get on the stage, then a performance-focused school might be the way to go. If your kid is determined to be next Misty Copeland, you might want to consider a more heavily technical training school.

A good pre-indicator of the level of seriousness of a studio is if it requires kids to audition first. Yes, some studios will require 6-year-olds to audition.

### Ask how levels are determined

Some studios will group students by age, which is perfectly acceptable for preschool-age students. However, as students grow into elementary-school age, they should really be placed by level so that everyone in the class is getting the proper amount of attention they need to improve.

### Inquire about any extra costs

Often, parents just ask about the cost of classes not knowing there are potentially many extra associated costs.

For example, parents should inquire if they'll need to purchase costumes for performances or if costumes are provided by the studio. Some studios also have strict uniform requirements in which parents will be asked to purchase specific colors and brands of dancewear. In addition, some studios require that each parent volunteer in some capacity to support the school. This is common for studios that are more affordable, as they'll be counting on you to help offset the costs of operating.

You'll need to consider how you'll be able to fit this into your schedule. It's also important to understand your financial assistance options, as many studios will offer financial aid depending on need. Studio pricing can be structured by per class or per semester, so it's important to inquire. Some studios may require a certain number of classes to be attended each week. For elementary-age dancers, many studios will also require a student take a ballet class in addition to other styles your child is interested in.

### Learn how classes will be structured

Studios will be diverse in how teachers decide to structure their classes. If your child is most interested in jumping over "puddles" across the floor, waving a scarf, then an unstructured, more free-flowing studio is the way to go. If your child has determined that he is bound for Lincoln Center, you'll want to consider a studio that has more structured classes based on traditional models of teaching.

In ballet studios you'll hear these teachers use terms like Vaganova (Russian), Cecchetti (Italian), Bournonville (French), and Royal Academy of Dance (British) to describe their teaching methodologies that date back hundreds of years. Some of these styles of teaching have strict syllabuses that require formal exams to advance to the next level.

### Learn about the teacher's experience

Just because a teacher was on Broadway or danced with a leading ballet company doesn't necessarily mean she'll be a great teacher. I'd recommend considering teachers with dance education qualifications and previous teaching experience. Or course, having a background in performing is imperative, but dancing and teaching are different specialties.

*Charlotte Reardon is a former professional dancer who has danced with Merce Cunningham, the Rockettes, and Ballet Arts. She is currently a teacher at Cobble Hill Ballet School in Brooklyn.*

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# ROCK & STROLL

By Mia Weber

## 15 GREAT STROLLERS FOR 2019

**Y**our stroller is one of the biggest-ticket baby gear purchases you'll make as a new parent. Make sure your wheels fit your lifestyle, budget, and aesthetic—our guide to 15 great strollers for NYC families on the market for the New Year has you covered (from doubles to joggers and beyond)!

### Austlen Baby Co.

**Entourage:** Designed for families who enjoy a life full of activity, the Entourage is super-versatile and offers an enormous storage capacity.

The Entourage's patented design has a one-handed expandable frame with three positions that enable multi-child configurations and the ability to carry large items, such as ice chests, shade canopies, and even luggage—this stroller has the strongest weight limit of any stroller, accommodating up to 150 lbs combined weight of children and cargo. The Entourage also features a seat that accommodates children from birth up to 50 lbs., available car seat adapters for dual car seat compatibility, a second seat that features multi-recline positions, and more. *\$849.99, austlen.com*



### Baby Jogger City Select

**LUX:** The Baby Jogger City Select LUX takes the popular City Select stroller to the next level by providing more versatility with over 20 possible configurations—the most riding

options of any single to double stroller on the market. This stroller can convert from a single to a double by adding a second seat or the new bench seat accessory, or even convert to a triple by adding the glider board. *\$629.99 for stroller; \$199.99 for second seat kit; babyjogger.com*

### BABYZEN YOYO+:

From birth, the YOYO+ can be used with the 0+ newborn nest, which works as a lie-flat, rear-facing stroller. The addition of car seat adapters means that baby can be switched from the car to the YOYO+ with one click. From 6 months, on the same frame, parents can change to 6+ fabrics and their stroller is ready for early childhood. Folding, unfolding, and pushing still work with just one hand, and the YOYO+ remains almost featherweight at just 13-13.5 lbs. Finally, a new storage pouch has been added to the back of the 6+ canopy and the basket underneath the pushchair is now 60 percent larger. *YOYO+ frame with 6+ color pack, \$495; 0+ bassinet insert, \$225; car seat adapters, \$50; babyzen.com*



### Bugaboo Fox:

This past March, Bugaboo introduced their newest stroller, the Fox! The Bugaboo Fox has the lightest push and parents will be able to take this stroller from city streets to snowy trails, as the advanced all-wheel suspension and larger tires ensure a smooth, stable ride. The Fox also offers modular design so parents can easily customize, refresh, repair and re-use parts of the stroller. It's lightweight, at just under 22 lbs., has a great one-piece fold, offers an underseat basket holding up to 22 lbs., and features high-quality fabrics made from recycled materials. Finally, it's Bugaboo's highest seat and weight capacity, suitable for children up to 48.5 lbs. *From \$1,199, bugaboo.com*

**CYBEX Priam:** With their Priam stroller, CYBEX has brought a complete, coordinated, three-in-one system to the market. This means that one frame enables three different

uses with "individualized mobility:"

As a pram-style stroller with matching carry cot, as a travel system with one of the CYBEX infant car seats, and later, as a luxurious stroller, with a choice of child facing forwards or backwards. There is also a choice of wheels for every surface: Light, all-terrain, and trekking. One other cool option? The Priam can be paired with a ski attachment to replace the front wheels, turning it into an urban snowmobile. *\$1,000, cybex-online.com*



### Diono Traverze:

The Diono Traverze is a new luggage-style, super-compact stroller created to make traveling easier for families on the move, fitting in most overhead

cabins and features an easy to use one-hand instant fold. Complete with water resistant Travel Carry Bag and tailored rain cover. The lightweight stroller also features a one-touch brake with smooth rolling, never flat wheels, city-resistant shock absorbers and all-wheel suspension ensuring that it turns on a dime through turnstiles and store doors, with swivel wheels and agile one-hand steering. *\$249.99-299.99, us.diono.com*

### Evenflo Sibby Travel System with LiteMax:

This new travel system comes complete with a sleek Evenflo stroller and a LiteMax infant car seat.



The stroller features improved Sport Style Handle Grips that are longer with an extended foam grip, a seat back with a new mesh storage bag and buckle to adjust the seat so a big kid can stand easier on the Ride-Along board, a large canopy with new peek-a-boo window and lowered/extended for better protection and visibility, a Flex Hold Parent Cup, and more. The car seat is suitable for 4-35 lbs and offers a 1-Step Belt Lock System for secure installation, an ergonomic and easy-to-carry handle, up-front harness adjustment, and many more premium safety and convenience features. \$199.99, [evenflo.com](http://evenflo.com)

**gb Pockit+:** The Pockit+ compact stroller is an upgraded version of the celebrated gb Pockit, the world's smallest stroller. The Pockit+ offers the same great features of the Pockit, but now with a 2-in-1 travel system.



Additional upgrades include a larger canopy with UPF50+ sun protection and a reclining seatback. The Pockit+ can be folded into a hand-bag shaped package in two easy steps, easily fitting into a tote or overhead airline compartment. The Pockit+ is recommended for use from birth (using the included car seat adapters with an infant car seat) up to 55 lbs. \$229.99, [gb-online.com](http://gb-online.com)



**Maxi-Cosi Nomad Collection Adorra:**

The Nomad collection features muted tones of beige, green, and blue all inspired by nature and the world around us. The stroller provides functional and convenient

features like its one hand fold, expandable storage basket, easy to remove and wash car seat, a flip-out visor to make life as a new parent just a little easier. When used with a Maxi-Cosi infant car seat, it transforms into a highly maneuverable travel system for use from birth, allowing for seamless transition from car to stroller. \$399.99, [buybuybaby.com](http://buybuybaby.com)

**Nuna DEMI grow:** Just launched last winter, the DEMI grow is Nuna's first double stroller and is crafted with 23 modes that cleverly convert from a single stroller, to both double and twin configurations. With an all-weather seat, large storage basket, and custom dual suspension that simply flips up for rough terrain and flips down for smooth surfaces, DEMI grow



has it all. Each DEMI grow seat can be used from 6 months to 50 lbs., making it ready for the stroll ahead. The DEMI grow will be offered in Caviar, Frost, and Aspen fashions exclusively launching with Pottery Barn Kids. Stroller frame, toddler seat, and two sets of adapters, \$799; second toddler seat or bassinet, \$179 each; [nuna.eu](http://nuna.eu)

**Safety First RIVA Travel System:**

The new RIVA travel system is made from a special blend of recycled materials including the brand's own recycled car seats. It features a lightweight stroller frame weighing only 18 lbs., easy-off, machine-washable fabrics, two parent cup holders that can double as viewable cell phone holders, and a generous storage basket and canopy with peek-a-boo window. It also offers a high-impact frame made from recycled materials that is rigorously tested to ensure sturdiness and reliability, as well as an American-made Safety 1st onBoard 35 FLX infant car seat with side-impact protection for children 4-35 lbs. \$199, [walmart.com](http://walmart.com)



**Silver Cross Wave:**

The Wave offers an ultra-sleek look, British sensibility, and an irresistible slate of premium features. The all-in-one Wave system includes

the stroller frame, bassinet, and seat—which means it's easy to re-configure as your child grows or if you have another baby. With the patented One Plus One connection system, it's a breeze to transition the stroller from single to tandem, and the system can be used as a single, in tandem with the reversible seat and bassinet, or with twins in two bassinets or seats; in total, the Wave can accommodate up to two children with a combined weight of 100 lbs.; later this month, they will also be launching a ridealong board. Finally, the Wave comes with a storage basket that holds up to 33 lbs. *Stroller with bassinet and main seat, \$1,299; tandem seat, \$349; [silvercrossus.com](http://silvercrossus.com)*

**Stokke Xplory:**

With pioneering seat height adjustability, the iconic Stokke Xplory brings your baby closer promoting interaction while you explore the world together. Thoughtful design makes



the Xplory effortless to maneuver, even around the tightest city corners. Front- or rear-facing, this stroller provides an almost infinite choice of seating positions. Plus, you can select from a variety of types and styles for the chassis and color of the stroller. \$1,129-1,199, [stokke.com](http://stokke.com)

**Thule Sleek:** Perfect for parents looking to hit the park as well as the city streets, the brand-new Thule Sleek (which is the rugged Thule brand's first four-wheeled stroller) is a smart, stylish, and safe



stroller for urban explorers and their kids. It has a lightweight and contemporary design, outstanding maneuverability, and superior comfort for both parent and child. Designed for the active parent, Thule Sleek can be configured to match the needs of your family, from your baby's birth and as your little one grows. Add a bassinet, a sibling seat, or a car seat, bring one, two or even three kids, mount the seat in parent-facing or forward-facing position. \$799.95, [thule.com](http://thule.com)

**UPPAbaby VISTA:**

The VISTA a performance stroller system that has a variety of configurations and maneuvers like a single stroller with the ability to adapt as a family grows. This stroller includes both bassinet (safe overnight sleep solution) and toddler seat. Great features include a one-button telescopic handlebar height adjustment and a reversible toddler seat with multi-position toddler seat recline. There's also an adjustable canopy for your growing child, an extendable UPF 50+ Sunshade, adjustable footrest, and an XL basket for storage. The VISTA lets you transport up to three children by adding a PiggyBack Ride Along Board, and it's compatible with the MESA infant car seat with no adapters necessary. New for the VISTA over the past year are mélange fashions, new matte fabric options, premium, full-grain leather accents, an updated front tire and tread pattern to match rear tire, and more. *Price varies according to fashion/color; \$839.99-899.99, [uppababy.com](http://uppababy.com)*



For more strollers we love, visit [newyorkfamily.com](http://newyorkfamily.com).

# Talking to Your Kids About

# Death

## How to broach the subject with young children and teens

By Tammy Scileppi

While going about our daily lives, we tend to forget that death is really a part of life.

But is there an afterlife? Many religious traditions claim there is an afterlife of some type; that death is not the end, but rather, a transition. Obviously, nobody knows for sure, but there are cultures that believe in several afterlife possibilities.

Numerous accounts of near-death experiences describe an amazing beyond, filled with endless love, forgiveness and compassion, as well as knowledge far beyond what we as mortals can grasp or comprehend.

Yet, we fear death mostly because it is the great unknown.

So, how do we explain this mysterious, scary, complex concept to our curious children?

Parents have been asking that profound question for generations. But these days, it's more important than ever to talk with your kids and teens about the meaning of death because they're witnessing and hearing about so much violence in the media.

With more school shootings and other horrific incidents happening everywhere in recent years and just in recent weeks, it's getting harder and harder to shelter them from a dangerous and scary world. That's why parents need guidance in understanding how to broach these sensitive topics to help children deal with loss and death, whether it's in their family or in their city.

Broaching these subjects isn't easy, but discussing them with youngsters should make them feel comforted, especially if they're trying to cope with sadness, fear, and confusion.

Dr. Anne Klaeyen, a parent and Brooklyn resident, has decades of experience in counseling as a Humanist Life Advisor at Columbia University. She's also a leader of the New York Society for Ethical Culture in Manhattan, where she helps oversee the organization's unique Ethics for Children class, which focuses on development of the moral reasoning process. Through stories, discussions, service projects, field trips, and art activities, classes encourage the exploration of ideas and issues in a safe, inclusive environment.

At a recent class, she invited parent and author J.R. Becker to introduce his inspiring, life-affirming new book, *What Happens When We Die?*. Through fun verses and whimsical illustrations, "the book helps youngsters cope with and understand death," Becker says, "namely, by allowing room for curiosity about an afterlife, sadness about loss, but then finally, celebrating the things we actually know: How our atoms rejoin the universe, which remains forever changed by our lives. How our energy lasts forever, along with the stories of our loved ones we keep alive by honoring their memories. And most of all, how mortality can inspire us to appreciate the incredible opportunity we've been given: to live the best, most meaningful lives we can, surrounded by the people we love."

Dr. Klaeyen offers valuable suggestions for parents and caretakers, to make sure they're talking about death, loss—and violence—with nuance and care.

**Tammy Scileppi:** What should parents know when broaching the delicate topic of death with their kids?

**Dr. Anne Klaeyen:** Parents should always listen, empathize, and know when to stop, so as not to overwhelm their child.

In my experience, honesty and empathy are essential. And they should always be prepared to talk about death but not force a discussion if their children aren't interested. It can come up naturally when telling family stories. For example, a child may remind us of an ancestor who has died. When I was a child, my father would sometimes pull out the projector and pull up the screen to view slides and we would fondly remember relatives who had died.

I think fear and anxiety about death come from not talking about it and treating it as a taboo subject. Death should always be presented as a natural part of life.

**TS:** Kids and teens deal with death in different ways. How can parents ease their worries?

**AK:** Again, it is most important to listen to your children's thoughts and concerns and to be aware of what is age-appropriate.

Young children turn to their parents for comfort, explanation, and behavior modeling. When my uncle and godfather died, my son Andrew (now 34) was 3. He observed me crying during the funeral and



stroked my back and said: “I’ll sing to you, so you’ll feel better, Mommy,” then launched into “Row, row, row your boat.” Again, empathy.

Teens process a lot of their experiences with their peers. After 9/11, my children grew weary of all the well-meaning adults offering counseling and just wanted to be left alone to deal with it themselves. That is not to suggest that we adults and parents should abandon them. Rather, we should listen deeply to what they really need and be available: present but silent. Talking at them is a waste of breath and risks losing their trust.

School counseling centers should offer peer counseling training to students. It doesn’t replace, but effectively supplements, professional counseling.

When my daughter, Emily (now 32), was at MS 51, a classmate was killed because she stepped between her parents during a domestic dispute. Her father stabbed her instead of her mother. Not only did Emily talk to me about this tragedy, she also let me know that she didn’t think her school was handling it well and asked me for advice. Together we found a community group that offered school programs on domestic violence

and convinced the administration to host an assembly program.

This was an occasion when I held her when she cried, listened to her criticism, and empowered her to take action. Such are the phases of grief.

**TS:** Escalating gun violence and mass shootings are causing fear and panic across the nation. What was it like when your kids were growing up?

**AK:** I was surprised to learn how many school shootings there have been in this country since 1840. Of course, most of them resulted in only one or two deaths and as many injuries. It was on April 20, 1999, two days after my daughter’s 13th birthday, that we learned the horror of a mass school shooting: 15 dead and 21 injured at a high school in Columbine, CO. We discussed this at great length around the dinner table. What were the shooters’ motivations? Where did they get the weapons? Did anyone suspect what they were planning? What responsibility did their parents have? How do you even begin to fathom the shock and grief? Lots of questions, few answers.

Talking about scary stuff really helps, especially during these highly stressful, violent times. But while you’re doing that, remember to hold your children real close and hug them every chance you get.

By the way, regarding the possibility of an afterlife, Dr. Klaeyesen says she is not a believer: “It simply makes no sense to me, and I have no need to pretend that it exists. To paraphrase American Transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson, ‘we are such stuff as stars are made of, and science bears that out.’ As a Humanist, I accept that I am part of nature: my body will return to its earthly elements and my consciousness will cease to exist. Such finality makes life all the more worth living, in my opinion.”

*Ethics for Children class at New York Society for Ethical Culture (2 W. 64th St. between Broadway and Central Park West, ethical.nyc/youth) every Sunday from 11am to 12:30pm (unless otherwise noted on website). Classes are free to families who are members of the Society, or donation-based entry from non-members. Parents may stay with their kids.*

*Tammy Scileppi is a Queens-based freelance writer and journalist, parent, and regular contributor to New York Parenting. Interviewing hundreds of New York City’s movers and shakers has been an amazing adventure for her. Scileppi’s work has appeared in a variety of media outlets. She has also written book cover copy for Simon and Schuster.*

# calendar



## JANUARY

### A DREAM-WORTHY PERFORMANCE

In “Emily Brown and the Thing,” at the New Victory Theater this month, a young girl goes on a dreamy quest with a “thing” just trying to find his bestie. The Thing is being so loud that Emily can’t sleep, but all he wants is to find his Cuddly. She sets out to help him be reunited with his friend so they can all get some much needed. Perfect for ages 4-7, this sweet show is a great way to kick off the New Year with your young theater-lovers.

Catch “Emily Brown and the Thing” on January 26-27, as well as on February 2-3. January 27, February 2, and February 3 offer performance at 11am, and a special talk-back performance on February 2 at 3pm is also showing. Tickets start at \$25.

*The New Victory Theater [209 West 42nd Street. (646) 223-3010. [newvictory.org](http://newvictory.org)]*

## 5 SATURDAY

**“Goldilocks & the Three Bears.”** Puppetworks is a not-for-profit founded and directed by Brooklyn-based artist Nicolas Coppola. The home of a number of excellent puppet shows, it will show “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” on Saturdays and Sundays throughout this January. The play is adapted for hand puppets by puppeteer Jack Kaplan, and appropriate for ages 3 and up, making this an excellent family-friendly event in Brooklyn. You can also count on getting a great story, as this sources from the original English folk-tale written by Robert Southey. January 5 and 6, 12, and 13. Ages 3 and up. *Puppetworks, 338 6th Avenue, Brooklyn. puppetworks.org.*

### Story Time: Brooklyn Music Factory’s Little Songwriters.

Join Greenlight Bookstore’s Fort Greene location for a special story time with Brooklyn Music Factory! Director of Little Songwriters classes Peira Moinester will lead a sing-a-long featuring songs from the class curriculum. Songs will incorporate basic musical concepts, scarves, shakers, African drums, and other instruments. Participants will also have the opportunity to write their own song. 11:30am. Free. *Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton Street, Brooklyn. greenlightbookstore.com.*

**Touch Tank.** Calling all marine animal and fish fans! Meet and touch real, live sea creatures like starfish and sea urchins! All ages. 12:30-1pm. *Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Avenue, Brooklyn. brooklynkids.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 [brooklyncalendar@cnglocal.com](mailto:brooklyncalendar@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!



## The magic of gardening

The study and use of herbs for healing, health, and beauty go far back in the history of humankind and continue in the present at “The Botanical World of Harry Potter Tour Series: Herbology” on January 13 at the Brooklyn Botanical Garden. It’s the next best thing to Hogwarts admission! Join the BBG for an

interactive tour about these plants and the ways wizards (and Muggles) use them. Harry Potter fans of all ages will delight in this magical activity with roots right here in Brooklyn. Event runs from 2:30-3:30pm. Free with garden admission. *Brooklyn Botanical Garden. (455 Flatbush Avenue / 990 Washington Avenue. bbg.org).*

### FURTHER AFIELD

**“World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theatre.”** This family-friendly show features physical comedy, juggling, acrobatics, and trained pets in a European-style circus performance. How fun is that? Popovich leads the animals, who he’s rescued from shelters, in their feats. 11:30 am, 2pm, and 5pm. Repeats January 6 at 11:30am, 2pm, and 5pm. \$40–50. *Tribeca PAC, Borough of Manhattan Community College,*

*199 Chambers Street, Manhattan. (212) 220-1459. tickets.tribecapac.org.*

## 6 SUNDAY

### Live Animal Adventure at the Brooklyn Children’s Museum.

Learn about and touch live animals from the Museum’s living collection. *Brooklyn Children’s Museum, 145 Brooklyn Avenue, Brooklyn. brooklynkids.org.*

### “Goldilocks & the Three Bears.”

See Jan. 5

### The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of ABBA for Kids.

All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for an ABBA concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock

through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11 am; show begins at 11:30am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn. ticketfly.com.*

### FURTHER AFIELD

### “World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theatre.”

See Jan. 5

### Just Kidding: “Stam-Pede” at Symphony Space.

This sound explosion ties in to a variety of dance, from Irish step dance to tap to body percussion. It’s sure to show kids the precision of dances that involve human body percussion. For ages 5 and up. \$17, \$14 members. *Peter Jay Sharp Theatre at Symphony Space, 155 West 65th Street. (212) 769-7406. symphonyspace.org.*

8 TUESDAY

**Library Lab: Paper Plane Test Flights.**

Children ages 6-10 are invited to Cortelyou Library's Library Lab in Ditmas Park! During this one-hour workshop, participants can create paper airplanes and test them using the library's runway. How fun is that? This program is designed to teach basic STEM principles to elementary school-aged kids. 3-4pm. Free. *1305 Cortelyou Road, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

● **Kids Explore: Snowflakes.**

Kids can learn all about snowflakes at Mill Basin Library! After a reading of the book *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Martin Briggs, participants will explore the science behind snowflakes, and create their own paper snowflake. All materials will be provided. 4-5pm. Free. *2385 Ralph Avenue, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

**Unbound: Malala Yousafzai at BAM.**

On Tuesday, January 8, the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) will welcome Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai to its stage in celebration of her latest book "We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World." New York Times journalist Rukmini Callimachi will moderate the evening's conversation concerning the displacement of girls who have lived in refugee camps and cities worldwide. Please note: There is limited ticket availability for this event. The author's net proceeds will go to the Malala Fund. 7:30-8:45pm. Tickets start at \$20. *BAM Opera House, 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn. bam.org.*

9 WEDNESDAY

**Sing-Along, Sneeze-Along.**

Head to the Borough Park Library for a super-fun Sing-Along, Sneeze, Along! Songwriter Erin Lee Kelly will perform songs and share silly stories about the



Welcoming winter

Head to Gowanus on Saturday, January 27, for a super-fun musical celebration of the winter season with Mil's Trills. Become a songwriter and join the Mil's Trills community as they celebrate their ninth birthday (fun fact: Since 2010, Mil's Trills has created more than 725 inter-generational live performance experiences in four countries around the world) with a collaborative music-making experience led by Amelia Robinson and a host of budding kid composers. All ages are welcome (though the event is especially suitable for children 0-12). Stroller parking and refreshments available. The festivities start at 3pm. \$10 online, \$15 at door. *ShapeShifter Lab [18 Whitwell Street, Gowanus, Brooklyn. shapeshifterlab.com]*

winter season during this one-hour show. 3:30-4:30pm. Free. *Borough Park Library, 1265 43rd Street, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org/.*

**Look Up! Astronomy Night in Carroll Gardens.**

Start the New Year by gazing at the night sky! Families with children of all ages can meet at the entrance to the Carroll Gardens Library for Astronomy Night! Using the Library's Dobsonian telescope, participants will be able to view stars, planets, and more during this evening program. Please

note: This outdoor program may be cancelled in the event of inclement weather. Please call the branch on the day of the program to confirm. 6-7:30pm. Free. *Carroll Gardens Library, 396 Clinton Street, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

11 FRIDAY  
FURTHER AFIELD

**BroadwayCon.** Any Broadway-bound of musical-loving kid will find plenty to do at this three-day convention. Events include live

performances, singalongs, and workshops alongside panels that preview upcoming shows and hold discussions between Broadway stars and creatives. There's a look at lots of behind-the-scenes work too! Tickets start at \$80. 10 am. *New York Hilton Midtown, 1335 Avenue of the Americas, Manhattan. facebook.com.*

12 SATURDAY

**"Goldilocks & the Three Bears."** See Jan. 5

**MulchFest 2019.** With the dawn of the New Year, do your part to help the planet! Dispose of your Christmas tree the eco-friendly way during the Parks Department's MulchFest 2019. You can drop off your tree to have it chipped into mulch for city parks and gardens at select locations throughout the five boroughs. Families can also take home their mulch for their backyards or street trees. For a list of sites visit *nycgovparks.org*. Daily, through January 13, 10 am-2pm. Free. *Various NYC parks (including Prospect Park in Brooklyn). nycgovparks.org.*

**Urban Stages: "The Amazing Ava's Great Escape!"**

This Saturday Urban Stages will present its production of "The Amazing Ava's Great Escape!" at the Jamaica Bay Library. When magic-loving Ava finds herself trapped in a library, Dr. Pemboozle comes to her rescue through live science demonstrations. Incorporating magic, science, and theater, this one-hour show will leave all ages enthralled. 11am-12pm. Free. *Jamaica Bay Library, 9727 Seaview Avenue, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

**The Rock And Roll Playhouse: Karina's Funk Revue For Kids.**

All ages are invited to Industry City this Saturday for a funk concert featuring Karina Rykman! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces

young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 12pm; show begins at 12:30pm. Free. *Industry City, 241 37th Street, Brooklyn. therockandrollplayhouse.com/industry-city.*

**FURTHER AFIELD**

**BroadwayCon.** See Jan. 11

**“CHALK” (a silent comedy).** A playful and poignant homage to classic silent-film era comedians, “CHALK” invites audiences into a hand-drawn world where imagination is made real and anything can happen. Charlie Chaplin meets “Harold and the Purple Crayon” in this feel-good romantic romp sure to “Draw You In.” For ages 3 and up. 2:30–3:30pm. \$15 general, \$12 parent, \$5 kids. *Frigid New York, East Fourth Street, Manhattan. tinyurl.com/ChalkPlay.*

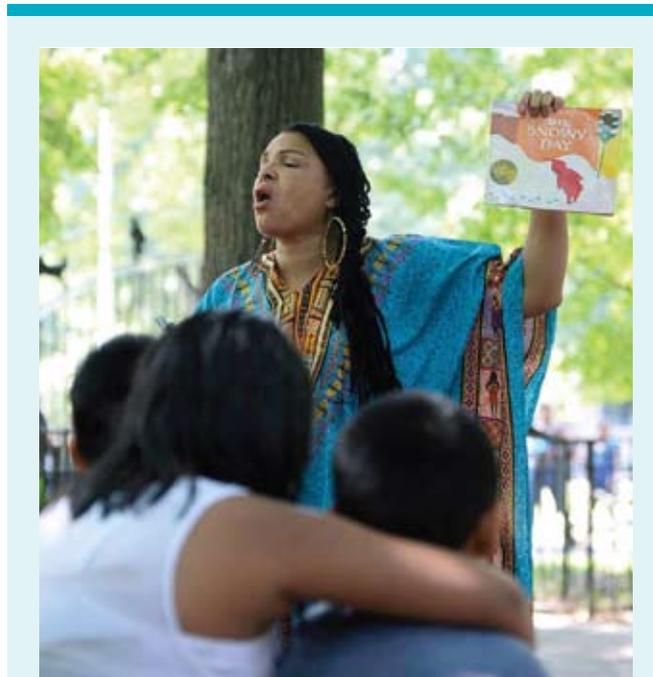
**13 SUNDAY**

**The Botanical World of Harry Potter Tour Series: Herbology.** Calling all Harry Potter fans and gardening-lovers (parents and kids alike)! The study and use of herbs for healing, health, and beauty go far back in the history of humankind and continue in the present. Join us for an interactive tour about these plants and the ways wizards (and Muggles) use them. All ages. Free with garden admission. 2:30-3:30pm. *Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 990 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn. bbg.org.*

**“Goldilocks & the Three Bears.”** See Jan. 5

★ **MulchFest 2019.** See Jan. 12

**The Rock And Roll Playhouse: The Music Of Led Zeppelin For Kids.** All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a Led Zeppelin concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games,



MLK Day in the park

This year, the whole family can spend Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebrating in Brooklyn’s beloved Prospect Park on January 21, 2019! The Lefferts Historic House will host an afternoon of storytelling and song led by Tammy Hall to celebrate Dr. King’s inspiring civil rights work. Hall will incorporate stories and songs from around the world based on the theme of freedom. Admission is free and all ages are welcome. *The Lefferts Historic House (452 Flatbush Avenue, prospectpark.org).*

movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 11:30am. *ticketfly.com.* 11 am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn. ticketfly.com.*

**Bed-Stuy Stop ‘N’ Swap at PS 3 The Bedford Village School.** Free community reuse event! Bring clean, reusable, portable items such as clothing, housewares, games, books, and toys that you no longer need, and take home something new-to-you, free! You don’t have to bring something to take something. Free. *grownyc.org/swap.* 12-3 pm. Free. *PS 3 The Bedford Village School, 50 Jefferson Avenue, Brooklyn. grownyc.org.*

**Creativity Lab at the Brooklyn Museum.** Welcome to the Lab! Drop by our studios and explore your creative side. In this drop-in workshop for all ages, take inspiration from our galleries and get messy, experiment with materials, and learn artistic techniques with a new project each month. Bring the whole family and stay as long as you’d like! All ages. Free with museum admission. 4-5:30pm. *Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn. brooklynmuseum.org.*

**FURTHER AFIELD BroadwayCon.** See Jan. 11

**15 TUESDAY Stomp, Clap & Sing With**

**Jeremy Zmuda.** Calling all music- and dancing-loving kiddos in Brooklyn! Children ages 5 and under are invited to a dance party at the Central Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library at Grand Army Plaza! Educational band Jeremy Plays Guitar will provide the award-winning tunes during this one-hour concert. Seating will take place on a first-come, first-served basis. 11am-12pm. Free. *Brooklyn Public Library, 10 Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

**16 WEDNESDAY**

**DIY: Make A Popsocket For Your Phone.** What teen or tween isn’t totally obsessed with their phone? Teens can visit the Coney Island Library this Wednesday for a super-fun DIY workshop that’s all about their fave piece of technology! Participants can create and decorate their own popsocket grip for their phone. All materials will be provided. 4-5pm. Free. *Coney Island Library, 1901 Mermaid Avenue, Brooklyn. bklynlibrary.org.*

**19 SATURDAY**

**“Escher: The Exhibition and Experience” Tour.** Join former director of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics Dave Masunaga for a tour of “Escher: The Exhibition and Experience” at Industry City. Curated by Escher experts Mark Veldhuysen and Federico Giudiceandrea, the exhibit features more than 200 works by iconic Dutch artist M.C. Escher, and makes its American debut in Brooklyn. *momath.org.* Daily, through January 21, 10am-4pm. \$40.00. *Industry City, 220 36th Street, Brooklyn. (888) 898-1118. momath.org/upcoming-events.*

**Storytime & Yoga Workshop: VeroyogaNYC at Greenlight Bookstore.** Join Greenlight Bookstore for a story time and yoga workshop at one of Brooklyn’s favorite bookstores! Instructors from VeroyogaNYC

will read yoga-themed books and teach participants child-friendly yoga poses. This event is free. 11:30am. Free. *Greenlight Bookstore, 686 Fulton Street, Brooklyn. greenlightbookstore.com.*

**The Rock and Roll Playhouse: Hip Hop for Kids.** All ages are invited to Industry City this Saturday for a hip-hop concert featuring Soul Inscribed! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 12pm; show begins at 12:30pm. Free. *Industry City, 220 36th Street, Brooklyn. therockandrollplayhouse.com/industry-city.*

**MLK Jr. Tribute Concert 2019.** Join the Brooklyn Music School for its annual MLK Jr. Tribute Concert, where it honors the legacy and impact of Martin Luther King Jr. through song and storytelling. \$5 in advance, \$8 at door. 5-6pm. *Brooklyn Music School, Saint Felix Street, Brooklyn. brooklynmusicschool.org.*

**FURTHER AFIELD**  
**Crafting for Corduroy with Project K!D.** Join Amanda Kingloff, founder of PROJECT K!D (as well as the former lifestyle director at Parents magazine), for a crafty program inspired by the exhibition “A City



## Give your regards to Broadway

Broadway babies of all ages can get their theater fix in the coolest way the weekend of January 11-13! BroadwayCon is coming to town and it’s going to be epic. Any Broadway-bound of musical-loving kid will find plenty to do at this three-day convention. Events include live performances, singalongs, and workshops alongside panels that

preview upcoming shows and hold discussions between Broadway stars and creatives. There’s a look at lots of behind-the-scenes work too! The convention runs 10am-11pm on Friday, 10am-10:30pm on Saturday, and 10am-5:30pm on Sunday. Tickets start at \$80. *New York Hilton Midtown [1335 6th Avenue, broadwaycon.com]*

For Corduroy: Don Freeman’s New York.” Visit the exhibition at the Museum of the City of New York for inspiration, then get hands-on with Kingloff to learn a DIY project to decorate

your home. Each family will take home a free copy of Don Freeman’s *Corduroy*. Free with museum admission. 11am-2pm. Free with museum admission. *Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan. mcny.org.*

*Society, 170 Central Park West, Manhattan. (212) 873-3400. nyhistory.org.*

**20 SUNDAY**  
**“Escher: The Exhibition and Experience” Tour.** See Jan. 19

**The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of Bob Marley for Kids.** All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Sunday for a Bob Marley concert featuring David Langlois and The Brooklyners! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 11:30am. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn. ticketfly.com.*

**Celebrating 50 Years of the Coretta Scott King Book Awards with Sharon Draper at New-York Historical Society.** Celebrate with Sharon Draper as she receives the Coretta Scott King Book award. This award highlights authors and illustrators who demonstrate a deep appreciation for African American culture and values. At this event, Draper will talk about her career, lead a writing activity, answer questions, and sign books. 1pm. Free with Museum Admission. *New York Historical*

## A tribute to MLK

Pay tribute to Dr. King at BAM’s annual celebration honoring the iconic civil rights leader: The 33rd Annual Brooklyn Tribute To Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. New York City’s largest public celebration of the iconic civil rights leader features #MeToo founder Tarana Burke, as well as a host of world-renowned activists, intellectuals, civic leaders, musicians, and other performers. There’s also a full day of free events, including a movie screening, a talk, and an art exhibition that’s sure to keep Dr. King’s message alive. Tickets distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Doors open at 8am. *Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Avenue, bam.org).*

**21 MONDAY**

**“Escher: The Exhibition and Experience” Tour.** See Jan. 19

**The 33rd Annual Brooklyn Tribute to Dr Martin Luther King, Jr at BAM.** Pay tribute to Dr. King at BAM’s annual celebration honoring the iconic civil rights leader. NYC’s largest public celebration features Tarana Burke, world-renowned activists, intellectuals, civic leaders, musicians, and other performers. There’s also a full day of free events, including a movie screening, a talk, and an art exhibition that’s sure to keep Dr. King’s message alive. Tickets distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Doors open at 8am. 10:30am. Free. *Peter Jay Sharp Building, 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn. bam.org.*

**Martin Luther King, Jr Day Storytelling and Music Event at Greenlight Bookstore.** Join the Prospect Lefferts Gardens community at Grace Reformed Church of Flatbush for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Award-winning Brooklyn author Jacqueline Woodson will read from her books “Show Way” and “The Day You Begin.” Other festivities include musical performances, arts and crafts for kids, and a complimentary lunch. 11 am – 3 pm. Free. *Grace Reformed Church of Flatbush, 1800 Bedford Ave., Brooklyn. greenlightbookstore.com.*

**Martin Luther King Jr Day in Prospect Park.** Spend Martin Luther King Jr. Day in Prospect Park! The Lefferts House will host an afternoon of storytelling and song led by Tammy Hall to celebrate MLK’s work. Hall will incorporate stories and songs from around the world based on the theme of freedom. Admission is free and all ages are welcome. 12-4pm. Free. *The Lefferts House, 452 Flatbush Avenue, Brooklyn. prospectpark.org.*



**A New Year sprouts**

Need some help with your New Year’s resolutions? Head to the Rubin Museum’s Family Sundays this month to ask: “What kinds of growth and change do you want to spark in 2019?” Plus, go home with a lovely handmade sculpture to boot! Get inspired by creating dynamic sculptures with floral foam, which can be used to nurture plant life and hold together intricate arrangements. The

activity is great for adults and kids to do together because it fosters creativity, a care for the world around us, and is fun and educational. This event is perfect for ages 3 and older with accompanying adults. Free for children and accompanying adults. This event repeats every Sunday in January, and runs from 1-4pm. *Rubin Museum [150 West 17th Street. rubinmuseum.org]*

**FURTHER AFIELD**  
**“The Snowy Day and Other Stories By Ezra Jack Keats.”** Celebrate what it feels like to experience your very first snowfall of the winter season. Four of Keats’s best-known stories are brought to life on the stage, all-encompassing the joy of new experiences. For ages 3-8. \$35. 11am and 3pm. *St Luke’s Theater, 308 W. 46th St., Manhattan. (212) 246-8140. thesnowydayplay.com.*

**26 SATURDAY**  
**The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of Grateful Dead for Kids.** All ages are invited to Brooklyn Bowl this Saturday for a Grateful Dead concert! Stella Blue’s Band will perform classic Grateful Dead hits in a family-friendly environment. The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 11am; show begins at 12pm. \$12. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61*

*Wythe Avenue, Brooklyn. ticketfly.com.*

**The Rock and Roll Playhouse: The Music of David Bowie for Kids.** All ages are invited to Industry City this Saturday for a David Bowie concert! The Rock and Roll Playhouse series introduces young audiences to classic rock through games, movement, and stories. Babies under the age of 1 are free. Doors open at 12pm; show begins at 12:30pm. *therockandrollplayhouse.*

## calendar JANUARY

com. 12:30pm. Free. *Industry City, 220 36th Street, Brooklyn.* [therockandrollplayhouse.com/industry-city](http://therockandrollplayhouse.com/industry-city).

### FURTHER AFIELD

#### Winter Jam in Central Park.

Get your kids moving with this super-fun annual winter sports festival that will make a snow field by blowing snow all over the area. Kids can learn to ski, take turns sledding, and more. They're sure to have winter fun they'll never forget. For all ages. 11am. Free. *Central Park, Sheep Meadow, 1802 65th Street Transverse, Manhattan.* (212) 360-8213 [nycgovparks.org/highlights/festivals/winter-jam](http://nycgovparks.org/highlights/festivals/winter-jam).

#### "Emily Brown and the Thing."

The Thing is being so loud that Emily can't sleep, but all he wants is to find his Cuddly. She sets out to help him be reunited with his friend so they can all go to sleep. Repeats on January 27, February 2, and February 3 at 11am, with a talk-back performance on February 2 at 3pm. For ages 4-7. Tickets start at \$25. 11am. *New Victory Theatre, 209 West 42nd Street, Manhattan.* [newvictory.org](http://newvictory.org).

## 27 SUNDAY

### Ninth Annual Mil's Trills



## Viva Cuba

Calling at dance moms, dance kids, and dancer-lovers in general! Come to the Family Matinee on January 12 for the Malpaso Dance Company's iBaile!, where trained dancers will perform the work *Tabula Rasa* (with choreography by the acclaimed Ohad Naharin) as well as other work by a variety of notable Cuban choreographers, both established and on the cutting edge. Tickets to this vibrant production at the Joyce Theater start at \$10 and run through \$41-56. The matinee starts at 2pm. *The Joyce Theater [175 8th Avenue.* (212) 691-9740. [joyce.org](http://joyce.org)

**Winter Bash.** Become a songwriter and join the Mil's Trills community as they celebrate their ninth birthday with a collaborative music-making experience led by

Amelia Robinson and budding kid composers. All ages. 3 pm. \$10 in advance. \$15 at the door. Family rate \$45 day of show for 4, thereafter \$11.25 each. *ShapeShifter Lab, 18 Whitwell*

*Place, Brooklyn.* (646) 820-9452. [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com).

**FURTHER AFIELD**  
"Emily Brown and the Thing."  
See Jan. 26

## Tunnel vision

Through March 17, "Underground Heroes: New York Transit In Comics" at the New York Transit Museum celebrates our city's transit system and its role in art. New York's rich visual vernacular is a colorful setting for illustrated stories, so it comes as no surprise that our iconic transportation system plays a starring role in comics and graphic novels. Drawing on satirical cartoons, comic strips and comic books from the 19th through the 21st Centuries, "Underground Heroes: New York Transit in Comics" is a raucous ride through New York's transit system from a range of visual



storytellers. The exhibit includes such luminaries as Winsor McCay, Will Eisner, Bill Griffith, Roz Chast, Ronald Wimberly and Julia Wertz whose work demonstrates the influence that mass transit has on the

stories that are irrevocably woven into the cultural fabric of New York City. Through 3/17. \$10/adults, \$5/children. *New York Transit Museum (99 Schermerhorn Street.* [nytransitmuseum.org](http://nytransitmuseum.org))

**Monster Puppets.** Inspired by its production of “Emily Brown and the Thing,” New Victory is holding a 90-minute workshop that will let kids make puppets of their very own. Each family participating needs at least one adult. For ages 4-7. \$19, \$14 members (up to four people in each family). 12:30pm. *New Victory Theatre, 209 West 42nd Street, Manhattan. (646) 223-3010. newvictory.org.*

**LONG-RUNNING Underground Heroes: New York Transit In Comics.** New York’s rich visual vernacular is a colorful setting for illustrated stories, so it comes as no surprise that our iconic transportation system plays a starring role in comics and graphic novels. Drawing on satirical cartoons, comic strips, and comic books from the 19th through the 21st Centuries, *Underground Heroes: New York Transit in Comics* is a raucous ride through New York’s transit system from a range of visual storytellers. The exhibit includes such luminaries as Winsor McCay, Will Eisner, Bill Griffith, Roz Chast, Ronald Wimberly, and Julia Wertz, whose work demonstrates the influence that mass transit has on the stories that are irrevocably woven into the cultural fabric of New York City. Through March 17. \$10 per adults, \$5 per children. Daily, through January 31. *New York Transit Museum, Schermerhorn Street and Boerum Place, Brooklyn. nytransitmuseum.org.*

**Escher NYC: The Exhibit.** In addition to the Escher works on display, the exhibition includes scientific experiments, play areas and educational resources that will help visitors of all ages to understand the impossible perspectives, disquieting images and seemingly irreconcilable universes which Escher combined to create a unique artistic dimension. Daily,



## Horse sense

In “Meet the Music! The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses” audiences at Alice Tully Hall will enjoy equal parts music, mysticism, and much more. Perfect for children ages 6 and up. This musical experience is based on the story of the same name by Paul Goble. Showing on January 13, the plot tells of a Native American girl who

runs away from home to be with horses, whom she understands mystically. The performance is preceded by a musical petting zoo at 1-1:45pm, which is free for ticket holders. The show start at 2pm, and tickets go for \$10-30. *Alice Tully Hall [1941 Broadway. (212) 875-5788. chambermusicsociety.org]*

through February. 3, 10am and 7pm. \$12-35. *Industry City, 220 36th Street, Brooklyn. eschernyc.com.*

**FURTHER AFIELD “Yeti, Set, Snow!”** An original story and production from the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, “Yeti, Set, Snow!” is the story of a young girl named Widget, and her friend, Twig, who encounter a yeti named Pascetti on the first snow day of the winter season. Pascetti, who lives on a mountain top nearby, dislikes the snow. Through songs and snow

day activities, Pascetti discovers not only that snow can be fun but also the value of friendship. Daily, through February 24, 11:30am-6pm. \$8-12. *Central Park, Sheep Meadow, 1802 65th Street Transverse, Manhattan. cityparksfoundation.org.*

**Holiday Train Show.** Just because the holiday season is over doesn’t mean you can’t still squeeze in some winter cheer! Celebrate the Holiday Train Show’s 27th anniversary at the New York Botanical Garden. Enjoy the enchanting

ambiance of the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, and watch as model trains zoom through the naturally recreated landmarks of NYC (complete with real bark, leaves, and more). Among the famous sights included are the Brooklyn Bridge, Statue of Liberty, Rockefeller Center, and, most notably, the Empire State Building. Advance reservations are strongly recommended. *nybg.org.* Daily, through January 21, 10am-6pm. Free with an All-Garden Pass. *New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd., Bronx. nybg.org.*

# Eat Your Winter Whites

It always bothers me to hear the advice “eat the colors of the rainbow.” As the thinking goes, the more colorful the produce, the more nutrients it contains.

But the fact is that many white or off-white plant foods can be just as nourishing as those colorful red, blue, and yellow foods. Here’s a look at what white-colored foods are nutrient-rich, and how they can be made kid-friendly:

## Banana

While the peel is banana-yellow, the edible portion is a creamy white. Bananas are a perennial kid favorite and can be baby’s first food when mashed with a fork. Everyone knows they’re loaded with the mineral potassium, but did you know they’re packed with fiber? Bananas are perfect for a backpack, need no refrigeration, and help to soothe hunger pangs when a meal isn’t forthcoming. Whirl into a smoothie, slice on top of cereal or nut butter, or even freeze for a cool treat.

## Cauliflower

This classic cold-weather vegetable is loaded with vitamins C and K and glucosinolates.

“Cauliflower is one of my go-to vegetables. It’s a great vegetable that you can prepare and serve in different ways as your kids grow,” says Kathryn Maher, a culinary and public health dietitian in Indiana. “Pureed cauliflower can be a great beginner food. Cooked, whole florets are easy to grab and munch on when your little one is ready.”

For older kids, cauliflower is fantastic when cut into flowerets; tossed with a little fresh chopped rosemary, olive oil, salt and pepper; and roasted in the oven.

## Celery root

Rich in both iron and vitamin K, this root vegetable is a good source of dietary fiber, which is lacking in many kids’ diets. Traditionally mashed, it can also be eaten raw with a dip.

## Jicama

“If you haven’t tried jicama yet, I challenge you to pick one up on your next trip to the grocery store. You will not be disappointed. Jicama has a similar texture to apples, but a milder flavor,” Maher says. “You can bake it, eat it raw or make it sweet or savory. Let your



kids help experiment with adding flavor.”

## Onion

Pungent and sharp when it’s raw, onion becomes sweet and delicious when cooked until it’s soft and translucent. Like the drummer in a band, always in the background yet missed when it’s absent, onion adds depth of flavor to nearly every savory dish there is. Onions contain the antioxidant quercetin.

Try this the next time you grill hamburgers: Slice a few onions thinly, put into a covered frying pan with a little oil and cook slowly over low heat. After about a half hour, the onions will have caramelized. You can top not only your burgers, but you can add them to sandwiches and salads as well.

## Potatoes

These sturdy, budget-friendly tubers tend to be a kids’ fave when ordered as a “fry” at a quick-service restaurant.

When cooked up at home in the form of oven fries, baked, sliced into wedges, and roasted, or even mashed with a little milk and butter, potatoes are a good source of vitamin

C and fiber. Surprisingly, they’re a better source of potassium than a banana.

## Parsnips

Most kids won’t eat cooked parsnips, but they will eat them if they’re sneaked into stew or soup or included into a medley of oven-roasted root vegetables. A cup of parsnips takes care of almost a third of your vitamin C needs, and is an excellent source of the mineral manganese and dietary fiber.

During this month of snow, incorporate one or more “winter white” foods for good taste and good health.



*Christine Palumbo is a registered dietitian nutritionist and Fellow of the American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. She is a 2018 recipient of the Medallion Award from the Academy of Nutrition and*

*Dietetics. Follow her on Twitter @PalumboRD, Facebook at Christine Palumbo Nutrition, or Chris@ChristinePalumbo.com.*

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# The Recipe for Parenting Success

A mom's culinary adventures in the midst of new motherhood

By Laraine Perri

Once cooked lamb chops in my bra, not wanting to risk splashing port on a favorite top, but daring even less to grab a T-shirt and wake my baby, asleep at last, in our bedroom.

The lamb chops had been something of a stretch, but were evidence of my determination to eat well, even with the wondrous, all-consuming new being under our roof. My husband and I had enjoyed years of great dinners, but we'd never been as deserving of them as we were in those thrilling but exhausting first months as new parents.

I'm a serious cook. Bouillabaisse and duck confit never daunted me. What did was wondering how I'd ever be able to make anything approaching those things again with the needy little dreamboat who'd entered my world. It wasn't long before I realized the culinary bar would need to be lowered a wee, and that naptime would be showtime. But those brief hours soon proved to hold no guarantees, and mighty competition for my attention.

I'd fully expected that life with a baby would offer little chance for standing at the stove, lazily stirring the makings of a wild mushroom risotto, and I'd planned accordingly. I felt smart, even smug, about the freezer I stocked as my belly swelled, filling it with homemade soups and stews and such. Clever me, ready to host a mid-winter dinner for six with the short ribs I'd braised in September. I'd hold my beatific babe in one arm as I passed the polenta with the other.

Somewhere around the time my son turned 6 months old, I realized I could barely close the freezer. Boxes of gyoza and ravioli and spanakopita had managed to insinuate themselves - the result of my strolling the



grocery aisles, Baby Bjorn'd and blissful, and thinking them splendid purchases for my busy new life. Home from the market, I'd shimmy my biryani and wedge the osso buco, ending up frazzled and nearly frostbitten, but still not sure about what we would eat.

For we never actually did eat any of the contents of that packed sub-zero drawer. The fact was, though my days brimmed with new motherhood and a trimmed down but demanding career, I still almost always had the nightly urge to cook, and that was an urge the freezer couldn't satisfy. On evenings when dinner from scratch just wasn't an option, we'd call up our favorite Asian noodle joint or bring in chicken souvlaki and a big Greek salad. My frozen assets remained in a kind of no-man's land - too treasured for a quick solution on a harried Tuesday, and too unfulfilling to serve up for dinner when what I really wanted to do was cook.

But, let's get back to the bra. It felt weird.

It felt thrilling. It felt weirdly thrilling to be standing in my kitchen, wood blinds drawn at 2:30 p.m., stripping rosemary from its stems, racing the clock, and exhilarated from the novelty of it all. There are, in this world, some iconic images of women, Madonna with child and the pin-up among them. At this moment I had nearly but hardly both - an unexpectedly racy new mom, sautéing shallots in a pair of jeans and a 34C.

I quickly finished the sauce and set it aside, then dove into some work in preparation for an upcoming meeting. I had just turned my attention back to the chops and a rosemary and olive oil paste when I heard my son's cry. Maternal synapses fired. I'd finish the dish later. It had been an oddly sequenced and hardly perfect plan, but still a plenty good one. We'd eat well tonight. I darted to the bedroom, warmed by the sight of my sweet boy.

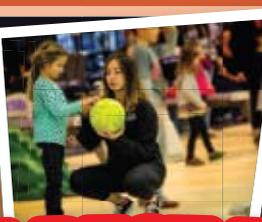
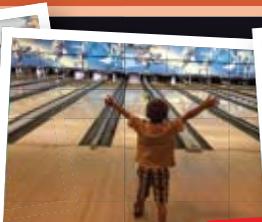
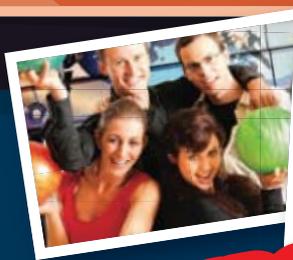
Years have passed, and with them, meals. By the time my baby was a first-grader, he was enjoying food with the kind of relish rarely encountered in a small child, savoring dishes like tandoori chicken, roasted asparagus, and smoked salmon with capers the way others swoon over cupcakes.

I began cooking six lamb chops instead of four, and couldn't have been more thrilled to do so. Taking a bite of one, Timothy would close his eyes, as he has seen my father do when tasting something wonderful my mother has cooked - a very quiet, almost involuntary "mmm" escaping from him. Eyes still closed, my little boy lovingly mimicked his grandpa, but with an appreciation of his own, saying: "This is not just lamb - this is a beautiful delicacy." He is a beautiful delicacy. Life is a beautiful delicacy.

*Laraine Perri is an editor at the 92Y, a freelance writer, and an NYC mother.*



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