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editor's note

Amazing April

Is it spring yet? As I write this, there's snow on the ground and the temperature "feels like 29 degrees." But! The sun is shining and the promise of warmer days is in the front of everyone's mind. Hopefully, our April issue helps hurry some of that spring warmth along!

For starters, we have the wonderful Tracy Pollan on our cover (with her mother Corky Pollan and sisters Lori Pollan and Dana Pollan, to boot). The Pollan women recently released a new book called *Mostly Plants* and it's a beautiful tome (with a forward by bro Michael Pollan) about the benefits of a "flexitarian" diet and includes yummy recipes that are perfect for busy parents. We caught up with the Pollan women about the new book, cooking, health and wellness, and parenthood all four come from big fams). Read all about it on page 36.

Additionally, since spring is the season of new life, we're thrilled to have several great stories for new parents on offer this month! Don't miss a comprehensive trove of information on pre- and post-natal sexual health on page 42 and a fabulous primer birth options (home, hospital, and birthing center) on page 18 for expectant and new mamas. We also caught up with The Glow founder and local mother



Violet Gaynor (page 16).

Finally, we're ringing in spring in the cutest way with a super-cute Easter gift guide (I promise, there's so much more than Peeps and pastel eggs) and our monthly calendar featuring the best family-fun picks of the month for you and your growing kiddos.

Happy April!

Mia Weber

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bits & pieces



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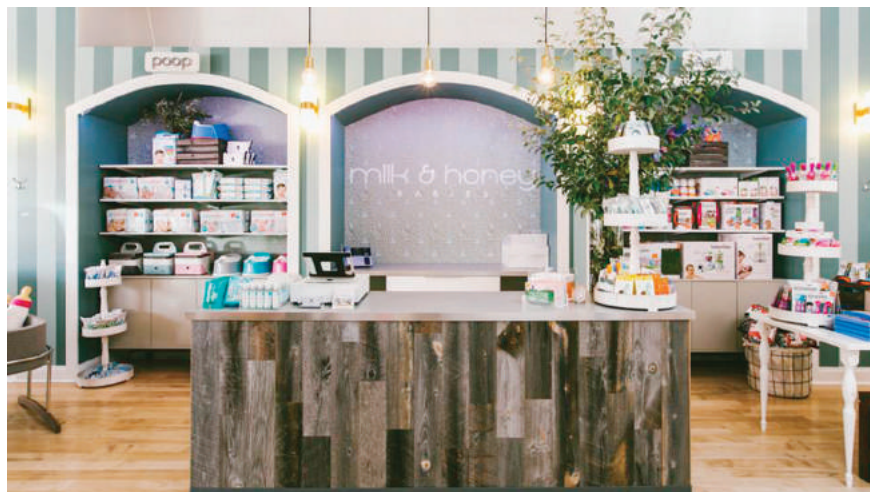
Mark & Graham x Pottery Barn Kids

Preppy-chic mamas rejoice! This month, the monogram mavens at Mark & Graham are launching a very special collaboration with Pottery Barn Kids. The forthcoming limited capsule collection will feature upscale diaper bags and stroller blankets that are sure to be perfect for the spring and summer seasons. Blending trendy details (think style-savvy camo print, bold color-blocked stripes, and high-end materials) with the classic sense of aesthetics and clean silhouettes that both Mark & Graham and Pottery Barn Kids are known for. The best part is that shoppers can mix and match patterns, color accents, and monogram styles to customize the diaper bag of their dreams. PotteryBarnKids.com & MarkandGraham.com



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



SHOPPING

Milk & Honey Babies in Hudson Yards

The super-chic baby boutique Milk & Honey Babies has arrived at Hudson Yards. As of mid-March, the #MillennialMom one-stop shop is now open for business and offering parents a thoughtful curation of gear, furniture, clothing, décor, and gifts from brands including Oeuf, CYBEX, and more. As part of the

“Floor of Discovery,” Milk & Honey Babies joins other emerging retailers on the second floor of the new shopping and dining destination. “At Milk & Honey Babies, new parents can shop and explore a modern selection of high quality, eco-friendly and non-toxic baby products in one convenient location,” says Ariana Adams, owner of Milk & Honey Babies. milkandhoneybabies.com & hudsonyardsnewyork.com

SCHOOL NEWS

The École is Expanding

Big news for NYC Francophiles! The École, an independent Nursery-8 French-American school is expanding! The school, which is located in the Flatiron District, recently took over the lease of the restaurant that occupied the ground floor and basement of their main building on 22nd Street—this means that construction by architect Barbara Marks on the new space will start in the coming weeks and will include the addition of six new classrooms, several multi-use rooms in the basement, a large préau (covered recess area), and a new lobby. The new space should be completed by the end of 2019. theEcole.org



GREAT APP

MASSE

Co-founded by local moms Lizzy Brockhoff and Elizabeth Shaffer, MASSE is an app for people to ask for and share product recommendations with real people, as well as shop directly for those products. When sponsored content and ads began to litter social media and product reviews no longer felt authentic, Brockhoff and Shaffer noticed many of the shoppers they were speaking to would be going back to their community for recommendations they could trust—with zero sponsored posts. MASSE also organizes recommendations in your network by category—baby, beauty, home, wellness—to provide users with an efficient way to find the best products for themselves and their family. masse.app





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April Finds for Spring in the City

Spring showers bring May flowers, and I am thrilled that April is finally here. It felt like a long winter for most here in New York City! Wishing everyone a happy Easter and happy Passover filled with lots of laughter, love, and staying off technology for a bit—always good to take a digital detox for yourself and the kids over the holidays.

If you are always unorganized, like *moi*, I invite you to elevate your organizational style with the Sundry Slides' elegant line of bags (in all shapes and sizes). These bags keep essentials together in your most-coveted handbags, gym bags, and diaper bags. You can stow away your workout items neatly, and pack for your travels and work beautifully. They are also awesome for finding your keys and holding your toiletries and personal care items.

I can't tell you how many times I get stopped in a restaurant when I take out my Sundry Slide, with its beautiful signature pearl design, in restaurants to take out my lip gloss and blush. The best part is, now I can find the items without digging through my bag!

They range from \$9.99/case of five to \$16.99/case of five. You will love organizing your essentials in elegance.

Purchase yours at spiritedluxuries.com.

My newest fabulous find that I am obsessed with for the kids is Wonder Crate, a subscription box that introduces kids to inspirational role models, sparks their curiosity, and connects them to their own possibilities. Each month, they feature brave, forward-thinking role models that are making the world a better place, and the skills that they used to make a difference. Each box contains a book and fun activities to spark curiosity and connect kids to their own possibilities. Who they see shows them who they can be!

Subscriptions start at \$23.96 per month, and the best part is that they donate \$1 from each box sold to a kid who is making the world a better place.



Wonder Crates offer new inspiration every month.

Spark your kids' curiosity at wondercratekids.com.

Believe it or not, summer is almost upon us, and that means getting beach-body ready. Recently, I signed up for several pilates classes with Erin DeLucia-Benson. I really need to firm up my core muscles, and DeLucia-Benson's Pilates and Holistic Health is a private, beautiful, quiet place to improve your health. She is a mother, dancer, MUTU Pro, Pilates instructor, and holistic health coach.

She offers private and semi-private equipment-based Pilates instruction, and specializes in prenatal Pilates, as well as postnatal restorative pelvic floor exercise. She studied and certified directly with Wendy Powell of MUTU System.

DeLucia-Benson is also a certified integrative nutrition health coach; she studied at the Institute for Integrative Nutrition and learned from the leading doctors, nutritionists, and health professionals in the field. She is very kind, caring, and extremely knowledgeable.

Erin DeLucia-Benson Pilates and Holistic Health [850 7th Avenue, between West 54th and 55th Streets. (585) 309-9267, erindeluciabenson.com].

There's a new Off-Broadway show that I think a lot of moms are going to love. In "Fiercely Independent," Julie and Robert have been married for four years. They are not getting along. They decide to spend 24 hours together in a hotel room with no television, no cellphones, no internet or computers to see if they can work things out.

But hurry up, you only have until April 7 to check this show out.

"Fiercely Independent" at SoHo Playhouse (15 Vandam Street, between Varick Street and 6th Avenue. fiercelysoho.com).



Lyss Stern is the founder of Divamoms.com, author of *Motherhood Is A B*tch*, and *If You Give A Mom A Martini*, and a mom of three. Follow Lyss on Instagram @diva_moms.



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By Mia Weber



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ALL TIME GLOW

Co-founder of *The Glow* Violet Gaynor talks honest motherhood & her thriving digital platform for modern mothers

By Mia Weber

In today's digital media landscape, rife with #sponcon and influencers galore, a commitment to substantial storytelling and open discussion about the less-glamorous sides of life can be tough to land on—and ones that are also beautifully presented with an aesthetically-refined point of view even more so.

Enter, The Glow.

Co-founded in 2011 by friends and former co-workers (they first met in 2009 while working together at Elle.com) Violet Gaynor (co-founder and editorial director) and Kelly Stuart (co-founder, photographer, and creative director), The Glow has always strived to be an “intimate and honest diary of motherhood: The beauty, the struggles, the magic and all.” In short, they utilized an Insta-worthy visual strategy before “influencer” was a thing you could reasonably put on a resume, and they did it all while staying true to a mission of bringing real moms together as they navigated the ups and downs of raising children while also pursuing worthy passions.

At the center of it all is co-founder Violet Gaynor, who came up with the idea for the site before she had children, and has only redoubled her efforts now that she's a mom-of-two (her daughter is 5.5—“the half is, obviously, very important to her”—and her son is 6 months old).

“The Glow is a platform that connects new mothers, and expectant mothers, and women in general, through storytelling,” the Upper



Photo by Carl Timpone

West Side-native says. “We capture moments that are very polished looking and sort of ethereal and inspiring and aspirational, but in terms of the information that is shared, and the stories that are told, and the resources given, it's very much a way to connect with other women. At the end of the day, it's a way to feel less alone in the motherhood journey.”

Since its inception in 2011, The Glow has grown to become a cultural force for savvy and successful moms looking to connect with

one another in authentic and emotionally honest ways. The site's core content revolves around shining a spotlight on moms who are doing meaningful work at the top of their fields, all while raising children in the modern world. Readers can expect to see mamas like Rachelle Hruska MacPherson (of Guest of a Guest and Lingua Franca), fashion designer Ulla Johnson, TV personality Daphne Oz, and fab foodie and restaurateur Eden Grinshpan featured alongside ethereal

and brightly lit photos and endearingly confessional interviews and essays.

"[Who we feature] really comes down to women who are doing something in their world that is inspiring and meaningful, and they're really making it happen for themselves—that means something different for each person who's featured," Gaynor, who's background is in fashion and magazine editorial work, says. "It's people who are out there in the world who are out there in the world, creating something for themselves... It really is about asking: Is this person doing something that's meaningful to them? Are they inspiring to me? Are they going to be inspiring to The Glow's audience? Are they relatable? All of those things... I think they all have something in common, and that's that they are all working hard at something that's meaningful."

Gaynor herself, as a mom with two young children, understands the need in the market for raw and real descriptions of motherhood firsthand. Though she wasn't a mother when she launched the site—she and Stuart teamed up for the business venture after the two women were no longer co-workers and

"At the end of the day, it's a way to feel less alone in the motherhood journey."

wanted to reconnect creatively, and Gaynor had noticed a hole in the media landscape for stylish motherhood content that also felt really true; something in between Baby Center and *Vogue*—she was pregnant with her first child, Plum, when *The Glow* published a book back in 2014 (*The Glow: An Inspiring Guide to Stylish Motherhood*) and now truly feels representative of the readership she serves.

"I think we're all going through things as humans, but in particular as mothers and women, and I think the struggle is a very real thing, and the whole idea of balance, and that balance myth, is something that's discussed more now, which is amazing," Gaynor says. Adding that the idea of "honest motherhood" has always been part and parcel of what makes *The Glow* tick as a storytelling platform. "To me, honest motherhood is just saying: 'This is the real side of what I'm dealing with.' It's amazing what

happens when you do open up about that... once you open up, it's incredible to hear that there are so many women going through similar situations, and we're really not alone in our struggles. I think sharing just as much about our triumphs as we do our challenges is really what honest motherhood is about."

And not only is the present looking rosy for *The Glow*, but the future looks bright as well. While Gaynor confesses that the work of producing a book isn't something that she and Stuart (also now a mother) are eager to jump in for round two on, the evolution of how to execute the site's mission in innovation and engaging ways remains top of mind.

"In general, going back to the honest motherhood discussion, there will be more of those stories," Gaynor says. "The Glow has always brought those honest stories to women and connected our audience in that way but I think that my mission, more than ever, is to tell really raw, honest stories that sometimes focus more on a specific topic."

To learn more about Violet Gaynor and *The Glow*, visit theglow.com!



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Picking Your Baby's Birthplace: A Primer

What's right for your birth experience? We looked into doulas, midwives, home birth, hospital birth, and more to tell you the pros and cons

By Caitlin Wolper

When you're expecting, there's so much to focus on: Clothes, furniture, getting your house ready. So much, in fact, that mothers often forget about something even more pressing: The childbirth itself. While hospital birth is still the standard for most delivering moms, there are all kinds of options to consider before you're ready to give birth.

"Who we choose as a care provider is going to have a massive effect on how the birth unfolds, and we really need to encourage women to spend time, even before they're pregnant, sitting down and saying 'What kind of support do I want? Where do I feel safest? Who do I want at my birth?'" says Debra Flashenberg, doula and founder of the Prenatal Yoga Center. "Do I need a care provider that's really going to make this a group effort, include me as the pregnant laboring woman, or do I want to let someone [else] call the shots?"

We drafted this primer that details everything available to you, from support staff to birth locations.

Doulas

Doulas aren't designated to work in a certain location: They can attend home or hospital births. "Hiring a doula means you're hiring a birth attendant to help you with the discomforts and anxieties of labor and birth," says Lizabeth Baker-Wade, a labor and delivery nurse, RN, and the owner of Birth & Beyond. In this sense, doulas are a support system in addition to whatever birth method you've chosen, a figure in the room focused on the mother's state.

In a hospital, "the most shocking thing [for new parents] is how often people are left alone in labor without supportive care," says Jada Shapiro, founder of Birth Day Presence, a top doula and childbirth education center,

and boober, where new parents can go for on-demand, in-person, same-day lactation support. "That's why so many people today are turning to birth doulas, because a birth doula is the only childbirth professional who is there with the parents from early labor to a couple hours after the birth of the child."

At the same time, it's important to remember that doulas don't have to be certified—though many certified nurses have worked as doulas, and there are certification programs for doulas through Doulas of North America (DONA) and Childbirth and Postpartum Professional Association (CAPP)—and as such, it's important to consider how much their educational experience means to you versus experiential experience (attending various births with another doula).

Midwives

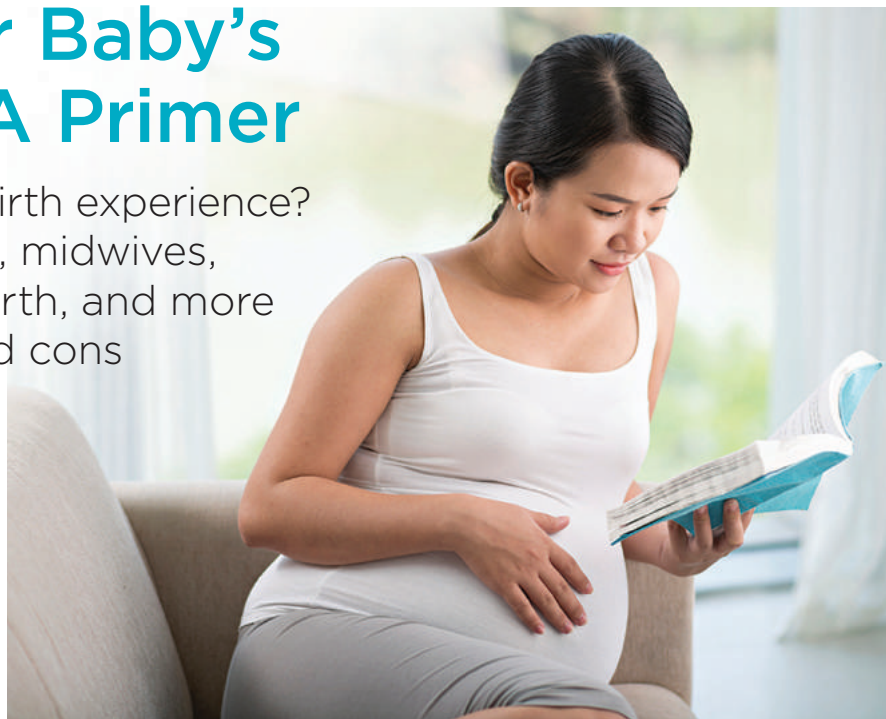
Where a doula is comparable to a birthing coach, a midwife is often seen more so as a medical professional. Midwives can deliver babies at home, in birthing centers, or even in hospitals. Often midwives are on hospital staffs. One thing to be aware of, though, cautions Dr. William Schweizer, an OB-GYN at NYU Langone, is the midwife's degree of experience. He says some "don't necessarily always have licensing and training. Some can be very good, of course and I think that's really kind of what should be thought about: The credentials of the person you're dealing with."

Baker-Wade agrees: "If you deliver at home, then you can be with a certified nurse midwife or a licensed midwife," she says. "Those are two midwifery programs: One requires a master's degree in nursing and then midwifery, and one, you can be a layperson and be licensed through the state. And those people can do births in a birthing center or in somebody's living room."

Home Birth

Despite what you may believe, only about 2 percent of Americans have a home birth, according to Schweizer. What's most important to keep in mind, he cautions, is the relative risk a mother-to-be poses. If she has a medical condition like a cardiac issue or even asthma, it may be unwise to attempt a home birth. Also to be considered: What if she decides she wants an epidural? Is someone in the room (hopefully, a midwife or doula) prepared to resuscitate the baby if need be? Is there a hospital plan should something go wrong?

Schweizer says that while the above are all important considerations, he does believe that for some "there are benefits to delivering at home: You're within your own environment, you can incorporate as many family and friends as you want in the experience. A hospital birth does give you some protection in the event of a complication, but it doesn't mean that all complications that might ensue in a hospital



couldn't be handled at home also."

An added consideration is that home births might empower the mother; she can eat what she wants, give birth in whatever position she wants, and choose exactly who is around her in a chosen space. "The home birth environment is really for a family that truly wants to have as much kind of control over the birthing environment as possible, that truly believes that an un-medicated birth at home is the safest option for them," Shapiro says.

Hospital Birth

Any woman whose birth may prove risky—whether due to previous health conditions, being post-term, or for other medical reasons—would be advised to give birth in a hospital for her and her baby's safety. "If there is any doubt for you about a home birth, it's not going to feel like the safest environment," Shapiro says. "If you want to be in a much more medical environment, then you know a hospital birth is going to be more appropriate."

Although hospital staff is able to administer medication and assist in an emergency, there are downsides as well.

"Do I need a care provider that's really going to make this a group effort, include me as the pregnant laboring woman, or do I want to let someone [else] call the shots?"

"Research shows that full-time fetal monitoring is not advantageous for the mom and baby," Flashenberg says. "It can actually have some negative cascade effects." There's also far more personnel changes; you could be assisted by several rotating nurses, and it's likely your doctor won't be present for most of the labor process.

Birth Centers

The biggest concern regarding birth centers is their actual availability; depending on where

you live, there may be only a few (if any) available, and it's quite possible that either none will meet your needs or requirements, or they'll just be overlooked. But if there is a perfect birth center nearby, many moms feel they provide the perfect middle ground between a home birth and a hospital birth. "I've worked with other women that feel they want all the bells and whistles [at a hospital] and should anything happen, they want to be right there," Flashenberg says, "And then I've had some women feel, 'I don't want the bells and whistles, but I want to have access to it.'" Those women who want that sense of medical security but don't care for the hospital atmosphere often choose a birth center.

Birth centers are also go-to spots for women who want to give birth in water. "Birthing centers typically have birthing tubs or laboring tubs, depending on the place," Shapiro says. "Submersion in water is one of the most effective pain relief tools that you can use during labor."

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Relief from Allergies

Symptoms and treatments for the season

By Jamie Lober

There are many things that make the Big Apple unique and fun, but New York parents may have to take extra precautions to keep their kids safe this spring if their tykes tend to suffer from seasonal allergies.

Many allergy sufferers report spring as their worst season, and it's not surprising why when you consider how many trees and flowers are in full bloom after the cold winter months have finally moved on.

One particular reason for why New York's pollen can be so troublesome is quite surprising.

"In New York we have a higher rate of allergies mainly because a lot of the parks that we have are planting male trees, which have higher levels of pollen," says Dr. Reenal Patel, pediatric allergist at Allergy and Asthma Care of New York.

Male trees are used by the city because they tend to be easier to upkeep than female ones.

"We also have wind tunnels because we have skyscraper buildings, so we get more symptoms in children and adults," said Patel.

And those symptoms can be quite hard on young children.

"Specifically for children, the symptoms we commonly see are runny nose, nasal congestion, sneezing, and itchy, watery eyes," Patel says. Adults have similar symptoms.

"As parents, you have to be a private investigator and document the symptoms and look back at the month to see if your child was runny and congested, so you should consider starting medicine earlier for the next season to be ahead of the game," Patel says.

There is a wide range of help out there, so there is no reason that any kid should suffer.

"There are nasal sprays, antihistamines, and eye drops, but if someone does not want to be on medications for life, we can consider allergy drops or shots," Patel says. Both are customized for the patient, and the shots will

teach the body to lose sensitivity to the spring pollen.

There are also techniques you can try before resorting to medication.

"Saline sprays help hydrate the mucosa in the nose," Patel says.

Have your kid shower when he comes in from the outdoors to remove pollen from the skin and hair.

"We recommend keeping car windows up and having air purifiers to remove allergens from the air so your kid is less symptomatic," Patel says.

Sunglasses and hats can keep pollen away from the hair and eyes. But if these measures fail, medications are available.

"We recommend nasal steroid spray if oral antihistamines are not working but to start medications earlier and before the season starts so the nasal sprays have time to kick in and help out during the spring season," Patel says.

Certain foods can be problematic as well. Beware of raw fruits and vegetables that can cause an itchy mouth or throat.

"The most common food allergies in children are soy, egg, milk, peanuts, and tree nuts, so we recommend that parents introduce peanuts earlier into the diet so we can evaluate them if there is an allergic reaction and get ahead of the game," Patel says.

Studies show early introduction yields better results.

"If the child is allergic, we have them remove it from the diet, but there is a chance the reaction may have been misunderstood by the parents or something else may have been going on around the same time, so we do the gold-standard supervised food challenge in the office with lifesaving medications," Patel says. This way if your child has a reaction, they are still safe.

The good news is that spring seasonal allergies are manageable.

"At least 75 percent of allergies are here to stay, and some improve with age," Patel says.

There's no need to dread the pollen count that comes with the warmer weather each year. By keeping track of symptoms and when they happen, finding patterns, and having an action plan, your challenging season will suddenly become a lot easier.

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.

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The Arts

A critical component for a child's education and development

By Jean Sheff

Most parents have heard of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, but maybe not as many know about STEAM (science, technology, education, art, and math) education. Some educators contend that adding the “A” for art is essential for a child’s full development and education.

Why are the arts important for children?

Arts education encompasses many disciplines including music, drama, dance, design, and the visual arts. Yet, it is more than just studying specific disciplines, an arts education can teach children to generally use their imagination to solve problems and approach their work in a variety of ways.

“The arts teach discipline, focus, cooperation, and creativity—a trait that 72 percent of employers say is the number one skill they seek when hiring,” says Mara Manus, executive director of New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). “Students involved in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, and arts engagement makes low-income students more than twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education.”

Many educators agree that arts education can help build determination and resilience in children and can also help them master important skills. Yet, in many school districts funding for arts programs have been slashed to the bone.

Providing financial support

“Through the Arts Education Program, NYSCA provides \$3 million statewide in dedicated support to community arts education programs as well as hands-on grade pre-K-12 in-school instruction,” Manus says. In addition, she says the agency provides nearly \$500,000 to support scholarships and training programs for underserved communities and \$150,000 to support community music schools.

Manus says NYSCA sees the impact of



this support in so many ways: students build self-esteem and confidence as they learn and excel at new talents; they cultivate empathy as they study the viewpoints of diverse characters through theater and literature; they develop diligence as they practice an instrument or polish dance moves; they learn to express themselves in healthy ways as they write, paint or create their own films and videos.

NYSCA in-school grantees must all meet state learning standards. “We are continually

impressed by the innovative ways they connect the arts to school curricula—from a mummy-inspired dance segment tying into a social studies class about Egypt to architecture instruction that integrates math and science concepts as students build their own bridges,” Manus says.

Throughout the city, there are so many opportunities for children to explore the arts through NYSCA’s programs. According to their website: “NYSCA’s Arts Education

Program cultivates the creativity of all New Yorkers, from preschoolers to seniors, in both school and community settings. Arts instruction empowers students of all ages and backgrounds to build hands-on skills in a range of disciplines, such as mastering a musical instrument, experimenting with a collage technique or learning a new dance choreography.”

Manus says that it’s also worth noting that museums often have special family programming during school vacations, and local libraries may be able to provide passes for museum admission.

How parents can help

Manus says parents can encourage children of all ages to explore the arts by sharing experiences with them and helping them pursue artistic interests through community arts education programs.

Here is just a small sampling of New York City arts programs for parents to explore with their children:

- **The Art Farm** theartfarms.org
- **The Brooklyn Museum**

“Students involved in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, and arts engagement makes low-income students more than twice as likely to graduate college as their peers with no arts education.”

brooklynmuseum.org

- **Carnegie Hall Kids** carenieghall.org
- **Children’s Museum of the Arts** cmany.org
- **Children’s Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)** cmom.org
- **Church Street School for Music and Art** churchstreetschool.org
- **The Craft Studio** craftstudionyc.com
- **JCC Manhattan** jccmanhattan.org
- **Private Picassos** privatepicassos.com
- **Symphony Space** symphonyspace.org
- **Theatreworks USA** twusa.org
- **WeBop at Jazz at Lincoln Center** academy.jazz.org/webop
- **Young Audiences New York** yany.org
- **92Y** 92y.org

Anywhere, anytime

“An increasing number of arts and cultural

organizations also have rich digital offerings, making even snow days or sick days opportunities to engage with the arts, often for free or at a low cost,” says Manus.

For example, she points out that the Metropolitan Museum of Art website offers a digital search of its collection, and you can download more than 400,000 public domain images that can be “remixed” to create your own works of art. The New York Philharmonic website includes free video of recent concerts.

Audiences of all ages have greater access to the arts than ever before, says Manus, and this means that sharing the arts with children is an attainable and deeply worthwhile goal.

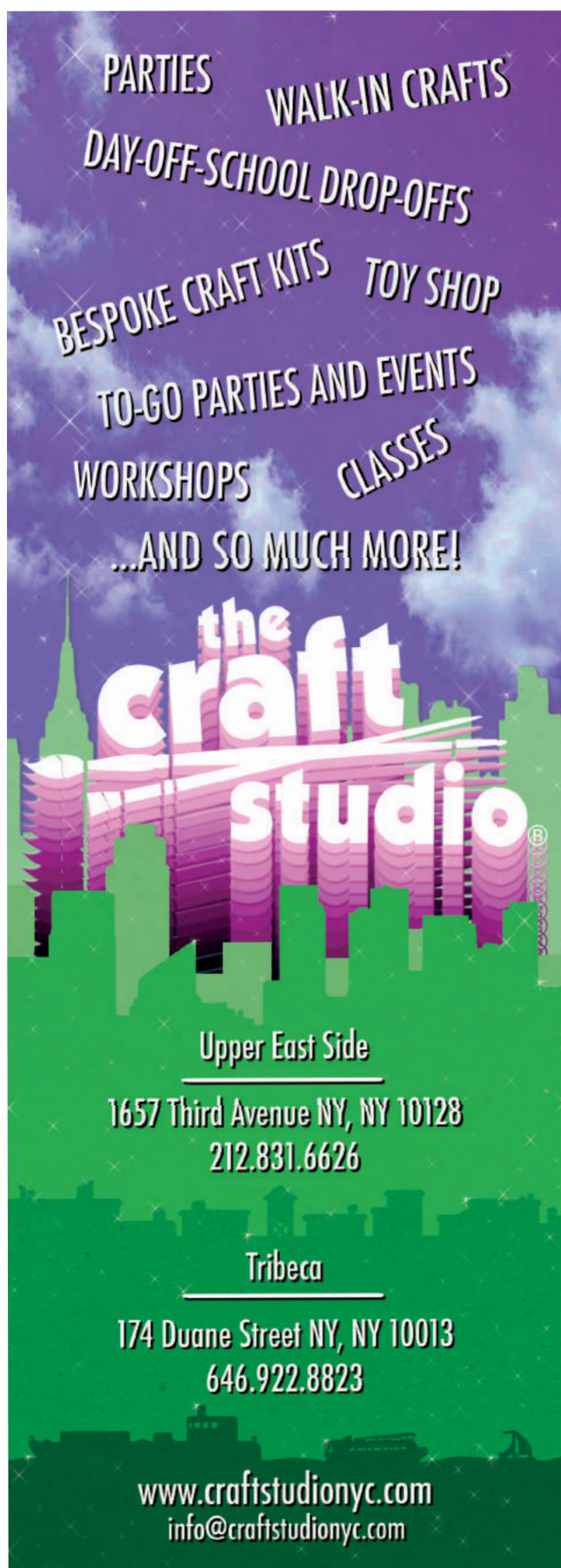
Jean Sheff is editor of Westchester Family and an enthusiastic supporter of children’s art programs.

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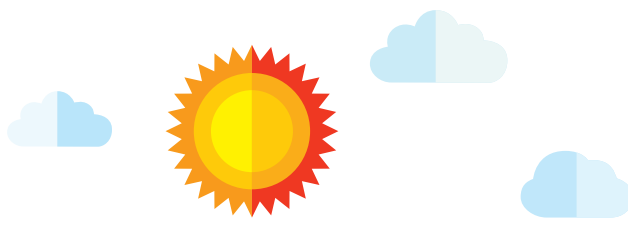
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The ABCs of IEPs

An education & disabilities advocate shares essential info for parents navigating the Individualized Education Plan process

By Margarycel E. Nunez.

In today's society, it is not uncommon to know a child who needs an IEP (Individualized Education Plan). This is due to the awareness that parents have about child development and milestones, along with the efforts from preschools that are receiving more training to help identify, and properly guide parents on how to manage this difficult task. Another factor that adds to more IEP designations is that children are more sedentary and technologically connected, this leads to the inability to develop social skills, and therefore concerns from teachers result in evaluations to rule out delays or neurological disconnect.

An IEP, as the name suggests, takes education and unitizes it for the specific child listed on the document. It's a road

map of success for everyone (parents, teachers, support professionals, and school administrators) to be on the same page, and effectively work on the skills as mandated in the document. It's not an instrument of doom, as some parents erroneously believe; its purpose is to provide all the help necessary for a child to succeed in school and in society at large. A child that goes without needed services will develop deeper issues, something as simple as a speech delay can become behavioral, stemming from frustration of not being understood.

An IEP is a living document that is revisited every year in order to determine its viability, and every effort is made by the education team to provide the least restrictive environment for the child. During the meeting everyone discusses what they think needs improvement and would like to see change.

Every year the meeting ends in one of three conclusions: Either the child is found to still need the services provided, or the child needs to add services or frequency of services, or the child no longer needs an IEP. These meetings and the needed evaluations are made by the professionals (child psychologist, followed by a Special Ed teacher, Speech Therapist, OT, or PT) that come to do formal assessments at home or at school (in the case of an initial evaluation) or the teachers and therapists at school that are in constant contact with the child and know what has been improving and what will need more work or different strategies, including the school social worker or preschool director if a child is under 5.

Most people wait until the child turns 3 in order to request an evaluation from the DOE, when in fact, it can be requested as soon as the child turns two and a half. The benefit in requesting an evaluation a bit earlier is that this process takes a long time and the more services a child receives before entering Kindergarten, the more likely it will be that the child will overcome some, if not all, the concerns if the child has a simple IEP that lists just speech or Physical Therapy as the prescribed service. All children are categorized as "preschooler with a disability" if they have an IEP, even if

there is no diagnosis and what they need is minimal to reach their educational goals; it is a blanket statement and there is no diagnosis or stigma behind it, so parents shouldn't be alarmed to see that. Once the child no longer needs services, the document will read "preschooler/student without a disability"

In order to request an evaluation, parents need to follow a few steps and be prepared to be persistent, staying on top of everyone who is handling the case will ensure you don't wait for a year. It is wise to enlist your child's preschool director and their teacher; they should be familiar with this process, but for reference please see this list:

1. Make a letter to the school district, citing your concerns and requesting an evaluation packet, make sure to include your child's name and date of birth, as well as your name, address and phone number. Make a few copies for your records.
2. Take the letter in person to the designated CPSE district, this way they will give you the packet on the spot which shaves a few weeks off the process.

An IEP is not an instrument of doom, as some parents erroneously believe; its purpose is to provide all the help necessary for a child to succeed in school and in society at large.

3. Do not sign anything from the packet, this gets done during the initial evaluation with someone from the agency you will select out of the listing they provide.
4. Choose an evaluation site to conduct the evaluation, I highly recommend to schedule all evaluations and observations at the child's school as much as possible; it is likely that the child will have different behaviors when in a group setting versus in the comfort of home. The more

information is provided to and observed by the specialists, the more accurate the education plan will be.

5. Receive and go over the evaluation summary that the site will send you via mail and speak to them should you have any concerns or if they forgot to include crucial information such as delays at birth or existing diagnosis, both of which have weight in a service determination.
6. Attend the meeting.
7. Follow up on recommendations.

During the year when the child turns 5 there is a "turning 5 meeting" which basically means that the child is reassessed and transferred from CPSE (Committee for Preschool Special Education) to CSE (Committee for Special Education). With the right supports, adequate professionals and follow up, every child will do an amazing job during their school years.

Margarycel E. Nunez, MASSED., is an accredited preschool administrator and proud mother-of-three, one of whom has Down Syndrome.

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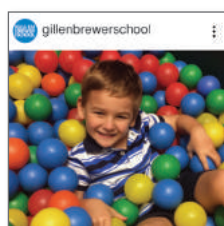
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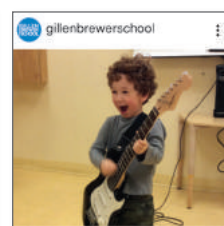
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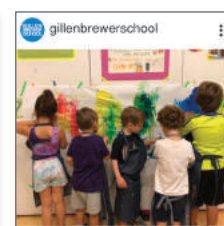
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Atlas School 2019/2020

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Upper East Side

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www.gillenbrewer.com

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Upper West Side

212-769-1699

www.theidealschool.com

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Yonkers, NY

914-376-4300

westchesterschool.org

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www.theidealschool.org

For further information, contact us at **admissions@theidealschool.org** or **212-769-1699**.

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Contact: Rabbi Laurie Phillips
lauriephillips@beineinu.com
www.Beineinu.com

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Upper West Side

646-454-3080

www.rodephsholom.org

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Upper East Side

212-452-2310

www.orzarua-orlatid.org

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Upper East Side

212-535-0912

www.shaaraytefilanyc.org

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monthly, 1 hour



INSPIRE
ideas
INSTILL
values
CREATE
community

Pollan



L-R: Dana Pollan, Tracy Pollan, Corky Pollan, and Lori Pollan

Photo by Nicole Franzen

Power

Tracy Pollan, her mom Corky Pollan,
and her sisters Dana Pollan &
Lori Pollan, dish on food, family
& their new book *Mostly Plants*

By Mia Weber



To call the Pollans a power family would be an understatement. Of course, many TV, film, and theater fans know the Emmy-nominated actress Tracy Pollan for her work on “Family Ties” (where she famously met her husband Michael J. Fox), “Law & Order: Special Victims Unit,” and “Bright Lights, Big City.” Tracy is also passionate about the work she does as a board member for her husband’s Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. But she’s just the tip of the talent iceberg that is the sorority of Pollan sisters and their mom, Corky.

To elaborate: Dana Pollan and Lori Pollan are the co-founders the acclaimed Pollan-Austen Fitness Center. Dana has a background as a fitness specialist and instructor and has been cited as an expert voice in

the fitness and wellness space in publications that run the range from *Seventeen* to the *New York Times*. Lori—also a former fitness expert—boasts a certification as a Life Coach with a focus on health, wellness, and stress management. Pollan matriarch Corky’s career in magazines includes work for *New York Magazine*, *Gourmet*, and more. Plus, Tracy, Dana, and Lori’s brother Michael Pollan is a nationally known author of *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*.

Oh, and that’s not to mention that all the Pollan women are also

working moms with big families. Tracy has four kids (a 29-year-old son, 24-year-old twin daughters, and a 17-year-old daughter), Dana and Lori each have three (a 26-year-old son, a 21-year-old daughter, and a 13-year-old son for Dana, and a 27-year-old daughter, a 26-year-old son, and a 21-year-old daughter for Lori), and Corky raised four. Casual!

And while the Pollan women have varied professional backgrounds, food, health and wellness, and writing are themes that ring true as passions for all of them. Back in 2014, the Pollan women wrote and released their first cookbook, *The Pollan Family Table* (which is also the name of their food blog), and, on April 16, they’ll celebrate the release of *Mostly Plants: 101 Delicious Flexitarian Recipes from the Pollan Family*.

“With the first book, we wanted to create a book that helped people to sit down and enjoy a family meal together, with easy-to-cook recipes that the whole family could enjoy,” Tracy says. “A lot of that was based on recipes that we had cooked together as a family—

and it was really about the importance of sitting down together as a family and eating and bringing your kids into the kitchen.”

In *Mostly Plants* (the title for which was inspired by Michael Pollan’s famous advice of “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”) the Pollan women are on a mission to promote the practice of a “flexitarian” diet. This means not completely “giving up” any particular fish, meat, or dairy, but really making a conscious effort to fill your plate with more veggies than not. It’s a philosophy they all believe in; presently, Dana and Lori identify as vegetarian, while Corky and Tracy identify as flexitarian.

“What we’re trying to convey in the new book is that it’s about incremental steps—you can make changes to incorporate more plants and vegetables and whole grains into your diet, and for parents, it’s such a great message to send to kids, and it’s so healthy for them,” Lori explains. “And the idea of sitting down together, at a meal, that looks beautiful and tastes delicious, creates something that will last forever for them, and they’ll do it with their families. It’s just one of the healthiest parenting benefits there is—having dinner as a family.”

It’s also about raising awareness that you don’t have to take an all or nothing approach to changing your food choices for the better. “Some people just don’t know what flexitarian is. We eat a lot of vegetarian meals, but the other things that we like to talk about is that when you are eating fish or meat or chicken, that changing the ratio on your plate is really key,” Tracy says. “You really can eat everything, but if you sort of look at it like a pie, and protein is just one quarter of the pie, and the rest of it is all the healthy grains and vegetables.”

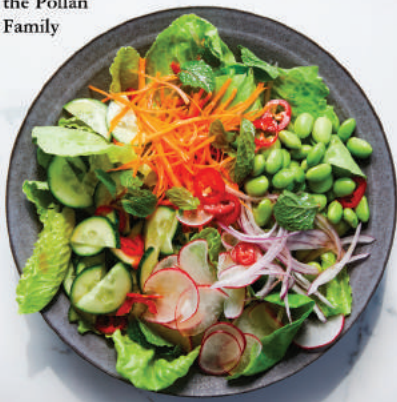
Dana chimes in, adding that inclusiveness is truly at the heart of book’s mission. “It’s realistic, it’s practical, it’s all inclusive,” she explains. “What I love so much about this book is that we have icons telling you if it’s vegetarian, vegan, or gluten-free—but we also offer modifications, because we know how families are now. You could have a vegan and someone who’s gluten-free. So there are modification for really any dietary lifestyle.”

Growing up, the Pollan sisters, along with their brother Michael (who wrote the forward for both *The Pollan Family Table* and *Mostly Plants*), were heavily influenced by their mother’s cooking, which aimed to be healthy, tasty, and varied, but also low-stress, given that Corky was raising four children while also working full time. In turn, *Mostly Plants* is a book designed to be a resource for busy moms and dads working on their weeknight meal plans while also juggling the dietary preferences and restrictions of each member of the family.

“When I was working full time and the kids were young, the weekends would be a time when I would cook things like stews or soups, pastas, and chilies—things that you could have during the week and then

mostly plants

101 Delicious Flexitarian
Recipes from
the Pollan
Family



Foreword
by Michael Pollan

Tracy, Dana,
Lori & Corky Pollan



Photo by Nicole Pizzani

maybe change them a little bit so you're not eating exactly the same thing. That really saved me when I was working full time," Corky recalls, adding: "And if your child comes up to you, as has happened to me, saying: 'I want to be a vegetarian now,' there are some wonderful recipes in this book. Or if they want to be vegan—we cover all those possibilities."

Lori elaborates, adding that Corky's sensibility when it came to cooking was central for all the Pollans, including Michael, as they developed their lives and careers: "We would always have a whole bunch of vegetables at the table—and interesting, different foods," she says. "We all had that same influence [from our mom], and Michael really delved into the more scientific aspects of it and studies that have shown that eating that way is healthier for you than not."

In his forward to *Mostly Plants*, Michael indeed delves into the fact that a "mostly plants" approach to eating has real, tangible benefits to both a person's wellbeing, as well as the planet's.

"I recommended 'mostly plants' because that is what the science tells us. We Americans tend to cast our eating choices in either- or ideological terms, and there is certainly an ethical and environmental case to be made for going vegetarian: meat eating contributes mightily to climate change and many people question the morality of eating animals," he writes in his forward to his sisters' and mother's new book. "It doesn't have to be that way—there are farms that raise animals sustainably and humanely, but these are still the exception to the rule of industrial meat production, and even at its most sustainable, a meat-centric diet has a bigger carbon footprint than a plant-based diet... This book is not dourly anti-meat; rather, it is ecstatically pro-plant. Prepare to be inspired."

The environmental benefits to eating a plant-based diet are ones that the Pollans hope will resonate with readers of all ages, but especially so with growing kids and teens making choices about the issues they care about as they grown up in a critical time for our planet. "In this day and age, I think so many kids are concerned about the environment, and eating this way, really can make a difference," Corky says. "We can make a difference with what we eat, and I think kids today are so into it."

In order to really make a difference with the book's pro-plant message, the Pollans really wanted to ensure that the recipes felt accessible to all types of home cooks (and especially working parents). Tracy, Lori, Dana, and Corky all noted that there are stereotypes of plant-based eating that imply that it's not protein-rich enough, or it's too labor-intensive—and those are myths they hope *Mostly Plants* can work to combat.

"I think that cooking with vegetables now is so different than when we were growing up. When we were growing up, it was about boiling and steaming vegetables. Or a can of string beans," Dana says. "But now, we've all gotten so creative. It's roasting and sautéing and making cauliflower rice and having



Photo by Cindy Ord/Getty Images

Clockwise from above left: Tracy Pollan with her husband and kids; Tracy with husband Michael J. Fox; three generations of the Pollan family, including Tracy, Dana, Lori, and Corky.

all different types of herbs and spices. I think the vegetables in our book really appeal.”

The recipes in the book—there are 101—really do stand out as fresh, enticing, and, best of all, attainable and appealing to the whole family—from picky pre-teens to hungry college students, as well as mom and dad.

For example, the recipe for Cavatappi with Broccolini, Brown Butter, and Sage, is a favorite of Lori’s, as well as of her college-age kiddos. “I have two kids in college and I love when they come home and I ask what they want me to cook, and they say: ‘Can you make that Broccolini dish with the Brown Butter?’ It’s so affirming when they request something from the book that I’ve tried out on them.”

There’s also a Salmon Farro Bowl (a personal fave of Tracy’s), an Orecchiette Pasta with Shaved Brussels Sprouts (a top pick of Dana’s, as well as of her 13-year-old), and a hearty Tuna Burger (enthusiastically endorsed by Corky). And the book covers the whole spectrum of meals—from breezy mezze options to delectable desserts.

Some of the recipes in the book were crafted just for this project, while others came from the Pollan Family Table website and newsletter; and by all accounts, developing the recipes themselves has been a real joy and fulfilling creative process for all four of the Pollan women.

“Sometimes I will get into bed and be like: ‘Oh, wait a second—what if I took a chickpea and made that into a crouton, and oh, that would work in the tomato soup that we did,’” Tracy explains. “It’s a very creative thing, and it causes me a little bit of insomnia—haha!—because my head is just spinning, but there’s something really fun about completely creating something from nothing.”

Lori echoes her sister’s sentiment, adding that they all find inspiration from each other, from friends, and from restaurants they love. “We’d be eating somewhere and say: ‘Oh this would be great if you just substituted *this* for *that*.’ We’re always brainstorming what our personal preferences are, so we are always generating ideas and then someone else will chime in,” she says. “It’s fun, because when we develop recipes and test



them, and it’s all about ‘is this cookbook-worthy?’ or ‘Is this exceptional enough to go in the cookbook?’”

In addition to being “cookbook-worthy,” the recipes all encourage the values of eating dinner as a family and presenting the values of healthy food choices and nutrition in ways that are easy for parents to speak to their kids about. “It’s so much about modeling behavior and if you serve a wide range of things and [not saying] ‘you can have dessert when you’re done—basically—with the yucky stuff,’” Lori says. “If you show enjoyment for vegetables and whole grains, then that becomes the norm for your kids.”

Tracy takes it one step further, noting that her kids often show genuine interest in the science behind a nutritious diet. “My kids are actually very interested in the science behind [food],” she says. “And we have a part of our book where we talk about the health benefits of different vegetables or herbs or spices, so sometimes we’ll throw that into conversation when we’re sitting around eating—I’ll say: ‘Did you know that chickpeas are actually super-healthy? They’re not just delicious!’ They want to eat things that they know are good for them.”

Beyond the healthy eating and modeling of good food choices, what do the Pollan women love best about their new book? The fact that cooking brings families together.

“For me, it has been such a joy to work with my children on a project. It’s been extra-special... We’re a very close-knit family,” Corky says. “And...it’s just *fun* to cook with other people!”

To learn more about Tracy, Dana, Lori, and Corky Pollan, and to order *Mostly Plants*, visit pollanfamilytable.com!



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Beyond the Birds & the Bees

Essential info from savvy sex-perts on navigating your sexual health before, during & after pregnancy

By Mia Weber, Caitlin Wolper & Alex Taylor

There's an old saying about relationships that "sex changes everything"—well, in the same vein, we say that a baby (and even just planning or hoping for a baby) also changes everything, including and especially sex.

To lift the curtain on topics that have sometimes been considered taboo, hush-hush, or sensitive and awkward, we got the scoop from a variety of women (most of them moms themselves) in the sexual health and wellness world—from psychologists, OB-GYNs, and RNs, to sexual anthropologists and authors, to CEOs of lingerie and sex-positive feminine hygiene and sex toy brands (scroll all the way to the end of this post to get the scoop on who they are and where to follow them on social media). They all chimed in from their different areas of expertise to offer insight on common FAQs for planning, pregnant, and new mothers.

Fertility & Conception

What should couples keep in mind if they're trying to conceive naturally?

"Timing is everything when trying to conceive. Once ovulation happens, the egg can be fertilized for 12-24 hours (sperm can live for up to five days). I recommend that when couples are actively trying to get pregnant, they track their cycles and ovulation, either by using a charting method or an ovulation prediction kit. It's so disheartening every time that pregnancy test comes up negative, but remember that it

can take up to 12 months for many women to become pregnant." —*Diana Spalding, RN, certified nurse midwife, owner of Gathered Birth, and Motherly Expert*

"[There are] some steps that can increase chances of getting pregnant. Having unprotected intercourse every two days or so, from days nine through 14-15 will help 'cover' the fertility window." —*Dr. Iffath Hoskins, OB-GYN at NYU Langone*

"Pressure is one of the worst things for sex, making it feel more like a clinical activity. While it is important to have an understanding of the science of conception, sometimes having fun with your partner and removing that pressure can reap great reproductive rewards." —*Sarah Forbes, former curator of The Museum of Sex and author of Sex in the Museum: My Unlikely Career at New York's Most Provocative Museum*

What factors determine if a couple should see a doctor about possible fertility issues?

"The general recommendation that if a woman is 35 or under, healthy, and has been trying to get pregnant for a year, she should seek out a fertility specialist. Healthy women over 35 should try for six months. Women who are over 40 and women who have health concerns should seek medical guidance right away." —*Diana Spalding*

"The CDC defines infertility as a disease... If you're in your 30s and you can't get or stay pregnant, [be aware that] you may have a medical issue like blocked tubes, fibroid tumors, PCOS, or more." —*Andrea Syrtash, relationship expert and founder of pregnantish*

"Infertility can be primary (never got

pregnant), or secondary (got pregnant before, with or without a live birth, but now can't)... Couples should tell the doctor everything—foods, medicines, activities, stresses, work hours, work exposures, etc. There are many examples where one or both [people] in the couple thought something was insignificant to the problem, but it was very important and needed to be addressed/corrected in order to get success." —*Dr. Iffath Hoskins*

What are some common concerns or misconceptions about conception and fertility?

"If it takes a while, a lot of couples' main concerns turn to sex feeling routine or stressful. It can no longer feel like this hot, loving, fun thing, and rather a pressured means to an end." —*Alexandra Zissu, eco lifestyle expert and author of The Complete Organic Pregnancy, and co-author of Get on Top: Of Your Pleasure, Sexuality & Wellness: A Vagina Revolution*

"I think there is a great crisis of both masculinity and femininity when it comes to reproduction and an assumption that it should happen right away. We want to be mechanically perfect, rather than human. Particularly as many are having children later in life, feeling a pressure of reproductive clocks, we want what we want yesterday. Stress, at least for most people, is neither an aphrodisiac nor positive for conception. As diligent we are about taking prenatal vitamins and watching what goes into our bodies when trying to conceive, we need to educate ourselves that Mother Nature doesn't often follow our commands." —*Sarah Forbes*



Sex During Pregnancy

Are there any medical reasons to avoid sex during pregnancy?

"If [a woman] is at risk for pre-term labor, or has had vaginal bleeding or contractions, her medical team may advise her not to have sex. If her placenta is on or close to her cervix, she should also abstain from sex. And if her water has broken, she shouldn't have sex." —*Diana Spalding*

"There's the big myth that you can somehow hurt a baby by having sex while pregnant—there is no truth to this whatsoever. In fact, many doctors ask you to have sex close to your due date as one of the many natural ways to bring on labor. Bottom line: A couple should feel free to be as sexual as they want to be when pregnant. If you have any questions or concerns, say about having anal sex if the pregnant partner has new hemorrhoids (a delightful addition to any pregnant body!), check in with your OB or midwife." —*Alexandra Zissu*

How might the physical changes of pregnancy affect a couple's sex life?

"If you've gotten the green light, sex during pregnancy is great. Many women actually find a boost in their sex drive when they are pregnant—the surge of hormones and being in awe of how awesome their body is can really put them in the mood. It's also a nice reminder that even though your body and life are going through massive changes, you're still you—sexy, fun, amazing you." —*Diana Spalding*

"As you grow bigger and bigger, some women feel hot and ready to get down, and others might not be totally into the idea of being sexual at a new size. Some partners find the changes in their woman's body sexy, others don't. Many couples share that it takes a little getting used to—mainly mentally—to consider penetrative sex when a baby is kicking around inside of you. But this is all totally par for the course, part of pregnancy. And in many ways these concerns, and having sex through them, sets soon-to-be parents up to parent their child." —*Alexandra Zissu*

Sex After Baby

How long should a woman wait to have sex again after giving birth?

"When it comes to sex after giving birth, you should wait for any bleeding to stop first. It's extremely important that you give your body time to heal! When you choose to start having sex again, it is a very personal thing and many women feel more comfortable waiting until they have had a check-up with

MEET OUR SEX-PERTS

Tania Boler, founder of Elvie (a Kegel trainer), elvie.com

Sarah Forbes, former curator of the Museum of Sex and author of *Sex in the Museum: My Unlikely Career at New York's Most Provocative Museum*, curatorofsex.com

Meika Hollender, founder and CEO of Sustain (natural feminine hygiene and sexual health products), and co-author of *Get on Top: Of Your Pleasure, Sexuality & Wellness: A Vagina Revolution*, sustainnatural.com

Dr. Iffath Hoskins, OB-GYN at NYU Langone, nyulangone.org

Logan Levkoff, PhD, sexuality and relationship educator, loganlevkoff.com

Uyo Okebie-Eichelberger, founder and creative director of You! Lingerie (for pregnant and nursing women), you-lingerie.com

Polly Rodriguez, CEO of Unbound, unboundbabes.com

Alexandra Sacks, MD, reproductive psychiatrist and co-author of *How Come No One Told Me?: The Emotional Guide to Pregnancy and the First Year of Motherhood*, alexandrasacksmd.com

Diana Spalding, RN, certified nurse midwife, owner of Gathered Birth, and Motherly Expert, mother.ly & gatheredbirth.com

Andrea Syrtash, relationship expert and founder of pregnantish (an online magazine about the challenges of infertility and fertility treatments), pregnantish.com

Alexandra Zissu, eco lifestyle expert, author of *The Complete Organic Pregnancy*, and co-author of *Get on Top: Of Your Pleasure, Sexuality & Wellness: A Vagina Revolution*

the doctor. Last year we did some research with Mush, a social app for mums, and found that most new mums (70 percent) waited between two and six months to have sex after giving birth. The most important thing is to wait until you are physically and emotionally ready to, and always remember to communicate with your partner!" —*Tania Boler*, founder of Elvie (a Kegel trainer)

"The general rule is six weeks, but to be honest, I don't love that recommendation. The reason behind it is that by six weeks, the uterus should be back to its pre-pregnancy size, and this is often when the postpartum visit with the doctor or midwife is—it's important for them to take a peek at the vagina and cervix to make sure they've healed and it's safe to have sex." —*Diana Spalding*

How might sex be different after childbirth?

"I think the biggest hurdle for a lot of couples when you get that okay [to have sex again] and both people are ready to move forward with that, the reality is that there is some pain. Lubrication is really important, there is going to be some discomfort, it's going to need to be taken slow, and partner trepidation on both sides is really common." —*Logan Levkoff, PhD, sexuality and relationship educator*

"Many of the post-pregnancy concerns involve the time it might take for a woman's body to fully heal, especially if there is tearing and stitching at birth or if a woman has had a C-section, or sometimes a woman might hurt or break her tailbone, etc.; How both members of the couple feel about their bodies post-pregnancy (a lot of partners pack on sympathy pounds!); about having any non-baby time for intimacy; about what breastfeeding may do to their sex life (in a good and in a bad way), especially in a couple where breasts are a big part of play." —*Alexandra Zissu*

"Pregnancy does not mean you need to stop being a sexual entity, nor does motherhood. But for many, it will be a re-negotiation of the version of body and sexuality that existed beforehand. I think giving ourselves a little permission to be evolving in this space is so important as well as to understand everyone will also have their own version and timeline of what postpartum sex is." —*Sarah Forbes*

How can postpartum depression affect a couple's sex life?

"There is nothing post-pregnancy that doesn't impact a couple's intimate life. One



of the really important things when someone has the blues or postpartum depression is to feel connected to your partner. Now, that might not mean you're not having any kind of penetrative sex, but certainly feeling connectedness, feeling safe, feeling like you're being heard, is super important." —*Logan Levkoff*

"You may not realize how important your sexual connection is for communication in your relationship until it goes away. It's not just about the physical intimacy; often during 'pillow talk,' couples communicate in other ways that provide emotional connection and care." —*Alexandra Sacks, MD, reproductive psychiatrist and co-author of How Come No One Told Me?: The Emotional Guide to Pregnancy and the First Year of Motherhood Sex-Positivity & Wellness*

Why is sex important in a healthy parenting partnership?

"Adding children to any household changes its dynamics and if you allow it, it can outright kill your sex life. Studies say maintaining a healthy sex life has a significant positive impact on our relationships which in turn can lead to

healthy and happy co-parenting. So we have to be deliberate in prioritizing and protecting our sex life from falling prey to the inevitable busy family life. We have to find ways to bring sexy back once we have shifted roles from 'husband and wife' to 'mom and dad.'" —*Uyo Okebie-Eichelberger, founder and creative director, You! Lingerie*

"It's no secret that you're a better person when you feel better—and sexual health is a really imperative (and often forgotten) part of overall health. Feeling sexually satisfied and empowered is an important part of caring for yourself, which will affect how you're able to care for others." —*Polly Rodriguez, CEO of Unbound*

"Sexuality within a relationship is not just about pleasure and orgasms, but it is also connection and intimacy. It is exactly this intimacy that needs to be maintained, particularly in the face of the hard work of parenthood and how trying this role can be on relationships." —*Sarah Forbes*

How can being proactive about sexual wellness make for a better sex life for a couple?

"I think this all goes back to communication.

From pleasure, to sexual health, to preventing unplanned pregnancy, everything is better when you're talking about it! [My company] Sustain was created to enable conversations about sexual and reproductive health, to get women (and men!) talking about sex. We live in a time where around 34 percent of women are having orgasms from casual sex and only 21 percent of sexually active women use condoms regularly. It's time for us all to start talking, because with conversation comes change." —*Meika Hollender, founder & CEO of Sustain, and co-author of Get on Top: Of Your Pleasure, Sexuality & Wellness: A Vagina Revolution*

How important are Kegels?

"Every woman who wants to feel stronger from the inside, improve their bladder control, sexual sensation, or reduce back pain can benefit from effective Kegel workouts. The problem is that most women don't think about doing pelvic floor exercises until they are pregnant, or start to experience issues like bladder weakness or prolapse. It can be difficult to exercise a muscle you can't see, or even stay motivated without the ability to track your progress." —*Tania Boler*

"All of those pelvic floor muscles are super critical, not just before, during, and after pregnancy, not just for incontinence, but also for sex and quality of orgasms." —*Logan Levkoff*

What should women keep in mind if they aren't feeling "sexy" because of the changes in their bodies and the shifts in their sex life with their partner?

"I think each person has to decide what sex means to them outside of trying to get pregnant or to fulfill your partner... the moment we start to define it for ourselves, we take back power in an activity that often can feel powerless. It's not selfish to ask for what you want in the bedroom and most often partners are excited to learn about what you need. I'd also say that masturbating, especially with a vibrator, can reinvigorate your libido and remind you how great an orgasm can feel." —*Polly Rodriguez*

"Pregnancy does some crazy things to our bodies but we must be kind to ourselves, be patient, and cut ourselves some slack. I'd love to remind new moms about the incredible feat their bodies have just accomplished. You brought life into this world, your body grew and nourished your baby for nine months. And if you are breastfeeding, it still is." —*Uyo Okebie-Eichelberger*

Giving Camp **BACK** to the Campers

To help kids foster independence, it's key for parents to let go and trust camp leaders

By Jess Michaels

Years ago, when you went to overnight camp, your parents put you on the bus and maybe received a letter or two before driving to camp on Visiting Day, where they found out all about how camp was going. Those days are long gone. Now, parents are more involved with their child's camp experience than ever before. From online photos to group texts among bunk parents to numerous calls to the office, parents are staying connected with their campers throughout the summer. But does being so involved help or hinder a child from thriving?

Corey Dockswell, Director of Camp Wicosuta, an all-girls four week overnight camp in Hebron, NH, says that parents should ask themselves what their goals are for their child's camp experience. "If you want your child to develop independence, you have to give them the space to be independent. In order to do this, one of the critical pieces is to trust the adults that are acting in your place. You have to figure out what it is that you as a parent need to feel that trust and work on that relationship



Camp Settega

before the summer."

Trusting the leadership team will allow parents to take a step back over the summer. Justin Mayer, Director of Timber Lake West, a co-ed four week overnight camp in Roscoe, NY, says: "I let parents know that we pride ourselves on our customer service and if something is wrong, we will certainly call to let you know." He reminds parents of this as they search through online camp photos. "Online photos have made parents more aware of every aspect of camp but some parents look into the photos more than they should. They will wonder 'why is my child not standing right next to her friends? Oh no, she must not be included or she doesn't have any friends', when in reality, it just means that is where your child was standing when

the photo was taken. When parents worry, I assure them that photos are just moments in time and that they don't accurately reflect how a child is feeling or what a situation really is."

Sometimes parents of children in a bunk together will have a bunk group text over the summer, where parents will discuss things from what they have heard from their child to what they think of the bunk counselors. "We will sometimes get a call from a parent saying she is calling on behalf of a certain bunk. I always tell the parent that we are happy to talk to you about your own child and if anyone else wants to speak, I'm happy to talk to anyone," Mayer says. However, he does encourage parents to get to know each other because it helps to nurture camper friendships in the

off-season and helps children see each other after camp. While parents might not always be happy with a decision that was made at camp, Dockswell says: "If you have questions about specific decisions, go to the source and speak with the director. Don't go to group texts which don't help."

When it comes to camp policies, it is important to respect them. "Whether that is a no package, bunk gift or electronics rule, children need to know that their parents respect the rules so that they then respect them," Dockswell comments. "Many camps don't allow bunk gifts from parents because they end up working against the creation of a larger community and increases competition. Camps are good about building bunk and overall camp community, and they are intentional about the way they do it. One of special things about camp is teaching campers that what they need is really right in front of them. So many children have access to so much 'stuff' and at camp, we try and dispense with the stuff and help them get back to the magic of personal relationships so children can develop empathy and care about



each other regardless of who has what. When we bring in bunk gifts, it takes away from a camp's ability to do that."

If you are worried about your child or just have a thought, do your best to limit your calls to the camp office. "As camp directors, we understand that it feels foreign for some

parents to not know what their child is doing while at camp," Dockswell says. "It's why it's important to partner and build a trusting relationship with the director. This allows parents to take a step back and give their child independence, knowing that we will reach out if there are any concerns."



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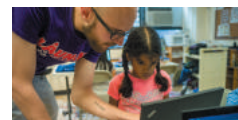
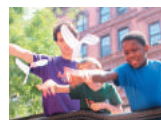


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Mountain High

The Berkshires, Catskills, or Poconos offer outdoor adventure for the whole family

By Lambeth Hochwald

There's nothing like getting a little fresh air at this time of year when winter is finally right in the rearview mirror. If the mountains are calling your name, read on as we tour guide you to the Berkshires, Catskills, and Poconos. Start rolling down those windows and get ready to revel in blissful mountain vibes.

Upscale R&R in the Berkshires

The minute you take those first exits into the Berkshires, the living just seems easier. The region, which spans 90 minutes from what locals call "North County" to "South County," exudes elegance with its tidy farms, historically preserved homes and main streets offering everything from farm-to-table fare to boutiques that feel like they could be in Brooklyn. No matter the town you pick to use as your base of exploration, you'll find plenty to do.

We chose Pittsfield as our starting point for a Berkshires immersion and an overnight at **Hotel on North**, the town's only boutique hotel, does not disappoint. Every nook and cranny of the hotel's two historic 19th-century buildings have been restored and it was cool to discover the character of this 45-room hotel, once a thriving menswear and sporting goods store. While you're there

to browse through **Dory & Ginger**, which stocks giftable items and jewelry from local artists.

While you're in Pittsfield, be sure to pop by the **Hancock Shaker Village**, which sports 750 acres of outdoor activities. At the **Discover Barn**, a 1910 barn/hands-on center, kids can take turns spinning wool, constructing a Shaker chair or weaving on a kids'-sized loom.

Then, once you've gotten your fill of life on the farm, continue your Berkshires adventures by taking a scenic drive down the always interesting Route 7 to Great Barrington and explore this town, considered one of the best in the Berkshires for shopping, award-winning dining, and strolling the historic streets. Before you leave, head on over to **SoCo Creamery**, an all-natural ice cream shop that's used locally sourced ingredients since 1989.

Kitschy fun in the Catskills

To say there has been a Catskills revival in recent years is an understatement. Once neglected main streets have gotten a major reboot in this mountainous region two-plus hours to the north of us and the days of a dingy overnight stay in a side-of-the-road motel has given way to accommodations in very stylish boutique hotels. Consider anchoring your Catskills stay at the **Emerson Resort & Spa**,

Hancock Shaker Village

a luxury property in Mount Tremper, New York, which is located right in the midst of **Catskill Park**. Best of all, there's a kid-friendly atmosphere here that your little ones will very much appreciate. For example, the resort's game room features, ping pong, Nintendo Wii and plenty of board games and, most recently, the Emerson introduced a Kids Movement class for ages 4-8, which encourages youngsters to explore and express creative movement in a safe playful environment. Your kids will also love checking out the resort's World's Largest Kaleidoscope, which is housed in a 60-ft high barn silo.

While you're at the Emerson, make sure to stop in for breakfast or lunch at the **Phoenicia Diner**, a local fave, located right down the road. Another must-stop that's just a 20-minute drive: Woodstock, New York, a family-favorite for its easy-to-access to the Shawangunk Mountains, which offer 78 miles of trails for hiking and biking (in varying levels of difficulty). Be sure to fuel up at **Bread Alone**, known for its certified organic breads and twice baked almond croissants, before you hit the trails.

If you're in search of another truly funky place to settle in for the night, consider an overnight the **Roxbury Motel**, which calls itself a "boutique motel resort." Located further north in the Catskills in Roxbury, New York, this one-of-a-kind hotel features individually designed rooms that are truly unforgettable, including The Shagadelic, to harken back to Austin Powers, and George's Spacepad, which has a decorative style that will prompt you to feel like you're sleeping on another planet.



Above: Hancock Shaker Village (top), and Woodloch Resort (bottom)

Kid-friendly everything in the Poconos

As you get closer to the glorious Poconos, which take up 2,400 square miles in northeast Pennsylvania, we promise your kids are going to start getting excited. That's because they won't be able to miss all the roadside signs that begin to appear promising endless fun and adventure as you drive down the region's gorgeous rolling mountain roads. Located just an hour and 45 minutes from New York City, the Poconos were once the place to go for honeymooners but have transformed into a year-round family-friendly destination offering 261 miles of hiking and biking trails, whitewater rafting, boating, swimming, zip lines, fishing, and year-round cultural events.

The region is also famed for its NASCAR races at **Pocono Raceway**, where kids under 12 enter free, numerous waterparks, historic train rides, **Claws "N" Paws Wild Animal Park** and so much more.

We decamped at **Woodloch Resort** recently to experience a fully immersive family-friendly getaway and the family-owned property did not disappoint. Not only are there kid-friendly activities on the half-hour—and you really feel like everyone wants you to have fun—the staff is super friendly and willing to help direct you to the activity of your choice. It doesn't matter if the weather isn't ideal, either, as there's a massive indoor water space on property that features splash pads, tubes, a Jacuzzi, sauna, and a pool bar for mom and dad.

And, if you have a little extra time, consider driving down the road to Hawley, Pennsylvania, the home of the renovated **Hawley Silk Mill**, a massive mill built in 1880 that operated as a Silk Mill until 1956, which has been recreated as a space that now features shops and galleries. Take a few minutes and stop for coffee at the **Cocoon Coffee House & Bakery**, housed in a cozy adjacent building that once sheltered the cocoons that supplied the silk.

Finally, while you're in the area, be sure to make time to pop on over to **Kalahari Resorts**, America's largest indoor waterpark, located in nearby Pocono Manor. The park features a retractable roof and 220,000-square-feet of indoor rides, slides, a surf simulator and splash pools. A full day at the resort (day passes are available) will yield endless moments of fun on twisting waterslides, a ride along a lazy river and poolside cabanas available for rent.

For more family travel ideas, visit newyorkfamily.com!

Living The Dream

Looking to settle down in the city but not sure where to start? We're shining a spotlight on 12 hot properties that are perfect for family living in NYC!

By Katarina Avendaño & Mia Weber

Property: 70 Charlton
Neighborhood: SoHo
Address: 70 Charlton Street
 70charlton.com

This 22-story luxury residential development located right between the enviable neighborhoods of SoHo and Tribeca is the first for the neighborhood and features two wings connected by an enclosed breezeway overlooking a lushly landscaped courtyard. Perfectly situated for city families, the 92 residences here feature graciously-sized spaces with private en suite bathrooms and generous closets, Miele appliances, and washer and vented dryer in every home. Residents also have access to a bevy of amenities such as a children's playroom, indoor saltwater pool, spa, private fitness center, and a basketball court.

Property: 180 East 88
Neighborhood: Carnegie Hill
Address: 180 East 88th Street
 180e88.com

One-hundred-eighty East 88th Street is one of the most coveted new condo developments on the Upper East Side. This is a luxury 48-resident building with lofts to 5-bedroom residences averaging \$2,900 per square foot. The architecture is truly unique, with a façade composed of handmade, handset Kolumba brick from Danish brickmaker Petersen Tegl. The interiors feature vaulted ceilings ranging from 14-28 feet high. One of the nicest interior elements is the brass fixtures in the kitchens and baths. Building amenities include a children's playroom, teen game room, partial basketball court, fitness center, wine room, and residents' lounge.

Property: 505 W 37th Street by TF Cornerstone
Neighborhood: Hudson Yards
Address: 505 West 37th Street
 tfc.com

Nestled within Hudson Yards are delightful world-class eateries, top-notch galleries, luxury retailers, and trendy clubs not to mention the vast number of green spaces (Hudson River Park, De Witt Clinton Park) located nearby—the neighborhood is also home to 505 W 37th. Within this luxurious building are studios and apartments ranging from 1-3 bedrooms; apartments feature bright, open layouts with energy-efficient floor-to-ceiling windows, sleek wood strip floors, high ceilings and modern stainless steel appliances. Many apartments also include spacious private balconies or terraces, while nearly every home offers breathtaking views of the Manhattan skyline and Hudson River. Some of the various amenities that residents have access to include: Pet-friendly atmosphere, elevator, 24-hour doorman, lobby lounge, fitness center, club room, resident lounge, billiards, homework and co-working space, garden, landscaped roof deck, sundeck, water feature, live-in super, valet, package room, laundry room, bicycle storage, WiFi, ATM in building, and parking garage.

Property: The Astor
Neighborhood: Upper West Side
Address: 235 West 75th Street
 theastor.com

One of the most prominent residential buildings on New York City's Upper West Side, the Astor offers sprawling 1- to 5-bedroom condominium residences with grand proportions and gracious layouts. Residences have been reimaged by renowned design firm Pembroke & Ives, offering the pedigree and elegance of a pre-war gem combined with a detailed restoration. The building is enhanced by a state-of-the-art fitness center, children's playroom, 24-hour concierge, and viewing gardens overlooking Broadway. The Astor is surrounded by some of the city's most prestigious cultural institutions, museums, schools, and parks.



Property: The Chatsworth
Neighborhood: Lincoln Square, UWS
Address: 344 West 72nd Street
 thechatsworth.com

Spacious 1-5 bedroom homes as well as penthouses and townhouses are available in one of the few pre-war developments that offers a comprehensive amenity program to cater to all ages and lifestyles, including: A state-of-the-art fitness center, children's playroom, library, wine tasting room, business center, media room, yoga studio, and residential storage, as well as a private garden mews available to all residents. Occupying a distinguished location at the corner of 72nd and Riverside Park, the Chatsworth is just moments away from the Hudson River waterfront, numerous transit options, fine dining, shopping, and some of the city's best schools and cultural institutions.

Property: CORTE
Neighborhood: Long Island City, Queens
Address: 21-30 44th Drive, Long Island City
 cortenyc.com

This modern architectural residential development, CORTE, is located in the vibrant neighborhood of Long Island City on 44th Drive. Living at CORTE is a great retreat from the bustling areas of Manhattan while



Photo courtesy of Related-Oxford



Photo by Evan Joseph Images

(Top) Hudson Yards and (bottom) The Kent.

still keeping close. These condominiums are wrapped in tinted glass windows with a great sense of openness and space, a grand passageway for natural light to beam through. This building is made up of clean lines, exquisite architectural details, and appears as stacked boxes for a brilliantly modern look. Within the interior, you will find each room with clean, minimal finishes and warm accents that complete a sophisticated look. Furthermore, this building has a great amount of amenities, such as a 24-hour doorman, residential lounge, fitness center, kids' room,

landscaped common roof and deck, private terraces, stroller and bike storage, pet wash room, and private parking spaces for sale.

Property: Fifteen Hudson Yards
Neighborhood: Hudson Yards
Address: 11th Avenue & 30th Street
livehudsonyards.com

The excitement about the sparkling new Hudson Yards development, which comprises more than 18 million square feet of mixed-use development, is palpable around town, and the team at Fifteen Hudson Yards are

sure their collection of 285 1- to 4-bedroom condominium residences will please families. The details such as white oak flooring and kitchen appliances by Miele are just the start. The building offers 40,000 square feet of amenities such as an entire floor dedicated to wellness, including an aquatics center with a 75-ft-long swimming pool, private spa with treatment rooms, and a sun-filled children's imagination center. Families will want to be part of the evolution of this neighborhood, which has more than 100 shops and restaurants, including New York City's first Neiman Marcus, and a new 750-seat public school.

Property: The Kent via Extell Development

Neighborhood: Upper East Side

Address: 200 East 95th Street
thekentnyc.com

This Upper East Side building, The Kent, is a luxurious building that has the perfect family-friendly amenities for your every need. From the moment you step into the lobby with custom chandeliers and rosewood paneled walls, you will want to call it home. Adults can socialize and wind down in the drawing room surrounded by gold leaf ceilings and a warm fireplace. Meanwhile, kids can head to "Camp Kent," an indoor and outdoor play experience that mimics the traditional camp-feel. They will have loads of fun with teepees, artificial trees, picnic tables, a campfire, and treehouse. The Kent also offers a completely soundproof studio, the "Sound Lounge"—fully equipped with a piano, drum set, amplifier, and state-of-the-art AV system. This space welcomes all ages to use their musical amenities, along with their performance stage, dance floor, and gaming consoles. And for the tiniest of guests, The Kent offers a "Stroller Valet" that is convenient for both the parent and child. Instead of lugging the stroller throughout the building, park it in the lobby to lessen the hassle. In addition, it also provides an indoor pool, fitness center, and "Garden Salon" for parents to unwind.

Property: Nine52

Neighborhood: Hell's Kitchen

Address: 416 West 52nd Street
nine52.com

Nine52 is perfectly located in Hell's Kitchen, which sits between Central Park, the Theatre District, and Hudson Yards. This neighborhood offers immediate access to some of the best restaurants in the city, Broadway plays, finest shopping, and multiple subway lines. Within this brick exterior are luxuri-



ous condominiums that have a spacious layout with modern detailing that combines metals with wood in a harmonious balance. Some of the unique features include stained white oak flooring, gourmet kitchens with top-of-the-line appliances, individual climate control, and bathrooms that included fixtures from Grohe and Kohler. Bedrooms are well-lit with natural light beaming through expansive windows and all homes offer LG stacked washers and dryers. Other amenities within the building include A 24 hour attended lobby, expansive with separate yoga and spinning rooms, a co-work space with separate conference room and private lounge, wine tasting room, residence lounge, tranquility garden with Koi pond and landscaping, children's playroom, and a large beautifully planted and furnished roof terrace.

Property: The Octagon

Neighborhood: Roosevelt Island

Address: 888 Main Street
octagonnyc.com

While having children used to signal a move to the suburbs, nowadays a childhood in NYC provides little ones with everything the suburbs can, plus more. Instead of looking for single family homes of Long Island and Westchester, Manhattanites can stay much closer, for grass, a pool, and an additional bedroom at The Octagon on Roosevelt Island. Roosevelt Island is accessible by subway, bus, tram, and has plenty of parking for strollers, bikes, and vehicles. Filled with green lawns, river walks, bike trails, and picnic areas, get all the feeling of a suburban oasis within the city skyline. With phenomenal views and an award-winning daycare on-site, plus a newly remodeled kids' playroom, your family will love urban, island living at The Octagon.

Property: The Pavilion

Neighborhood: Lennox Hill, UES

Address: 500 East 77th Street
glenwoodnyc.com



(Clockwise from top) CORTE, The Chatsworth, 180 East 88th Street.

The Pavilion, from Glenwood Management, offers the best of luxury rental living in New York City. The Pavilion's 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom homes are built with growing families in mind, boasting Glenwood's signature finishes, generous proportions, and timeless sophistication. Just steps from some of New York City's finest public and private schools, this upscale rental building is located on the Upper East Side, a neighborhood that offers a vast selection of restaurants and specialty stores along with a family-friendly atmosphere. The Pavilion provides tenants with an elegant and welcoming entry with fountains and a circular drive leading to beautifully appointed lobby with two 24-hour doormen and daily fresh floral arrangements. This 35-story high-rise luxury apartment offers an interactive children's playroom to tenants with growing families. The Pavilion's tenants also have access to complimentary shuttle service to transit and shopping. Residents of The Pavilion enjoy full-service amenities including landscaped rooftop sun decks, available valet, maid service, and on-site shopping. Additionally, the property offers a 24-hour attended on-site parking.

Property: Skyview Riverdale

Neighborhood: Riverdale, The Bronx

Address: 5700 Arlington Avenue,
Riverdale
skyviewriverdale.com

If you've considered an exodus to Riverdale, this may be your moment. During the spring of last year, sales officially began at the renovated Skyview Riverdale, a community of three 20-story towers at the end of a tree-lined street with 23 acres of landscaped outdoor space and amenities, roughly 25 minutes to Midtown. The building even features 3- and 4-bedroom residences with river and park views, ideal for larger families. Situated on a crest overlooking the Hudson River and the Palisades, Skyview Riverdale offers expansive views, unparalleled amenities including a 101-ft. resort pool (larger than the standard Olympic size), a children's pool/splash pad, playground, dog park, health club, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a full-service café offering home and poolside delivery service. Regularly scheduled events are also part of life, including flea markets, farmers' markets, composting, educational seminars, kids' events, movie nights, and much more.

**For more real estate info, visit
newyorkfamily.com!**

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calendar



APRIL

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BIG BONES

The American Museum of Natural History has brought a new exhibition to life, “T:rex: The Ultimate Predator.” In honor of the museum’s 150th anniversary, they went big by unleashing the killer-predator T.rex last month. In this exhibit, you will be able to see a T.rex from its early, defenseless hatchling years to a fully grown massive adult. With the most scientifically accurate display of a 43 ft. T.rex on display, you will be in awe of what this historic creature was capable of. Not only was this dinosaur enormous but it weighed 6-9 tons. At this exhibit you will be able to build a 66 million old T.rex

through a virtual reality experience and interact with a life-size animation of the dinosaur reacting to visitors passing by. Whether you are a T.rex enthusiast or know little about these amazing creatures, this engaging exhibit will reel you in with life-like displays and information on discoveries that you never would have expected. The Museum of Natural History’s objective is to spark curiosity and a sense of exploration—“T:rex:The Ultimate Predator” truly represents that and is definitely worth seeing. This exhibit will run through August 9. Prices vary. *American Museum of Natural History* [Central Park West & 79th Street, Manhattan. amnh.org]

1 MONDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. It's time for the Macy's Floral Show! Be ready to be taken on a journey of space, adventure, and discovery through the beauty of flowers and gardens that celebrate the cosmos. Don't miss out on this floral sci-fi event for the family. Daily, March 24–April 7. Free. macys.com.

"Johannes Dokchter Faust, A Petrifying Puppet." Come and see the Czechoslovak-American Marionette Theater present a new version of "Johannes Dokchter Faust, a Petrifying Puppet Comedy," translated and directed by Vit Horejs. See Johannes Faust sell his soul for knowledge through the art of puppetry and traditional Czech satire. Days and times vary. Daily, March 21–April 7. \$18 general admission/ \$15 students & seniors. *Theater for the New City, 155 1st Avenue. (212) 254-1109. jsnyc.com*.

Storybook Artists. Does your kid wear velcro shoes? Is he or she under 4 feet tall and about to attend their first day of school? Well, if your answer is "yes" to either of these questions, the Children's Museum of the Arts (CMA) semester-long camp may be for your child! Here, kids will get to read books, explore social storytelling, and develop their literacy skills. Using stories and art to spark their own creativity, CMA encourages campers to pour themselves into crafting their own book which will act as their final project. \$395. *Childrens Museum of the Arts, 103 Charlton Street. cmany.org*.

2 TUESDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

"Johannes Dokchter Faust, A



Bond, James Bond

Here, your spy dreams can come to life at the new "007 x Spyscape" exhibition. You'll be able to see the James Bond movie 007 like you have never seen before. Experience a multisensory journey as you learn about how producers were able to make this iconic spy movie and the many secrets behind Bond's Aston Martin DB5. Get the hands-on experience of investigating gadgets in Q's lab along with other fun activities. Aside from from all the spy tools, you will also get the chance to see the movie's original concept art in Oscar-winning Production Designer Sir Ken Adam's studio. With this ticket, there will also be a chance for you to see what happened behind the scenes of Skyfall's explosive finale. This immersive exhibition will allow you to see what it takes to be James Bond in this movie while getting to interact with all the spy's top-of-line gadgets. This event has limited availability so RSVP online in advance. Open daily, Monday-Friday 10am-9pm, Saturday- Sunday 9am-9pm. Prices vary. *Spyscape [928 8th Avenue, Manhattan. spyscape.com]*

Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

Spring After School. This spring your children (ages 8-11 years old) have the opportunity to study art and develop their own style under the tutelage of museum educators! Get premium access to the Guggenheim's special and permanent collections, as well as learn new painting, drawing, sculpting, printmaking, collaging, and photography techniques. Students will graduate from the program with a private exhibition of their own work for family members and friends. 4–6:15pm. \$400/ \$350 for members. *Guggenheim Museum, 1071 5th Avenue. guggenheim.org*.

Storybook Artists. See April 1

3 WEDNESDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

"Johannes Dokchter Faust, A Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

¡HOLA MÚSICA! Register for this Spanish learning program through ¡HOLA MÚSICA! This special program fosters language through the joy of music and rhythm, teaching young children new vocabulary words. Teachers will get children excited and participating in these sessions, while learning and having a great time socializing with their peers.

This program is recommended for ages 8 months- 4 years old. Wednesdays: 11-11:45am; Thursdays: 4:30-5:15pm. April 3, April 4, April 10, April 11. Seven-class pack: \$280. *City Tree House, 129A West 20th Street. holaplaygroup.com*.

Storybook Artists. See April 1

4 THURSDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

"Johannes Dokchter Faust, A Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

¡HOLA MÚSICA!. See April 3

Storybook Artists. See April 1

5 FRIDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

"Johannes Dokchter Faust, A Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

Storybook Artists. See April 1

McCoy Tyner And Charles McPherson at 80 featuring the Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis.

For jazz enthusiasts, pianist McCoy Tyner and saxophonist Charles McPherson will be performing their one-of-a-kind compositions with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra and Wynton Marsalis. Not only is this a special performance, but this composition is written exclusively for this event. April 5–April 6, 3pm. Starting at \$40. *Rose Theater, Lincoln Center Theater, West 65th Street. (212) 258-9922. jazz.org*.

Pajama Glow-In-The-Dark Yoga! It's pajama party time! Come to yoga in your comfy pajamas and get ready to have an exciting night of yoga games,

storytime, milk and cookies, and a funky dance party — all glow-in-the-dark! After you are done enjoying the festivities, you will be all ready for bed with your pajamas on. Make sure to register in advance. For ages 4-8 years. 6:30-8pm. \$40. *Karma Kids Yoga, 25 West 23rd Street. karmakidsyoga.com.*

6 SATURDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

Operation Slumber. The Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space Museum is hosting an overnight slumber party for all the adventurers in your family! Giving guests exclusive access to the ship, Space Shuttle Pavilion, planetarium shows, unlimited simulator rides, and more, you and your family's wanderlust will be satisfied. Board the Intrepid and sleep among the stars! Food, Youth T-shirts, and a 60-day return pass to the museum is included. Group price: \$99 per person, Individual price: \$130. April 6, April 12, May 18, June 1, June 22. Group price: \$99 per person, Individual price: \$130. *Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, West 46th Street & 12th Avenue. intrepidmuseum.org.*

"Johannes Dokchtor Faust, A Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

"Pinkalicious The Musical". Pinkalicious can't stop eating pink cupcakes despite warnings from her parents. Her pink indulgence lands her at the doctor's office with Pinkitis, an affliction that turns her pink from head to toe — a dream

come true for this pink-loving enthusiast. But when her hue goes too far, only Pinkalicious can figure out how to get out of this predicament. April 6, April 13, April 20, April 27, May 4, May 11, May 18, 11 am. \$49.50. *St. Luke's Theatre, 308 W. 46th St., Manhattan. pinkaliciousthemusical.com/?ist=MPpLPKws.*

Stop 'N' Swap With GrowNYC.

Give items that you no longer use a new life with Stop N' Swap! Bring your own clean, reusable, and portable items such as clothes, toys, housewares, games, books, and take home something "new-to-you." If you don't have anything to bring you can still come out and browse! April 6, April 13, April 14, April 18, 12-3pm. Free. *Locations vary. (212) 788-7900. grownyc.org.*

McCoy Tyner And Charles McPherson at 80 featuring the Jazz at Lincoln Center with Wynton Marsalis. See April 5

7 SUNDAY

Macy's Flower Show Presents Journey To Paradisios At

Macy's Herald Square. See April 1

"Johannes Dokchtor Faust, A Petrifying Puppet". See April 1

Freedom Art Jam Art & Dance Party for Passover. A festive afternoon celebrates Passover with the soulful sounds of ShirLaLa; themed workshops for kids to craft holiday artifacts and freedom shakers; a giant collaborative art project; and gallery tours. Ages 3 and up. Free with museum admission. 11am-4pm. Free with Museum Admission. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Studio Art Sessions at the



Phil Kline

Parade of Bonnets!

Bring your bonnets to the annual Easter Parade and Easter Bonnet Festival that has been a traditional event since the 1870s. Gather around Fifth Avenue with your fellow New Yorkers dressed in bright, spring colors. Since this isn't your traditional parade with floats and bands, you can join the festivities by walking up and down the avenue, grabbing bites to eat, and even stop by some shops on your route. Come and go as you please with your family since this festival will be going on all day and partake in this cus-

tomary scene of New York. Decorate bonnets with your children and enjoy seeing the many costumes. If you are wondering where the best place is to be during this parade that runs from 49th to 57th Street, you can't go wrong with being near St. Patrick's Cathedral. It's time to dress up in your spring pastels and enjoy this celebration of the new season with everyone in the family. For all ages. This parade and festival will be held from 10am-4pm on April 21. *[5th Avenue between 49th & 57th Streets, Manhattan. nycgo.com.]*

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 calendar@newyorkfamily.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!

Jewish Museum. Families explore new themes each week in these drop-in art workshops. Paint, draw, sculpt, or craft a work of art inspired by exhibitions on view. Parents can visit the Jewish Museum's website for details. Ages 3 and up. Runs 1–4pm every Sunday through May 12. Free with Museum Admission. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Afterglow New Moms Group. Join this supportive mother's group to gain advice and share experiences from the early days of childhood (from birth to 5 months). This group will be lead by Pria Alpern, Ph.D., a licensed clinical psychologist specializing in maternal mental health. She will be leading discussion and exploring various topics from the development of maternal identity to postpartum mood and self-care. Sundays, 3–4:30pm, through April 7. \$180/ \$210. *JCC Manhattan, 334 Amsterdam Avenue. (646) 505-4444. jccmanhattan.org.*

Meet the Music: Magical Mystical Moonlight! With music by Debussy, Beethoven, Schumann, and George Crumb take your family to a concert that's out of this world! Inspired by moonlight and the great outer space—these compositions will transport you out of this world on musical notes. *Alice Tully Hall, 1941 Broadway. chambermusicociety.org.*

8 MONDAY
Storybook Artists. See April 1

9 TUESDAY
Spring After School. See April 2

Storybook Artists. See April 1

10 WEDNESDAY
¡HOLA MÚSICA! See April 3

Storybook Artists. See April 1



Green is Great!

The Earth is our home. With that being said, it is our responsibility to clean up, tend to it, and take care of it with kindness. April is a great time to recognize and celebrate our earth with beauty blooming everywhere—flowers, green grass, and trees turning the perfect hue of color. This year for Earth Day, celebrate at The Museum of the City of New York by engaging with the many activities that commemorate the environment. Go on a scavenger hunt in the exhibition *Activist New York*, where you will learn plenty of helpful tips to help the environment. Aside from the hunt, there will be plenty of other activities that will teach you about our planet. This event is a great one for the entire family because not only is it fun, it's informative and vital that we teach our little ones how to protect our habitat. This event will be held from 11am-2pm on April 22nd (Earth Day). Free with museum admission. *Museum of the City of New York [1220 5th Avenue, Manhattan. mcny.org.]*

11 THURSDAY
¡HOLA MÚSICA! See April 3

Storybook Artists. See April 1

12 FRIDAY
Operation Slumber. See April 6

Storybook Artists. See April 1

13 SATURDAY
"Pinkalicious The Musical."
See April 6

Stop 'N' Swap With GrowNYC.
See April 6

"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. April 13, May 11, June 8, July 20, August 10, 2:30–3:30pm. \$15 general, \$12 parent, \$5 kids. *Frigid New York, East 4th Street. tinyurl.com/ChalkPlay.*

14 SUNDAY

Second Sundays Dig Drop-In. Kids can discover a passion for ancient artifacts in the Museum's simulated archaeological dig, open on the second Sunday of each month through May 12. Ages 3 - 10. Free with museum admission. April 14, May 12. Free with Museum Admission. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Stop 'N' Swap With GrowNYC.
See April 6

Studio Art Sessions at the Jewish Museum. See April 7

15 MONDAY

Storybook Artists. See April 1

16 TUESDAY

Art Explorers. Preschoolers and their adult companions can explore Scenes from the Collection through themed tours and engaging gallery activities, followed by a visit to the Museum's art studio. Ages 3–4. 3:30–4:30pm. Tickets are \$10 general public, \$8 for Jewish Museum Family Members. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Spring After School. See April 2

Storybook Artists. See April 1

17 WEDNESDAY

Storybook Artists. See April 1

18 THURSDAY

Stop 'N' Swap With GrowNYC.
See April 6

Storybook Artists. See April 1

19 FRIDAY

Re-Building With Nature. Don't spend spring break at home the whole time, stop by the CMA for an Andy Goldsworthy and Alice Aycock inspired workshop.

Kids will take natural materials and get a chance to re-create an art piece. Use sticks, leaves, natural dyes, and handmade paper to create something you didn't think imaginable. 9am-5pm. \$595. *Children's Museum of Art, 103 Charlton Street. (212) 721-1223. cmany.org.*

FURTHER AFIELD

Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. Does your kid have a lot of energy, creative mind, or both? Then the Brooklyn Game Lab's Spring Break Camp is for you! For one week, your kid can design games, innovate new rules to play by, and even earn rewards for their contributions. With locations in both Brooklyn and Tribeca, Brooklyn Game Lab makes it easy for your child to have fun! Daily, April 19-26, 9am-3pm. \$620. *Brooklyn Game Lab, 479 7th Avenue, Brooklyn. (718) 788-1122. brooklynamelab.com.*

Storybook Artists. See April 1

20 SATURDAY

"Pinkalicious The Musical".

See April 6

College Fair. Need help with finding what your next steps should be after high school? Attend this free college fair that will have tons of resources to help guide you. Learn about the college application process, speak with university representatives, and see how to connect with college professors and students through an interactive workshop. 11am-3pm. Free. *Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum, West 46th Street & 12th Avenue. intrepideducation.wufoo.com.*

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

21 SUNDAY

Easter Parade & Bonnet Festival. As a New York City tradition that dates back to



Under the Moon

Throughout history, people have been in awe by the moon and its mystical powers that it holds. Sometimes people's actions have even been dominated by the moon, such as writing and gatherings. This time, The Chamber Music Society is celebrating the moon through song and welcomes you to join them for this concert. This mystical, moon journey will be playing music by Debussy, Beethoven, Schumann, and George Crumb. Join these musicians at the Alice Tully hall for a great outing with the family. Recommend for kids 6 and up and their families. This concert takes place at 2pm on April 7. \$10-30. *Alice Tully Hall [1941 Broadway. chambermusicsociety.org]*

the 1870s, the Easter Parade and Easter Bonnet Festival is a celebratory event where celebrants don their very best bonnets and finery and walk along 5th Avenue! On April 21, you too can join in the festivities! Wear your best bonnet, dress, suit, or top hat and come out to see everyone in their finest. Free. *5th Avenue, between 49th and 57th Streets. nycgo.com.*

Studio Art Sessions at the Jewish Museum. See April 7

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

22 MONDAY

Spring Art Colony. It's school vacation! You have a week of your child's free time to fill and a full-time job. What are you going to do? Don't worry,

the Children's Museum of Art (CMA) has the answer: hands-on art camps! Campers get to spend the day learning new techniques ranging from 3D printing to animation and more! This spring help your child develop their creativity at CMA! 9am-5pm. \$595. *Children's Museum of Art, 103 Charlton Street. cmany.org.*

Passover Week Drop-In Art Workshop: Painted Wonders. Kids will make original art with Passover and springtime themes. Ages 3 and up. Runs April 22, 23, and 25, from 1-4pm. Free with Museum Admission. April 22, April 23, April 25, *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Archaeology Mondays. Unique in New York City, the Jewish Museum's simulated archaeological dig highlights replicas from ancient to modern

times in a hands-on experience. Kids can collect stamps in a special passport each visit, and receive a gift after three digs. Ages 3-10. 3-5pm. Free with Museum Admission. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Storybook Artists. See April 1

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

23 TUESDAY

Spring Art Colony. See April 22

Passover Week Drop-In Art Workshop: Painted Wonders. See April 22

Spring After School. See April 2

Storybook Artists. See April 1

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

24 WEDNESDAY

Spring Art Colony. See April 22

Storybook Artists. See April 1

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

25 THURSDAY

Spring Art Colony. See April 22

Passover Week Drop-In Art Workshop: Painted Wonders. See April 22

Storybook Artists. See April 1

FURTHER AFIELD
Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

26 FRIDAY

Spring Art Colony. See April 22

Storybook Artists. See April 1

FURTHER AFIELD

Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

27 SATURDAY

“Pinkalicious The Musical”. See April 6

FURTHER AFIELD

Brooklyn Game Lab: Spring Break Camp. See April 19

28 SUNDAY

Picture This! Each program begins with a 10 am gallery program that includes interactive art-viewing activities and a storybook reading, followed by an opportunity to create original artworks and a concert at 11:30 am featuring an acclaimed performer. Ages 4–7. Tickets are \$25 general public, \$22 Jewish Museum Family Members. 10am–12:30pm. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Hot Peas ‘N Butter. Hot Peas ‘N Butter’s multicultural rhythms range from vibrant Puerto Rican folk music to soulful American blues, as the band performs tunes celebrating nature from their latest release, *Back to The Land*. Ages 3 and up. \$18 general public, \$14 Jewish Museum family members. 11:30am. *Jewish Museum, 1109 5th Avenue. thejewishmuseum.org.*

Studio Art Sessions at the Jewish Museum. See April 7

29 MONDAY

Storybook Artists. See April 1

30 TUESDAY

Spring After School. See April 2

Storybook Artists. See April 1

LONG-RUNNING

Taub Auerbach: “Flow Separation” Exhibition in Hudson River Park. Head over



Spring Into Art

With April here, the weather starts to become milder, days a little brighter, and people start to step out into the community to gather at local festivals and events. This year, step into the MoCCA’s Art Festival that will be celebrating artists’ work at the Ink48 boutique hotel, overlooking the iconic Hudson River, located in Hell’s Kitchen. This program will be featuring top artists and speakers that will be addressing the current issues that are circulating in today’s world. See what this festival has in store for you and walk away with a new perspective through the power of art. Let your creative side flourish and stop by with the family to explore the different works of art. This event will be held from 11am–7pm on April 6, and 11am–6pm on April 7. Tickets start at \$10. *Ink48 [653 11th Avenue, societyillustrators.org.]*

to the park for an immersive exhibition by New York-based artist Tauba Auerbach, which features a “dazzle ship.” The geometric patterns were once designed to make it more difficult for enemies to spot but was later adopted by artists. Daily, through May 12. Free. *Hudson River Park, 425 West 59th Street. publicartfund.org.*

“Mom-and-Pops of the L.E.S.” Installation. On Essex Street and East Broadway in Seward Park, kids can check out this art installation that features photos of mom-and-pop shops, many of which have closed due to rising rents and gentrification. Daily. Free. *untappedcities.com.*

Justin Favela: RECUÉR-

DAME. Organized by guest curator Petrushka Bazin Larsen, Favela’s murals take visitors on a phantasmagoric adventure, rendering the Mexican landscape in piñata-cute tissue paper. From the imagery found in Jose Maria Velasco’s expansive 19th-century canvases, to Walt Disney’s 1944 live-action animation film “The Three Caballeros” and 2017 Pixar animated film “Coco,” Favela covers over 1,000 square feet of the Museum in a full array of chromatic hues. The result is a larger-than-life immersive environment that recalls some of Favela’s memories of driving through Mexico’s countryside during his visits as a child, as well as contemporary cinematic references that were created for both Latin-American and non-Latin-

American audiences to celebrate and exoticize Mexican culture. Daily. *Sugar Hill Children’s Museum of Art & Storytelling, 898 St Nicholas Avenue.*

“Trolls” The Experience. Come dance, sing and hug at the all-new interactive DreamWorks’ “Trolls” The Experience. Daily, through May 12. \$25. *218 West 57th Street, trollstheexperience.com*

Defying Gravity: Women in Space. In that spirit and in conjunction with Museum Day, the Intrepid debuted an exciting new mixed-reality experience *Defying Gravity: Women in Space* powered by Microsoft. Located beneath the space shuttle Enterprise, the mixed reality experience, designed for Microsoft HoloLens and narrated by a holographic capture of engineer, physician, and former NASA astronaut, Dr. Mae Jemison, takes guests through women’s pivotal yet often unsung contributions to space exploration. *Defying Gravity*, created in collaboration with Microsoft and the Smithsonian, uses the space shuttle Enterprise as an entry point to explore the U.S. space program and its journey to inclusion. The experience is open now through September 21, 2019. Daily. *The Intrepid Sea, Air And Space Museum, Pier 86, W. 46th Street & 12th Avenue, Manhattan.*

The Wheel of Intention at the Rubin Museum. Set your intention for the new year! Visitors can empower their own intentions by turning “The Wheel of Intentions,” an interaction installation in the lobby created by data artist Ben Rubin, Potion Design, and the Rubin Museum. Individual intentions will join those of other visitors as they travel up the spiral staircase and take visual form within *The Power of Intention* exhibition. Daily. *The Rubin Museum, 150 West 17th Street. rubinmuseum.org.*

A Way with Words: the Power and Art of the Book. Children's Museum of the Arts (CMA) is pleased to announce A Way With Words: The Power and Art of the Book, an exhibition that presents artworks which draw attention to the long and remarkable history of the book, on view from November 29, 2018 to April 29, 2019. Including works by Cara Barer, Doug Beube, Long-Bin Chen, Casey Curran, Brian Dettmer, Ann Hamilton, Andrew Hayes, Lisa Kokin, Guy Laramée, Mike Stilkey, and Robert The, A Way With Words will show the transformation of everyday books into expressions of identity, environmentalism, and reconstructed narratives. Children and their families will also create their own artworks inspired by the exhibition. Daily, through April 29. Free with Museum Admission. *Children's Museum of the Arts, 216 West 83rd Street. 212-721-1223. cmany.org.*

"This Is Sadie". Take your family to go see this dancing, theatrical show that is choreographed and directed by Stephanie Klemons, Tony award-winning Associate Choreographer. Come along for the adventure with Sadie, a 6-year-old girl who loves her stuffed animal and has a big imagination. Daily, through

April 21, Times Vary. \$29.25 General Seating/ \$49.25 Premium Seating. *Theater Row, 410 West 42nd Street. nycchildrenstheater.org.*

T Rex: The Ultimate Predator.

The American Museum of Natural History is bringing in a new exhibition that explores the tyrannosaur superfamily. Learn about the latest research by scientists, discoveries, fossils, and casts. Their engaging learning opportunities and virtual reality experience will surely not disappoint the kids. Daily. Prices Vary. *American Museum of Natural History, 79th Street Transverse and Central Park West. (212) 769-5100. amnh.org.*

"Atlantic For Kids – Last Stop On Market Street: A Hip Hop Musical". See this hip-hop musical that explores the beauty of city life and tells the story of Young CJ and his reluctant stay with his Nana. As CJ begins to move out of his comfort zone, he finds himself closer to his roots and starts to see things in a different light. Daily, through April 13. Prices Vary. *Linda Gross Theater, 336 W. 20th Street. atlantictheater.org.*

Gateway Storytime In The Discovery Room. For children 2 to 5 years old, there is storytime

every Friday morning at the American Museum of Natural History where your little ones will learn about natural science and culture. After they get their full dose of learning and singing, there will be a period of free play time to let their energy out. Session 1: 10am; Session 2: 11am. Fridays. Free with museum admission. *The American Museum of Natural History, 79th Street Transverse and Central Park West. (212) 769-5100. amnh.org.*

stART Studio: Mix and Make!

Make your own flubber! Make your own colors! Experiment and create by mixing familiar and unfamiliar art materials. Each week, kids will get to curate their own art in new ways and cultivate their confidence as an artist. Daily, beginning April 1, 9:15-10:15am. \$395. *Children's Museum of Art, 103 Charlton Street. (212) 721-1223. cmany.org.*

In The Dugout With Jackie Robinson.

Get to know the man, the myth, and the legendary baseball player Jackie Robinson! In this intimate portrait, you and your children will get access to never before seen footage of this sports icon. The first African American to swing a bat on a Major League Baseball team, the exhibition features rare footage of Robinson's family as

well as his baseball career. Daily, 10am-6pm. Prices Vary. *Museum of the City of New York, 1220 5th Avenue. mcny.org.*

The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter.

Though it may be winter on the East Coast, it doesn't have to feel like it. Disappear into the Museum of Natural History's balmy butterfly sanctuary! With free-flying butterflies and tropical flowers, learn about these unique fluttering creatures as they land on you and your child's outstretched finger or shoulder. Daily, through May 27, 10am-5:45pm. *Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th Street. (212) 769-5100. amnh.org.*

James Bond Exhibit on at Spyscape.

Skyscape's James Bond Exhibit explores the creative process behind the famous 007 movies. An exhibit that is sure to fascinate kids of all ages, discover the secrets behind the icon! Get up close and personal with Bond's Aston Martin DB5, gadgets, and with this ticket there will also be a chance for you to see what happened behind the scenes of Skyfall's explosive finale. Daily through May 31. *Spyscape, 928 8th Avenue. spyscape.com.*

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That Empty Nest Feeling

One stay-at-home mom adjusts to having both of her young children at school and out of the house

By Leah Black

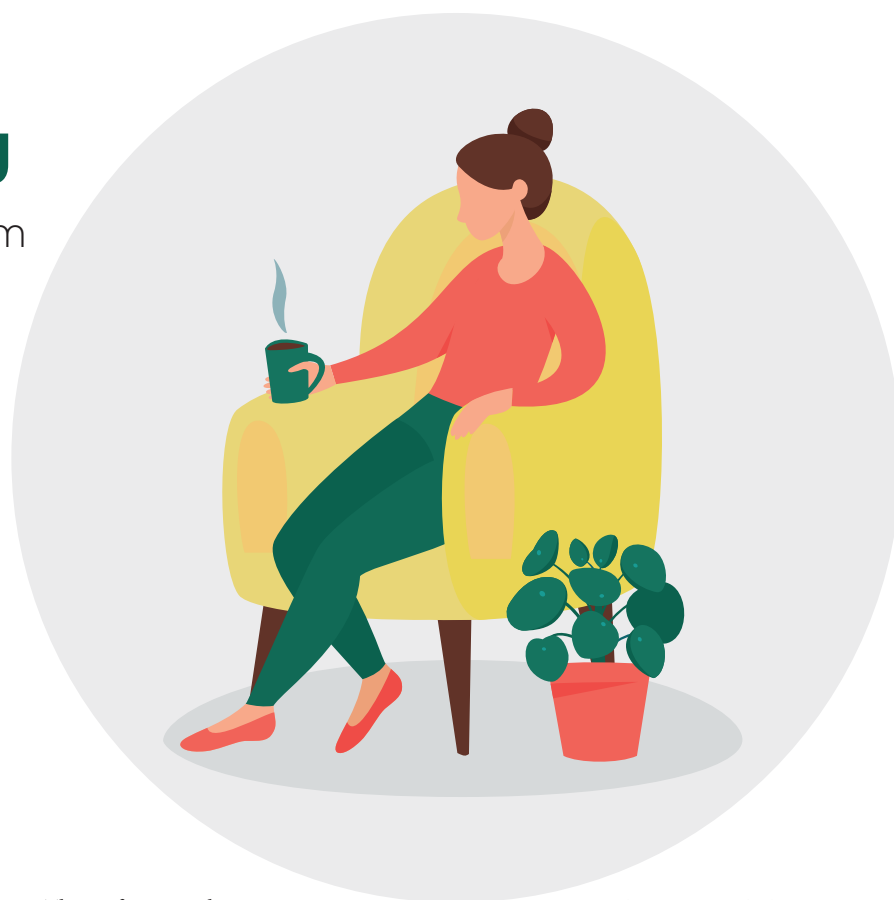
My youngest had gone off to Kindergarten, and what I thought would feel like freedom felt more like an identity crisis. I was a stay-at-home mom, and suddenly I had no one to take care of.

I thought I'd like having both my kids in school. For one thing, I hadn't had a break from parenting in over eight years. Sure, my husband took the kids, now 8 and 5, out on weekends so I had time to myself (which usually ended up with me folding laundry). And I'd gone on my share of mini-vacations, like the romantic weekend getaway where, in my kid-free zeal, I spent too much time in the hot tub and passed out. But, for the most part, my days were spent largely with my children.

Now, however, it would be me, by myself, all day long!

There was a lot I wanted to get done. I had projects I'd been wanting to tackle for years but hadn't had the time and energy for. Like the out-of-control Tupperware cupboard filled with dozens of containers and no matching lids. And the pile of clothes in the back of my closet I'd been meaning to take to the dry cleaners since 2013. Not to mention my kids' artwork stored in overflowing bins under their beds; every time I stuffed in just one more cotton-ball laden creation, I felt a wave of guilt for not taking better care of their life's work.

But while there was a lot to get done, I wasn't planning on spending all my newfound time organizing. I also needed "me time" to make up for all those years of putting my family first. I imagined leisurely mornings at the library, amassing novels I'd read in yet-to-be-discovered cafes. I'd finally visit all the museums in my town that did not have children's programming.



Then, of course, there was the tantalizing prospect of doing nothing. I craved unstructured time. Or at least, the pre-mom me did. Before I had kids, I could wander around the house with a cup of coffee, staring out the windows and watching delinquent squirrels destroy my flowerpots for hours. I could binge-watch historical dramas on BBC like it was my full-time job. I could browse through old high-school photos for way too long, to the point of feeling strangely bereft.

However, the start of Kindergarten came and went, and none of this happened (except the Tupperware project, which I am proud of). After the novelty of the first few days of time to myself wore off, I didn't feel free. I felt lonely. My body physically ached for my children. I wasn't used to going so long without seeing one of them. I missed their sweaty palms, their need for snacks, their clobbering footsteps. By lunchtime each day, I'd had enough of time to myself.

I also found that, paradoxically, with more time to myself, I somehow managed to get less done. Grocery shopping took twice as long because, with no one on the verge of a meltdown, I had no reason to rush and plenty of time to browse. I also started adding

things to my daily routine that had fallen by the wayside post-kids—like blow drying my hair and eating breakfast—which left me with less time for, say, squirrels.

But I would have gladly traded these little luxuries—and, as any mom knows, time, even for personal care, is a luxury!—to return to the utterly exhausting years of early motherhood. When my son got a bad cold and had to stay home one day this fall, I felt relieved. Finally, someone to take care of! I was in my element amidst 101-degree fevers and throw up. When he started to feel better, we spent the afternoon playing board games and reading books. It felt good to share the house with someone, instead of luxuriating in it by myself.

I know I can't resist the next phase of my life forever, though. Slowly, as the months go on, I am adjusting. I am remembering that I'm a person with skills, interests, and dreams that go beyond parenting (and Tupperware). It's hard to switch gears when you've been immersed in one thing—motherhood—for so long. But I'm learning to value my own time again—and make the most of it

Leah Black is a writer and mom-of-two.



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