

# ParentMap

'cause parenting is a trip!

ELEVATE YOUR  
parent-elligence!

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2015

## HEALTH TRENDS FOR FAMILIES

*Pedal power, noggin knocks and the state of the school lunch*



*go south, niños!*

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**Good Growing**  
newsletter inside



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## KIM LOST 22 LBS & 10 YEARS IN 10 WEEKS

Many women can relate to a busy life. When we're not working, we're managing our homes and families in an "always-on" world. We have good intentions to cook healthy meals, exercise more, sleep eight hours a night, and drink more water. After all, how hard can it be when we're managing everything else? Unfortunately, all too often, it's easier said than done.

I didn't take time to exercise. Lunch was often a snack from the vending machine. I drank wine instead of water. I worked long after everyone else had gone to bed. I often thought about making changes and tried many times, but never kept the commitment.

Just like you're doing, I read the My Best 10 success stories and envied the women. They looked amazing! I also noticed that many were working moms who had the same challenges as I had. So when a friend challenged me to sign up for the program, it was exactly the push I needed. After all, I wanted to prove that I could get it done, just like everything else.

When you're used to being on the go, it's possible to get 10,000 steps in a day. When you have a trainer who designs a program that's achievable and challenging, you start to feel empowered and strong. When you get the facts about food, you make more informed choices. When you understand the benefits of sleep, you find the time. When you see your body change shape and feel the difference in your clothes, you smile.

The MB10 program was more than I expected. I had an entire team dedicated to my success and also held me accountable. The program is designed for lifestyle changes and you get all the tools to do so. You also get spa treatments that give you that extra lift after you've worked hard on your diet and exercise. Together, it all works.

Having a team at my side contributed to my success, and I had wonderful support from my husband and daughter. They ate what I ate, and exercised with me. We managed the changes together.

I'm thrilled with the results from the program. I dropped two dress sizes and lost a total of 22 inches. I sleep eight hours a night. I eat better meals. I enjoy water and caffeine-free mint tea. I exercise regularly. Admittedly, some weeks are better than others. However, I now have the tools to get back on track when I have a tough week.

The My Best 10 program helped me change my life and I will be forever grateful.

mybest10.com

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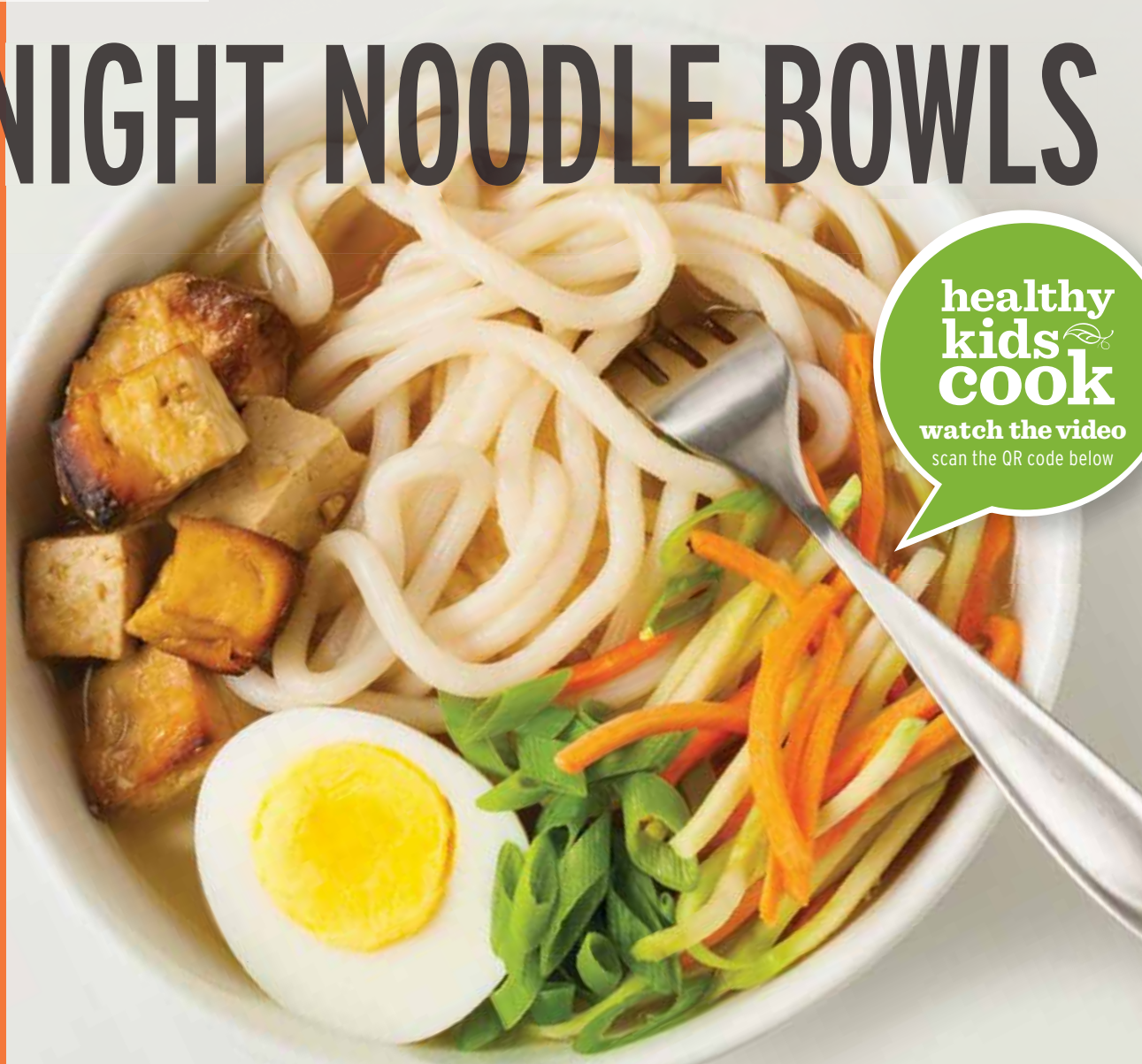
4455 148th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA



# WEEKNIGHT NOODLE BOWLS

With these simple bowls, you can have each family member assemble their own ideal combination of noodles, vegetables, protein and broth. It's a healthy, filling crowd-pleaser that can be on the table in about 20 minutes.

**Find the recipe and additional Healthy Kids Cooks favorites at [pccnaturalmarkets.com/healthykids](http://pccnaturalmarkets.com/healthykids).**



**healthy  
kids  
cook**

**watch the video**  
scan the QR code below

Try these terrific ingredients to make your noodle bowls healthy, fast and delicious.



**Pacific Organic  
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**Taylor Farms  
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**Koyo Udon  
Noodles**



**PCC Deli  
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# Bilingual Education *is good* for **Brain Development**



Emmett is attending the French Immersion School of Washington in Bellevue. Children start at FISW as young as age 2.5, and are immersed in the French language and culture, learning every subject in French. By 5th grade, graduates are often ahead of their monolingual peers in many subjects.

*“As our world becomes fully interconnected, succeeding in life will require new ways of thinking, strong language skills and an open mind. Being bilingual has concrete advantages; it teaches children to be open to new ideas and be aware of other cultures.”*

*Véronique Dussud, Head of School*

## Bilingual Benefits

Research shows that children who speak more than one language become more aware of other cultures, people and points of view. They are better at focusing attention and multi-tasking, are more likely to be avid readers, and find it easier to learn other languages. Families choose an immersion program like FISW because they want their child to reap the benefits of language learning, encourage critical thinking skills, become an independent learner and be a true global citizen.

**W**hen 4-year old Emmet walks into his preschool classroom, he starts his day like many other preschoolers in the Bellevue area - playing at one of the learning stations. As the day progresses, he spends time painting, drawing, playing with blocks and learning to write, count, and even add and subtract. His classroom is like many others - with one exception. Everyone speaks in French.

## Why Immersion?

**Emmet, age 4, American, attends FISW because:**

His family wants him to learn to embrace cultural differences and become a global citizen.

**Bianca, age 7, Mexican, attends FISW because:**

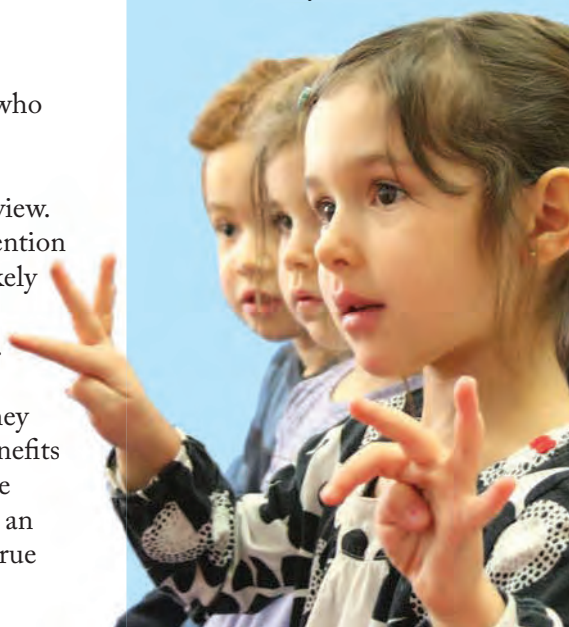
Introducing a third language - French, will preserve her native language - Spanish, by keeping one language from becoming too dominant.

**Pierre, age 5, French, attends FISW because:**

His family wants to maintain his cultural identity and language skills.

**Lucy, age 5, American, attends FISW because:**

Numerous studies show that being bilingual is good for your brain!



## Discover the Joy of Learning!

Learn why being bilingual is good for a child's brain development and discover children with the joy of learning at [www.fisw.org](http://www.fisw.org)

Located in Bellevue | Find out more at [www.fisw.org](http://www.fisw.org) or 425.653.3970

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## 2015 HEALTH TRENDS FOR FAMILIES

*Pedal power, noggin knocks  
and the state of the school lunch*

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### COMING IN FEBRUARY

- **Making It Work:** Our 2015 series on the career/kid juggle kicks off
- **Coitus interruptus:** When sex stops
- **You're grounded! No you're not!** What to do when partners disagree on discipline

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BRUCE R. SWANSON



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navigate great stuff daily!



## Read between the lines

Did you know local libraries have bowling leagues, loan forgiveness, digital story labs and programs to entice even the most reluctant reader or testy tween? Go online to read our Sherlock-worthy discoveries of local library tips, hacks and secrets: [parentmap.com/libraryhacks](http://parentmap.com/libraryhacks).



### Civil rights screen time

January marks Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and we have a roundup of top apps for kids, from an educational app that teaches about black history, to an app about Rosa Parks' heroic journey, to a game that helps start important conversations about race: [parentmap.com/civilrightsapps](http://parentmap.com/civilrightsapps). And when screen time is done, see our recommendations for books that teach kids of different ages about slavery and civil rights: [parentmap.com/civilrightsbooks](http://parentmap.com/civilrightsbooks).

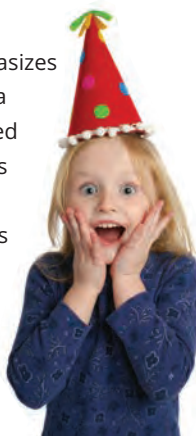


### Homeschool how-to

Have you ever wondered about homeschooling? This month, one mom who also happens to be a teacher reveals why she decided to homeschool her own child, and offers tips on how many different types of families can make homeschooling work — even for kids in middle school and high school. [parentmap.com/homeschools](http://parentmap.com/homeschools)

### Celebrate big, you will

Do you have a *Star Wars* fanatic? If your kiddo fantasizes about whacking the piñata with a light saber, you need to check out our *Star Wars* birthday party roundup, with outta-this-world ideas like Yoda "soda," Clone Trooper cupcakes and Death-Star-worthy décor. [parentmap.com/starwars/birthday](http://parentmap.com/starwars/birthday)



### Take back family time!

We've all been there: It starts with the blissful moment of reuniting at school after being apart from your kids for the day. Hugs, smiles, news to share; and yet, the minute you get home it all seems to fall apart. Peaceful family time might feel elusive some days (OK, many days) — but it's not. Learn the simple habit one parenting coach says is all you need to transform that time after you get home: [parentmap.com/cominghome15](http://parentmap.com/cominghome15). Read the tip, then try it at home and let us know how it goes by tweeting to us @parentmap with [#cominghome15](https://twitter.com/parentmap).

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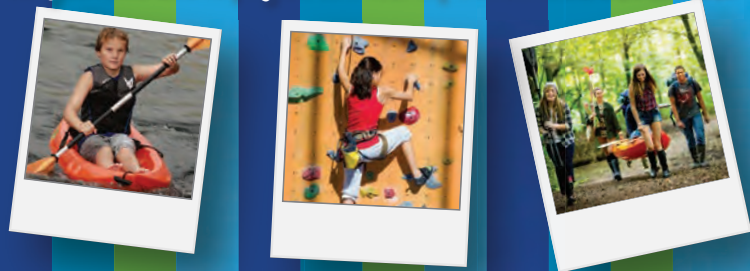
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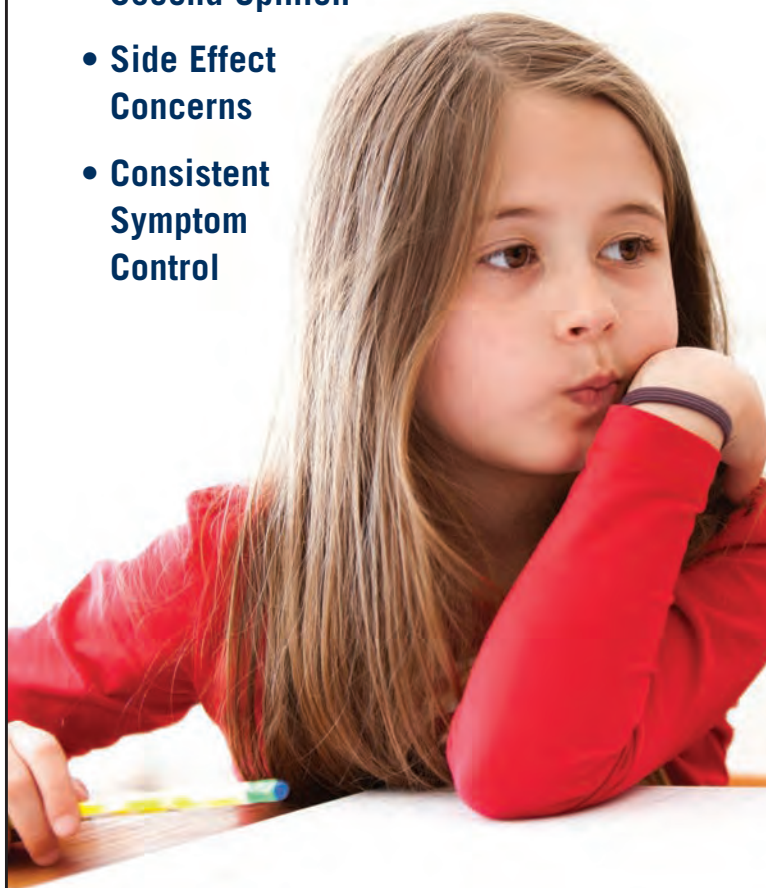
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dear reader

## Yesterday you said 'tomorrow,' right?

**W**hen it comes to our health, or what really has us obsessed — diet and exercise — we're gifted masters of "tomorrow." Most of you don't face the fabulous yet frightening mirror of an identical twin like I do. We've got freakishly similar bodies, mannerisms and aging lines. We've recently discovered our identical daily self-talk in our respective morning showers. Our days start by lathering up and optimistically reassuring ourselves that today's disciplined diet and exercise will yield great things. And then, the day happens. We can inspire one another positively with our joint hot yoga addiction, or badly with our butterball cookie consumption (recipe share: *The Silver Palate Cookbook* p. 257).

The new year offers all of us the opportunity to learn, grow, and better influence our loved ones. Our "health trends" issue kicks off 2015 with inspired and practical content for you and your family's mind and body nourishment.

Could you possibly travel with kids in tow to Costa Rica for a cultural adventure and Spanish lessons? Then book it, and don't say "tomorrow." ("Language-school vacations," p. 37.)

You, readers, inspired our launch of a new feature, in partnership with Seattle Children's, which invites top health and development specialists to respond to your most burning parenting questions and challenges ("Ask the experts," p.47). We kick off the column with resolutions-themed hot topics: social media use and chores.

Often, it's our kids who inspire our elevated behavior. My Maya, (age 13 and topping 5-foot-8-inches) provides me with daily lessons, if I'm wise enough to listen. My default food urge is to chase down a burger and truffle fries.

Maya, a committed dancer who thankfully does not suffer from body-image issues ("Weight worries and body-image secret," p. 57), steers us to consume her favorite treat: an Acai bowl with fresh berries and coconut.

Lastly, Maya and I were lucky enough to attend "Puberty Lady" Julie Metzger's Great Conversations class a couple of years back ("Someone you should know," p. 62). Julie is a master at breaking down the uncomfortable barriers that prevent us from having essential conversations with our kids about sexuality. We laughed a lot as Julie placed a Kotex pad on her head, and cringed a bit as dozens of 10-12-year-old girls and their moms created a chorus by saying "penis" together. Apologies if we're filling up your to-do list, but this is another "do not say tomorrow" experience for you.



*Sharon*

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## BRAIN FUEL

*parent news, snack-sized*

### Baby got back

Parents of infants, here's an important reminder: Forego those darling crib bumpers and grandma-knit baby blankets at bedtime. A new report from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) finds that most U.S. infants — nearly 55 percent! — are still being placed to sleep with bedding that increases their risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). According to the NIH (*nih.gov*), babies should be placed on their backs on a firm, safety-approved mattress covered by a fitted sheet (and no cushy stuff underneath the baby, either); toys, bumpers, quilts or other bedding should be kept out of the crib.



### Girl alert

Got a girl who won't pay attention? Don't write it off as normal (albeit exasperating) tween behavior! New research finds that symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may be missed in tween girls because they are more likely than boys to display inattentiveness, rather than the hyperactivity and impulsivity most people associate with ADHD. In the study, nearly 50 percent of moms of tween girls diagnosed with ADHD say they first attributed the behavior to normal adolescent struggles. BTDub's, the study was commissioned by Shire Pharmaceuticals, makers of Adderall. But still....

### Mixed media

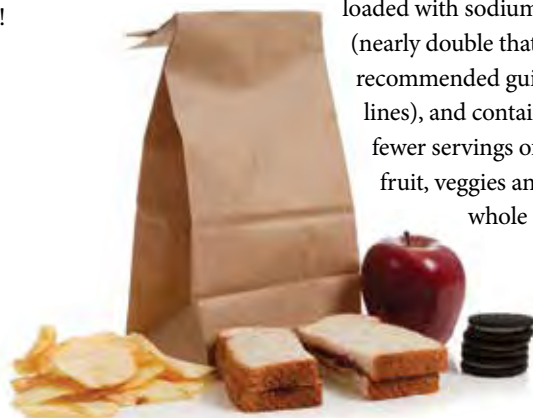
Good news and bad news from a new study on teens and screens: Turns out all of that texting, Snap-chatting, Skyping and TwitBooking is apparently rewiring teen brains for better multitasking. The study — conducted by two high school seniors and presented to the American Academy of Pediatrics — found that some teens who “chronically use multiple media” are becoming adept at switching from devices to real life without losing their performance edge. On the flip side, these kids do worse when asked to focus on a single task. All of which leaves parents of teens right back where we started.



### Lunchbox hero?

For all those well-meaning parents who pack their kids' lunches to avoid “unhealthy” options at school: Here's 20 minutes of your morning back. It looks like the vast majority of homemade lunches are far healthier than what's on offer at school. New research published online by *JAMA Pediatrics* finds that lunches brought from home by elementary

and middle school students are generally loaded with sodium (nearly double that of recommended guidelines), and contain fewer servings of fruit, veggies and whole



grains. About 90 percent of them also contain desserts, snack chips and sweetened beverages. Schools must follow strict nutrition guidelines, so consider leaning on them for lunch instead. You're welcome.

### Chain reaction

New rules from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are about to destroy your junk-food deniability: Chain restaurants and vending machines will soon be required to prominently display nutrition information.

Since most Americans eat and drink about one-third of their calories away from home, these rules have huge implications. By about this time next year, you won't be able to order that Nacho Cheese Doritos Locos Taco in blissful ignorance: The calories, fat, saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium and more will be right there on the menu for you to see. ¡Ay, caramba!



### Milkin' it

Here's a chill new product for nursing moms: specially designed freezer trays for storing breast milk. Made from food-safe, BPA-free PET plastic, the trays create perfect 1-ounce sticks that are shaped to be easily popped through baby-bottle openings. A handy cover protects frozen milk from Häagen-Dazs and dino chicken nugget cross-contamination. These mom-invented trays also keep disposable plastic bags out of the landfill. Find 'em at [fairhavenhealth.com](http://fairhavenhealth.com). We give it two pumps up!

— Kristen A. Russell

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# 12 products to prevent, treat and soothe during cold and flu season

By Tiffany Doerr Guerzon

**J**ingle bells, jingle bells, cough cough, sneeze sneeze. The holiday season brought joy, togetherness . . . and cold and flu season. It's almost inevitable, no matter how healthy your lifestyle is: Someone in your family will come down with a bug this winter. To come to your aid, we've rounded up the latest products to help prevent and treat illness when you and yours are under the weather.

## NIGHTY NIGHT, SLEEP TIGHT

### Celestial Seasonings Sleepytime Kids Goodnight Grape Herbal Tea

Getting plenty of sleep is a sure way to keep immune systems strong and ready to fight off germs. But sometimes it's hard to catch enough z's.



Chamomile tea has long been touted for its relaxing properties, but the taste isn't exactly kid-friendly.

This yummy grape-flavored kids' tea is the perfect way to help children wind down after a busy day. [celestialseasonings.com/products/herbal-teas/sleepytime-kids-goodnight-grape](http://celestialseasonings.com/products/herbal-teas/sleepytime-kids-goodnight-grape)

### Withings Aura

For the grown-ups, the Withings company has a new sleep product called Aura. This device not only tracks your sleep and syncs the data to a smartphone, it also uses light waves that stimulate melatonin production to help you fall asleep. It can even gently bring you out of sleep in the morning during your lightest sleep phase for a stress-free awakening.

[withings.com/us/withings-aura.html](http://withings.com/us/withings-aura.html)



### Warm Tradition Fleece-covered Hot Water Bottles

A cozy hot water bottle brings relief for everything from upset tummies to cold feet. Warm Tradition hot water bottles for kids come with a variety of fun fleece, flannel and even animal-shaped covers. Made of thermoplastic for extra-long-lasting warmth, the bottles are both odorless and recyclable. Snuggle in and get well!

[warmtradition.com/Fleece-KIDS/b/5524208011?ie=UTF8&title=Fleece](http://warmtradition.com/Fleece-KIDS/b/5524208011?ie=UTF8&title=Fleece)

## SAY 'AAHHHHHH'

### Oral-B's Disney Magic Timer

Kids seldom brush as long or as well as they should, but with this free app, you won't have to nag them about dental health. Simply download the free app onto an iPhone, iPad or iPod and



then scan in the kids' Oral-B or Crest product. Children choose from 16 Disney or Marvel characters and receive a digital sticker each time they brush for a

full two minutes. They can also collect other digital rewards for their own brushing calendar; plus, reminders are given when it's time to buy a new toothbrush.

[oralb.com/stages/disney-timer-app](http://oralb.com/stages/disney-timer-app)

### Gaia Kids Black Elderberry Syrup

This syrup is alcohol-free so that the kids can benefit from the healing and preventive properties of elderberries. With dosing recommendations for ages 2 and older, this tasty syrup is taken once a day for a strong immune system, and twice a day when illness hits, for a faster recovery.

[gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/746/GaiaKids-Black-Elderberry-Syrup](http://gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/746/GaiaKids-Black-Elderberry-Syrup)



### Gaia Kids KidsDefense Herbal Drops

Dilute these drops in 4 ounces of herbal tea or warm water for short-term use at the beginning of a cold. Based on the naturopathic principles of stimulating immune response with warming herbs, this product will help raise the body temperature and fight off those germs.

[gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/704/GaiaKids-KidsDefense-Herbal-Drops](http://gaiaherbs.com/products/detail/704/GaiaKids-KidsDefense-Herbal-Drops)



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## 12 products to prevent, treat and soothe

continued from page 13

### Medimals

Tiffany Krumins, the creator of Ava the Elephant, has added two new characters to her talking medicine-dispenser line. You fill the included dropper, and with the push of a button, the character sings, "One, two, three, open wide! Make the medicine go bye-bye!" When kids are focused on BPA- and phthalate-free Ava, Mia or Fin, medicine time is easier



for both parent and child. Ava the Elephant and Medimals were featured on *Shark Tank* and *The Dr. Oz Show*.  
[medimals.com/collections/all](http://medimals.com/collections/all)

### GET MOVING!

#### Zombies, Run!

Staying physically fit during cold and flu season helps to ward off illness. Get your teen or tween off the couch with the app *Zombies, Run!* This immersive running game brings you into the world of zombies with an audio recording of a story, interspersed with your own playlist. Co-created with an award-winning novelist, the audio track keeps your interest in between bursts of running from zombies. So put on those headphones, tie your shoes and run!  
[zombiesrungame.com](http://zombiesrungame.com)



### BODY COMFORT

#### Pharmaca's Breathe Clear Essential Oil Blend

When cough, croup or congestion is making you or your little one miserable, try this essential oil blend. With eucalyptus, sage, thyme, myrtle and spruce, this soothing mix can be added to a humidifier, used in a personal steam bath or even as a mist. For a croupy cough, try adding a few drops to a wet washcloth and placing on a shower shelf while running the hot water in the bathroom to soothe airways, says Cassy Dymond, a naturopathic doctor at Pharmaca in Seattle.  
[pharmaca.com/Sinus-Care/Pharmaca-Essential-Oil-Blend-Breathe-Clear-2oz/521489/10-5600/Product#.VGJf9jCJOuY](http://pharmaca.com/Sinus-Care/Pharmaca-Essential-Oil-Blend-Breathe-Clear-2oz/521489/10-5600/Product#.VGJf9jCJOuY)



### Mentholatum Cherry Chest Rub

For those nights when a cough is keeping everyone up, try this kid-friendly cherry-scented chest rub. The gentle vapors help calm coughs and soothe minor throat irritation in kids ages 2 and older, so you and your child can sleep.  
[us.mentholatum.com/cherry-chest-rub-for-kids](http://us.mentholatum.com/cherry-chest-rub-for-kids)



### Bucky Heart Warmer Pillow

If you prefer your soothing warmth in a microwavable package, try the Bucky Heart Warmer pillow. This beautiful, heart-shaped heat pack comes with a machine-washable cover and is the perfect size for your tummy or back to soothe the sickness, aches and sore muscles. And for little ones, check out the Woopsies: These colorful character pillows can be heated or chilled for relief of any owie. Bucky's products are made in the USA and filled with allergy-free buckwheat, making any of these a great, eco-friendly gift for the holidays.  
[bucky.com/heart-pillow.html](http://bucky.com/heart-pillow.html); [www.bucky.com/woopsie-cold-pack.html](http://www.bucky.com/woopsie-cold-pack.html)



### CALM AND QUIET

#### Scroll Wood Shop Northwest Edition Pentomino Space Needle Puzzle

When sick kids need a break from screens, try one of these beautiful, locally made wooden puzzles. The Northwest edition puzzle is made of 12 different hand-cut hardwoods. Pentomino puzzles have multiple solutions, making these a great way to keep kids busy yet calm. The sturdy wooden pieces are even durable enough to be played with outside of the puzzle frame. Comes with a booklet of puzzle solutions.  
[etsy.com/listing/111699687/northwest-edition-pentomino-space-needle?ref=listing-shop-header-3](http://etsy.com/listing/111699687/northwest-edition-pentomino-space-needle?ref=listing-shop-header-3) ■



Tiffany Doerr Guerson is a freelance writer and the mother of three children, including a teen. Read more of her writing at [TDGuerson.com](http://TDGuerson.com).





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**SATISFYING SOUP** Kids love soup, and the possibilities are endless! To a pre-warmed thermos, try adding tomato soup (top with shredded cheese, corn nibbles, black beans or croutons); chicken noodle soup; potato soup (try adding chopped ham, corn, or bits of broccoli); lentil soup (add some pita or naan wedges on the side for dipping); or miso soup with cubed tofu and sliced seaweed.

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See  
pg 36

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PRESCHOOL - 8

# Training up to help kids

By Hilary Benson

**O**n a recent weekend, with bare winter trees reflecting on Lake Langlois at Camp River Ranch in Carnation, dozens of middle-school-age Girl Scouts gather inside nearby Helena's Lodge and do some reflecting of their own. Led by female volunteers, the girls discuss the media and how their own self-images and identities are shaped by media messages.

Gigi Morrison, a mom from Sammamish whose 12-year-old daughter has been in a Girl Scouts of Western Washington troop since kindergarten, kicks off one focus group by playing the powerful "Like a Girl" video, produced by Always, which, since its release last summer, has



gone viral, tallying more than 53 million YouTube views. Then Morrison gently nudges the girls into talking.

"What does doing something like a girl mean to you?"

"It means doing something wrong or funny," one girl offers. "It means I'm going to do it the best I can," says another. Another adds, "But sometimes it's actually other girls who are the ones who make me feel bad."

Morrison is soft-spoken. She encourages a safe space for all girls to share their thoughts without being judged. "I'm so pro-girl," she says, explaining why she volunteers her time for this project and other Girl Scouts after-school programs. This particular discussion holds special meaning for her. The 54-year-old was once a talented ninth-grade athlete who had the

misfortune of coming of age before Title IX's implementation.

"I was a better basketball player than half of the boys out there, but I wasn't allowed to play on the team with the boys. I had to get their water for them," Morrison says.

To say that volunteers like Morrison make the world go 'round may seem like a cliché. But for many nonprofit organizations, volunteers are the horsepower that allows them to serve more people. For more than a century, volunteers have brought personal experiences, professional expertise and passion to the national Girl Scouts organization. Now, Girl Scouts of Western Washington (GSWW)

is leading the way in adopting program quality standards as part of its volunteer development.

"We want all girls, regardless of income, geography or anything else, receiving consistently high-quality experiences," says Lorey Ford, who oversees quality work for GSWW.

It is no small challenge: With 11,000 volunteers serving about

26,000 girls in 17 western Washington counties, using an assessment tool usually reserved for paid employees is exciting and sometimes challenging, according to organization leaders. "Rolling out the Youth Program Quality (YPQ) process to this sheer number of volunteers just hasn't been done at this scale anywhere else in the country," says Samantha Bannon, manager of program quality initiatives.

Like roughly 100 other organizations across Washington state, the Girl Scouts have in the past three years voluntarily implemented the quality standards with staff, many of whom have youth development backgrounds. The assessment tool covers nine domains, including ongoing staff and volunteer development, as well as youth leadership and engagement, and family, school and community connections. As *ParentMap*



has reported in this series, research shows that quality after-school programs can boost students' academic achievement and social-emotional health. Because the assessment categories are specific, measuring, for instance, "how well staff supports youth with encouragement," there are quantifiable results to guide both staff and volunteers in a journey of continual improvement. Parents, too, can better measure program quality.

After daylong trainings, program volunteers undergo both self-assessments and external assessments with professional trainers. The more accurate their assessments are, the more nimble and successful programs like the Girl Scouts can be in building and maintaining a high-quality corps of essential volunteers. The better trained the volunteers are, the better the programs will be at serving kids and families in that critical 3–6 p.m. window.

"We want to be supportive so that volunteers want to continue to participate," says Girl Scouts program manager Julie Wendell. Forging a new path in a way no others have done before: Now *that* is acting like a girl. ■

*Hilary Benson is a veteran award-winning journalist and mother of three active children. She and her family live in the Seattle area.*

**Editor's note:** In this series, we explore how new voluntary standards developed in Washington state are impacting the quality of after-school programs that serve about 134,000 youths. We explain what parents should seek in a program, look at research on the impact of quality care on kids' development and academics, and visit with programs and kids. After-School Special's independently reported content is funded by a journalism grant in partnership with the Raikes Foundation and School's Out Washington.





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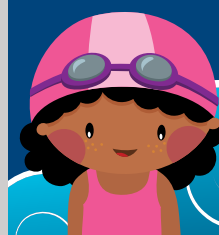
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# 2015 HEALTH TRENDS FOR FAMILIES

*Pedal power, noggin knocks and the state of the school lunch*

BY NANCY SCHATZ ALTON

**A**s parents, we spend a good amount of our time — in the winter months, especially — trying to keep our families healthy. But good health goes beyond the occasional doctor visit: Every day, we're faced with choices about how to be and stay well. News about concussion rates raises the question of whether it is OK to sign our children up for football or if our little kickers should stop heading the soccer ball. Bicycling enthusiasts hauling their kids around on cargo bikes next to our traffic-entrapped cars seem to whisper for us uninitiated to come and join their hip and growing club. Even as some of us pound the running trails and pump gym iron, our children explore new,

holistically healthy horizons, introducing us, for example, to old-style Seattle family dances with their fiddle playing and sweaty-fun square dances. This past Halloween renewed our “pot state” concerns over marijuana edibles in the form of enticing candy. And we worry, always, about the health quotient of our kids’ school lunches.

It's a new year: What better time to turn over a new leaf and set our healthy goals and intentions? As families, we can arm ourselves with the latest research and information, and embrace mind and body trends to create new ways to live healthfully together. Read on for intel and inspiration! >>



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## HEALTH TRENDS

continued from page 21

### PEDAL FORWARD WITH FAMILY BIKING

There's a revolution rolling down our city's streets, and its symbol is a cargo bike. "I define a 'family bike' as a bike that holds an adult and one or more kids. But family biking is any method of biking with children, whether they're attached to an adult's bike or riding separately," says Madi Carlson, leader of monthly **Kidical Mass** family rides and the board president of **Familybike** Seattle ([familybike.org](http://familybike.org)), a nonprofit that has a family bike rental fleet and hosts expos and educational seminars.

This pedaling movement helped bump Seattle to no. 8 on *Bicycling* magazine's 2014 Top 50 Bike-friendly Cities list. Biking parents are part of the grassroots advocacy group **Seattle Neighborhood Greenways** ([seattlegreenways.org](http://seattlegreenways.org)). "Family bikers are the canary in the coal mine; they are carrying the most precious cargo of all," says executive director Cathy Tuttle. When roads are not safe enough for a child or family to cycle on, volunteers and advocates work to make sure it becomes so, Tuttle says.

Thanks to this coalition's advocacy, the Seattle Department of Transportation's Bicycle Master Plan will make roads safer for families who pedal together. Passed unanimously by the Seattle City Council last April, the plan includes recommendations for 608 miles of bike routes, including off-street trails, protected bike lanes and 249 miles of greenways. Other elements include bike parking, intersection crossings, signs, and education and encouragement programs. The full cost of implementing this plan is around \$500 million. "Family biking takes the most mundane and frustrating part of parenting and turns it into one that is engaging and enlivening, turning wasted time into quality time. Family biking is also a real way to model consumption and lifestyle choices that are healthy for our bodies and responsible to our communities and the environment," says Davey Oil, co-owner of **Seattle's G & O Family Cyclery** ([familycyclery.com](http://familycyclery.com)).

### CONSIDER CONCUSSIONS

In recent months, many parents have become more aware of concussion risks in youth sports due in part to what seems like more media coverage. In fact, "We are starting to pay more attention to

something that has always been around. Probably every adult had some experience of getting a concussion and being told to walk it off and 'you'll feel better in a few days,'" says Samuel Browd, M.D., the medical director of Seattle Children's Hospital's Sports Concussion Program. "That's no longer the protocol. Now, we systematically walk a player through the recovery process."

A concussion means a child has hit his or her head hard enough to have a temporary metabolic change in their brain, Browd says. Most resolve quickly, but persistent symptoms call for a visit to a concussion management clinic. Nelle Steele took her son to **Seattle Children's Hospital Sports**



**Concussion Clinic** after he hit his head playing a tripping game. "The doctor was able to list activities our son typically does and what his symptoms need to look like before he can engage in each of those activities again," Steele says.

Parents might be surprised to know which kids are at risk — it's not only football players. While the highest rate of concussion happens to young male football players, followed by boys' ice hockey and lacrosse, girls' soccer, lacrosse and basketball players suffer the next highest rates of concussion, according to a 2012 study published in *The American Journal of Sports Medicine*. "Collision sports can have a high rate of concussions as do many solo sports, such as equestrian, wheel

sports like skateboarding and snow sports like snowboarding and skiing, unless certain protocols are followed. The key to how well our children recover and return to play is how quickly we first identify a concussion has happened and how well we manage it," says Brooke de Lench, executive director of MomsTEAM Institute and producer of *The Smartest Team: Making High School Football Safer* on PBS ([thesmartestteam.com](http://thesmartestteam.com)).

So, is your child's sport safe enough? It's a personal decision. Parents should educate themselves about concussion signs and treatment protocol, talk to coaches and teach their children about symptoms. Check out the **MomsTEAM Institute** protocol for concussion risk reduction ([thesmartestteam.com/#!six-pillars/cnz4](http://thesmartestteam.com/#!six-pillars/cnz4)).

### FIGHT OBESITY HEALTHFULLY

Congrats to us! Washington state was one of 19 states that showed a decline in obesity among low-income 2- to 5-year-olds in a study reported in August by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This is hopeful news in light of a study published this fall in *Pediatrics* that showed most children who were obese in fifth grade were still at an unhealthy weight at the beginning of 10th grade.

"Obesity crosses all socioeconomic groups. It's more challenging with lower-income groups because the access to healthy foods and activities is harder for them. As people begin to develop awareness, habits start to change and gradually over time these changes become the norm, just like smoking rates have declined," says Lenna Liu, M.D., MPH, who leads Seattle Children's Hospital's obesity program.

She notes that the obesity issue needs a collective response from industry, government and schools. In our state, the **Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition** ([copcwa.org](http://copcwa.org)) is pushing for policy change to create environments in which children can more easily lead healthy, active lifestyles.

"Some schools are working hard to make a healthier environment. Recently, we helped Kent and Highline school districts create a PE curriculum that contains more physical activity that is more culturally relevant, too," says Brian E. Saelens, Ph.D., a researcher and obesity expert at Seattle Children's Research Institute ([seattlechildrens.org/research](http://seattlechildrens.org/research)). >>

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## HEALTH TRENDS

continued from page 23

Parents should remember to let their children know that weight and appearance do not make you who you are, Liu says. "Weight is one aspect of a person, and it is a very, very small aspect. I heard someone say, 'All the weight is your relationship to gravity. It doesn't tell you anything about a person.' There is much diversity — even within a family — and we really need to honor that."

How do we encourage children to eat well, find fun in exercise and maintain a healthy body image? Start with Seattle Children's **7-5-2-1-0 formula**: Eat breakfast 7 days a week; eat 5 fruit and vegetable servings a day; limit screen time to two hours each day maximum; incorporate one hour of physical activity into their day, and aim for zero sugar-sweetened beverages. Focus on small changes: Park the car 15 minutes from school and walk the rest of the way; have a weekly family exercise time where everyone takes a turn choosing activities such as playing tag and swimming. And ask your kids what sport they want to try next — their answers may surprise you! Out of ideas? Learn about unusual sports classes for kids at [parentmap.com/unusualsports](http://parentmap.com/unusualsports).

### ADDRESS POT EDIBLES

The tales of middle school and high school students ingesting pot edibles and ending up at the hospital are fact, not rumor. Officials at Seattle Public Schools (SPS) have seen an increase in edible consumption since medical marijuana became legal in

Washington in 2012, finding lollipop sticks with brand names and candy bar wrappers purchased at legal dispensaries, says Lisa Davidson, manager of prevention and intervention at SPS.

"When I talk to young people, they say, 'It's legal now, it's not a problem or a big deal.' They don't understand the potency specific to edibles [often stronger potency and longer-lasting effects than smoked or vaped pot]. We don't want to teach them how to use safely, but we want them to know if they eat a whole pot candy bar, they are going to the hospital. We've seen panicking and vomiting teens who couldn't breathe and called ambulances," Davidson says.

Especially now that pot is recreationally legal in this state, parents shouldn't have edibles out and available for children and teens, says Leslie Walker, M.D., codirector of the **Adolescent Substance Abuse Program at Seattle Children's Hospital**. "Kids get their marijuana from other kids or from their home. Parents are the most important definer of whether or not their kid is going to use drugs."

As 2015 gets under way, commit to talking about pot edibles to your kids in the same way you discuss other drugs or risks. "They are going to make a decision about taking pot edibles without their parents there, out in the world. Kids do a much better job if they talk with their parents about it," Walker says. For younger children, it's enough to say, "It can hurt you, and it's illegal, and

we have family rules because we love you," Davidson recommends. For scripts for tweens and teens, go to [starttalkingnow.org](http://starttalkingnow.org) and [drugfree.org](http://drugfree.org). >>



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See pg 36

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### HEALTH TRENDS

continued from page 25



#### ARE THEY EATING THEIR VEGETABLES?

On Twitter feeds, students sarcastically “thank” Michelle Obama and the federally mandated public school lunch standards that have made salty, junky food a no-no in lunchrooms across the country, and the school cafeteria has become, in some states, as politicized as the statehouse. But how have the updated USDA child nutrition rules ([www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs](http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/child-nutrition-programs)) — which require schools to offer healthier foods and limit bad fats and sodium, and require kids to choose a fruit or vegetable, among other guidelines — really fared? Is your child eating full, healthier school lunches with a smile on her face, or not?

“The message nationally is that schools are spending more money on higher-quality food, and kids won’t eat it,” says Tricia Kovacs, who works for the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and is the state lead for the National Farm to School Network, which brings locally grown food to schools. “Students need time and encouragement to adjust, and schools have limited resources. We hope efforts like Farm to School will help schools get kids to eat the new foods.”

Here is a snapshot of the state of school lunch programs around our state:

- Wenatchee serves locally sourced food regularly at area schools.
- Walla Walla has a farm-to-school food program.
- Renton, Kent and Auburn have partnered with WSDA on a three-year pilot project to purchase foods from nearby farms and local distributors.
- The La Conner School District has a student helper in its kitchens daily and frequently buys from farms in the community.
- High-need schools in the Seattle Public Schools (SPS) have a daily-snack program with a fresh fruit or vegetable.
- Several Spokane-area school districts have focused on making the transition to cooking from scratch and buying from local farms.

In SPS, average daily lunch program participation dropped by about 1,000 students between 2012 and 2014 as the new menus rolled out, even as the district’s overall student body grew. The district’s director of Nutrition Services, Wendy Weyer, R.D., SNS, says the district is learning and hopeful. “We are still looking at this as a journey. Participation is still not back up, and we are continually asking, ‘How do you use different herbs and flavors to intensify the flavor profile so kids will take the first bite?’”

Kovacs’ child attends a Seattle public school, and she often advises parents there to look again at school



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## HEALTH TRENDS

continued from page 26

lunches. “Your participation improves the quality by improving the budget. Some assume the lunches are no good because they are affordable, but the nutrition and quality is much improved, and they highlight great local foods.”

### MAKE MUSIC A FAMILY ENDEAVOR

During **Seattle Fandango Project** ([seattlefandangoproject.org](http://seattlefandangoproject.org)) performances, two dancers tap out a powerful dance while musicians play guitar-like instruments and a donkey jaw while singing, and audience members get their blood flowing by tapping their feet and clapping their hands. “People from a range of cultural backgrounds meet every Saturday at [Seattle’s] El Centro de la Raza. I joined as a young mom because I could connect to my heritage and my kids could participate or play video games with other kids,” says member Yesenia Hunter, whose girls learned to play the guitar-like jarana after a member they looked up to challenged them to learn. This mix of music, dance and verse is a tradition from Veracruz, Mexico.

Many families begin sharing music-and-motion experiences at parent-child classes geared toward preschoolers, such as **Music for Everyone** ([musicforevery1.com](http://musicforevery1.com)). “The songs they learn in class reappear in home life, singing during car rides, nature songs on hikes or bath-time songs. When parents and children sing to each other about their daily world, music becomes another language the family shares,” says independent early childhood music teacher Jana Vitols.

A short list of Seattle-area family musical endeavors includes cultural arts classes at the **Cornerstone Café** in Hillman City ([hillmancitycollaboratory.org](http://hillmancitycollaboratory.org)); the **Columbia City Family**

**Chorus** ([kathleentracy.com/columbia-city-family-chorus](http://kathleentracy.com/columbia-city-family-chorus)), which has a repertoire that stretches from Woody Guthrie to Katy Perry; and **Seattle Family Dance’s** caller-led communal dances ([seattledance.org/family](http://seattledance.org/family)) at Seattle’s Phinney Neighborhood Center, held monthly from October through April. “I used to say if you could walk, you could dance, but I’ve seen people do this walking-to-music partner dancing in wheelchairs. I’ve taught kindergartners all the basic moves they need in five minutes,” says organizer Amy Carroll.

It’s said that playing and moving to music with other people creates a sense of community and empathy, says Jacob Finkle, director of the **Intergenerational Choir** at University Unitarian Church ([uuchurch.org/music/choirs](http://uuchurch.org/music/choirs)) in Seattle. “There are biological reasons, too. Singing releases dopamine, which gives feelings of pleasure, increases levels of immunoglobulin A, which decreases stress, and increases levels of oxytocin, which promotes trust,” Finkle says. “Studies show singing in a group is often a place that people feel most comfortable being their true self. I also think that you learn a lot about other people’s cultures by singing their music, which can lead to greater understanding across distances and years.”

You can learn more about family music and dance opportunities at [parentmap.com](http://parentmap.com) and explore unique, off-the-beaten-path instruments trending with kids at [parentmap.com/uniqueinstruments](http://parentmap.com/uniqueinstruments). ■

*When not navigating parenthood, Nancy Schatz Alton uses her brainpower to write, edit and fact-check articles for websites and magazines. Find her blog at [WithinTheWords.com](http://WithinTheWords.com).*

## SCHOOLS



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## January PICKS



### Preschool Previews

Help with the daunting preschool search is here. ParentMap presents four regional preschool fairs featuring dozens of organizations at each one. **Highland Community Center**, Bellevue, Jan. 10, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.; **Shoreline Community College**, Jan. 11, 2–4 p.m.; **STAR Center**, Tacoma, Jan. 17, 10 a.m.–noon; **Mount Baker Community Club**, Seattle, Jan. 18, 2–4 p.m. [parentmap.com/preschool-previews](http://parentmap.com/preschool-previews)



### ParentMap Lecture: Gordon Neufeld Ph.D.

ParentMap's series kicks off with a talk by renowned **developmental psychologist Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D.**, who will share surprising insights into the alpha-child dynamic in a talk titled "Who's the Boss: Making Sense of Power Struggles." Thursday, Jan. 22. \$25. Town Hall Seattle. [parentmap.com/lectures](http://parentmap.com/lectures)



### Star Wars Costumes at EMP

Explore the power of costumes as EMP opens a much-anticipated exhibit showcasing **nearly 60 costumes from six Star Wars movies**—from Darth Vader's mask to the gilded suit of C-3PO. The exhibit will also explore the creative process behind iconic characters and their clothing. Exhibit opens Jan. 31; buy tickets starting Jan. 7. EMP Museum. [empmuseum.org](http://empmuseum.org)

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## MONDAY

## TUESDAY

## WiggleWorks kids



4

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**Seattle Family Dance.** Press pause on the new holiday gadgets and learn simple, fun dances with your family. 3–5 p.m. \$6/person or \$18/family. Ages 10 and under with families. Phinney Neighborhood Center, Seattle. [seattledance.org](http://seattledance.org)

5

**Free Skate Monday.** Last Monday to skate at this large, open-air rink, free for Bank of America or Alaska Airlines cardholders on Mondays. 3–9 p.m. (Rink open through Jan. 11.) Magic Season Arena, Bellevue Downtown Park. [magicseason.com](http://magicseason.com)

**Cornerstone Café Open Play.** New community café offers drop-in play on weekdays and other family programs. \$3 suggested donation. Ages 5 and under with caregiver. Cornerstone Café, Seattle. [facebook.com/FOCSCornerstoneCafe](https://facebook.com/FOCSCornerstoneCafe)

6

**Shoreline Indoor Playground.** Let the kiddos loose at this huge gym with balls, hoops, toys and slides. Monday–Friday 9:30–11:30 a.m. \$2. Ages 1–5. Spartan Recreation Center, Shoreline. [shorelinewa.gov](http://shorelinewa.gov) **ONGOING EVENT**  
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11

**Snow Sport Helmet Fitting and Giveaway.** Kohl's and Seattle Children's team up to protect kids' noggins; one helmet per child. 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 4–18 (wearer must be present). Seattle Children's Bellevue Clinic and Surgery Center. [makesurethehelmetfits.org](http://makesurethehelmetfits.org)  
**Tacoma Resident FREE Day at PDZA.** City of Tacoma dwellers enjoy free admission to the zoo and aquarium. Jan. 11 and 24, 9:30 a.m.–4 p.m. **FREE** for Tacoma residents with proper I.D. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. [pdza.org](http://pdza.org)

12

**Maker Mondays.** Visit Future of Flight's Maker Space to experiment with 3D modeling and try out the 3D printer. Mondays, 3–8 p.m. \$5–\$10; printing extra. Ages 11–18, under 15 with adult. Future of Flight Aviation Center, Mukilteo. [futureofflight.org](http://futureofflight.org)  
**Toddler Time at the Aquarium.** Marine science fun for little bodies and minds. Jan. 12, 13, 26, 27. 9:30 a.m.–noon. Included with admission. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. Seattle Aquarium, Seattle. [seattleaquarium.org](http://seattleaquarium.org)

13

**Tuesday Tales.** Get comfy for this monthly story time (readings at 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.); this month's selection is "It's Okay to be Different" by Todd Parr. 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Included with admission. Imagine Children's Museum, Everett. [imaginecm.org](http://imaginecm.org)  
**Self-guided Walking Tour at Shadow Lake Bog.** Download the guide and embark on a two-mile walk to see and explore the fascinating features of this bog preserve. Daily during daylight hours. **FREE.** Shadow Lake Nature Preserve, Renton. [shadowhabitat.org](http://shadowhabitat.org)

18

**The Velveteen Rabbit.** This sweet story illustrates the bond between children and their special toys. Saturday–Sunday, Jan. 10–25. \$10; \$5 for kids 1–3 on all-ages Sunday shows. Ages 5 and up. SecondStory Repertory, Redmond. [secondstoryrep.org](http://secondstoryrep.org)  
**41st Annual Model Railroad Show.** Ride on the kid-sized train, build with Legos at the interactive station, plus check out all the displays. Saturday–Monday, Jan. 17–19. Included with admission. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. [pacificsciencecenter.org](http://pacificsciencecenter.org)

19

**United Way MLK Day of Service.** Honor the legacy of Dr. King by volunteering to improve your community. Become a project leader or join a project. United Way of King County. [uwkc.org](http://uwkc.org)  
**FREE Entrance to National Parks.** Venture out to one of Washington's three spectacular National Parks: Mount Rainier, North Cascades or Olympic National Park, **FREE** today in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. [nps.org](http://nps.org)

20

**Dirty Dancing.** Baby and Johnny dance and fall in love, live on stage for fans of the beloved 1987 movie. Jan. 20–Feb. 1. Ages 12 and up. \$25–\$100. Paramount Theatre, Seattle. [stgprepresents.org](http://stgprepresents.org)  
**We Are 12.** Relive the Seattle Seahawks' road to Super Bowl victory, take a peek at the Lombardi trophy, and hope for a repeat. Daily through Dec. 2015. Included with admission. EMP Museum, Seattle. [empmuseum.org](http://empmuseum.org)

25

**Wild Winter Story Time.** IslandWood welcomes kids and families for tales of winter from around the world, plus outdoor exploration and a cookie. 1–3 p.m. \$5; ages 3 and under free; preregister. All ages. IslandWood, Bainbridge Island. [islandwood.org](http://islandwood.org)  
**Mini Maestros: Peter and the Wolf.** Join Tacoma Symphony Orchestra for this introduction to orchestra instruments, each as a character in the classic Russian folk tale. 2:30 p.m. \$7–\$10. Ages 2–8 with families. Rialto Theater, Tacoma. [broadwaycenter.org](http://broadwaycenter.org)

26

**Story Time at WiggleWorks.** Pause the wild wiggling for a reading time breather. Mondays, Wednesdays at noon and 5 p.m. Included with admission. For kids 48 inches and under in height. WiggleWorks Kids, Bellevue. [wiggleworkskids.com](http://wiggleworkskids.com) **ONGOING EVENT**  
**Science Fair Success.** Learn how the library can help make your science fair project a winner. 7–8 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 6 and up. Pierce County Library, University Place Branch. [piercecountylibrary.org](http://piercecountylibrary.org)

27

**Indoor Playground.** Bounce, balance, roll and play. Sunday–Friday 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. \$6; adults free. Ages 1–5 with caregiver. Seattle Gymnastics Academy Lake City Gym, Seattle. [seattlegymnastics.com](http://seattlegymnastics.com) **ONGOING EVENT**  
**See the World Change the World.** This Children's International Film Festival collection of shorts transports kids across the globe. \$8–\$11. 5:30 p.m.; also Jan. 25, 11:30 a.m. Ages 10 and up. Northwest Film Forum, Seattle. [nwfilmforum.org](http://nwfilmforum.org)



## WEDNESDAY



*Sally's Way* is one of the films showing at the Children's International Film Festival, Jan. 22-Feb. 7.

7

**Little Bookworms Story Time.** Stop by for stories, songs and a special treat. 11 a.m.-noon Wednesdays. **FREE.** Ages 0-5 with caregiver. The Shops at the Bravern, Bellevue. [thebravern.com](http://thebravern.com) **ONGOING EVENT**

**After-School STEAM Games.** Visit the library for fun and games related to science, technology, engineering, art and math. 3:30-5 p.m. **FREE.** Grades K-12. Seattle Public Library, Greenwood Branch. [spl.org](http://spl.org)

14

**Juice and Jammies Story Time.** Wear your PJs, bring your stuffies, and share bedtime stories with friends. Wednesdays, 7 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Barnes & Noble, Olympia. [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com) **ONGOING EVENT**

**Mary Poppins.** Delight in this hit musical about a high-flying English nanny, with "Spoonful of Sugar," "Chim Chim Cher-ee" and other beloved songs. Wednesday-Sunday, Jan. 9-Feb. 8. \$35-\$67. All ages. Everett Performing Arts Center. [villagetheatre.org](http://villagetheatre.org)

21

**Lil' Diggers Playtime.** A sandbox bigger than your whole backyard with lots of toys and wi-fi for grown-ups. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 9:30-11 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. \$7. Ages 5 and under. Sandbox Sports, Seattle. [sandboxsports.net](http://sandboxsports.net) **ONGOING EVENT**

**Movies at the Museum: Jungle Book.** Join the adventures of Mowgli, a boy raised in the wild by animals; pre-register for dinner. 6-8 p.m. \$5-\$8; \$3 dinner. All ages. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. [kidsquest.org](http://kidsquest.org)

28

**Fiddleheads Family Nature Class.** Explore a topic with learning stations and nature walks; new weekly afternoon sessions for older preschoolers. Wednesday, 1:30-3:30 p.m.; other days available as well \$18/adult-child pair, \$9 additional child; preregister. Ages 2-5 with caregiver; 4-5 for Wednesday afternoon sessions. Washington Park Arboretum, Seattle. [depts.washington.edu/uwbg](http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg) **ONGOING EVENT**

## THURSDAY

1

**Polar Bear Dip.** Gather your courage, then strip down to your suit for an invigorating dunk in Lake Washington. 11 a.m. **FREE.** Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park, Renton. [rentonwa.gov](http://rentonwa.gov)

**Model Train Festival.** Last day to take in an eye-popping array of model trains, built and operated by some grown-ups who really, really love trains. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. \$8-\$11; ages 5 and under free. Washington State History Museum, Tacoma. [washingtonhistory.org](http://washingtonhistory.org)

8

**Rocky Mountain Express.** This IMAX documentary appeals to train fans young and old and features stunning Canadian scenery. Multiple show times through Feb. 5. \$6-\$9. Ages 2 and up. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. [pacificsciencecenter.org](http://pacificsciencecenter.org)

**Open Skate.** Indoor skate park offers discounted evening open sessions for skaters of all ages; other sessions available. Tuesday-Saturday, 7-9 p.m. \$5. All Together Skate Park, Seattle. [alltogetherskatepark.com](http://alltogetherskatepark.com) **ONGOING EVENT**

15

**Family Book Club.** Read *A Bear Called Paddington* by Michael Bond, then come discuss the book with other families. 6:30-7:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 6-12 with adult. King County Library System, Sammamish Branch. [kcls.org](http://kcls.org)

**Imaging the Arctic.** Learn about the impact of climate change on West Greenland through art, science and stories. Tuesday-Sunday through Feb. 22. Included with admission. Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle. [nordicmuseum.org](http://nordicmuseum.org)

22

**Children's International Film Festival.** This unique festival screens more than 175 films from 45 countries. Highlights include an opening-night screening of a Buster Keaton film, Caspar Babypants pajama party and pancake breakfast screening. Jan. 22-Feb. 7. \$8-\$11 per film. Seattle. [nwfilmforum.org](http://nwfilmforum.org)

**Who's the Boss: Making Sense of Power Struggles.** Developmental psychologist Gordon Neufeld Ph.D. speaks at the first Parent-Map lecture of the 2015 series. 7 p.m. \$25. Town Hall, Seattle. [parentmap.com/lectures](http://parentmap.com/lectures)

29

**KURIOS - Cabinet of Curiosities.** An inventor stars in Cirque du Soleil's latest show, aiming to turn perception on its head amid Cirque's amazing acrobatic talent. Jan. 29-March 22. \$25-\$131. Marymoor Park, Redmond. [cirquedusoleil.com](http://cirquedusoleil.com)

**Board Game Night at Card Kingdom.** Learn and play a bounty of fun games with your family and other like-minded folks. Thursdays 6:30-10 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Card Kingdom, Seattle. [cardkingdom.com](http://cardkingdom.com) **ONGOING EVENT**

## FRIDAY

2

**Sing-a-Long-a Sound of Music.** Share your love of this timeless Julie Andrews showcase, belting out "Doe, a deer, a female deer"; there's a costume contest, too. January 2-4. \$31. Ages 8 and up. The 5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle. [5thavenue.org](http://5thavenue.org)

**Geronimo Stilton Party.** Celebrate this popular children's book character with like-minded fans. 3-4 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 7-11. Pierce County Library, Gig Harbor Branch. [piercecountylibrary.org](http://piercecountylibrary.org)

9

**Preschool Pets.** Kids meet a loveable shelter pet, plus take part in animal-themed crafts, games and songs. 10-11 a.m. \$10; preregister. Ages 4-5 with caregiver. Crossroads Bellevue Community Room, Bellevue. [seattlehumane.org](http://seattlehumane.org)

**Friday Morning Story Time.** Kids are invited for storytelling and tales every Friday in the children's area of the bookstore. Fridays. 10 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 0-5 with adult. Third Place Books, Lake Forest Park. [thirdplacebooks.com](http://thirdplacebooks.com) **ONGOING EVENT**

16

**The LEGO Movie.** Head out for a casual family date night and get your fix of your favorite movie; beer and wine for purchase for adults. \$5/family. Mount Baker Community Club, Seattle. [mountbaker.org](http://mountbaker.org)

**Hour of Code.** Learn to write code and think like a programmer; beginners welcome. 3:30-4:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 9 and up. Pierce County Library, University Place Branch. [piercecountylibrary.org](http://piercecountylibrary.org)

23

**Mwindo.** This world premiere by Seattle Children's Theatre is a coming-of-age tale from Central Africa, where the title character battles enemies and obstacles to reach his potential. Jan. 22-Feb. 15. \$25-\$36. Ages 9 and up. Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle. [sct.org](http://sct.org)

**Snap! Show for Kids: Vicious Puppies Crew.** Local breakdancing crew performs amazing and inspiring moves close up for young kids. 11:15-11:45 a.m. \$5; preregistration recommended. Ages 2-5 with adult. Frye Art Museum, Seattle. [fryemuseum.org](http://fryemuseum.org)

30

**Don Quixote.** Pacific Northwest Ballet presents this lively and colorful staging of the Spanish adventures of the romantic dreamer Don Quixote. Jan. 30-Feb. 8. \$30-\$184. Ages 5 and up. PNB McCaw Hall, Seattle. [pnb.org](http://pnb.org)

**Craft Extravaganza.** Dig into crafts and construction with your friends on this day off school between semesters. 3-4:30 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Seattle Public Library, Lake City Branch. [spl.org](http://spl.org)

## SATURDAY

3

**Beauty and the Beast.** The Fremont Players return with a British panto-style show, full of outrageous characters, catchy songs, audience participation, plus a magic horse. Through Jan. 11. \$7-\$13. All ages. Hale's Palladium, Seattle. [fremontplayers.com](http://fremontplayers.com)

**Pier into the Night.** Harbor WildWatch invites families to "travel" under the surface of the Sound to explore the sea at night. 6-8 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Skansie Brothers Park, Gig Harbor. [harborwildwatch.org](http://harborwildwatch.org)

10

**Exploration for All: Autism Early Open at Pacific Science Center.** A new program allows families with children on the autism spectrum to explore exhibits before doors open to the public. Second Saturday of the month through Dec. 2015, 8 a.m.-10 a.m. **FREE** admission. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. [pacificsciencecenter.org](http://pacificsciencecenter.org)

**Family Day: Snowflake Salutations.** Make a sparkly winter snowflake ornament. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Included with admission. Museum of Glass, Tacoma. [museumofglass.org](http://museumofglass.org)

17

**Kids' Saturday in the Park.** Olympic Sculpture Park's Paccar Pavilion welcomes families to explore what makes a good city with activities, story time (11:30 a.m.) and a screening of *The LEGO Movie* (1 p.m.). 11 a.m.-3 p.m. **FREE;** RSVP requested. All ages. Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle. [seattleartmuseum.org](http://seattleartmuseum.org)

**Peking Acrobats.** All ages will marvel at the feats of balance, flexibility and strength displayed by this dazzling troupe. 3 p.m. \$19-\$49. Pantages Theater, Tacoma. [broadwaycenter.org](http://broadwaycenter.org)

24

**X-treme International Ice Racing.** Lightweight motorcycles with powerful engines, studded tires and no brakes race around a track made of ice. 7:30 p.m. \$10-\$32. All ages. Xfinity Arena, Everett. [xfinityarenaeverett.com](http://xfinityarenaeverett.com)

**Bushwick Book Club's Winnie the Pooh.** The innovative Bushwick troupe, which writes and performs songs about favorite books, does a special performance inspired by the A.A. Milne tales. 11 a.m. Kids 12 and under free; adults \$5. Town Hall Seattle. [townhallseattle.org](http://townhallseattle.org)

31

**Raffi.** Beloved children's entertainer, recording industry pioneer and advocate Raffi brings his hugely popular tunes such as "Baby Beluga" and "Shake Your Sillies Out" to fans of all ages. 1 p.m. \$31.50. Get tickets early! Neptune Theatre, Seattle. [stgresents.org](http://stgresents.org)

**Family Nature Walk.** Naturalists help families explore the green world around us. 10-11 a.m. **FREE;** preregistration requested. Ages 3 and up. Wapato Park, Tacoma. [metroparkstacoma.org](http://metroparkstacoma.org)

# Good Growing

A Seattle Children's Publication | **Winter 2015**

## Preparing Kids for Success in a Changing World

One of the most important jobs we have as parents is teaching our kids to thrive in this complex, quickly changing world. We want them to be successful citizens who can happily learn, live and work in communities that are becoming more diverse every day.

Being curious, compassionate and accepting enriches our lives — and the lives of those around us. We all benefit when we learn from each other and find what connects us. This means respecting our differences. Beyond ethnic, religious and gender differences, we must also respect our physical and intellectual differences, differences in sexual orientation and gender identity, and in mental and emotional health.

As families, we can live this philosophy



through our actions. Find fun ways to learn about other cultures, and travel if you can. Push your child — and yourself — to learn one or more new languages. Socialize with families who don't mirror your own; this might include multi-ethnic, multi-generational,

or same-sex-parent families. Attend religious services or cultural celebrations with friends whose background is different than yours. If you can choose your child's school, be sure it offers a diverse mix of both students and staff members. Help your child arrange a play date with a classmate who has a physical challenge or disability, and get to know that child as a person.

We can choose toys, books, videos and music that value diversity. When we spot stereotypes in the media, we can talk with our kids about how these unfair portrayals can be harmful. And we may need to re-think how we talk or joke about others. What messages are we sending our kids if we refer to someone as 'crazy,' or grumble about a person's accent being difficult to understand?

Does an attitude of acceptance mean that all behaviors should be accepted? Of course not. Our kids can understand that it's never OK to hurt or disrespect others. Lying, cheating, stealing and bullying should not be tolerated at home, at school or in society.

In a world that is changing so quickly, here's something that will always be true: kids who feel deeply loved and respected — simply for being their unique selves — have a solid foundation for life. They'll be ready to go out into the world and do wonderful things!

### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing) to read 7 Ways to Raise a Global Kid.

### Calling All Parents and Caregivers

Are you looking for more information about child health and safety? Sign up for my Good Growing, Seattle Children's free community education email newsletter for parents and caregivers of babies, children and teens. The newsletter is sent six times each year in an easy-to-read format so you can quickly scan to find tips that apply to your family. You'll get the latest on growth and development, research on child health and safety topics, nutrition and fitness tips, class information, and more! Subscribe today at [www.seattlechildrens.org/newsletters](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/newsletters).



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## Tips for Medicine Safety

We can all prevent accidental poisonings from medicines if we follow some key safety tips. First, never refer to medicine as ‘candy’; call it medicine. Store it out of a child’s sight and reach, and lock cabinets and drawers. (Don’t assume a high-up location is safe, since kids like to climb and explore.) Purses and other personal bags often contain medicine, so keep them somewhere safe where kids can’t access them. Keep all medicines in their original containers and follow

label directions; re-read them each time and follow dosing instructions. Check the expiration date and safely dispose of old products. Finally, have grandparents and other caregivers medicine-proof their home prior to a child’s visit.

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### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.wapc.org](http://www.wapc.org) or [www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing).



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## Getting Ready for Preschool



A high-quality preschool is a fun place, and it helps prepare kids for their future. Preschool is where most kids first work with teachers and alongside other children. They learn to share and follow instructions, which are important skills for elementary school. Before your child starts preschool, you can prepare them for success. Stick to a regular schedule for eating, bathing and sleeping to make the transition to a school schedule easier. Daily chores teach responsibility and the value of cooperation. Read with your child every day, so they will have an easier time learning these new skills. Help them develop

their fine motor skills with toys, plus activities such as coloring, gluing and cutting with kid-size safety scissors. Two or three weeks before class starts, talk in a positive way about all the fun they’ll have at school. If possible, arrange for some ‘sneak peeks’ for your child: meet their teachers, observe a class in session, and use the playground after school or on the weekends, so it starts to feel like a fun and familiar place.

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### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/safety-wellness/growth-development](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/safety-wellness/growth-development).

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## Helping Tweens and Teens Cope with Stress

Tweens and teens often feel stressed by school, outside activities and their social lives. When we help our kids learn to cope with stress, we’re giving them some important tools for life.

Kids usually don’t just start talking about what’s bothering them. But they do want their parents to reach out and help them with their troubles. To start the conversation, simply ‘notice out loud,’ and name the feeling you think you’re seeing. For example: “You seem a bit discouraged and overwhelmed. Would you like to talk about that?” Then, listen carefully and calmly — without judging, blaming or lecturing. Let your child take the lead on brainstorming solutions. And while we can’t solve our kids’ problems for them, we can sometimes help them reduce their stress



triggers. For example, if homework is a big stress, suggest a 20-minute run midway through their work. Or you might need to help them limit their other activities, or find a tutor.

There’s a free tool for coping with stress. ‘Trigger cards’ are used at Seattle Children’s Hospital to help kids pinpoint what makes them feel mad, sad or upset. The cards also help kids realize how they deal with stress, and how they might better cope with it. (Visit the link below to learn how to create and use your own trigger cards.) Let your child know that we all have stress, and that you’ll support them in finding solutions that work.

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### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing).

## Kid Bits



### No Bulky Coats in Car Seats

Is your child's bulky winter coat putting them in danger in their car seat? In a crash, bulky or puffy coats compress, making the car seat straps suddenly too loose and thus unsafe. As a result, a child can suffer a serious injury or even be ejected from the car seat — and possibly the car. So dress your child in a lightweight jacket or sweatshirt. If extra warmth is needed, don't be tempted to add an 'after market' insert to your child's car seat. Instead, add a blanket over the top once they are snugly buckled in. Then, change them into their bigger jacket once you arrive at your destination. Use the link below to find upcoming dates for Seattle Children's free car-seat safety checks.

#### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/CE639.pdf](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/pdf/CE639.pdf).



### Switching to a 'Big Kid' Bed

Is your little one ready for a 'big kid' bed? Most kids make the switch between 18 months and 3 years. Cribs are safest, and some tots are not eager to give up this cozy sleep spot. However, if your child climbs out, or is potty trained and needs quick access to the bathroom, it's time to switch. Make the change a positive experience. If possible, let your child help choose the bed, or at least the bedding. Make a big deal of showing the new bed to visiting family and friends. If it's a standard height, attach a guardrail so your child doesn't roll out. And remember that no child should sleep in the top of a bunk bed until they are 6.

#### TO LEARN MORE:

Explore [www.seattlechildrens.org/safety-wellness](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/safety-wellness).



### Stay Fit with Indoor Fun

Kids need 60 minutes of exercise each day — even when the weather is cold and wet, and daylight hours are shorter. Indoor fitness is easy if you plan ahead and are creative. Move the furniture to make room to jump rope or hula-hoop, or create a hopscotch course on the carpet with masking tape. Set up fitness stations throughout the house: pushups in the bedroom, crunches in the hallway, planking in the family room, and a stair-climb on the real stairs. Music makes exercise more fun, so let your child choose the tunes and crank up the volume. If you have a game console, try a new dancing or fitness game. Stay hydrated with water, and be sure to join in the fun yourself.

#### TO LEARN MORE:

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/goodgrowing).

## Quick Tip

Prevent TV and furniture tip-overs with wall straps, brackets or braces.

### Regional Clinics

Find us near you at one of our clinics:

- Bellevue
- Everett
- Federal Way
- Mill Creek
- Olympia
- Tri-Cities
- Wenatchee
- Odessa Brown Children's Clinic

### Main Hospital Numbers

206-987-2000  
866-987-2000 (Toll-free)

### Online Resources

Visit [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org) for the following:

- Child Health Advice
- my Good Growing e-mail newsletter
- Doctor Finder
- Seattle Mama Doc, Teenology 101 and Autism blogs
- Medical condition information
- Safety & wellness information
- Ways to help Seattle Children's
- Research Institute



[www.facebook.com/seattlechildrens](http://www.facebook.com/seattlechildrens)



[www.twitter.com/seattlechildren](http://www.twitter.com/seattlechildren)



[www.youtube.com/seattlechildrens](http://www.youtube.com/seattlechildrens)

Heather Cooper is the Editor of Good Growing which is produced four times a year by the Marketing Communications Department of Seattle Children's. You can find *Good Growing* in the January, April, July and October issues of *ParentMap* and on our website [www.seattlechildrens.org](http://www.seattlechildrens.org). For permission to reprint articles for non-commercial purposes or to receive *Good Growing* in an alternate format, call 206-987-5323. The inclusion of any resource or website does not imply endorsement. Your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider. © 2015 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington.



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# Classes and Events

To register or view more information, please visit [www.seattlechildrens.org/classes](http://www.seattlechildrens.org/classes). A phone number is provided for those without Internet access. No one will be denied admission if unable to pay the full amount. If you need an interpreter, please let staff know when you register, and one will be provided. These classes are popular and often fill up several months in advance, so register early.

## PARENTING CLASSES

### Autism 101

WHEN: Thursday, Jan. 22, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-8080

For parents and caregivers of children recently diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder who wish to better understand this disorder. The class is also available through Children's video and teleconferencing outreach program in various locations throughout Washington and Alaska.

### Autism 200 Series

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-8080

For parents and caregivers of children with autism who wish to better understand this disorder. These classes are also available through Children's video and teleconferencing outreach program in various locations throughout Washington, Alaska, Oregon and Montana.

Autism 201: The State of Autism in 2015

WHEN: Thursday, Jan. 15, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

Autism 202: Medication Management and ASD

WHEN: Thursday, Feb. 19, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

### Babysafe

WHEN: Saturday, Jan. 17, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

FEE: \$50 per family

WHERE: Seattle Children's admin. building,  
6901 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-789-2306

For new and expectant parents and infant caregivers. Topics include infant development, baby safety, injury prevention and treatment. Infant CPR is demonstrated and practiced.

### Heartsaver First Aid, CPR and AED

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 8, 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

FEE: \$50

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-9878

For parents and caregivers. Topics include how to treat bleeding, sprains, broken bones, shock and other first-aid emergencies. Also includes infant, child and adult CPR and AED use.

### Child and Infant First Aid, CPR, AED for Adults

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

FEE: \$60

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-9878

For parents and caregivers. Topics include how to treat bleeding, sprains, broken bones, shock and other first-aid emergencies. Also includes infant and child CPR and AED use.

## PRETEEN AND TEEN CLASSES

### Better Babysitters

WHEN: Saturday, Feb. 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Pavilion for Women & Children,  
900 Pacific Ave., Everett

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 15, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Seattle Children's admin. building,  
6901 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

WHEN: Saturday, March 7, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

WHERE: Overlake Medical Center,  
1035 116th Ave. NE, Bellevue

View more dates online

FEE: \$40 per person

CALL: 206-987-9879 for all locations

For youth, ages 11 to 14. Topics for responsible babysitting include basic child development, infant care and safety, handling emergencies, age-appropriate toys, business hints and parent expectations.

### CPR and First Aid for Babysitters

WHEN: Sunday, Feb. 1, 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

FEE: \$60 per person

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-9878

For youth, ages 11 to 15. Topics include pediatric CPR, treatment for choking, and first-aid skills. Students receive 2-year American Heart Association completion card.

### For Boys Only: The Joys and Challenges of Growing Up

WHEN: Wednesdays, Jan. 14 & 21,  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

WHEN: Mondays, Jan. 26 & Feb. 2, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Overlake Medical Center,  
1035 116th Ave. NE, Bellevue

View more dates online

FEE: \$70 per parent/son pair; \$50 per extra son

CALL: 206-789-2306

Two-part series for parents, guardians and sons ages 10 to 12. Focuses on what each can expect as boys begin adolescence. Class covers body changes during puberty, popular myths about growing up, behavior and attitude changes, girls, and how to communicate about the experience of adolescence.

### For Girls Only: A Heart-to-Heart Talk on Growing Up

WHEN: Tuesdays, Jan. 20 & 27,  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Overlake Medical Center,  
1035 116th Ave. NE, Bellevue

WHEN: Tuesdays, Feb. 3 & 10, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

View more dates online

FEE: \$70 per parent/daughter pair;

\$50 per extra daughter

CALL: 206-789-2306

Two-part series for parents, guardians and daughters ages 10 to 12. Focuses on the physical changes of puberty and menstruation, what girls need to know about boys, social issues and sexuality. The sessions use lectures, videos, group activities and humor to emphasize family values and communication.

## EVENTS

### Car Seat Check

WHEN: Saturday, March 28, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's main campus,  
4800 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

CALL: 206-987-5999

Come learn how to safely secure your child in the car. Child passenger safety experts will check your child in a car seat, booster seat or the seat belt and answer any questions you may have. First come, first served. No appointments needed.

### Ski Helmet Fitting and Giveaway

WHEN: Sunday, Jan. 11, 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.  
(view more dates online)

FEE: Free

WHERE: Seattle Children's Bellevue Clinic and  
Surgery Center,  
1500 116th Ave. NE, Bellevue

CALL: 206-987-1569

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Shoreline Community College

*south sound*

**SAT, JAN 17**

10 am – 12 pm  
STAR CenterTacoma

*seattle/central*

**SUN, JAN 18**

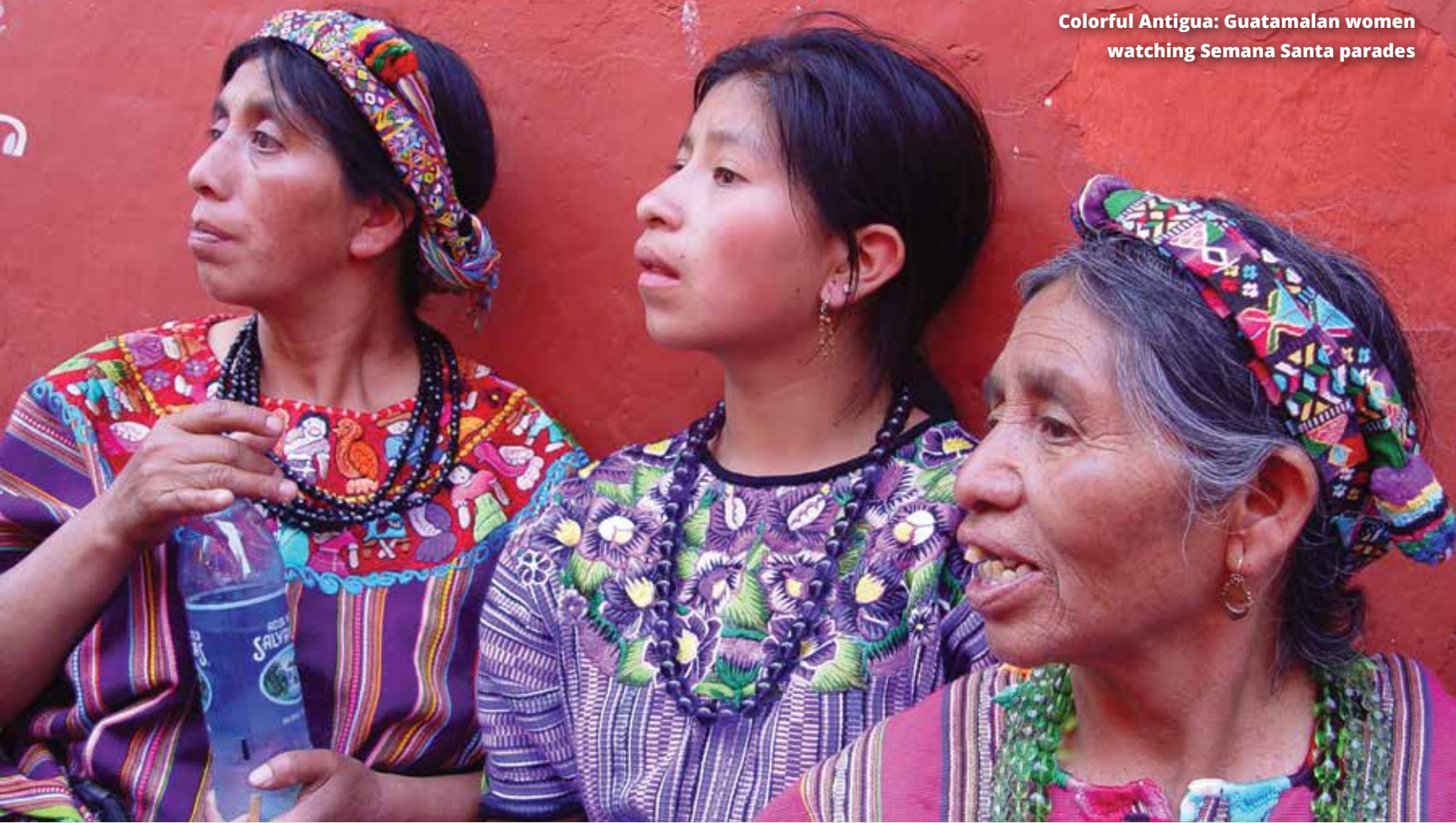
10 am – 12 pm  
Mt. Baker Community Club

***[parentmap.com/preschool-previews](http://parentmap.com/preschool-previews)***





Colorful Antigua: Guatemalan women  
watching Semana Santa parades



# Language-school vacations

Two unforgettable trips to Central America  
that combine culture, study and tourism

BY MARGOT PAGE

**S**itting under a banana tree with my Spanish-language tutor, I grinned as my 5-year-old daughter raced by with hers. “*Rosada!*” the teacher called, as my daughter ran to a flower and pointed in triumph: “*Rosada!*” (“Pink!”). Over by the fountain, our 12-year-old was deep in conversation with her tutor. Our whole family was enjoying the first of what turned out to be several fantastic journeys into place and people: a week at a Spanish language school in Central America, learning, playing, touring and making friends.

It’s just so *fun*. But I learned that later. I had

first cooked up the idea of a language-school vacation because I was in a bit of a rebellion over a new lexicon I noticed emerging around travel:

“We *did* France last year with the in-laws.”

“I’ve been really wanting to *do* Southeast Asia.”

When did that happen? When did we start “doing” a place, rather than “taking a trip to” it? Is the distinction meaningful?

I have come to think so. When you “do” a place, it’s done, right? Check it off the list. The vocabulary implies a closing, rather than

what I think travel should be: an opening, the beginning of a lifelong relationship with a place. And I have come to think that a language-school vacation is the perfect antidote to checklist vacationing.

Immersive language schools operate throughout Latin America, offering lesson/homestay packages that are as family friendly as vacations come. No matter what your Spanish level is (even if you don’t speak a word — yet), there’s nothing like living with a family, even for just a week, to connect you to the place you are visiting. One great perk is that your host

## Language-school vacations

*continued from page 37*

family has the very best insider information. It's like having a concierge who also eats toast with you.

The rhythm of your day on a language-school vacation could look like this: Eat breakfast in the morning with your homestay family (lunch and dinner are typically on your own). Then you're off to a morning of Spanish lessons. A class usually is composed of one to four students, with personal "tutors" for young children not ready for formal lessons. In the afternoons, you can explore the amazing place you've come to visit — on your own or on a school-sponsored outing.

Central America has been, for us, the ideal region for such a vacation, involving a reasonable travel time to an entirely different world. Countries such as Guatemala and Costa Rica offer family travelers a wealth of cultural and socioeconomic diversity, a different language that is learnable (and useful!) here in the states, and, for older kids, fascinating histories and politics that are deeply intertwined with our own.

You, too, might find that incorporating language learning helps you create a life-changing trip that leaves the checklist behind. We offer here journeys into the heart of two very different destinations in Central America.

### From mountains to sea in Costa Rica

One of the many wonderful things about Costa Rica is that, if you have the time and energy, you can embark on a language-learning trip with multiple destinations. CPI ([cpi-edu.com](http://cpi-edu.com)), a high-quality Spanish immersion school in Costa Rica, has campuses in the mountains, at the beach and in the city. (But be warned: When my own family took a 10-day vacation in Costa Rica, my husband and I ended up quitting our jobs and moving the family there for a year.)

People come to me all the time for advice on their Costa Rican vacations, and the places I tell them they absolutely cannot miss — both of which tie in beautifully to language learning — are the cloud forests of Monteverde and the beach.

Culturally, the Monteverde zone — located in northern Costa Rica — is unlike any other place in Central America, possibly on earth. Monteverde was founded and developed by two distinct groups: a handful of white Quakers who moved from Alabama in the 1950s and native Costa Ricans, or Ticos. Those groups have now intermingled with such peace and cultural respect that the whole area is a repudiation of some of the more heinous stereotypes of the North American traveler.

Plus, as your homestay family will tell you, the cloud forests of Monteverde are entirely magical. With miles and miles of trail to explore, the forests chirp, sigh, rustle and growl with more life than most of us have ever heard



in one place. The Monteverde zone also offers horseback riding, butterfly gardens, fantastic food experiences and lovely art galleries. And of course ziplining high above the viney jungle is a thrill many won't want to miss. (Suspended bridges over and through those same forests offer an equally breathtaking, but less nervewracking, experience.)

And then there's the beach. Costa Rica's coasts are dotted with beach towns of all flavors. The Caribbean side tends to be more laid-back, less built up, and has much more of a Rastafarian feel. The Pacific side, more accessible and typically drier, has more tourism infrastructure. The CPI beach campus is in Playa Flamingo, on the Pacific side.

#### ALSO DON'T MISS:

A visit to Volcán Arenal — an active volcano with hot springs in a town at its base — is worth a couple of days and could easily be fit into a weekend between stints at the Monteverde and Playa Flamingo language schools.



**Lava story:** After a Spanish-language week, head to Arenal





Ephemeral art: Antigua residents create short-lived alfombras

## Learn Spanish in Antigua, Guatemala, during Semana Santa

Guatemala is a study in contrasts. From the ancient Mayan ruin of Tikal to the bustle of Guatemala City, the largest city in Central America, Guatemala has something for everyone. A favorite for family travel, because of its beauty, manageable size and proximity to the international airport in Guatemala City, is Antigua.

Antigua is an old city renowned not just for its Baroque architecture, charming cobblestone streets and cheerfully painted houses, but also for its abundant flowers and stunning backdrop of simmering volcanoes. Several language schools offer an immersive experience of the city.

You could pursue a family language-school vacation there any time of the year, but I highly recommend aiming for Semana Santa, the Christian holy week that leads up to Easter Sunday. When we took a language-learning vacation during that week, our host family was an invaluable resource, telling us the best places to go each day.

As we found, you don't have to be religious to fall in love with Antigua's celebration of Semana Santa. Each day of the week, parades wind through the narrow, cobble streets of the city, following a distinct route each day. But while the paraders are a delight to watch, they're not what blow visitors' minds. It's what they're parading *on*.

Each night, in preparation for the next day's parade, the neighbors whose homes and businesses line the route work in the streets to create elaborate *alfombras* — literally, rugs — to carpet the parade's path. Using materials such as flower petals, sand, colored salt and sawdust, residents prepare elaborate street illustrations, from depictions of Biblical stories to scenes from the natural world. Each night, you can walk the route, marveling at the art taking shape before your eyes. The next afternoon, you can exclaim all over again (perhaps in your newly acquired Spanish!) as the parade winds toward your spot — trampling and destroying the carpets beneath it.

The *alfombras* are breathtaking — and then they are gone. Every part of this process is incredible to watch and to talk about. What must it be like to

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A man in a light blue shirt and black pants is juggling three balls (two blue, one red) in a large, brightly lit shopping mall. A crowd of people, including children, is watching him. In the background, there are signs for 'Piroshki' and 'PIZZA'.

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A map showing the location of Crossroads at the intersection of 156th Avenue NE and NE 8th St. A large blue arrow points towards the intersection, and a star marks the location. The word 'Crossroads' is written in a stylized font.

[crossroadsbellevue.com](http://crossroadsbellevue.com)



## Language-school vacations continued from page 39

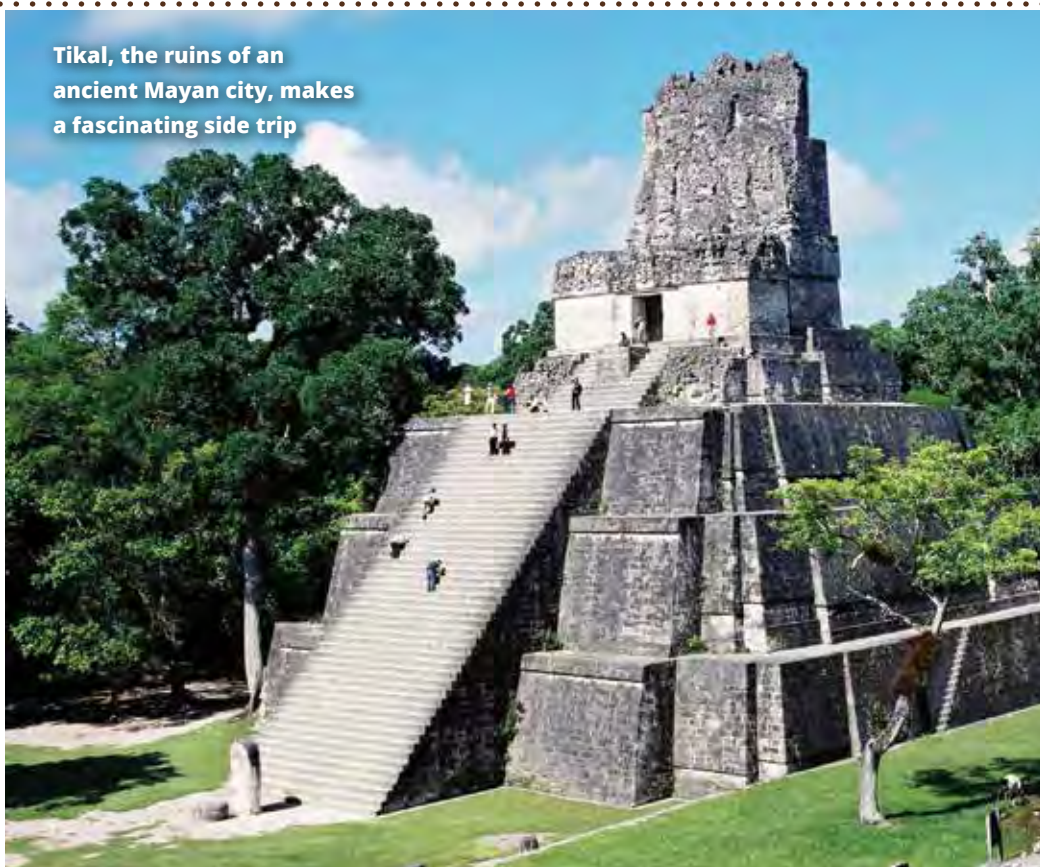
build something with so much of your heart when you know its whole purpose is to be destroyed a few hours later?

### ALSO DON'T MISS:

- The small towns around Lake Atitlán, called “the closest thing to Eden on Earth” by the *Lonely Planet Guide*, are populated by Mayans. Check out market day in the town of Chichicastenango, about a three-hour shuttle ride from Antigua.
- Tikal, the ruins of an ancient Mayan city located in a national park in central Guatemala, makes a rich and invigorating one- or two-day trip. ■

*Margot Page's memoir Paradise Imperfect: An American Family Moves to the Costa Rican Mountains was released in 2013 by Yellow House Press. She lives, writes and works in Seattle, Washington, and blogs at margot-page.com.*

Tikal, the ruins of an ancient Mayan city, makes a fascinating side trip



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## How to pick a language school

The Internet provides a wealth of school options for each of our suggested trips (and many others), and at varying price points. It's not hard to find language instruction plus a homestay for the price of a midrange hotel. As you're looking at schools, consider:

- **FAMILY FRIENDLINESS** If you don't find family instruction highlighted on a school's website, just ask about it. Schools tend to be very flexible, helping organize packages that meet your needs.
- **INSTRUCTION** Do you want one-on-one attention or group lessons that offer the camaraderie of classmates? Our family has tried both options and found individual instruction to be our favorite approach.

- **HOUSING** If you opt for a homestay with a local family, you can ask to be matched with a family with children of similar ages to yours. Some schools (such as CPI in Costa Rica) can also organize housing in apartments, if there isn't a homestay match.
- **OTHER ACTIVITIES** Many schools can organize afternoon activities for students, from salsa dancing to field trips to watch local artisans at work.
- **VOLUNTEER WORK** If your family is interested in an even deeper connection to place, many language schools will help set up age-appropriate volunteer work for visiting students.



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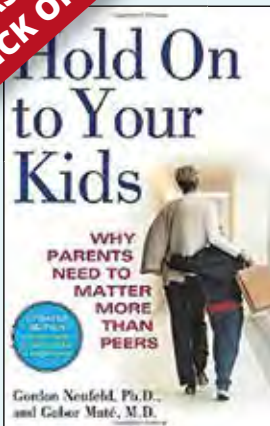
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# 5 ways to beat the drizzle



1

**WHOOSH! FIND A NEW SLEDDING SPOT**

Yes, the Summit at Snoqualmie's tubing center always delivers a screaming-fun time. But there's also the Leavenworth Tubing Park at Ski Hill, typically open earlier in the season because it's on *that* side of the mountains; tubing at Hurricane Ridge, and super-cheap sledding at Mount Rainier National Park's snow play area at Paradise (just pay for entrance to the park). Details at [parentmap.com/sled](http://parentmap.com/sled).



2

**HIKE THE WIGGLES OUT**

You might have to drag every-one out, but once you're on the trail, winter walks bring distinct pleasures. Try the Witt Winter Garden at Seattle's Washington Park Arboretum; Swan Creek Park in Tacoma, an urban nature oasis; best-kept-secret Lewis Creek Park in Bellevue, where you can always take cover in the fantastic interpretive center; or head north to Skagit County to combine forest walks with eagle watching. [parentmap.com/winterkidhikes](http://parentmap.com/winterkidhikes)



3

**TRY A NEW SPECIAL-OCCASION SPOT**

Got a special birthday or celebration coming up? Tip: Skip the Rainforest Café and try a more adventurous option. At Little Sheep Mongolian Hot Pot, with locations in Bellevue and Seattle, families can cook their own steaming pots of soup. On Seattle's Capitol Hill, recently opened Trove mingles noodles, Korean BBQ and parfaits in one 4,000-square-foot, mixed-use space. For more ideas, see [parentmap.com/foodiefun](http://parentmap.com/foodiefun)



5

**EXPLORE THE GREAT INDOORS**

On the days when only indoor outings will do, your first stop should be ParentMap's encyclopedia of rainy-day play spaces ([parentmap.com/rain](http://parentmap.com/rain)), which lists more than 70 options for indoor fun. Recent additions: Umbrella Tree in Queen Anne, with classes and drop-in play; and community-driven Cornerstone Café in South Seattle, with free open play for tots, affordable drop-in child care and more.

# When cancer called

By Corbin Lewars

**A** man I had never met before called that Monday to say, “I’m sorry, but all three of your biopsies came back cancerous.”

I crumbled. I’m not speaking metaphorically — I literally fell to the ground. The room began to spin, but unfortunately, I was aware enough to realize I was acting like Meredith Baxter in a Lifetime movie. God, I’m such a cliché, I thought. I actually just thought the words, “My life changed with a phone call.”

To hear they have cancer at the age of 43 would surprise many people, but for me it was similar to being told I was going to be living on Mars. I ate organically, practiced yoga and mindfulness, exercised daily and expressed myself, making my children do so as well because I thought not doing so caused blocked energy.

“Me?” I said to the doctor on the phone. “Are you sure?”

But I knew he was sure, because he knew my name, medical history and date of birth. Then he prattled on about my infiltrating lobular carcinoma, mastectomy, chemotherapy and radiation, all of which it appeared

bed. Visions of friends who had undergone chemotherapy and other cancer treatments came to mind. My friend Chris’ throat became so burned with radiation, he couldn’t swallow. Even the noise of the Spiritualized CD that was playing felt as if it was attacking him. He died a few months later, at 31.

“It’s not the cancer that’s hard, it’s the treatment,” a friend’s mother told me. But if I refused treatment, what would happen to me?

Ever since I was a little girl, thinking about my own death caused panic attacks, so I

But then there were my children.

My kids were only 7 and 10, and the thought of leaving them motherless was unbearable. Equally devastating was the thought of dragging them through this ordeal and not being able to be the mother I wanted to be for them, the mother I was now. In either case, I would be leaving them. Thoughts of being nauseous, emaciated and bedridden battled it out with calls from the dark tunnel, and I didn’t know which to root for. So I crawled back into bed and called all of my friends.

The following morning, I said, “I can’t

**“Me?” I said  
to the doctor  
on the phone.  
“Are you sure?”**

possibly meet with clients this afternoon. I just got told I have cancer.” But then I met with clients.

When my friend Erika offered to take my kids to the class picnic that night, I said OK. But then I stopped at the store to buy some chicken for the picnic.

I won’t tell my kids yet, I told myself, but within five minutes of picking them up I did tell them.

My son, Conor, cried, immediately grasping what breast cancer was, but my 7-year-old daughter looked perplexed.

“Will you be all right?” Conor asked.

“I hope so,” I said.

“Will your boob grow back?” my daughter, Stella, asked. The sweet thought of a regenerating breast, like a lizard’s tail, caused my eyes to well with tears.

“No, sweetie, boobs don’t grow back.”

“Who will take care of us when you’re at the doctor’s?” Conor asked.

I explained that Jenn, our housemate, would help more and that friends had already offered to step in.

were now — or soon to be — part of my life. He explained margins and tests, but I couldn’t retain anything he said.

“What stage is it?” I asked.

“We can’t be sure at this point.”

“What stage is it?” I yelled.

“At least 2, perhaps 4.”

And then I asked him the only question that really mattered.

“Will I survive?”

“I can’t answer that,” he said, “but we’ll do our best.”

I threw the phone down and crawled into

usually didn’t think about it. But today, today I needed to travel down its very long, dark tunnel.

“Hello, Death,” I said.

To my surprise, greeting death felt more calming than facing chemotherapy. I told myself perhaps it wouldn’t be that bad. I was exhausted, as most single moms are. Maybe dying young was the way to go, at least it spared me all of the aches, pains and decay that came with old age. Perhaps it was better to go out like a bright star rather than to wither away.





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Once they had asked all of their questions, Conor went out to his yoga ball — a place where he talks to himself and sorts things out — and Stella crawled into bed with me. We snuggled and stared out the window. Conor joined us a few minutes later.

Eventually, the snuggling was replaced with wrestling and poking, so I said, “Who wants to go to the picnic?”

“The picnic is tonight?” they asked. But their excitement was short-lived once they remembered the big C.

“Picnics are supposed to be fun,” Stella said.

“I know,” I said. “And you guys can do and say whatever you want tonight, but personally, I’m taking the night off from cancer. A couple

of people at the picnic know I have it, and they’ll hug me and I’ll cry, but for the most part, I’m not going to talk about it. If you want to talk to your friends about it, feel free, but if you don’t want to, that is absolutely all right as well.”

We gathered our picnic blanket, plates, napkins, cups and our very store-bought chicken and headed to the car. I checked and double-checked to make sure we had everything we needed, and then I returned to the house for one more task.

“Swedish Medical Center, can I help you?” the voice on the line asked.

“Yes, I need to make an appointment with a surgeon,” I responded.

“Do you have someone in particular you would like to see?” she asked.

“Yes, the surgeon who can see me tomorrow.” ■

*Corbin Lewars (corbinlewards.com) is the author of Creating a Life: The Memoir of a Writer and Mom in the Making, which was nominated for the 2011 PNBA and Washington State book awards; the divorce guidebook Losing Him, Gaining You: Divorce as Opportunity; and the forthcoming novel Swings. Her essays have been featured in more than 25 publications. She teaches writing classes and lives in Seattle with her family.*

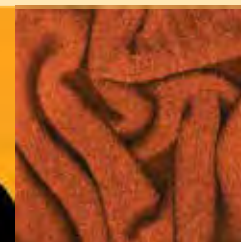
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# ask the experts!

**Q:** How can I limit/manage my teens' use of social media and electronics without damaging their social lives? All of their friends' social interactions are online.

**A:** My approach is rather than thinking about limits, how do you have a conversation about balance? Healthy households talk about the social contract. The child and parent each make a list: The parent lists what they want and don't want the child to do with the device; and the child lists what they want and don't want to do with the device. Write your lists separately, and talk together about how to achieve balance. When you ask kids what matters to them, you see how aware they really are. I remember one girl had an entire section of different rules for when school finals were scheduled.

Make family rules: Thou shall not touch the cell phone at dinner. Thou shall not sleep with the cell phone by your side. I've never seen limits implemented as a top-down power game that work well. This is about both parent and child being responsible. The things that get us through all these hard times are trust and communication. Parents want an easy mechanism, but that's not how parenting works. Introduce other adults into your kid's life that can be good sounding boards: coaches, youth ministers, the cool aunt and uncle. Say, "You don't have to talk to me, but please talk to somebody." You don't see what is going on in Instagram, but someone else does.

In my book *It's Complicated*, I tell a story about a father who was friended by his daughter on Myspace. A survey answer said cocaine was her favorite drug. The father asked his daughter about it. "Oh, Dad, those surveys are so funny. The kids who smoke pot at school are so lame, and the kids who do mushrooms are totally crazy. Your generation did cocaine and you turned out OK," she said.

Once the father realized his daughter wasn't doing cocaine, they had a great conversation about his generation and drugs in her school.

From the time our kids are babies, we don't know what the heck is going on in their heads. We see the digital traces [on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook] but they are not always accurate. It's a digital trace of something going on in their lives that we misinterpret all the time.



*danah boyd is a principal researcher at Microsoft Research, founder of Data & Society Research Institute and a visiting professor at New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program. Her research examines the intersection between technology and society.*

**Q:** How can I not only get my child to tackle chores, but also to be agreeable or even happy about it rather than complaining and miserable?

**A:** We all love to see our kids happy, but you can't make your kids love chores any more than you can make yourself love coming home from a long day at work to three loads of laundry and a sink full of dishes. What you can do is set the stage for chores to be a regular part of family life, free from nagging and full of valuable life skills. Here's how.

**Involve them in choosing chores.** This may shock you, but my children pick a new chore on their birthdays. They talk with excitement about possible choices for weeks. How did we achieve this magic? When they were young, we asked what they wanted to learn how to do and we started with that chore.

**Make a plan.** Have a discussion to work through chore completion logistics. Include specifics: when the chore will be completed, how they will remember the task and how they will communicate completion. This creates clear expectations, helps parents avoid nagging and teaches kids to be responsible for their jobs. Let your child really be a part of the decision making.

**Take time for training.** Children often resist chores because they are overwhelmed with the task. It doesn't matter if you know your children can do it — it's all about whether they believe they can do it. Implement steps so your child feels capable: Your child watches you do it and then helps you do it; you help your child do it and then watch your child do it.

**Express appreciation despite imperfections.** Often we discourage kids by focusing on mistakes with criticisms. When your child completes a chore, thank them for pitching in. If more training is needed, pick another time to bring that up.

While you can't make your child love chores, you can share control, teach life skills and help them feel capable. This increases their willingness to do chores and helps them realize they have a role that matters in the family.



*Sarina Behar Natkin, LICSW, is a Seattle-based parent educator and coach, and cofounder of Grow Parenting.*

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### When should I take my child to the dentist for the first check-up?

In order to prevent dental problems, your child should see a pediatric dentist when the first tooth appears, or no later than her first birthday.

### How often does my child need to see the pediatric dentist?

A check-up every 6 months is recommended in order prevent cavities and other dental problems. However, your pediatric dentist can tell you when and how often your child should visit based on their personal oral health.

### Toothpaste: when should we begin using it, and how much should we use?

The sooner the better! Starting at birth, clean your child's gums with a soft infant toothbrush or cloth and water. As soon as the teeth begin to appear, start brushing twice daily using fluoridated toothpaste and a soft, age-appropriate toothbrush. Use a small smear of toothpaste to brush the teeth of a child 2 years of age or younger. For the 3-6-year-old, dispense a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and perform or assist your child's toothbrushing. Remember that young children do not have the ability to brush their teeth effectively. Children should spit out and not swallow excess toothpaste after brushing.

Source: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry



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0–5

# Antibiotic overindulgence

*The overprescribing of antibiotics to kids*

By Kali Sakai

**A**s parents, we dread that inevitable moment when our kid comes down with a major cold or respiratory illness. At the first hint of sniffles or the onset of fever, we secretly wish for a magic pill to make it all go away. Sometimes we get our wish, in the form of an antibiotic, which can effectively treat bacterial ailments, but are powerless against viral illnesses.

New research out of Seattle Children's Hospital shows that antibiotics are too often dispensed for ailments that shouldn't be treated that way. Between 2000 and 2011, antibiotics were prescribed for 57 percent of all respiratory cases, despite the fact that only 27 percent of respiratory cases were bacterial and would be responsive to the medicine. Matthew Kronman, M.D., assistant professor of pediatric infectious diseases at Seattle Children's, documented this trend in a study published in the October 2014 issue of the journal *American Academy of Pediatrics*. Kronman also reported that roughly 11.4 million unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions are given to children and teens in the U.S. annually.

## What's the risk?

Taking unnecessary antibiotics can put a patient at risk for adverse side effects, and everyone at



risk for the potential development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), when antibiotics fail to work against antibiotic-resistant infections, the consequences can be dire: longer-lasting illnesses, more doctor visits or extended hospital stays, use of more expensive

and more toxic medications, and even death in some cases.

Approximately 30,000 visitors also come to emergency rooms all over the country every year with diarrhea and a serious intestinal infection called *Clostridium difficile* colitis (C. difficile), said Kronman. The CDC determined that the taking of antibiotics is the most important risk factor for developing C. difficile infections

— more than 70 percent of cases had antibiotics prescribed just prior to contracting C. difficile.

## When are antibiotics needed?

In order to treat any illness correctly, you first have to know whether you're dealing with a bacterial infection or a viral one. However, with the

## find the right plan

### 1. Setting parental expectations

**through education** can significantly decrease the rate of antibiotic prescriptions. Parents can visit the website Choosing Wisely ([choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/antibiotics-for-ear-infections-in-children](http://choosingwisely.org/doctor-patient-lists/antibiotics-for-ear-infections-in-children)), co-developed with the American Academy of Pediatrics. It illustrates when antibiotics would or wouldn't be appropriate with ear infections (but the information can be applied more broadly).

### 2. Doctors should discuss watch-and-wait

**strategies** with parents and frame their recommendations around what parents can do to help kids ride out the illness more comfortably.

### 3. Parents and the medical community

**should keep doctors accountable** to reserve antibiotics for only confirmed or highly suspected bacterial ailments.

### 4. If antibiotics are the right solution,

**parents must follow the exact dosage** instructions over the entire duration as prescribed by the doctor.

### 5. Know the signs of common illnesses.

"Most colds will only last about five days, so fevers lasting longer than that should get checked out," Kronman says. "When children have cold symptoms, then get better briefly, [but] then get worse again with increasing symptoms, that can be a sign of a bacterial infection."

### 6. Some practitioners support taking

**probiotics** when well and in tandem with antibiotics to head off antibiotic-induced diarrhea. Parents should research this course of care and discuss it with their child's doctor.

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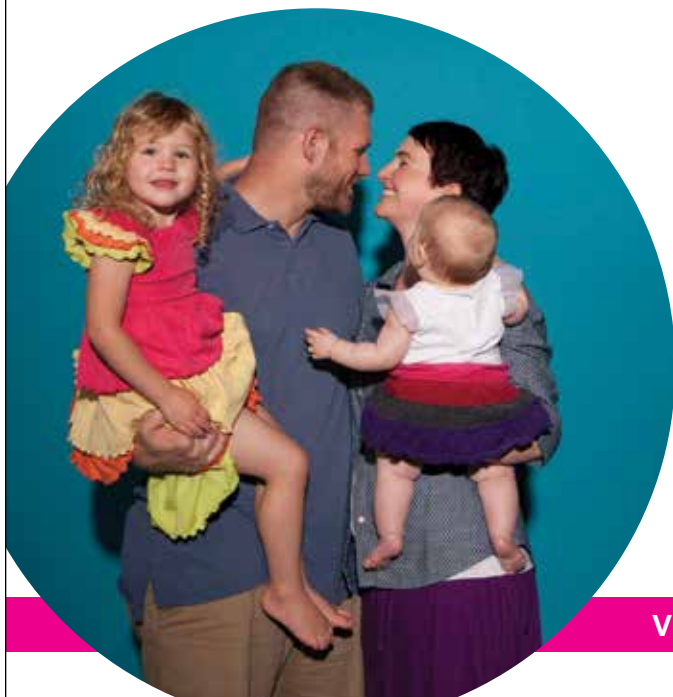
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## 0–5 Antibiotic overindulgence

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exception of the rapid strep test for strep throat, doctors treating a high volume of patients in offices and clinics are limited in their ability to unequivocally distinguish bacterial from viral illnesses.

“We desperately need easy tests that can be performed right in the exam room to determine when a patient has a bacterial infection,” Kronman says.

In lieu of test results, practitioners typically rely on symptoms and observational data, but because of the uncertainty, along with the discomfort, of symptoms, there are parents who just want clinicians to give them “something” for their child.

“It’s a real challenge to explain why it is harmful to take antibiotics, in many circumstances, to a parent who knows what they want and has gotten what they want in the past,” says Jeremia Bernhardt, M.D., a family physician and faculty

member at Swedish Family Medicine Residency at Cherry Hill in Seattle.

Still, even when antibiotics are the right solution, taking them is not without risk. According to the CDC, the beneficial bacteria in and on our bodies that protect against infection can be altered or eliminated for weeks and even months when taking antibiotics.

“As a parent, I can relate to wanting to do something to limit suffering while my kid is sick, but as a doctor, I also know that [some medicine] may actually cause my patients more harm than good in the long run,” Bernhardt says. ■

*Kali Sakai is a Seattle-based freelance writer and reluctant homemaker. She once ascended through the media and high-tech industries, but now raises her two young kids full-time as a “domestic project manager.”*

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## Athletic clubs for kids

*Fun fitness craze or just plain crazy?*

By Malia Jacobson

**F**or two mornings a week last summer, Finley and Xavier Hepfer of Tacoma practiced burpees, perfected forward rolls and polished cartwheels at a local CrossFit kids program. At 7 and 5, the boys are part of a trend toward kids' fitness programs that has many parents cheering and some experts concerned.

Finley and Xavier are in good company: According to the American College of Sports Medicine, fitness programs for kids are a top health trend for 2014. The boys' mom, CrossFit enthusiast Lisa Hepfer, signed them up without hesitation. Because both parents do CrossFit, the kids' program seemed like a natural extension of family wellness. "My kids are thrilled when they get to do burpees and box jumps just like mom and dad!" Hepfer says.

But some fitness experts worry that an intense focus on kids' fitness could contribute to negative trends such as early sport specialization — year-round sports practice for grade-schoolers, which has been credited with driving the 400 percent increase in knee injuries in children — and put too much emphasis, too soon, on athletic performance.

### Are they safe?

Now practiced at more than 7,000 gyms across the country, CrossFit is famous for its high-intensity, structured workouts and legions of devoted fans. It's not the only kids' gym program around: Other junior fitness programs include Girls on the Run ([girlsontherun.org](http://girlsontherun.org)), and My Gym ([mygym.com](http://mygym.com)). But with more than 1,200 gyms participating in the program, CrossFit Kids ([crossfitkids.com](http://crossfitkids.com)) is one of the most popular.

CrossFit Kids founders Jeff and Mikki Martin, who created the program for kids ages 3–18, say parents don't need to worry that their children will be pushed to exhaustion with round after round of rigorous strength moves. CrossFit Kids focuses on mechanics, consistency and, yes, intensity, but the program is scalable and not as extreme as adult CrossFit workouts.

"Consistently good mechanics translates to



physical literacy, enhanced sports performance, and fewer sports injuries for kids," the program literature states.

Mark Northuis, Ph.D., professor of kinesiology and head cross-country coach at Hope College in Holland, Michigan, says it's unlikely that a child will push herself to the point of injury. Although adults sometimes set themselves up for injuries and fatigue by pushing past the point of exhaustion, kids rarely do, Northuis says.

"Elementary-age kids will give you a good indication of when they're ready to stop and rest, and they'll stop when they get tired. Injuries occur when we push kids past their comfort zone," he says.

### Are there benefits?

Because they help get kids off the couch, scheduled fitness programs can benefit kids year-round, says physical therapist Maureen Suhr, pediatric specialist at Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City. During summer break, children don't have regular physical education class, and in the winter, they're not as inclined to play outside.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends 60 minutes of physical play for kids at least five days per week, a total that can be tough for kids to meet, Suhr notes. Putting physical activity on the family schedule by signing up for a fitness program makes it easier to reach that goal.

With a focus on balance and coordination, programs like CrossFit Kids can actually help kids be safer on and off the field, Suhr says. Moves such as side planks, bear crawls and side-to-side hops build core strength needed for everyday play — think running, jumping, climbing and biking.

### Keeping it fun

Looking for a fitness program for your child? Start by seeking a program run by a licensed instructor with first-aid training. Match the program to your child's interests; a kid who loves to run may not love the stationary poses of a yoga program or the strength exercises practiced in CrossFit Kids. Making it a family affair can help, too: Kids who see mom or dad do CrossFit or run races may be more inclined to participate in similar programs.

Exercises should be age-appropriate, Suhr says. Moves using body resistance, like planks, are appropriate for all ages and a great place to start strength and conditioning. Because proper form is vital to weight training, this type of workout shouldn't be introduced until children develop enough self-control and listening skills to follow precise directions, around age 7 or 8. Running for speed and distance — anything

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- Immediately upon taking the cake from the oven, place a damp tea towel or paper towel directly on the cake and ever so gently press the dome down. Don't press exactly in the center, but around the center. Remove from pan after a 10-minute cooling period. Caution: Wear oven mitts since the steam released is alarmingly hot.

**Better buttercream:** For uniform buttercream or filling between the layers of cake, simply use an ice-cream scoop to portion out the frosting. It doesn't matter how much the scoop holds, just use the same number of scoops between the layers.

**Crumb coat:** Crumb-coat is a thin layer of frosting that seals in stray crumbs before the second frosting is added. This step is worth the effort, especially when covering a chocolate cake with vanilla frosting since the purpose of a crumb coat is to prevent little bits of cake peeking through to the finished design.



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## 6-10 Exercise

continued from page 53

longer than a 1K fun run, which kids can do in preschool — can start around age 8 or 9.

“Research shows that the risks of running injuries aren’t any greater for younger kids than for adults,” Suhr says. But like adult runners, kids should approach longer distances gradually, taking about eight weeks to train for a 5K race, and 12 weeks to train for a 10K.

Along with age, consider maturity levels — which are more important than age in terms of how advanced their exercises should be, Northuis says. “Children who are the same age chronologically may differ in their maturity.”


Look for programs that aren’t entirely focused on fitness: games, songs, crafts or math and science challenges can help round out a program, allowing kids to rest and upping the fun factor. To that end, CrossFit Kids offers a mental workout with a math-related “workout of the day.”

“Kids’ programs should be geared toward fun and promote a lifelong love of physical activity,” Suhr says. “These days, it’s harder for parents to just send their children outside to play. We all have busy schedules.”

The world is changing, and spontaneous stickball games with neighbors are no longer the norm, she adds. Sometimes, parents need to put fitness on the calendar. ■

*Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades.*

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11-14

## Weight worries and body-image secrets

How boys and girls are at risk for eating disorders

By Natalie Singer-Velush

**W**hen Seattle mom Julia Ramirez's\* 12-year-old daughter started running for hours every week, stopped eating fats and carbs, and was often too busy to sit down at the family table for a meal, Ramirez assumed that her girl was just "growing up" and trying to shed a bit of her "baby weight."

But the tween's habits became more intense until, just after her 13th birthday, she became so sick and stressed that her secret life came tumbling out, and her mom brought her to a clinic for help.

"My baby got really sick, and I still feel so guilty, because for a long time I had no idea," Ramirez says. "Now, we take it day by day."

Many parents assume that if their child was developing an eating disorder, it would be obvious. But in fact, so many of the would-be signs are easily excused, downplayed or concealed. How common is it for a busy kid to brush off a family dinner, or skip a full meal at lunch, because she's got homework, soccer practice or is "just not that hungry"? Been there, heard that.

Eating disorders can happen under anybody's nose. Certainly, sometimes kids are just being kids. But sometimes, experts say, it's more.

"If you are a family that typically eats their meals together and your child does not want to eat with you, if they're too busy, if they used to eat everything and now suddenly they're vegan — that could be a sign," says Neeru Bakshi, M.D., medical director of Eating Recovery Center of Washington ([eatingrecoverycenterwa.com](http://eatingrecoverycenterwa.com)). "Talk to your child. With the busyness of parents, you can get lost in the day to day, and not really notice the things in front of you."

### Early weight worries

Eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia are not new. But trends ebb and flow, and current trends include a younger generation of kids more hyperaware, thanks in part to social media, of negative messages around body image.

"We are seeing kids younger and younger. It used to be that a young patient was 12 or 13; now a young patient is 8 or 9," says Jillian Lampert, Ph.D., chief strategy officer for The Emily

Program ([emilyprogram.com](http://emilyprogram.com)), which has clinics in Washington state, Minnesota and Ohio, and offers residential, partial and outpatient treatment as well as specialized youth programs. "It's not entirely clear why that's the case. But the emphasis on weight and eating right has increased over the last couple of years. Now restaurants and stores are labeling calories." There's a good aspect to that, of course, Lampert says. But it's also putting more pressure on us, young people especially. "There's just so much more focus on what we are eating."

Among elementary school girls, 40-60 percent are concerned about their weight or about becoming too fat, according to a 2011 study cited by The National Eating Disorders Association ([nationaleatingdisorders.org](http://nationaleatingdisorders.org)).

"Social media really has created a sense of community that wasn't there before," Bakshi says. "There is a very loud pro-eating-disorder community out there, but there isn't a loud pro-recovery voice."

Lampert, who has three daughters in grade school, says she just heard a story of a fourth-grader being told by a friend at the school lunch table, "You're fat. You need to go on a diet."

"Then she said, 'I'm just kidding, I'm just being funny.' This type of thing probably happens every day — and while that alone doesn't lead to an eating disorder, for people who are susceptible, it can change the way they think."

Another trend parents need to know about: boys.

"People think it's just girls, but boys are in our clinic all the time," Bakshi says. "And athletes. They are driven to have a perfect body, and it's impossible."

Currently about 8 percent of adolescent girls and 4 percent of adolescent boys have an eating disorder, Lampert says. And 8 percent of high school males surveyed in Seattle said they did not eat for 24 or more hours to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

### Body-image issues

Many parents know something about anorexia and bulimia, two of the most common types of eating disorders. But other iterations are less commonly known, such as orthorexia (an unhealthy obsession with eating otherwise healthy food), Bakshi says. "It's not an official diagnosis. But eating certain things at certain times, having anxiety around your typical patterns being disrupted, exercise and eating" — these could all be cause for concern.

The terms can be confusing, agrees Lampert. Binge eating disorder (BED), for example, was officially included in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5* as a standalone diagnosis just last spring. "It gets kind of caught up in our confusion about weight, weight loss and emotional eating. Binge eating is when food is soothing a person; they're overeating for comfort, they feel out of control. It's not just your garden-variety big-Thanksgiving-meal overeating.

It's repeated," Lampert says. And it's potentially hard to spot. "Somebody at a reasonable weight could be throwing up every day, could be binge eating or withholding food."

So, what is the root cause of an eating disorder?

"There is no real root. But we do look at things like: What's the child's temperament? How are they hard-wired? Are they always wanting to be in control? They might lean toward anorexia," Bakshi says. "Are they always wanting to avoid negative consequences? Then they might lean toward bulimia."

And, experts agree, so much of it has to do with self-image and modeling.

"Look at our culture. With my mother — we bonded around food. And we bonded around the diet. We would eat a beautiful meal, and then my mother would say, 'Oh, I shouldn't have eaten that,'" recalls Robyn Cruze, a recovery advocate and author of *Making Peace with Your Plate*.



\*Names have been changed

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## 11–14 Weight worries

continued from page 57

Cruze was sick from ages 11 to 29 and nearly died of her disease.

"There's such shame. My behavior was hiding depression, anxiety and trauma. It was like I was swimming in the river, and only my nostrils were above water, and I was flailing."

### A healthy home

Parents should think carefully about how they model a relationship with food and their body to their children, experts say. It might sound corny, but it's true: Self-love begins at home.

One important rule: There are no "good foods" or "bad foods."

"We have friends who come to our home and say, 'I can't eat that — it's fattening.' And I just gently say, 'In our home, there's no good or bad food,' says Cruze, who has two grade-school-age children. "I tell [my children] their bodies are so amazing. And it's not just mothers who need to do this. Fathers need to be more mindful, too. No fat talk!"

"If you think your kid might be struggling, bring them in for an assessment," Lampert urges parents. Specifically, she says, schedule an eating disorder assessment. "Most general physicians aren't well-trained in eating disorders."

Lampert recommends that parents of tweens and teens ask their children how their friends and other kids at school talk about health and weight, or if anyone is teased. "Weight bullying is sometimes [more] overlooked than other types of bullying. Because we're so focused on weight in our society, we sometimes don't hear that."

Ask about lunch: Do the kids eat? Middle school girls often don't eat lunch, just a container of yogurt. "They're probably going to be hungry. They need to eat real food," Lampert says.

Parents can also get athletic coaches on their side, encouraging positive talk about eating healthfully and feeding active bodies properly.

And at home, Lampert says, "Focus on what you want [your kids] to do, not what you want them to do less of. Focus on 'We're going to eat more fruit,' not 'We're going to eat less cookies.' It will balance itself out without having to vilify the food you want less of. [Tell them,] 'Let's eat these things because they give us energy and they make our bodies strong.'" ■

*Natalie Singer-Velush is ParentMap's managing editor. She lives in Seattle with her husband and two elementary-age daughters, in front of whom she has never once said, "I'm fat."*

### tips

- Have as many family meals together each week as possible.
- Make sure that a variety of foods are offered and accepted in the household.
- Stop making disparaging comments about weight or appearance.
- Emphasize the importance of body acceptance.
- Educate girls and boys about normal change and body development, especially preparing them for puberty.
- Teach kids critical thinking skills about images they see in the media.
- Prepare kids for negative "chatter" that they will hear from peers about food, weight and appearance.

— Neeru Bakshi, M.D., medical director, Eating Recovery Center of Washington (eatingrecoverycenterwa.com)

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## Lighting up

*E-cigarettes are addictive, appealing and easy to get*

By Malia Jacobson



**H**igh school teachers and staff are all too familiar with the problem of teen smoking: kids skipping class to light up, smoke seeping out of bathroom stalls, tobacco wafting into class. But when electronic cigarettes hit the scene, educators at Olympia High School noticed a change. Instead of the classic smoker aroma, the smell was candy sweet. Instead of lighters, students were carrying the hard, slender pens of electronic cigarettes.

"Suddenly, these things were everywhere," says staff member Megan Temple, an instructor at Olympia's "learning lab" preschool, located at the high school. "In sporting events, in bathrooms, even showing up in class. It's a big problem."

The popularity of e-cigarettes is exploding, and it's a worrisome trend, says Sophie J. Balk, M.D., pediatrician and professor of clinical pediatrics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York. Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a quarter-million middle

school and high school students who had never smoked a traditional cigarette tried e-cigarettes in 2013, a threefold increase from 2011. Overall, e-cig use by students in grades 6–12 doubled to about 7 percent.

E-cigarettes are slender, cylindrical devices with an electronic heating element that vaporizes nicotine-infused liquid, also called "vape juice" or "e-juice," available in hundreds of sweet, kid-friendly flavors, from banana cream pie to butter rum.

Because there's no combustion, no smoke and therefore no telltale cigarette smoke smell or ash,

**"vape pens" are much more discreet than traditional cigarettes, so they pose a different kind of health risk to teens**

"vape pens" are much more discreet than traditional cigarettes, so they pose a different kind of health risk to teens, says Harold Farber, M.D., pediatric pulmonologist at Texas Children's Hospital.

E-cigarettes allow teens to use nicotine in places smoking isn't allowed — at school, work, or in or around restaurants where cigarettes are banned — effectively increasing access to nicotine, Farber says. The vape liquid smell isn't a smoky smell, so parents may not detect it, either.

Counter to popular opinion and marketing claims, research shows e-cigarettes are a "gateway" product of sorts, Farber says. They're marketed as a cleaner, safer alternative to cigarettes that can help smokers quit, but research shows the reverse effect in youths: Nearly half of middle school and high school students who tried e-cigarettes in 2013 expressed an intention to smoke, compared to about one-fifth of students who had never vaped.

"One student said that her friends who started with e-cigarettes had moved on to [inhaling] other substances," says Temple. "Anything in liquid form can be put into an e-cigarette, so the sky's the limit."

Most vape users are smokers, too; the CDC reports that 76.3 percent of current e-cigarette users in grades 6–12 also use conventional cigarettes. "It's an either-or thing. They choose e-cigarettes when they want to be more discreet," Farber says.

Discreet or not, e-cigarettes still pose all the health risks associated with nicotine, including reduced lung function, narrowed blood vessels, heart strain and risk for serious, long-term addiction.

"Nicotine is highly addictive, and it seems that teens are uniquely susceptible to the risks of nicotine addiction. When you look at adult smokers, close to 90 percent started before age 18," Farber says.

Health risks aren't limited to addiction; nicotine liquid is hazardous if ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin. The CDC reports that poison center calls involving e-cigarettes jumped from one call per month in 2010 to 215 calls per month in February 2013.



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## Legal limbo

Appealing and addictive, e-cigarettes are also more accessible to teens than conventional cigarettes. Although some states, including Washington, ban e-cigarette sales to minors, vape pens and juice are available in a few clicks online.

Currently, no federal ban prevents youths from purchasing e-cigarettes or the nicotine liquid. Federal regulation of e-cigarettes is currently pending; in the spring of 2014, the FDA released a proposed rule that would expand the ban on tobacco sales to minors to include electronic cigarettes and liquid. As it stands now, the rule only extends to conventional cigarettes, smokeless tobacco and roll-your-own tobacco products.

A final rule is expected in 2015, according to an

American Academy of Pediatrics spokesperson. But it's not clear whether or not the rule would ban the sale of vape pens, because they don't contain nicotine — so youths may still be able to obtain these items online.

## Buzz beaters

The best way to keep teens away from e-cigarettes: Talk to them in terms they care about.

"Teenagers don't care as much about losing years of their life, because that's so far in the future," Farber says. "Instead, talk to them about how nicotine reduces athletic performance. Tell them it can age them and affect how their skin looks."

Avoiding exposure to tobacco marketing — retail displays, print ads and digital promotion — is

important, too. American youths see 559 tobacco ads per year, and those exposed to more sources of tobacco advertising are the most likely to smoke.

At Olympia High School, Megan Temple hopes the e-cigarette novelty wears off. The school drafted e-cigarette policies that seem to be helping. That's a positive step, because e-cigarettes appeal to teens and introduce nonsmokers to tobacco, Temple says. "Any e-cigarette use at school or in teens is a problem." ■

*Malia Jacobson is an award-winning health and parenting journalist and mom of three. Her latest book is Sleep Tight, Every Night: Helping Toddlers and Preschoolers Sleep Well Without Tears, Tricks, or Tirades.*



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# Someone you should know

By Lynn Schnaiberg • Photograph by Will Austin

A registered nurse, University of Washington grad and frequent lecturer, **JULIE METZGER** is known around town as the “Puberty Lady.” For more than two decades, her Great Conversations classes for parents and preteens (she teaches the female side of the puberty equation) at Seattle Children’s and other area hospitals have been a rite of passage for thousands of Puget Sound families each year. Great Conversations also offers classes in friendship, communication and decision making. The co-author of *Will Puberty Last My Whole Life?*, Metzger is also the mother of two daughters and a son, all in their 20s.

## Did you always know you wanted to become the “Puberty Lady”?

My father is a urologist, my mother is a nurse. I grew up in a family that thought nothing of saying “vasectomy” or “penis” at the dinner table. Adolescents are my passion. In grad school [working on a study of women’s health], there were questions about who taught you about your period and did it make a difference? I remember laughing out loud thinking, *Picture all those conversations*. Some were a torture test, some lasted one second, some six hours, some were in total embarrassment, some were critical, some were completely mythical. And wouldn’t it be great if there was a place you could sit together and hear the truth? I thought this would be so great for parents and kids. And I thought: *That’s me. I could do that.*

## I took your class last fall with my daughter; so much of it is really about the parent-child relationship. How can we keep close and positive at the time our preteens need and want to separate from us?

They’re looking for separation, but they’re not looking for you to step away. Our job as parents is to stay close while standing back. And that’s challenging, a quantum physics thing — how can you be in that place and yet not be in that place? I wish parents would do more “Hmmm, tell me more about that” rather than a quick checklist of “Do you have your soccer stuff? Is your homework done? How was your day?” That is not a conversation.

## You also say that we as parents need to have 200 one-minute conversations with our kids about puberty and sex, instead of the one Big Talk. Why?

The more sensitive the topic, the more kids will retain it when it’s woven into their life and not a one-shot deal. We really only have the courage and the retention of about a minute — not 20. You’re building a house over time with individual bricks. You honor the growth of your child with each of those bricks.

## You take anonymous questions from the group and then answer them. What question most surprised you?

I can honestly say I have never been surprised. I’m assuming in any single class someone is thinking *I’ve been waiting for this moment my whole life*, and someone else is thinking *This is my worst nightmare*. There’s a mom thinking to herself *I’m going to be offended if she says “sex” out loud*, and another who will be offended if not. I could hand you 250 questions [from girls] that could just make you weep with the

vulnerability: “Did you say your period is four to seven days, or 47 days?” Or: “Why are we talking about this? Signed, Ms. Nobody.” I love the people and so respect the relationships and the courage it takes to come.

## What’s changed in the two decades since you started this? Parent expectations? Kids’ questions? Attitudes?

If you had asked me up until three or five years ago had there been any difference, I would have said “nothing.” Then we started to feel the openness and hunger from people to understand both gender and sexuality, and homosexuality and gender. What makes a man or what is a man? What is a girl? It’s an enormous shift.

## If you could impart only one piece of advice to a parent of a preteen, what would it be?

Listen more, speak less. Staying close requires that. Parents tend to talk a lot and quickly give their opinion.

## What about to the preteen?

The person who brought them to that class wants very much for this whole puberty thing to go well for them. They are not alone. They have adults invested in their lives. And other kids feel just like they do.

## What was most difficult for you to talk about not as Puberty Lady, but as Mom?

No one subject. We certainly butted heads. You set a certain bar, rule or expectation, and your kid matures beyond that, but you’re [still] holding on to that one thing. That creates a control thing. I found myself realizing, “Hey, they can handle that better than I thought.”

## Anything new brewing for you or Great Conversations?

I have a new book called *This Is Me*, a journal tailored to preteen girls in fifth through seventh grade. It’s filled with writing prompts and creative activities; it’s a way to process what’s happening to them. ■

Lynn Schnaiberg is an award-winning journalist and author of *Outside magazine’s Urban Adventure Chicago*.





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