

FIGHTING THE MID-YEAR EDUCATION BLUES

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JANUARY 2019

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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.

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museumofillusions.us



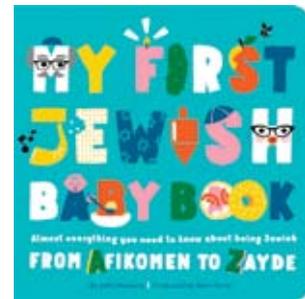
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SPECIAL NEEDS

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



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 littles "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



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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www.ps55q.com
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**The Magnet School of Leadership and
Innovation through STEAM, PS 349**



88-08 164th Street, Jamaica, N.Y. 11432
www.ps349.info
Wednesday, January 23rd, 2019
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**The Edward K. Ellington Magnet School of
Science, Technology and the Arts, PS 140**



166-01 116th Avenue, Jamaica, N.Y. 11434
www.theedwardkellingtonschool.org
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9:00 - 10:30 A.M.

**The Magnet School of STEAM Exploration and
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88-08 164th Street, Jamaica, N.Y. 11432
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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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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.”

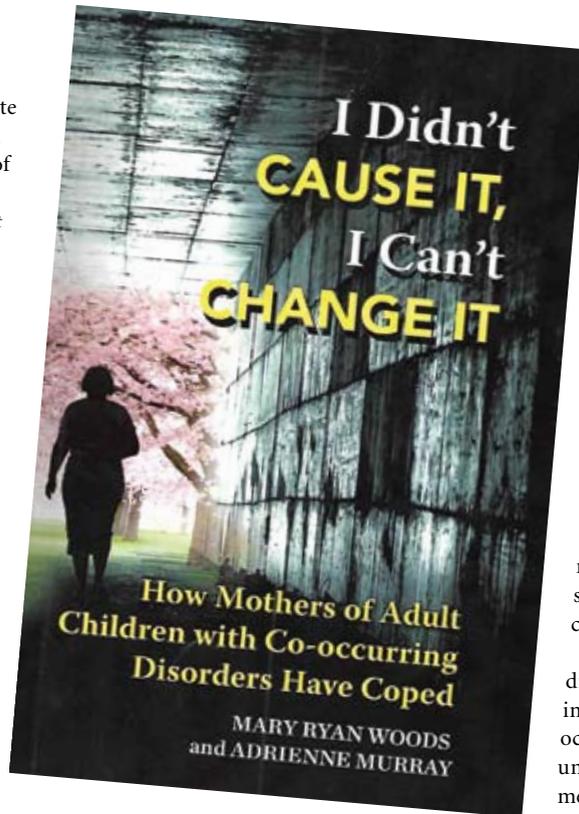
Co-occurring disorders

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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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.

Beary-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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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 (tzedakah); 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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www.olhca.org

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Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Academy

South Ozone Park
718-843-4184
www.olphcatholicacademy.org

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Floral Park
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www.olscafp.org

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Rego Park
718-426-4963
www.racatholicacademy.org

Principal - Joann Heppt
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718-527-0123
www.hcach.org

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Astoria
718 726-9405
sfaacademy.org
Principal: Anne Stefano

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Corona
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slswhitestone.org
Principal: Jan Brunswick

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GRADES NURSERY – 8 **OPEN HOUSE**

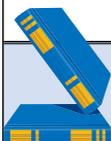
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Mid-Year Elementary School Blues

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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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!

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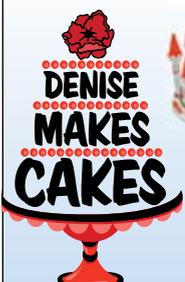
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Eat Your Winter Whites

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.

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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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



SPECTACULAR SEASON OPENER

It's time to welcome the winter season in the coolest and most musical way. On January 26, 2019, join Flushing Town Hall for its Season Opening Party with La Cumbiamba eNeYé!

The afternoon will begin with a free, musical dance workshop for families (both parents and children of all ages).

Percussion instruments will be distributed on a first-

come, first-served basis. Then at 4pm, the Colombian band La Cumbiamba eNeYé will take the stage to perform music from the Colombian coast.

Finally, join the band after the performance for a musical jam session with your instrument of choice.

Flushing Town Hall (37-35 Northern Blvd, Flushing, flushingtownhall.org).

5 SATURDAY

Moving Image Studio. Moving Image Studio is the Museum's drop-in space where visitors of all ages can create media and other projects. Families are welcome to stop by and experiment with puppet making and animation inspired by The Jim Henson Exhibition and the core exhibition Behind the Screen. Ages 4 and up. Free with museum admission. 11 am – 4 pm. *Museum of the Moving Image, 36-1 35th Ave, Astoria. movingimage.us/visit/calendar/2019/01/05/detail/moving-image-studio.*

Stop 'N' Swap In Jamaica. Bring clean, reusable, portable items such as clothing, housewares, games, books, and toys you no longer need, and take home something new — for free. You don't have to bring something to take something. Noon – 3 pm. Free. *PS 50, 143-26 101st Ave., Jamaica. grownyc.org/swap.*

Dogfest. Dog-lovers ages 4 through 10 are invited to the Glen Oaks Library for its Dogfest! The afternoon will feature canine-themed arts and crafts, activities, and a screening of the trailer for the upcoming movie "A Dog's Way Home." 3:30 – 4:30 pm. Free. *Glen Oaks Library, 256-04 Union Tpke., Glen Oaks. queenslibrary.org/event/dogfest.*

FURTHER AFIELD

"World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theatre." This family show features physical comedy, juggling, acrobatics, and trained pets in a European-style circus performance. Popovich leads the animals, who he's rescued from shelters, in their feats. 11:30 am, 2 pm, and 5 pm. Repeats Jan. 6 at 11:30 am, 2 pm, and 5 pm. \$40–50. *Tribeca PAC, Borough Of Manhattan Community College, 199 Chambers St, Manhattan. (212) 220-1459. tickets.tribecapac.org/world-famous-popovich-comedy*



Sweet, Sweet Music

Meet the clarinet at Book Culture LIC's "Have You Met The Clarinet?" event on January 13, 2019 at Book Culture in Long Island City. Mozart for Munchkins (MfM) will introduce families with children ages 12 and under to clarinet music during this one-hour program. Clarinetist Aleks Karjaka will be accompanied on the piano and ukulele by MfM co-founder Sara Leila Sherman. Following the performance, there will be an instrument "petting zoo" during which all are invited to interact with the musicians and instruments. *Book Culture LIC (26-09 Jackson Avenue, Long Island City, mozartformunchkins.com).*

pet-theatre.

Skyscrapers: Past and Future. The Skyscraper Museum hosts this workshop where kids can learn about how skyscrapers have changed in appearance over the years and then imagine what the tall buildings will look like in the years to come, designing their own vision of the buildings' future. Pre-registration is required. For ages 6 and up. \$5. 10:30 am – 11:45 pm. *Skyscraper Museum, 39 Battery Pl., Manhattan. (212) 945-6324. skyscraper.org/WHAT'S_UP/*

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family_programs.htm.

6 SUNDAY

"World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theatre." See Jan. 5

Teddy Bear Tea. Enjoy high tea with your favorite stuffed animal or doll at Mount Vernon! After meeting Mrs. Woodhull, the proprietor's wife, kids can imagine that they are living in the 1830s and experience a typical day during that time period. This is sure to be an unforgettable experience for your

little ones — and their teddy bears! Registration required. mvhm.org. 1 pm. \$10. *Mount Vernon Hotel Museum & Garden, 421 E. 61st St., Manhattan. (212) 838-6878. <https://www.mvhm.org/?events=teddy-bear-tea>*

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. Show begins at 11:30am. ticketfly.com. 11 am. \$12.00. *Brooklyn Bowl, 61 Wythe Ave., Brooklyn. ticketfly.com/event/1798381.*

7 MONDAY

Mind-Blowing Puzzles For Kids. Love puzzles? Head to the Queensboro Hill Library for an hour of puzzle fun! Kids can puzzle over word searches, crossword puzzles, Sudoku, cardboard puzzles, and message decoding. 2 – 3 pm. Free. *60-05 Main St., Flushing. queenslibrary.org/event/mind-blowing-puzzles-for-kids.*

Fun With Theater. Theater fans ages 11 and up can visit the South Hollis Library for an intensive theater workshop! Tweens and teens will receive an introduction to theater, play acting games, and write and produce their own play which will be performed in June. 4 – 5 pm. Free. *South Hollis Library, 204-01 Hollis Ave., Jamaica. queenslibrary.org/event/fun-with-theater.*

8 TUESDAY

QL Teen Radio Podcast. Teens who are interested in broadcast journalism, radio, podcasts, or audio engineering are welcome to join the Queens Library Teen Radio Podcast! This hands-on workshop is devoted to the creation and production of a teen radio show. Participants

will learn how to host, edit, and engineer a show of their own creation. 3 – 6 pm. Free. *Queens Library for Teens, 2002 Cornaga Ave., Far Rockaway. queenslibrary.org/event/ql-teen-radio-podcast.*

Crafty Tuesday: Clothespin And Button Race Cars. Check out the Rochdale Village Library in Queens for a clothespin and button race car workshop! All ages can make and decorate their cars using clothespins, buttons, paint, stickers, markers, and more. 3:30 – 4:30 pm. Free. *Rochdale Village Library, 169-09 137th Ave., Jamaica. queenslibrary.org/event/crafty-tuesday-clothespin-and-button-race-cars.*

FURTHER AFIELD

Unbound: Malala Yousafzai. On Tuesday, Jan. 8, the Brooklyn Academy of Music 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 – 8:45 pm. Tickets start at \$20. *BAM Opera House, 30 Lafayette Ave, Brooklyn. bam.org/talks/2019/malala-yousafzai.*

Holiday Train Show. 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

Zombie Time!

“How Many Zombies Are Too Many Zombies?” That is the question of the moment this season at the New York Hall of Science. At this interactive new game at the New York Hall of Science, players take on the role of scientists helping the “Center for Calamity Control” simulate a zombie outbreak. Facilitators introduce participants to mathematical modeling and the ways they can be used to simulate, analyze and make predictions about the complex real-world phenomenon. At the end, players see graphs detailing the population swings and can further tweak parameters and see different results through play. “How Many Zombies Are Too Many Zombies?” is showing daily throughout the months of January and February. Free with NYSCI Admission. 9:30am-5:30pm. *New York Hall of Science (47-01 111th Street, Corona, nysci.org).*

Building. Advance reservations are strongly recommended. *nybg.org.* Daily, through Jan. 21, 10 am – 6 pm. Free with an All-Garden Pass. *New York Botanical Garden, 2900 Southern Blvd, Bronx. nybg.org/event/chihuly.*

9 WEDNESDAY

Monthly Jazz Jam: Celebrating the Legacy of Louis Armstrong. Open to jazz students, musicians, and music educators, Monthly Jazz Jams are a fun way to hone your skills and jam with your peers. The house band led by saxophonist Carol Sudhalter opens each jam with the work of Louis Armstrong. All are welcome, regardless of instrument (vocalists, too!). Don’t play? Come listen! \$10/ free for members, students, teens and jamming musicians. 7 am – 9 pm. *Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., Flushing. flushingtownhall.org/event/3b08b22573e39b39681e854a729ce91b.*

Mother Goose. Infants ages 18–30 months and their caregivers could enjoy an hour of songs and playtime. Free. Daily, through Jan. 10, 11 am – Noon. Free. *Queens Library at Bayside, 214-20 Northern Blvd., Flushing. queenslibrary.org/event/mother-goose-time-10.*

10 THURSDAY

Mother Goose. See Jan. 9

Sewing Club For Kids. Kids who love to sew can join the sewing club at the Hillcrest Library in Queens! Ages 7 through 12 will be able to make pocketbooks, stuffed animals, and more during this one-hour workshop. All materials will be provided. 5 – 6 pm. Free. *Hillcrest Library, 187-05 Union Tpke., Fresh Meadows. queenslibrary.org/event/sewing-club-for-kids.*

11 FRIDAY

Teen Digital Media Lab. Teen Digital Media Lab is a series of free design jams just for teens. These events are a unique opportunity to get exclusive access to the museum, to share in your favorite kinds of media-making, or to experiment with something new. We work with everything from vintage arcade games to web-based hacking tools as we explore the Museum’s collection in fun and innovative ways. All levels of experience are welcome. Plus, there’s pizza. Ages 14 and up. Free. 4 – 6 pm. *Museum of the Moving Image, 36-1 35th Ave., Astoria. movingimage.us/visit/calendar/2017/07/21/detail/the-*

muppet-movie.

FURTHER AFIELD

BroadwayCon. Any Broadway-bound or 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/events/1801106539951678.*

12 SATURDAY

Kids Silent Disco and Parents Bottomless Brunch Party!

Let the Quiet Events DJs watch your kids while you enjoy a Saturday afternoon brunch with friends. Katch Astoria is Queens’ Premiere Gastropub offering a huge dance floor for your kids to party and a wide range of drinks and tasty meals for everyone. Just take a look at their Brunch Menu. Make this your kid’s birthday party or just a fun afternoon with your friends while your kids are entertained by our interactive DJs, getting them to sing, dance, and have a great time. They also will have a small arts and crafts table with coloring books, markers, crayons, and other fun activities for the kids to do if they don’t want to join the headphone party. Don’t worry, mom and dad, they also have a music channel for you to dance, too! \$10–25. 8 am. *Katch Astoria, 31-19 Newtown Ave., Astoria. quietevents.com/event/kids-silent-disco-and-parents-bottomless-brunch-party.*

Vet Tech 101. Ages 10 through 13 can learn all about basic animal health during Vet Tech 101 at Alley Pond Environmental Center! Students will handle live animals, practice conducting animal check-ups, and study animal anatomy during this two-hour class. The most



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]*

common animal pets will be covered. Pocket magnifiers will be provided. Registration is required. 9 – 11 am. \$25. *Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-6 Northern Blvd., Little Neck. alleypond.com/weekends.html.*

MulchFest 2019. 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 Jan. 13, 10 am – 2 pm. Free. *Various NYC parks, Central Park, Manhattan. nycgovparks.org/highlights/festivals/mulchfest.*

APEC Adventure Time's Animal Movements: Hop, Flap, And Slither. This Saturday, toddlers and their caregivers can visit Alley Pond Environmental Center to learn how animals move! Youngsters will have the opportunity to meet and pet three animals and imitate how each moves during this morning program. Other activities include an art project, trail walk, and story time. Recommended for ages 18 to 36 months. alleypond.com. 10:30 – 11:45 am. \$18. *Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-6 Northern Blvd., Little Neck. alleypond.com/weekends.html.*

Winter Family Programs: Plants We Eat! Learn all about different plant parts, identify their functions, and discover which of these parts we eat at the Queens Botanical Garden. Attendees will visit the

Greenhouse to see edible plants and make hummus. Ages 4–10. Please purchase separate tickets for each child. \$12. 11 am – Noon. *Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St., Flushing. (718) 886–3800. queensbotanical.org/event/winter-family-programs-plants-we-eat.*

Snapology Basic Engineers. Calling all budding engineers! Ages 5 through 8 can build working models during the Snapology Basic Engineers class at ACD Playspace. Participants will work in groups to create objects made from gears, axels, and pulleys. There will also be free-building time at the end of the workshop. Registration is required. 11 am – Noon. \$26. *ACD Playspace, 3124 38th St., Astoria. embed.snapology.com/licensee/88/events/35778.*

Year of the Pig Community Art Project. Drop in at the Queens Botanical Garden to work on collaborative sculptures to celebrate the Year of the Pig. The project will be displayed in the Garden for QBG's Lunar New Year Celebration on Saturday, Feb. 9, and for the remainder of February. Repeats the rest of the Saturdays in January. Free. Noon – 1 pm. *Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St, Flushing. 718–886–3800. queensbotanical.org/event/year-of-the-pig/2019-01-12.*

Stop 'N' Swap In Elmhurst. Bring clean, reusable, portable items such as clothing, housewares, games, books, and toys you no longer need, and take home something new — for free. You don't have to bring something to take something. Noon – 3 pm. Free. *PS 13, 55-01 94th St., Flushing. grownyc.org/swap.*

"Four Seasons." On Saturday, Jan. 12, Chinese Theatre Works will present an original production entitled "Four Seasons" at Flushing Town Hall. The family-friendly work will combine music, dance, opera, poetry, and puppetry with contemporary shadow theater techniques to create a show unlike anything audiences have ever seen. 2 pm. Adults: \$14, children: \$8. *Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., Flushing. flushingtownhall.org/event/1a1e98976476bc4e41e4703e5f4bb5a1.*

FURTHER AFIELD BroadwayCon. See Jan. 11

13 SUNDAY Outdoor Skills: Wilderness Survival. Whether you are preparing for an extended journey through the woods or just want to be more prepared for any situation, a wilderness survival program, taught by Urban Park Ranger at Alley Pond Park, is perfect for you. Learn tips and tricks that will enhance your knowledge of the natural

world, and might just save your life. Ages 8 and up. Free. *Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-6 Northern Blvd., Little Neck. (212) NEW-YORK. nycgovparks.org/events/2019/01/13/outdoor-skills-wilderness-survival.*

MulchFest 2019. See Jan. 12

Red Envelope Show Drop-In Workshop. Drop by Flushing Town Hall for a Red Envelope Show Drop-In Workshop! Flushing Town Hall Teaching/Visual Artist Tina Seligman will lead this workshop during which all ages can create original artwork on red envelopes which will be hung on the Hall's celebratory clothesline. All materials will be provided. 1 – 3 pm. Free. *Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., Flushing. flushingtownhall.org/event/6e240da09eb17c572bc93250f598bc1b.*

“Have You Met The Clarinet?” Meet the clarinet at Book Culture LIC! Mozart for Munchkins will introduce families with children ages 12 and under to clarinet music during this one-hour program. Clarinetist Aleks Karjaka will be accompanied on the piano and ukulele by Mozart for Munchkins co-founder Sara Leila Sherman. Following the performance, there will be an instrument “petting zoo” during which all are invited to interact with the musicians and instruments. 4 – 5 pm. Adults: \$30, children (ages 12 and under): Free. *Book Culture LIC, 26-09 Jackson Ave., Long Island City. mozartformunchkins.com/events/have-you-met-the-clarinet-lic.*

FURTHER AFIELD
BroadwayCon. See Jan. 11

14 MONDAY
Favorite Characters Book Club. Book-lovers ages 6 through 12 can join the Favorite Characters Book Club at the Broadway Library in Long Island City! In celebration of some of the most beloved fictional

Tales of the Diaspora

Parents and kids of all ages are invited to the Jamaica Performing Arts Center to see Something Positive, Inc.'s production of “Crick! Crack!” on January 19, 2019. Master storyteller Michael Manswell will engage audience members with tales from the African Diaspora. This one-hour theatrical show will also feature enthralling original choreography based on traditional African-Caribbean dances. Get ready to feel energized by the amazing music and dancing. *Jamaica Performing Arts Center (153-10 Jamaica Avenue, Jamaica, jcal.org).*

characters, club members can participate in read-alouds, crafts, games, and more. No registration is required. *queenslibrary.org. 4 – 5 pm. Free. Broadway Library, 40-20 Broadway, Long Island City queenslibrary.org/event/favorite-characters-book-club.*

19 SATURDAY

Winter Bird Walk For Beginners. Families with children ages 8 and up can take a Winter Bird Walk around Oakland Lake! Nancy Tognan of the Queens County Bird Club will lead guests on a walk along the lake to see ducks, coots, swans, grebes, geese, and more. Participants will meet at Alley Pond Environmental Center for orientation. Binoculars will not be provided; guests are encouraged to bring their own. Pre-registration is required. 9:30 – 11:30 am. Free. *Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-6 Northern Blvd., Little Neck. alleypond.com/specialevents.html.*

Pooping Butterflies: Fire Types Welcome. Ages 8 through 11 can discover the difference between living and non-living things in the wild at Alley Pond Environmental Center. Participants will learn about a bird that relies on forest fires to make its home, standard fire safety procedures, and more during this outdoor program. 10 am – 11:30 pm. \$24. *Alley Pond Environmental Center, 228-6 Northern Blvd., Little Neck.*

alleypond.doubleknot.com/event/pooping-butterflies-fire-types-welcome/2441833.

Winter Family Programs: Bugging Out. Come explore the world of bugs at the Queens Botanical Garden by examining the parts of a squirmy earthworm, building your own insect, and looking for bug homes in the Woodland Garden. Ages 4–10. Registration required. \$12. 11 am – Noon. *Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St., Flushing. (718) 886-3800. queensbotanical.org/event/bugging-out.*

Birding: Hawk Watch. The Urban Park Rangers at Flushing Meadows Corona Park will guide you to the best wildlife viewing spots in the urban jungle. Birding programs are appropriate for all skill levels and beginners are welcome. Free. 11 am – 12:30 pm. *Flushing Meadows-Corona Park, 11101 Corona Ave., Corona. (212) NEW-YORK. nycgovparks.org/events/2019/01/19/birding-hawk-watch.*

Queens Baseball Convention. Autographs! Panels! Great food and beverages! Vendors with great baseball merchandise and memorabilia! Ed Kranepool Panel 11 am – noon. Autographs Noon – 1:30 pm. Keith Hernandez Panel 1 pm – 2 pm. Autographs 2pm – 3:30 pm. Edgardo Alfonzo Panel 4 pm – 5 pm. \$50-130. Noon – 5 pm. *Katch Astoria, 31-19 Newtown*

Ave., Astoria. eventbrite.com/e/queens-baseball-convention-2019-tickets-50620400982.

Year of the Pig Community Art Project. See Jan. 12

“Crick! Crack!” All ages are invited to the Jamaica Performing Arts Center to see Something Positive, Inc.'s production of “Crick! Crack!” Master storyteller Michael Manswell will engage audience members with tales from the African Diaspora. This one-hour theatrical show will also feature choreography based on traditional African-Caribbean dances. 2 – 3 pm. Adults: \$10, children: \$5. *Jamaica Performing Arts Center, 153-10 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica. jcal.org/saturday-family-matinee.*

The Bookshop Band. Check out Book Culture's Long Island City store for a concert from The Bookshop Band! As part of the UK duo's first-ever US tour, the Band will perform original songs, which are responses to the books its read. Beth Porter and Ben Please bring the books that inspire them on stage as well as instruments including the cello, harmonium, glockenspiel, ukulele, and guitar. *bookculture.com. 5 – 6 pm. Free. Book Culture LIC, 26-09 Jackson Ave., Long Island City. bookculture.com/event/lic-bookshop-band.*

20 SUNDAY
Nature's Workshop: Nature Illustrations. This workshop at Forest Park will inspire you to illustrate the landscapes, woodlands, and wildlife of Forest Park. Registration is required to participate. Basic materials will be provided. Free. 1 – 2:30 pm. *Forest Park Visitor Center in Forest Park, Woodhaven Boulevard and Forest Park Drive. (212) NEW-YORK. nycgovparks.org/events/2019/01/20/natures-workshop-nature-illustrations.*

Museum Explorers Workshop.

On the third Sunday of every month, the Queens Museum offers a free Museum Explorers Workshop led by a licensed art therapist. Museum Explorers Workshops are geared particularly towards families with children with disabilities, including those on the autism spectrum. No advance registration is required, all materials and instruction are provided free of charge by the ArtAccess program. Children must be accompanied during art-making by families or caregivers. Free. Drop-in between 1:30 – 4:30 pm. *Queens Museum, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park. queensmuseum.org/events/museum-explorers-workshop.*

26 SATURDAY

Winter Family Program: Winter Trees. Kids will learn about the various parts of trees, their functions, and will use parts of trees to make a craft to take home! Program concludes with a walk through the Pinetum at the Queens Botanical Garden. Ages 4–10. Drop-ins welcome. \$12. 11 am – noon. *Queens Botanical Garden, 43-50 Main St., Flushing. (718) 886-3800. queensbotanical.org/event/winter-trees.*

Year of the Pig Community Art Project. See Jan. 12

Stop ‘N’ Swap In Flushing. Bring clean, reusable, portable items such as clothing, housewares, games, books, and toys you no longer need, and take home something new — for free. You don’t have to bring something to take something. Noon – 3 pm. Free. *PS 244, 137-20 Franklin Ave., Flushing. grownyc.org/swap.*

Spooktacular: Boneyard Boogie. The theme for this year’s Queens Museum family fund-raiser is Boneyard Boogie. Designed and produced by Queens Museum artist and

Play Ball!

On January 19, 2019, the Queens Baseball Convention is back and better than ever (and sure to tide fans over until baseball season officially starts in the spring) at Katch Astoria! The Fan Fest run by fans about everyone’s favorite team from Flushing Queens, NY. The event will have autographs, panels, great food and beverages, vendors with amazing baseball merchandise and memorabilia, and so much more! It’s a perfect family-friendly event for baseball-loving parents and kiddos alike. The Ed Kranepool Panel will run 11am-12pm, with autographs will be from 12pm-1:30pm. The Keith Hernandez Panel will be from 1pm-2pm, with autographs from 2pm-3:30pm. The Edgardo Alfonzo Panel will run 4pm-5pm. \$50-130. *Katch Astoria. (31-19 Newtown Avenue, Astoria, katchastoria.com).*

educator Gregory Corbino, Spooktacular is always an afternoon full of exciting performances, live music, face-painting, art-making, scavenger hunts, raffle prizes, and tasty treats! Ages 3–12. \$25. 2 – 4 pm. *Queens Museum, New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park. queensmuseum.org/events/spooktacular-monster-metropolis-copy.*

La Cumbiamba eNeYe: Season Opening Party. Join Flushing Town Hall for its Season Opening Party with La Cumbiamba eNeYe! The afternoon will begin with a free, musical dance workshop for families. Percussion instruments will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. At 4 pm, Colombian band La Cumbiamba eNeYe will take the stage to perform music from the Colombian coast. Afterward, join the band for a musical jam session with your instrument. 3 pm. Adults: \$14, children: \$8. *Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Blvd., Flushing. flushingtownhall.org/event/10940a968608609e17351f0edeb4b11.*

FURTHER AFIELD “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 Jan. 27, Feb. 2, and Feb. 3 at 11 am, with a talk-back performance on Feb. 2 at 3 pm. For ages 4-7. Tickets start at \$25. 11 am. *New Victory Theatre, 209 W. 42nd St., Manhattan. newvictory.org/Show-Detail?ProductionId=9289.*

27 SUNDAY “Emily Brown and the Thing.” See Jan. 26

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). 12:30 pm. *New Victory Theatre, 209 W. 42nd St., Manhattan. (646) 223-3010. newvictory.org/Workshop-Detail.aspx?WorkshopId=157.*

LONG-RUNNING Langston Hughes Spelling Bee 2019. Elementary school-age children can compete in the Langston Hughes Library Spelling Bee! The competition will take place over the course of three days and will culminate

in the Queens Library Spelling Bee in April. Schedule is as follows: Jan. 2: third and fourth grade; Jan. 9: fifth and sixth grade; Jan. 16: seventh and eighth grade. Daily, through Jan. 16, 4 – 6 pm. Free. *Langston Hughes Community Library, 100-01 Northern Blvd., Corona. queenslibrary.org/event/langston-hughes-spelling-bee-2019.*

How Many Zombies Are Too Many Zombies? In this interactive game at the New York Hall of Science, players take on the role of scientists helping the “Center for Calamity Control” simulate a zombie outbreak. Facilitators introduce participants to mathematical modeling and the ways they can be used to simulate, analyze and make predictions about the complex real-world phenomenon. At the end, players see graphs detailing the population swings and can further tweak parameters and see different results through play. Repeats daily through February. Free with NYSCI Admission. Daily, through Feb. 28, 9:30 am – 5:30 pm. Free with NYSCI Admission. *New York Hall of Science, 47-01 111th St., Corona. nysci.org/event/how-many-zombies/2019-01-02.*

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 Feb. 24, 11:30 am – 6 pm. \$8-12. *Central Park, Sheep Meadow, 1802 65th Street Transverse, Manhattan. cityparksfoundation.org/swedish-cottage-marionette-theatre.*

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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718-969-7780 | www.globalstudiesandleadership.org

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