

'cause parenting is a trip!

ParentMap

Ride, mama, ride!

GOTTMAN
+
SCREENING
**'HAVING
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2015 SUMMER LEARNING



KIDS!

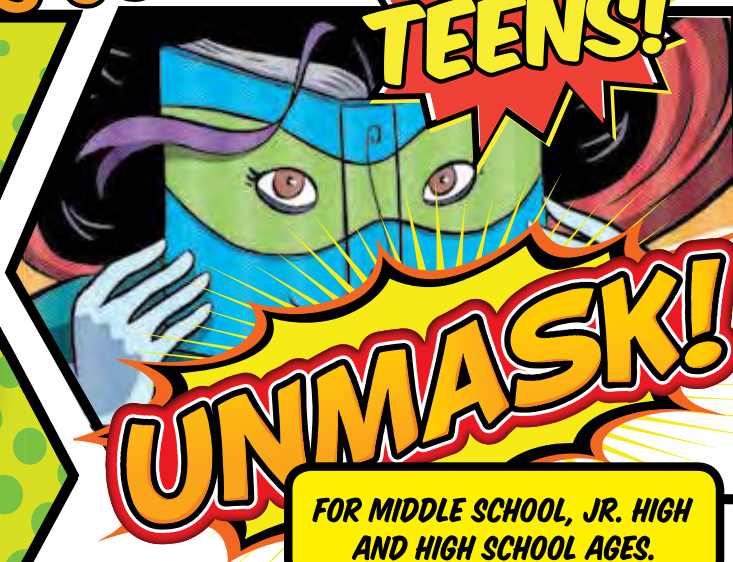
BEGINS JUNE 1

TEENS!

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Ride, mama, ride!

6 family-friendly bike rides for Mother's Day and May

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- **Routines to swear by:** As the season changes, these routines will save your butt

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FAMILY
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inside

Tourism makeovers, ferry tales, summer deals

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Mommy reads

If you are anything like us, you've got a tall stack of how-to books by the bedside table (we didn't say we'll actually *read* them all) about the finer art of being the parent you want to be. Right in time for Mother's Day, we've reviewed a collection of new parenting titles that will guide you in how to apply more love, less panic; parent like the Amish; and avoid spoiling your kids. We've done the heavy (eyeball) lifting — you'll only have to read the ones that sound good! **parentmap.com.momreads**



We want some of that!

Should you assign your own Mother's Day gifts to your kids? Yes, if it means they'll be whipping you up a stack of fluffy rainbow pancakes or some delectable rose petal jelly! Give them a little hint with these easy, crafty ideas for gifts that go a long way (or make them yourself for another mom you admire): **parentmap.com/mothersdaygifts**.



Into the birthday woods

Woodland fairies. Little Red Riding Hood. Adorable animal friends. Look no further for your next birthday-party theme than our woodland birthday roundup. Get inspired by sweet cakes, felt crowns, fairy doors and more (no wolves allowed!): **parentmap.com/woodlandbirthday**.



May the 4th be with you (OM)

In time for Star Wars day (and good anytime!): Check out our fun profile of the creators of Cosmic Kids Yoga, which combines yoga and storytelling to help engage kids ages 3 and older in yoga: **parentmap.com/cosmicyoga**. Plus, we've made sure The Force is with you all the time: Check out our galactic collection of Star Wars crafts (**parentmap.com/starwarscrafts**); stellar ideas for a Star Wars birthday bash (**parentmap.com/starwarsbirthday**); and our geek-mom mom review of EMP Museum's Star Wars and the Power of Costume exhibit (**parentmap.com/EMPstarwars**).



Forts, ahoy!

To many of us, the quintessential summer experience of childhood was building a fort in the woods — with no parents in sight. Even if your yard isn't so fort-friendly, your kids can do it, too; find Puget Sound's coolest fort-building spots and imagination-ready treehouses at **parentmap.com/forts**.

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provide complementary solutions
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NEW EXHIBIT OPENS MAY 16TH, 2015



dear reader

Honoring all mothers

"All that I am, or hope to be, I owe to my angel mother."

—Abraham Lincoln

There are simply not enough words to express our deep, abiding admiration for the mothers who read, create, contribute to and otherwise belong to our ParentMap community. We celebrate and honor you on Mother's Day with a jaunty tip o' the sippy cup!

My mom, "Bubbie Shu" (z"l), was an angel with a little lion and teddy bear mixed in. I pay homage to Bubbie and my father for attributes I have embraced as a parent, wife, business owner and engaged citizen. I try to mimic both my mom's contagious smile and her impeccable integrity. She was devoted to higher callings: improving Chicago's public education system, living the values that come with leading an observant Jewish life, and trying to raise great



**Bubbie Shu with granddaughter
Arielle (Happy 29th May 12th!)**

kids. My fast-acting, risk-taking, entrepreneurial (and a tad funny) father was nearly a perfect balance to my mother's more solemn (and sometimes stern) approach to life.

Mom had one of life's toughest jobs: a full-time public school math teacher in Chicago's highest-crime neighborhoods. She never complained or cut

corners, but 30 years on the job wore her out. She taught eighth-grade inner-city kids, volunteered, and worked on her Ph.D. while raising three wild kids.

Is this having it all?

In my life I have a rich mix of personal and professional passions, too. I own a social-minded media business filled with brilliant, inspiring and kind women. ParentMap offers greater flexibility than I was ever able to achieve as a young lawyer 29 years ago when my first baby, Arielle, was born. I am writing this note at 2:51 a.m. Flexibility yes, but at what cost?

Ultimately, I can do the crazy hours, because what is priceless for me is the ability to pick up my kids from school every day.

Our team of exceptional ParentMappers all have their own unique way of "making it work." We know all parents need solutions to life's hectic race; we will continue to explore work/life balance issues together through 2016.

On May 18, join us as we host the premiere screening of *Having It All*, a documentary by Vlada Knowlton. This poignant film follows three women as they embark on and juggle motherhood, marriage and careers. Then stay for Dr. Gottman's "Making Marriage Work and Love Last" lecture (always a sell-out!) — a great gift for yourself and your honey for Mother's Day!

Olga

P.S. My brother's brain was likely saved when he had an accident on a recent bike ride. I insisted he wear a helmet. Our cover photo this month shows cyclists taking a rest, and we'll assume their helmets are off to the side! Stay safe this season, readers: Visit parentmap.com/safety for how to choose the right helmet and many other safety tips.



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BRAIN FUEL

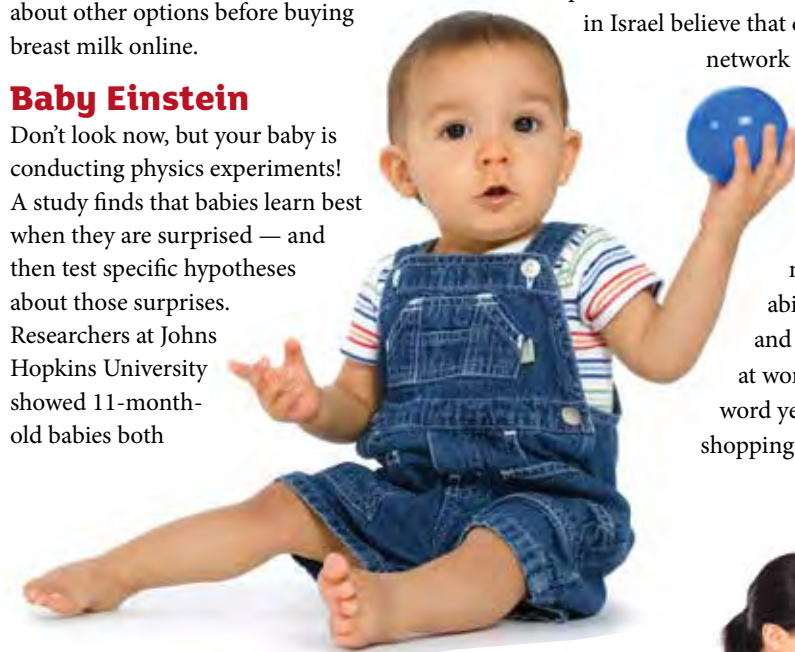
parent news, snack-sized

Milky way

A new warning about the potential dangers of breast milk bought online: A study published in the journal *Pediatrics* found that about 10 percent of samples purchased via the Internet were actually blended with cow's milk. This follows an earlier study that found 75 percent of samples bought online contained high levels of bacteria that can cause illnesses such as pneumonia and meningitis. Online breast milk sales have been growing rapidly; some 55,000 women in the U.S. now buy, sell or exchange breast milk via the Internet. The researchers say moms should talk to their pediatricians about other options before buying breast milk online.

Baby Einstein

Don't look now, but your baby is conducting physics experiments! A study finds that babies learn best when they are surprised — and then test specific hypotheses about those surprises. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University showed 11-month-old babies both



predictable and surprising situations; for instance, a ball hitting a wall and stopping versus a ball appearing to pass right through a wall. Not only did the babies learn more about surprising objects, they worked to understand them. When the babies saw the ball appear to pass through the wall, they banged it on a table to test its solidity. In another experiment, when babies saw the ball appear to hover in midair, they dropped the ball to test the ball's gravity. So that's what's going on when food goes flying off the high chair: physics.



Score one for the dreamers

Here's a surprise: scientific evidence that daydreaming actually enhances brain performance. Researchers at Bar-Ilan University in Israel believe that daydreaming activates a network involving many parts of the brain, as opposed to the localized neural activity that occurs while doing specific tasks. The result: creativity and enhanced mood — and an improved ability to stay mentally on task and efficient. So, daydreaming at work equals productivity! No word yet on whether online shoe shopping has a similar effect.

Modest mouse

If you want to boost your kids' self-esteem, be careful — you could overshoot the mark. A new study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that children whose parents describe them as “more special than other children” and deserving of “something extra in life” were more likely to be narcissistic. “People with high self-esteem think they're as good as others, whereas narcissists think they're better than others,” says one of the study's co-authors. The researchers claim that theirs is the first prospective study to investigate how narcissism develops over time. So I guess it's more special than other studies on narcissism.

Got Gottman?

ParentMap's annual John Gottman lecture always sells out — and always results in some mind- and marriage-altering revelations. Bring your partner to Gottman's talk “Making Love Last and Marriage Work,” on Monday, May 18 at Town Hall Seattle. You can also attend a special premiere screening of the documentary *Having It All*, which explores the persistent challenge of work/life balance for moms. Visit parentmap.com/havingital for more details. ■

— Kristen Russell



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From pain comes a sparkling love

By Megan Wright

The phone was ringing again, but I couldn't bring myself to answer it. I sat on my couch, ignoring the constant ringing as my nearly 2-year-old son watched too many cartoons. The pain was overwhelming.

Typically when you are a hopeful adoptive couple and your adoption agency calls you, multiple times, you answer the phone. But heartache and depression can do strange things to a person. It's something we were never prepared for, and still something that is rarely talked about in adoption circles. Most potential adoptive couples will go through at least one failed match. No one prepares you for the emotional toll of that experience.

Three years earlier, in 2007, I had become pregnant with our oldest son. After a pregnancy rife with health complications, he was miraculously delivered via emergency caesarean section at 35 weeks. We were sternly warned by doctors to never attempt another pregnancy. Just over a year later, we had completed our mountains of adoption paperwork, a home study, and were ready to welcome a new little one into our family.

Despite our meticulous preparation, nothing could prepare us for what the following year would bring.

By October, we had been matched with three different potential birth families. All of them ultimately decided against placing. While we respected these families, their rights and their decisions, each situation left cracks in our hearts.

In September, we met Anna* and Mitch*. They were a sweet teenage couple from Spokane. Both were foster kids and had decided on adoption for their child because they weren't ready to become parents. We drove to Spokane to spend a weekend with them and had a wonderful time getting to know them. We believed, at long last, that we had found the birth family we had been searching for. We returned home from that weekend full of hope and excitement. Papers were signed, and the nursery was readied. We planned to name him Cyrus.

And then, we were blindsided.

The details are painful, the memories blurred

through tears and insomnia. My mother-in-law came to stay with our son while we traveled to Spokane for several days. We learned that Mitch was not the baby's father. He would not return our phone calls. Just days before the baby's birth, Anna had been evicted from the foster home where she had been living and was now homeless. Devon*, the actual father, came into the picture. He didn't want to meet us, but he didn't want to be a father, either.



They were all terrified, and so were we. We knew that it was our job to be the adults as we attempted to navigate a world we didn't understand with kids in circumstances no teen should ever have to face.

We did our best to be graceful, offering support where we could, arranging counseling, finding resources. However, in the end, Devon blocked the adoption. He agreed adoption would be the best thing for the baby, but his time in foster care had wounded him. He could not reconcile his own feelings of abandonment with relinquishing his parental rights, even if he was not ready for the responsibility that came with those rights. Our hearts ached for him.

The young woman was expecting, due in February. She was placing; she had chosen us to parent her baby.

The birth was complicated, and the baby boy went to the NICU; we never got to hold him. We helped prepare a room in a kind woman's house where Anna would eventually bring her baby home. We visited her in the hospital. We did all we could for her before leaving. Our hearts ached for her.

With an empty infant carrier in the backseat that symbolized our crumbled hopes, the five-hour drive from Spokane to Seattle felt like a lifetime.

We pulled down all of our adoption profiles. Those cracks in our hearts created throughout the spring and summer split wide open, leaving me with an emptiness and a pain I can't put into words.

This is where we found ourselves when the agency called, called again, then called again, and eventually sent an email saying, "CALL US!!!" The urgency was lost on me. I finally called after three days.

We believe that God had taken us to the edge of our abilities to endure so that when he delivered us from our sorrow, we would recognize our miracle, our angel.

The agency gave me a name, an email and a phone number. The young woman was expecting, due in February. She was placing; she had chosen us to parent her baby. There were no loose ends; it was an ideal match.

I was terrified.

First, we emailed her, then made a phone call. Her story was heartbreaking, but she told it with grace and composure. She knew our history. She knew we were scared. She calmed us, assured us.

She was in a trying situation, yet she comforted us. It all felt so backward. We felt guilty for needing that kind of strength from her, but she never wavered.

"He chose you. You are his parents," she told us, explaining that her baby had jumped and kicked while viewing our profile, something he had never done before or since.

Six weeks later, we flew to Fairbanks, Alaska, where I met Lisa* for the first time. It was as if I had always known her. We even look like sisters,

both of us tall, with dark curly hair and light olive skin.

Five years later, we still call Lisa our angel. She is Aunty Lisa to our boys, who know she is Leo's birth mama and are so proud of her. We enjoy a wonderful open adoption and wouldn't have it any other way.


Adoption is a miracle born of the ashes of tragedy.

Our son Leo is worth every tear any of us shed, and so much more. Parenting is hard, no matter how you become a parent, and my son is the epitome of a 5-year-old boy, but every now and then, I am blessed with a reminder of that miracle.


Leo has Lisa's eyes, and sometimes when he looks up from his dinosaurs or begs me to dance with him in the kitchen, those beautiful blue eyes sparkle. It's in those moments that I am reminded that the most beautiful things come from the most painful experiences. ■

Megan is the mom of two young, energetic boys. She has a BA in Family History & Genealogy and an MBA from Seattle University. She owns a small business and works from home, which allows her to protect the world from her exuberant boys.

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6 benefits of becoming bilingual

Fluency in two languages could be a major benefit to your child's cognitive development — and when it comes to becoming bilingual, starting young is key. Learning a second language is practically effortless for most children ages 2–5, because their brains are still in the habit of

mimicking new sounds and pronunciation. Up through preadolescence, a child has time to practice a new language through play-based and immersion learning. Starting early can also benefit from a younger child's minimal self-consciousness or fear of embarrassment while honing skills. And, learning two languages simultaneously improves the accent.

While bilingualism was previously associated with a slower response time when speaking and a reduced vocabulary in both languages, recent studies suggest otherwise. Below are just 6 of the many reasons why learning a second language is beneficial to a child's development and ongoing cognitive health.



1. STRONGER COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTIONS

Learning a second language has been shown to strengthen cognitive and linguistic development in children. In order to balance between two languages, a bilingual brain is constantly flexing its executive functioning. This ongoing mental exercise in attention translates into increased focus, better conflict management and a heightened ability to multitask.

2. BETTER WORKING MEMORY

Knowing two or more languages has been linked to developing a better working memory — that is, an individual's ability to store and process information over a short period of time. A good working memory means increased focus and understanding in complex activities such as mental calculations and reading comprehension. Ages 5-7 are critical years for honing working memory skills, pointing to another reason why preschool is an ideal time to start teaching a child another language.

3. REDUCED RISK OF COGNITIVE DECLINE

Due to better executive control, bilingualism has proved to protect against dementia, Alzheimer's disease and other age-related cognitive decline. Relative to older monolingual individuals, elderly bilinguals typically have an improved memory

and overall executive control. In short: a bilingual brain seems to stay sharper, longer.

4. IMPROVED LINGUISTIC AWARENESS

Learning a second language also encourages a heightened sense of linguistic awareness when it comes to nuances in a language's structure, grammar, etc. — an important skill for reading, writing and holding a conversation. Additionally, a more sophisticated understanding of language makes it easier to pick up a third or fourth language later on.

5. MORE DIVERSITY

A bilingual learning environment provides an important level of diversity. Exposing children to a diverse learning environment can encourage a message of community, understanding and respect, helping to create cultural awareness and fluency in a global context. The confidence and worldliness they'll develop by learning a second language will prove to be an asset in all settings.

6. BENEFITS DOWN THE ROAD

Since we are living in an increasingly interconnected world, career opportunities multiply for those who know more than one language. So, while learning a second language might be fun and games for your toddler, she'll thank you later on when it comes time to decide on a career.

— Aurelie McKinstry and Nicole Persun



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The **boss** of everyone

Parents launch businesses to find that elusive career/family balance

• By Erin Baebler •

When Susan Slater-Cotter was going through a divorce, she realized that her days of being a stay-at-home mom were coming to an end. A former teacher, Slater-Cotter wasn't willing to give up being there for her three daughters after school. Instead, she contemplated the options that would allow her the flexibility she needed and decided to reenter the working world by pursuing her interest in health and wellness.

Although she had no idea what it would lead to, Slater-Cotter, who lives in Seattle, began by teaching fitness classes. She loved the work, and her classes were consistently full, which her friends pointed out was because people loved the energy and enthusiasm she brought. Not long after she started, those friends encouraged her to consider going out on her own. At first, she didn't think starting a business was even a possibility. But ultimately, like a growing

number of parents seeking to tweak their careers to better fit the desire for autonomy and their personal and career goals, she decided that even though it felt scary, it was the best choice.

"I started mentioning it to friends, and everything began to fall into place," Slater-Cotter says. Her connections were invaluable: She was offered a retail space as well as some angel investments, and, soon after, Strength Studio opened its doors. On most days, Slater-Cotter can be found in her Portage Bay studio intermittently cracking jokes while working her clients into shape with her relentless encouragement. "It hasn't been easy, but I love it, and it's helping me meet my goals both professionally and personally, which makes it all worthwhile," she says.

Sasha Muir became an entrepreneur and a parent at the same time. In 2005, Muir had just secured seed money for her first venture, Butter

London, a well-known cosmetics company, when she found out she was pregnant. The Seattle mom had her second child in 2008 as Butter London was taking off. Muir and Butter London's two other key employees all had newborns during this initial period, which Muir remembers fondly as a hectic but productive time. The formation of her second company, Knickerbocker Glory, which she sold last year, coincided with the birth of her third child. And now that Muir has sold her majority stake in Butter London, the mom of three elementary-school-age kids is focused on her newest brand, Bevee, a luxury handbag and accessory line for busy, modern women.

"My days are completely crazy, but I love it. My business is almost like a fourth child, and like a child, it always needs more from me," Muir says. "But, I'm able to carve out my own schedule and I'm able to be there for my family, so it works out great."



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ABOUT THIS SERIES

Readers, we've heard from you: The juggle of family and work is one of the biggest challenges you face as parents. In an ongoing series we're calling **Making It Work**, we're going beyond tired-out debates about having it all to explore the issues you face, from on-ramping and off-ramping to the search for easy meals. Here, online at parentmap.com/makingitwork and over Facebook with #MakeItWorkMondays and #MakingItWork, we'll focus on stories and solutions. Send your ideas to editor@parentmap.com.

Change of plans

Whether getting back into the working world after some time away or making a change at one of the many forks in the road that parents encounter, more of us are deciding to take the leap into self-employment and entrepreneurship. In fact, the seemingly at-odds roles of parenting and owning a business can actually work quite well together, letting parents focus on their priorities in whatever way works best for your family. It is hard to tally parent-owned businesses. But the number of women-owned businesses has grown 54 percent in the past 15 years, and solo-entrepreneur businesses are also on the rise. According to entrepreneur and columnist Vivek Wadhwa, author of the 2014 book *Innovating Women: The Changing Face of Technology*, "Twice as many successful entrepreneurs are over [age] 50 as under

[age] 25. . . . The vast majority — 75 percent — have more than six years of industry experience, and half have more than 10 years when they create their startup."

Robin and Clay Martin have managed to create a surprisingly flexible life as the parents of three young children and the owners of Hello Robin, a bakery on Capitol Hill in Seattle. Robin, who has a background in education, decided to stay at home while her kids were young. Once her third was in preschool, however, she filled those newfound hours by baking, something she had loved to do as a child with her grandmother. After perfecting her recipes in her home and hoarding butter in her basement refrigerator (Clay says he once counted 96 sticks), Robin started to consider baking as a business. Friends who had benefited from her excess of sweet treats encouraged Robin to go for it and, after a period of time supplying cookies for >>

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The **boss** of everyone

continued from page 17

the ice cream sandwiches offered at Elemental Pizza in Seattle's University Village, Robin found the perfect space for her bakery just blocks from her home and from the school her children attend.

Clay, who previously co-owned a record label, and Robin opened the charming and family-friendly Hello Robin in December, and she says that it's worked out better than she could have imagined. Robin and Clay walk their kids to school, work at the bakery during the day, and then pick the kids up to do after-school activities, homework, and to have family time. While Robin was initially a bit nervous, she took faith in their solid business plan and trusted that it would all work out. The greatest fear was that they would regret not having tried.

Deciding whether to take time away from a career to stay at home with children can be challenging. Circumstances shift. Kids grow. It can be hard to foresee, long-range, what you might want or need.

Some parents decide to stay home with children, and then their plans change. Before Audra Mulkern quit her job at Microsoft to stay at home with her first baby, she and her husband took steps to ensure they would be able to make ends meet with one salary. Mulkern didn't plan to work while her children were young, but when private school became the best choice for her daughter, she used the skills she had developed in the corporate world to launch an event-planning business. This allowed Mulkern to earn some income while still being largely in control of her schedule. Past work experience plus an interest in farms (due in part to her family's life in Duvall) led her to her newest endeavor, The Female Farmer Project, which chronicles and champions the role of women in agriculture around the world through in-depth stories and photography, with Mulkern speaking and exhibiting at events such as the International Food Blogger Conference and TEDxManhattan. To fund The Female Farmer Project, Mulkern has continued to produce events and take some freelance writing assignments.

“At the end of the day, so much of your success with a startup is about your connections.”



Mulkern's career has changed as the needs of her family have changed. Success does not need to be measured only by bonus checks and titles, she says. “Women are seeking nontraditional paths to redefine their own success. [For instance,] women are finding deep satisfaction in the entrepreneurial and intellectual challenge[s] of farming.”

Risks and rewards

Of course, many business ideas never get off the ground, so in reality, entrepreneurship is not as easy as simply choosing a path and having aspirations. Starting a business comes with risks, not the least of which are financial. You'll need to be realistic about the time you intend to spend working, your startup costs, and the income you need to bring in. You'll need to be sure there is a market for your product or service. And, you'll need to be very clear about how you will measure your success so you can reach your goals.

For Dr. Kris Sasaki, who owns Vida Integrated Health (with Seattle and Everett locations), entrepreneurship was a well-thought-out endeavor that came with carefully weighed risks. After getting his doctor of chiropractic degree, Sasaki lived in Peru for eight years, where he opened six clinics. When he and his wife wanted to start a family, they moved back to the U.S. and landed in Seattle with the intention of purchasing an existing chiropractic practice and turning it into a complete wellness center. Sasaki says it likely would have been much easier for him and less

risky financially if he had had a business partner, but he had very clear goals related to both career and family. He gave himself five years to establish Vida, so that when his children start school this fall, he'll be able to adjust his schedule and be available for their after-school sports schedules and other activities. As the sole owner of his business, Sasaki can shift his work hours to make sure he has time for both business and family.

For Lisa Brandli of Bellevue, the quest for flexibility and freedom drove her to leave her corporate marketing job and launch her own business. She started Brandli PR seven years before she became a mom, but her business enabled a family lifestyle once her son was born. Brandli knew how to manage and maintain both her client load and her income. The big adjustment was how to handle the needs of her infant son. Many days, Brandli would sit at the computer typing with her son strapped to her chest.

While she didn't get a paid maternity leave and has to cover the cost of her benefits as a “solopreneur,” Brandli says she wouldn't trade the time she gets to spend with her son for anything. “It's those hours before and after school, and those drives to and from school that have allowed us to bond and to form the close relationship that we have,” she says. Yes, she ends up working in the evenings sometimes, but it's a trade-off that has worked. In fact, it has worked so well that Brandli is now launching a second business with a partner, a college consulting practice that specializes in helping students navigate the admissions process.

Dreams, hard work

Some parents find that having children provides the creative spark for an entrepreneurial idea.

Seattle foodie and mom of four Sharelle Klaus was looking for her next business idea when she began thinking about how much she had missed being able to pair food with wine while she was pregnant. She set out to create a line of less-sweet sodas in interesting flavors such as vanilla bean and lavender that would enhance the dining experience, and in 2005 Dry Soda was born. Klaus' success in attracting investors is a large part of the company's success. She was able to use her connections from her previous roles, which proved invaluable when she started looking for funding for Dry's growth.

"At the end of the day, so much of your success with a startup is about your connections. I am lucky to have such a great community of people," Klaus says. She also credits trusting her intuition: Many who heard her idea warned her about going into the beverage industry. As an experienced business owner, Klaus believed wholeheartedly that there was room for her idea, and she turned out to be right. Dry is now sold in 4,500 stores and is the fastest-growing soda brand in the country.

Whether you start a consulting business based on your past work experience, create a product that solves a problem you've encountered as a parent, become a franchise owner or pursue some other idea, owning a business has become a tempting choice for

many parents. And, thanks in part to the rise of social media, which makes getting exposure easier than ever, plus the ease with which you can publish a website, a growing number of parents are finding it relatively simple to get started. The lifestyle of being your own boss is increasingly appealing to parents who want more control regarding when and where they work.

That's not to say that you'll work less, though. According to Scott A. Shane, author of *The Illusions of Entrepreneurship*, the typical American who works for himself or herself works 4.4 more hours per week than the typical person who is employed by someone else. So, as you fantasize about calling your own shots, be realistic about the kinds of demands your business might place on you.

Parenting is full of upheaval, and the needs of children seem to change on a regular basis. Whether you envision a little supplemental income from selling a handmade good or freelancing your talent, birthing a global brand, or something in between, life as an entrepreneur could enable you to mold your days around what's most important to you. For parents, that often means the freedom to put family at the top of the list. ■

Erin Baebler is the co-author of Moms Mean Business: A Guide to Creating a Successful Company and Happy Life as a Mom Entrepreneur. She coaches women through her company, Magnolia Workshop.



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How to build a growth mindset

Author and expert Carol Dweck's work over the last 10 years has shed light on the importance of mindset when helping children to succeed. Below is a sample of techniques you can use to transfer a growth mindset to your kids. People with this mindset believe, for example, that traits can be developed and improved, and they tend to persist in the face of obstacles, see failure as an opportunity to learn and enjoy the process because they are not solely focused on the outcome. Read the full post for more strategies and information: parentmap.com/growthmindset

USE ENCOURAGEMENT. The message we send in response to our children's efforts is going to have the highest impact on their likelihood for success. Contrary to popular belief, encouragement is NOT praise. It is an acknowledgement without judgment. Instead of focusing on supposed innate talents or abilities, focus on the process or effort ("Wow, it looks like you worked really hard on that project").

RESPOND TO SETBACKS AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING.

How we respond to our children's failures, setbacks and challenges will be one of the key factors in their future success. These responses might sound like: "It sounds like you are disappointed with your grade on the math test. What do you think you could have done differently to prepare?"

MODEL A GROWTH MINDSET AS A PARENT.

Even as adults we are still learning, growing and making mistakes. Share with your children challenges you are having or setbacks you have experienced and some of the things you have done to overcome them. Kids love to hear stories about their parents' childhood. It might sound like, "You know, when I was in second grade and we were doing times tables, I really had a hard time memorizing my 6s and 7s. I even failed that test! So this is what I tried..."

— Melissa Benaroya, Grow Parenting



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Teeing up summer care

By Hilary Benson

Here in the Pacific Northwest, it's felt like spring since January; ski gear has gathered dust, and heavy coats have stayed in the closet. So we parents can be forgiven for being a little discombobulated. Summer (real summer, as in that time of year when kids are not in school during the day) is right around the corner, and frankly, some of us feel caught off guard.

The fact is we need to find summer care for our kids. And not just any care; we want good-quality care. As we have reported in this multipart series, that means programs that engage children

Parents should also look for programs that encourage wellness; promoting health and nutrition can have a lasting impact on children's health.

in meaningful activities that they can reflect upon afterward; that are culturally responsive; and that offer opportunities for youth leadership.

But the most basic criterion for any program serving children is that it offers a safe environment. "Parents first need to ask about staff ratios," recommends Brian Pitt, a recreation specialist for Metro Parks Tacoma's Sparx program. "With any program or camp, the cost you're paying for is generally the cost of staff, so watch out for low-priced programs, because you have to ask, 'What are they cutting?'" And Pitt advises that parents ask what those staff members actually do: How many are with the kids at any given time? How many walk around managing?

This spring at Truman Middle School in Tacoma, Sparx students have had a choice of cooking, math help, drama or breakdancing sessions after school.

It's a good sign when kids want to be in a program. In Truman's cooking group, chef Ron Rzewnicki teaches kids a variety of ethnic recipes.

Sixth-grader Zoe White made her apple enchilada recipe for a family holiday meal. "They learn in this class that there is no one way to do things," says Rzewnicki. With knives and culinary tools involved, he has an assistant helping, which allows kids to experiment in this safe environment. "I've even had these kids eating sauerkraut!" he says.

Jenny Keister mostly homeschools her seventh-grade son, Jake, but she still brings him to the Sparx drama program. "He likes being a leader, a role model," she says. Through the program, Jake will be the stage manager for production of an upcoming murder-mystery dinner.

Parents should also look for programs that encourage wellness; promoting health and nutrition can have a lasting impact on children's health. On one recent afternoon at McGilvra Elementary School in Seattle, kids came bounding in for fresh fruit and sandwiches made with whole wheat bread. "But wait, kids," reminded one of the staff members, "wash your hands first!"

In Seattle public schools and community centers, after-school and summer day care programs are often run by the Associated Recreation Council (ARC), a nonprofit that provides recreation programs for the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

In 2014, an average of 1,533 students relied on an ARC program for out-of-school care, according to deputy director Christina Arcidy. Hours of care depend on the needs of that community. For example, some parents living in the South Park neighborhood of Seattle need to leave for work earlier, so ARC started offering care at 6:30 a.m. and going later, until 6:30 p.m. "We try to take that one weight off parents' shoulders, where parents can be stuck in traffic but at least not have to worry about where their kids are or if they're in a safe place," Arcidy says.

In leading McGilvra's program, Carolyn Whipple offers a different "active challenge" each week. Whether working with a soccer ball or acting out animal-based movements, students are rewarded with neon shoelaces or other fun items if they complete the challenge. One recent afternoon, the students learned how to make zucchini bread from scratch. "We prioritize healthy food here;

once every few months we might have a junk-food snack, but that's it," says Whipple.

Katia Farage finds it tough to extricate her kindergarten-age son, Ziad, from the program at the end of the day. This is the single mom's first summer of trying to piece together camps and care while she works full-time. Because of her good experience with the McGilvra program, she plans to have her son make the transition from the after-school program to ARC's nearby summer program at the Montlake Community Center. Beyond that, Farage admits, "I'm really still trying to figure this all out."

There's so much to think about when it comes to summer care, and often our kids are in multiple camps and programs. But keep some basic questions in mind, particularly regarding staff numbers. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions such as: "How are bathroom breaks handled?" or "What would staff do if a child was stung by a bee, or if a child falls and hits her head during an activity?"

There may not be a right or wrong answer, but as Sparx's Brian Pitt points out, "If they are quick to answer and actually have an answer, that's a good sign. If not, it may mean that program does not have a plan in place." ■

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. After-School Special's independently reported content is funded by a journalism grant in partnership with the Raikes Foundation and School's Out Washington. See the full series at parentmap.com/afterschoolspecial.

How to pick a HIGH-QUALITY program FOR KIDS

Safe Environment

- What is your staffing? How many staff work directly with children?
- What training do you provide frontline staff?
- Tell me about supervision inside and out
- What are your emergency procedures?
- Are staff trained in child and/or youth development and conflict resolution?

Social and Emotional Well-Being

- How does staff promote positive peer interactions?
- How does staff handle conflict?
- Do kids know what behavior expectations are?
- How do you approach discipline?
- How does staff build relationships with kids?

Youth Engagement

- When do kids get choice in their activities?
- Do students get to plan activities for the group?
- What leadership roles do kids get to play?
- Do they get to reflect on what they learned? How?
- Has youth feedback influenced your program?
- Has parent/family feedback influenced your program?

Program Activities

- What do kids get to do? Can I see a schedule of a typical day?
- What skills will my child learn from your program?
- What is staff's approach to kids who struggle with an activity?
- Are there opportunities for kids to demonstrate what they learn?
- How will you share with me what and how my child is doing?

Other things to look for

- Do staff welcome children by name upon arrival?
- Do staff say goodbye to kids and parents at pickup?
- Do staff appear happy and interested in the kids?
- Do staff provide you with verbal or written information about what your child is doing, progress made, skills developed?

- After-school programs get better the more they assess themselves and make changes based on those assessments (*The Weikart Center, 2012*)
- High quality after-school programs can lead to improved attendance, behavior and coursework. (*Durlak, Weissberg, Pachan 2010*)
- Teens who do not participate in after-school programs are nearly 3 times more likely to skip classes than teens who do participate. They are also 3 times more likely to use marijuana and other drugs and are more likely to drink, smoke and engage in sexual activity. (*YMCA of the USA, 2001*)

For more information about finding great programs for kids, visit parentmap.com/education and schoolsoutwashington.org

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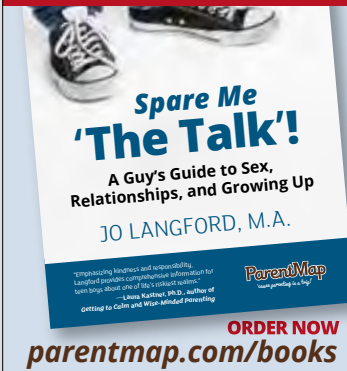
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May PICKS



Making Love Last and Having It All

For a marriage-changing date night, book tickets for ParentMap's May 18 double feature: the premiere of **Vlada Knowlton's powerful documentary film, *Having It All***, which explores career and family life; followed by a **talk by John Gottman, Ph.D.**, who will share insights from decades of research on creating a happy marriage. **Monday, May 18, 5-9 p.m.** Register for the film (\$15), lecture (\$25), or both. Town Hall, Seattle. parentmap.com/gottman



Jellyfish, Tigers and Sloth Bears!

Wild new exhibits at local zoos: At Woodland Park Zoo, the much-anticipated **Banyan Wilds exhibit opens May 2**, with Malayan tigers and sloth bears on view, (zoo.org/banyan). At Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, a **jellyfish exhibit in the North Pacific Aquarium** will mesmerize visitors starting on **May 30** (pdza.org/jellies).



SIFF: From Frozen to Films4Families

The United States' largest film festival offers plenty for adventurous families, from a **Frozen singalong and SIFF sneak preview** (May 2 at noon; SIFF Cinema Uptown) to **SIFF's 2015 Films4Families program**, which screens the best children's features and short films from around the world. **May 14-June 7**; times and prices vary. siff.net

SUNDAY



www.seattlechildrens.org

Purchase a Miracle for Seattle Children's May 1 - June 15

Grocery stores across Washington

Purchase products marked by bright green Purchase a Miracle shelf tags at your local grocery store to benefit cancer research and clinical trials at Seattle Children's Hospital.

www.seattlechildrens.org/purchase-a-miracle

MONDAY

TUESDAY

3

Bicycle Sunday. Take your family's two-wheelers out for a spin on this first of many car-free Sundays along the lake; helmets required. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Lake Washington Boulevard, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/bicyclesunday
Pinkalicious the Musical. Can there possibly be too much of two good things, cupcakes and the color pink? Saturday-Sunday, May 2-24. \$5-\$10. Ages 5-12; Sunday shows are all ages. SecondStory Repertory, Redmond. secondstoryrep.org

4

The Pied Piper. OFT invites little ones to enjoy an interactive, 30-minute show. 10:30 a.m.; also May 8-9. \$5. Ages 0-5 with families. Olympia Family Theater, Olympia. olyft.org
Invention Workshop. Assumption-St. Bridget Pre-K invites young inventors to explore and play; all welcome. 10-11 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 3-5 with caregiver. Assumption Catholic Church, Seattle. absschool.org

5

MayFest at Lakewold Gardens. Visit the gardens for an amazing display of spring color, plus stone sculptures and a photography exhibit. Friday-Sunday, May 1-10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. \$6-\$9; ages 11 and under free. Lakewold Gardens, Lakewood. lakewoldgardens.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

10

Free Train Rides for Mom. Take mom on a scenic train excursion; free with paying child of any age. Saturday-Sunday, May 9-10. \$10-\$18; ages 1 and under free. Northwest Railway Museum, Snoqualmie. trainmuseum.org
Native and Edible Plant Sale. Shop for your mom's garden and catch a hayride (\$1) or take an educational farm tour (\$5). Saturday-Sunday, May 9-10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free entry. Oxbow Farm, Carnation. oxbow.org

11

How Birds Fly. Explore the connection between modern aviation and the earth's original flying machines: birds. Daily through Sept. 7. Included with admission. All ages. Museum of Flight, Seattle. museumofflight.org
Lil' Diggers Playtime. Behold the giant, indoor sandbox of kids' dreams, with 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
ONGOING EVENT

12

POMPEII: The Exhibition. Last few weeks to explore the ancient artifacts preserved under the ash of Mount Vesuvius. Daily through May 25. \$17-\$32; includes admission to regular exhibits. Ages 12 and up; some sensitive content. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. pacificsciencecenter.org
Stomp Rocket Workshop. Use recycled materials to construct a rocket, then launch it. 4-5:30 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 6 and up. Pierce County Library, DuPont Branch. piercecountylibrary.org

17

Syttende Mai Bash. Each year Ballard hosts the largest Syttende Mai (May 17) parade outside of Norway. Take part in the Ballard Street Scramble, free activities at the Nordic Heritage Museum, and the parade (4 p.m.). See schedule at 17thofmay.org.
Bear Camp. Learn about our formidable Northwest neighbors. Saturday-Sunday, May 16-17, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Included with admission. All ages. Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, Eatonville. nwtrek.org

18

John Gottman, Ph.D. and 'Having it All' Premiere. Celebrated author and researcher John Gottman will share his insights on making love last and marriage work. Preceding the lecture, ParentMap presents the premiere of local filmmaker Vlada Knowlton's documentary *Having It All*, following three women trying to juggle career and family. Heavy appetizers served. Doors open 5 p.m., film at 5:45 p.m., lecture 7:15 p.m. Film \$15, lecture \$25. Adults. Town Hall, Seattle. parentmap.com/gottman

19

Seattle Aquarium Beach Naturalist Program. Explore tidal life at select beaches on low-tide days with help from volunteer beach naturalists. 9:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. **FREE.** Check website for details and other dates. seattleaquarium.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Sesame Street Live - Let's Dance! Elmo, Cookie Monster and Ernie lead audiences in an interactive dance party. Tuesday-Wednesday, May 19-20. (Also at Xfinity Arena, Everett, May 22-24.) \$17-\$34; under age 1 free. All ages. ShoWare Center, Kent. showarecenter.com

24

Buddy - The Buddy Holly Story. The musical story of a kid from Texas, his mark on rock 'n' roll and his tragic early death. Friday-Sunday, May 15-June 7. \$20-\$29. Ages 8 and up. Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma. tmp.org

25

Mary Poppins. A spoonful of sugar comes to the enchanting outdoor theater. Sunday-Monday, May 24-25 and Saturday-Sunday, May 30-June 14, 2 p.m. \$10-\$20; ages 5 and under free. Kitsap Forest Theater, Bremerton. foresttheater.com
Memorial Day at HOCM. Military families offered half-price admission in honor of the holiday; all welcome. 11 a.m.-5 p.m. \$9-\$11; under age 1 free (regular price). All ages. Hands On Children's Museum, Olympia. hocm.org

31

Kodomo no Hi - Children's Day. Celebrate this traditional Japanese holiday. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. \$4-\$6; ages 5 and under free. Seattle Japanese Garden, Seattle. seattlejapanesegarden.org

26

Open Play at Let's Play. Stop in for free play, inflatables, fun and games. Tuesdays, 10 a.m.-noon; Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m.; Fridays, 9:30-noon. \$7; discount for siblings. Ages 0-6. Let's Play Sammamish. letsplaysammamish.com **ONGOING EVENT**
Pool Playland. The small outdoor pool is a lovely 95 degrees for tot and grown-up water fun. 11 a.m.-noon daily May 9-Sept. 7. \$3.75-\$5.25; under 1 free. Ages 0-5 with caregiver. Pop Mounser Pool, Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/aquatics **ONGOING EVENT**

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY



Northwest Folklife, May 22-25



Find a motherlode of Mom's Day ideas at parentmap.com/mom

6

Bike to School Day. Ask your school to register with Cascade Bicycle Club, or just get on your bike and ride to school, to the park or around your neighborhood. **FREE.** All areas. cascadecycling.org
Toddler Tales & Trails. Kids and caregivers enjoy story time and then head out to explore nature on short hikes perfect for tots. 10-11 a.m. \$2. Ages 2-5 with caregiver. Seward Park Audubon Center, Seattle. sewardpark.audubon.org

13

Toddler Time at ESC. Environmental Science Center naturalists welcome tots and caregivers to dig into nature activities. Wednesdays, 10:30-11:30 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 1½-5 with adult. Seahurst Park, Burien. esciencecenter.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Northshore Open Gym. Kiddos get wild on the rope swing, trampolines, foam pit, tumbling mats and more. Wednesdays, 2:30-4 p.m. \$10. Ages 1-18. Northshore Gymnastics Center, Woodinville. northshoregymnastics.com **ONGOING EVENT**

20

Dental Home Day. FREE dental care for children, along with games, prizes, the Mariner Moose, Harry the Husky and more fun. Call 206-543-5800 to schedule. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 1-18. The Center for Pediatric Dentistry, Seattle. thecenterforpediatricdentistry.com
Living Laboratory. Kids play games and help UW I-LABS scientists learn more about early brain development. Select Wednesdays, 1-3 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 1-5. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. kidsquestmuseum.org

27

Find Your Village. ParentMap invites parents to connect with others in their neighborhood while kiddos play for free. 10 a.m.-noon. **FREE.** Parents with children ages 0-6; kids must be under 48 inches. WiggleWorks Kids, Bellevue. Preregister at parentmap.com/fyv.

7

Nordic Stories. Hear stories by Scandinavian authors, then make a related craft project, the first Thursday of the month. 10 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 3-6. Nordic Heritage Museum, Seattle. nordicmuseum.org
Late Play Date. A night of fun crafts and activities with friends and family. 6-8 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 3-12 with families. White River Valley Museum, Auburn. wrvmuseum.org

14

Seattle International Film Festival. Three weeks of films from more than 80 countries, including a robust Films4Families program featuring the best children's features and short films from around the world. Through June 7; times and prices vary. siff.net
LeMay Cruise-In. Stop by to admire cool cars of all vintages with live music and dinner available from barbecue food trucks on site. 5-8 p.m. **FREE;** museum admission not included. LeMay - America's Car Museum, Tacoma. americascarmuseum.org

21

Story Time in Bellevue. Settle in for new and classic kids' books, plus activities and refreshments. Thursdays, 11 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 3-7 with caregiver. University Bookstore, Bellevue. bookstore.washington.edu **ONGOING EVENT**
Pinocchio. A new adaptation of this classic tale follows the ultimate test of the marionette's courage. 7 p.m. Pay-what-you-can Thursday. (Other shows May 15-31, \$13-\$19.) Ages 5 and up. Olympia Family Theater, Olympia. olyft.org

28

Cornerstone Café Open Play. Community café offers drop-in play and other family programs. Monday-Wednesday, 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.; Thursday-Friday 1-5 p.m. **FREE;** donations appreciated. Ages 5 and under with caregiver. Cornerstone Café, Seattle. facebook.com/FOCSCornerstoneCafe
Dusty Strings Presents Carolyn Cruso. Live music from friends of Dusty Strings acoustic music store while you shop, dance or relax. 6:30-8 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Crossroads Market Stage, Bellevue. crossroadsbellevue.com

1

Once Upon a Mattress. Delight in this funny musical featuring princesses, a troublesome pea, a prince, an evil queen and more. Friday-Sunday, May 1-9. \$5-\$12. Ages 5 and up. Bellevue Youth Theatre-Crossroads. bellevuewa.gov
Magic Tree House: Dinosaurs Before Dark KIDS. Based on the popular book series, a play about Jack and Annie being transported to the age of dinosaurs. Friday-Sunday, May 1-9. \$12. All ages. Renton Civic Theatre. hi-liners.org

8

Flushed: Into the World of Wastewater Treatment. Last weekend to catch this innovative one-man show exploring what happens after we flush. Friday-Sunday through May 10. \$10-\$15. Ages 7 and up. New City Theater, Seattle. brownpapertickets.com
Kaleidoscope in Concert. Creative Dance Center's dancers ages 7 to 17 present a varied program by local and national choreographers. Friday-Monday, May 8-10. \$8-\$18. All ages. Broadway Performance Hall, Seattle. creativedance.org

15

Coppelia. International Ballet Theatre presents the fanciful tale of a doll-maker who seeks to bring a doll to life. Saturday performances abridged for younger audiences. Friday-Sunday, May 15-17. \$25-\$45. All ages. Meydenbauer Center Theatre, Bellevue. ibtbellvue.org
MamaCon 2015. MamaCon's FREE Friday evening kick-off features a book reading and free cocktails. 6-9 p.m. **FREE;** preregister (MamaCon main event Saturday \$97). Adults. Embassy Suites, Lynnwood. mamacon.net

22

Northwest Folklife Festival. The iconic performance fest showcases a huge array of talent and this year aims its cultural focus on Beats, Rhymes and Rhythms. The Discovery Zone focuses on activities and performances especially for kids. Friday-Monday, May 22-25. \$10/person or \$20/family suggested donation. Seattle Center. nwfolklife.org

29

Seussical the Musical. It's a comic mash-up of all the best of Seuss starring Horton the Elephant in a triumphant turn. Friday-Sunday, May 29-June 21. \$13-\$15. Ages 4 and up. Studio East, Kirkland. studio-east.org
Bat Walk. Head out in the dark with a ranger to spy our furry, flying friends leaving their roosting site. 7:30-9 p.m. \$2-\$3; preregister for course #94453. Ages 5 and up. Lewis Creek Park, Bellevue. myparksandrecreation.com

2

Lacey S.T.E.M. Fair and Grand Prix Electric Car Races. Hands-on activities, robotics demos, electric vehicle races around a quarter-mile track and more. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Huntamer Park, Lacey. ci.lacey.wa.us
Free Comic Book Day. Just like it sounds, visit one of dozens of area comic stores to choose from among 50 free comic books offered **FREE** today. All areas. freecomickbookday.com

9

Saturday Morning Cartoons. Super-fun plays written by kids, inspired by the morning cartoons of their playwright parents' youth. 10:30 a.m. \$5-\$14. All ages. The Pocket Theater, Seattle. the1448projects.org
Storybook Ballet Theatre Fairytale Tea Party. Treat Mom to a delightful catered tea while watching fables, fairytales and folktales as short ballets. 11 a.m., 1:30 and 4 p.m. \$15-\$16. All ages. The Merlino Art Center, Tacoma. tacomacityballet.org

16

Dock Fishing Derby. Cast your line off the dock and see if you reel in a winning flounder, sculpin or just "coolest catch." 7 a.m.-4 p.m. \$20. All ages. Point Defiance Marina, Tacoma. metroparkstacoma.org
Family Saturday. Dig into the dirt with Seattle Tilth, make nature crafts and have a very fresh snack. Saturdays, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. **FREE.** Pickering Garden, Issaquah. All ages. seattletilth.org **ONGOING EVENT**

23

Canoe Mercer Slough. Paddle the amazing Mercer Slough to spot some resident wildlife. Saturday-Sunday, 8:45 a.m.-noon. \$14-\$16; pre-register. Ages 5 and up. Enatai Beach Park, Bellevue. myparksandrecreation.com **ONGOING EVENT**
Job Car Cabin Craft Saturday. Stop by to discover Tacoma's history and get busy with a craft project, the fourth Saturday of the month. 1-4 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 3-8 with families. Job Carr Museum, Tacoma. jobcarrmuseum.org

30

Kent International Festival. Performances, a world dance party and hand-carried float contest. 9:30 a.m.-10 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. ShoWare Center, Kent. kentinternationalfestival.com
Spirit of Indigenous People. Celebrate and honor the rich culture of the first inhabitants of North America with music, dance, food and more. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. **FREE.** All ages. Seattle Center. seattlecenter.com/festival

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MOM & ME

SATURDAY, MAY 9

9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Treat Mom to a day at the zoo!

At Mom & Me, moms will be honored with half-price admission as thanks for all they do year-round.

The whole family will delight in family-focused keeper talks, the playful antics of the lion cubs, special activities, and the new Banyan Wilds exhibit. It's sure to be a wild time!

Visit zoo.org or call 206.548.2500 for more information





Ride, mama, ride!

**Mom's the ride:
the author and her
two mini cyclists**

6 family-friendly bike rides for Mother's Day and May

BY JENNIFER KAKUTANI

Get ready to roll! The availability of family-biking gear such as trailer bikes and cargo bikes is making it easier than ever to ride with kids in tow. Meanwhile, bike lanes and rail trails are being added to the Puget Sound map, making it easier to bike safely with kids of any age. Now, you just need the perfect route for your spring family bike ride: one that's safe, the right distance, and with a snack stop for refuel and reward.

In honor of National Bike Month, here are six favorite bike routes for spring, ranging from lazy-day rides to a high-thrill tunnel jaunt that older kids will love. If mom's favorite way to spend her day is on two wheels, you might have just solved what to do on Mother's Day. >>



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Ride, mama, ride

continued from page 27

1 Car-free in Kirkland

ROUTE Cross Kirkland Corridor Interim Trail: Terrace Park to the end of the trail at 108th Avenue N.E.

DISTANCE 3 miles round trip

This short ride in picturesque Kirkland is ideal for families with kids on scoots or little ones new to pedal bikes. Park by **Terrace Park**, a small park about one mile from the Kirkland waterfront, whose ample grassy lawn offers a perfect picnic site where mom can relax while the kids frolic on the play structure. Above the park at the top of the stairs, you'll find the car-free **Cross Kirkland Corridor Trail**, a relatively new rail trail that's part of a larger Eastside rail-trail project. Enjoy peek-a-boo views of Lake Washington and the Seattle skyline as you pedal southbound 1.6 miles, at which point the trail turns into the original railroad tracks again, and you turn back.

MINIMUM AGE Kids on scooters or scoot bikes or preschoolers on pedal bikes

SNACK STOPS A **PCC** and **Metropolitan Market** are just 3 minutes away (bikeable for grown-ups). Pick up ingredients to build your own picnic charcuterie: gourmet cheeses, salami, olives, fancy crackers and don't forget mom's favorite bar of chocolate! **Menchie's Frozen Yogurt** is also nearby.

2 Fresh fun in Bothell + Redmond

ROUTE Sammamish River Trail from Bothell Landing to Redhook Brewery and the Redmond Saturday Market at Redmond Town Center

DISTANCE 8–25 miles round trip

Cycle the Sammamish River Trail for river views, farm fun and more. Start the ride at lovely **Bothell Landing Park**, where you'll pedal south on the **Sammamish River Trail**. At about 4.5 miles, you can detour for lunch at the **Redhook Brewery** (check out the Aerial Adventure Park next door, too). If your pedalers are up for more, continue along the Sammamish River Trail to **Redmond Town Center** (10.9 miles), enjoying peaceful agricultural landscapes. At Town Center, refuel with a latte or, on Saturdays, fresh goods from the fabulous **Redmond Saturday Market**, open May to October. For more play time before your return, nearby **Marymoor Park** offers climbing structures, trails and even a velodrome.

MINIMUM AGE For kids ages 7 and up who are comfortable riding independently or any age on trailer bikes or tot seats.

SNACK STOPS **Redhook Brewery**, for burgers, sun and microbrews; **Redmond Saturday Market**, for produce and snacks from more than 80 vendors; or **Ooba Tooba Mexican Grill**, an upscale taquería in downtown Redmond, just a quick ride from Redmond Town Center.



Crossing the locks is part of the Ballard bike adventure

3 Paddle and pedal in Ballard

ROUTE Golden Gardens Park to Hiram M. Chittenden Locks or Discovery Park

DISTANCE 4–6.5 miles round trip

Choose your own adventure in Ballard! Start at **Golden Gardens Park** and ride south on a flat, scenic section of the Burke-Gilman Trail. If mom is up for a paddle, stop by **Surf Ballard** on Shilshole Bay, which rents paddleboards by the hour (reserve online, surfballard.com). After you finish with your upper-body workout, pedal to **Hiram M. Chittenden Locks**, where you can laze around on the lawns (a perfect picnic stop) or walk your bikes across the locks and wind your way up the hills of Magnolia to **Discovery Park**, one of Seattle's wildest, most view-rich parks. Ride to the park via 32nd Avenue W. and W. Government Way, where you'll cross a funky bridge over train tracks and the **Kiwanis ravine** (home to Seattle's largest nesting colony of great blue herons). Enter the park on Discovery Park Boulevard.

MINIMUM AGE Any child who can ride several miles independently should be comfortable pedaling to the locks on the bike path; older middle schoolers and teens who are comfortable with street riding (and hills) can go all the way to Discovery Park.

SNACK STOPS Brunch at **Portage Bay Café** in downtown Ballard, famous for its pancake buffet (brunch served until 2:30 p.m. every day; make reservations online).

4 Tunnel adventure in Snoqualmie

ROUTE Iron Horse Trail from the Hyak parking lot through the Snoqualmie Tunnel

DISTANCE 5–20 miles round trip, your choice

At Snoqualmie Pass, an exhilarating (or terrifying, depending on how you look at it) cycling adventure awaits: The 2.5-mile **Snoqualmie Tunnel**, a former railway tunnel that bores through the mountain on the 110-mile gravel rail trail known as the Iron Horse Trail. "It is the longest tunnel open to nonmotorized travel in the U.S.," says Russ Roca of the Path Less Pedaled website (pathlesspedaled.com). Park at Hyak, an entry point to **Iron Horse State Park** on Snoqualmie Pass (you'll need a Discover Pass to park). West of the lot, find the **Iron Horse Trail**, a wide gravel path that leads to a metal gate; the tunnel entrance is about one-third of a mile away. >>



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For more information call 425-452-7155 or
byt@bellevuewa.gov

out + about

Ride, mama, ride

continued from page 29

Be sure to wear reflective clothing, and bring bright bike lights and well-charged headlamps. Hikers and bikers traveling at various speeds can be inside the tunnel. Roca also recommends extra layers: Even if the temperature outside the tunnel is 75 degrees, the inside can be a breezy 45.

You can stop for a picnic and views at the end of the tunnel, or continue on for a backcountry cycling experience that offers bridges over beautiful rivers, campsites and even crosses the Pacific Crest Trail. Once you head back into the tunnel for your return trip, you will not see the light at the end of the tunnel until you reach the bend near the start. Find more info at wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/iron-horse-tunnel.

MINIMUM AGE All ages of kids who are comfortable riding on gravel (and not too afraid of the “dark”)

SNACK STOPS This is a bring-your-own-snacks ride, but you could start a little campfire at one of the campsites on the side of the trail and roast marshmallows. Or pack a gourmet picnic.

5 Cruising a historic trail in Snohomish

ROUTE Centennial Trail from Machias Trailhead Park to Trails End Taphouse & Restaurant

DISTANCE 10 miles round trip

The 29-mile **Centennial Trail** that runs from Snohomish to points north was once a Native American path. It then became a railroad and is now a recreational rail trail that offers sweeping views of the lush Snohomish River Valley. You can do several kinds of rides on the trail, but a fun family ride is to start from **Machias Trailhead Park**, 5 miles north of Snohomish, and ride south on the wide, paved trail to the town, where you can refuel on baked goods or burgers. If this distance is too far, start farther south at the **Pilchuck Trailhead** (2.1 miles from Snohomish). Or lengthen the route by starting at the **20th Street N.E. trailhead** in Lake Stevens. Customize your trip by using the informative Centennial Trail website (centennialtrail.com), complete with videos.

MINIMUM AGE All ages

SNACK STOPS The **Snohomish Bakery** is a crowd-pleaser for baked goods and coffee. For lunch, try **Trails End Taphouse & Restaurant** in Snohomish.

6 Trains, ships and the Sculpture Park, oh my!

ROUTE Fremont Bridge to West Seattle via the Ship Canal Trail, Elliott Bay Trail, Olympic Sculpture Park and the water taxi

DISTANCE 14 miles round trip

“Mama, look at all the trains!” my son yells from behind me on our bike. We’re riding one of my favorite routes in Seattle, from the Fremont Bridge to the Seattle waterfront to take the King County Water Taxi to West Seattle. It takes about an hour and is chock-full of great sites.

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Arty on! The ride from Fremont to West Seattle takes kids right past the Olympic Sculpture Park

Begin the trip in Seattle's funky Fremont neighborhood, where you'll cross the Fremont Bridge and immediately bike west on the **Ship Canal Trail**, which runs toward the Ballard Bridge. After the Ballard Bridge, with the train yard on the left and the entrance to Fisherman's Terminal on your right, the trail ends abruptly at a crosswalk. Here, you'll navigate to the **Elliott Bay Trail**, where kids will love the view of the train yard, and start downtown. (Watch out for speedy oncoming cyclists.) Cycle past the **Olympic Sculpture Park** (ask your kids questions about the different sculptures you'll see), and along Alaskan Way to the **King County Water Taxi** at Pier 50 (after the Seattle Aquarium, merge with the pedestrian path along the construction site of the new seawall). If you're up for more riding, the scenic **Alki Trail** in West Seattle extends for miles along the beach, with more gorgeous views.

MINIMUM AGE Because this is a busy route, it's best for kids riding with parents, or older tweens and teens able to ride longer distances and navigate cycling and street traffic.

SNACK STOP A must is **Marination Ma Kai**, right at the King County Water Taxi stop in West Seattle, for Kahlúa pork sliders, kalbi beef tacos and shave ice. Alki offers more refueling stops. ■

Between school drop-offs on her cargo bike, Jennifer Kakutani works on her memoir and teaches writing workshops at jenniferkakutani.com.

super-cool gifts for a biking mama

- Schedule a **bike service/yearly tune-up**. Keep your mama safe!
- A bike-ready coffee mug and holder such as the **Vacuum Insulated Black Trim Travel Tumbler** (with oh-so-essential, one-handed push-button operation). thermos.com
- **Thin, bright, breathable gloves** for signaling and smart-phone operation, such as the **Duraglove ET**. defeet.com
- A nice loud brass bell. The **Crane Brass Riten** is a beauty and has enough sound to carry. Sold locally at G&O Family Cyclery (familycyclery.com).
- **Safest bike lights** ever at orfos.bike.
- **Bike Basics kit**, with tools, tube repair and more. sunandski.com
- Essential for any Seattle bike mom, a **Brooks Rain Cape**. modernbike.com

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0–5

Good summer gear for family adventure

Ready, set, summer! Here's what you need for a summer on the go (even if you're just going to your favorite local park)

By Malia Jacobson

It's almost summertime — are you ready? More specifically, are you geared up? Summertime livin' may be easy, as the song goes, but the long days of summer can be tricky to manage with a baby, toddler or preschooler in tow. But don't sit this one out: The Old Farmer's Almanac predicts a warm, dry summer for Seattle, so make

the most of it. Get out and explore, whether your taste runs to road tripping, car camping or a simple picnic at a local park. We polled local parents and curated our own favorite gear to help keep you going all summer long. And you can stock up: These makes great gifts for Mother's Day and Father's Day (hint, hint!).



CAMPING

Keep calm in the woods

PETZL HEADLAMPS \$19.99

Forget fumbling for a flashlight in a dark tent.

Color-coordinated headlamps illuminate your sightline to make everyday tasks safer and more fun. Let's face it, setting up, cooking dinner, even diaper changes are easier with both hands free, and



middle-of-the-night potty runs are more pleasant when everyone can see where they're stepping. Petzl headlamps are lightweight, affordable, adjustable and come in an array of bright colors. (Splurge and get enough to go around if you want to delight the kids. My headlamp adjusts to be small enough to fit my toddler, but it's comfortable on me, too.)

ON THE GO PLAY YARD about \$70

A simple, **portable play yard** provides a safe place for baby to chill and enjoy the scenery while you set up camp; if your tent is large enough, move it inside to give your toddler a serene spot for an afternoon nap or quiet time. It'll be so quiet, you'll hear the birds peep.



MEGA CHECKERS/TIC-TAC-TOE REVERSIBLE RUG \$15.99

When you've got a brood to entertain, look for camping games that pull double duty. This one serves up **checkers** for school-age kids; flip it over for a **tic-tac-toe board** suitable for the pre-K set, which also includes an upgrade to "mega" tic-tac-toe, once players master the original game. Made to spread out on grass, concrete or a picnic table, the rug is machine-washable; when play is over, simply roll or fold it out of the way. In search of a more physical pastime? Invest in a classic **Ladder Toss set**, and your campsite will be the most popular one at the park. >>



0–5 Good summer gear

continued from page 33



CAR TRIPS

No-drama navigation

TECH-FREE CAR GAMES \$10–\$25

Sandra Kimmet, a Carnation, Washington, mom of four tots, says she uses marble mazes and other “fidget” games to keep her offspring occupied on long drives. Try a **magnatab game**, **bead-filled alphabet board**, or **brain-building marble maze**, all from Kid O.



MESS-FREE ART PLAY \$6–\$15

As a mom of three, I find it’s a rare toy that engages all my kids — currently 8, 5 and almost 2 — for any stretch of time. But the **Melissa & Doug Water Wow sets** do exactly that. Unlike earlier “paint with water” toys, these offer instant gratification: Vivid colors appear instantly with a stroke of the small, refillable brush. **Bendon’s Imagine Ink books** get high marks with parents for a low price point and a wide selection of kid-approved characters, from My Little Pony to Disney’s Planes.



CARGO ROOF BOX \$349 and up

Think you need a bigger car to power through your summer with a growing family? You might not: The right **cargo rooftop box** could expand your cargo space by as much as 17 cubic feet, enough to haul the family’s gear and make trips more comfortable and less crowded. You’ll shell out at least \$300–\$400 for a quality roof-top cargo box, but it’s certainly cheaper than a new set of wheels.



ADVENTURE

Trek forth, kids

SMARTWOOL SOCKS \$8–\$10

Pacific Northwest summer days are famously cool in the morning and at night; temperatures can be downright brisk when taking kids into the forest or the mountains. **Smartwool socks** keep tiny explorers from getting cold feet (a guaranteed hike-ender); paired with rubber boots or hiking boots, these socks keep toes toasty, dry and blissfully blister-free.



TREKKING POLES \$80–\$220

Wesley Molloy leads the Tacoma chapter of the national organization Hike it Baby, which means she’s frequently out on the trails with daughter Delaney, 2, and a dozen or so other little ones. “Trekking poles are great for helping to maintain your balance and footing while hiking with kids, especially when hiking while packing a kid on your back or front,” Molloy says. Bonus idea: Kids love to have their own “trekking poles”; bring a pocket knife on your adventure, help them find **the perfect stick**, then whittle a smooth handle. Extra fun: Have the kids paint or color their names on their poles.

MUDDY BUDDY RAIN SUIT \$31.50

Don’t let raindrops ruin a perfectly good adventure. When you’re not sure if the good weather will hold, pack a **Muddy Buddy rain suit** by Tuffo. Available in toddler sizes from 12 months to 4T, these head-to-toe coveralls keep kids dry and happy; when the hike’s over, you can zip the suit off to keep the car and car seat mud-free.



PARK + BEACH PLAY

Go all day

MELISSA & DOUG SAND PLAY SETS \$5-\$12

Hitting the beach? Why settle for a simple sand castle when you can have sand cupcakes, sand pizza or sand bricks? These sets are popular with my toddler and his pals, and they're affordable, so if a piece gets left behind, it's not the end of the world. If your beach day gets stalled by a storm, pull out the **kinetic sand** for some tabletop sensory sand play at home. (Fair warning — don't be surprised if older kids and adults get hooked on sand sculpting with these sets, too.)



CAMP STOWAWAY LOW CHAIR \$44.50

Each and every summer, as I haul my kids to parks, beaches and outdoor concerts, I envy the smart parents who think to bring along portable chairs — settling in on the ground just isn't all that comfortable, particularly when toddlers insist on sitting in your lap. These **take-along seats** from REI are equally well-suited for making s'mores fireside or cheering on your little one at soccer camp.



ZIPPERED PICNIC BLANKET \$26.99

Taking on summer with little ones in tow means being prepared for whatever the day brings. Stash this **bright zippered blanket tote** from Target in the trunk, and you'll always be ready for an impromptu picnic, park day or beach stop. Zipped up, it's a highly portable square with a carrying strap; unzipped, it's a family-size blanket with enough space for your brood, food and gear.



SPORT-BRELLA UMBRELLA SHELTER \$59.99

When it comes to shading kiddos from the sun's rays, regular picnic umbrellas fall woefully short. While the **Sport-Brella** looks like a traditional umbrella, it features side canopies that tether to the ground to serve as a sunshade, wind blocker and rain shelter in one. And it's huge — 8 feet wide when open — so the entire family is covered, no matter what. ■



Malia Jacobson of Tacoma is a nationally published journalist and mom of three.



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4–8

Keying in to music lessons

Questions to ask before renting that baby grand

By Michael Berry

So your 5-year-old has been singing “Let It Go” nonstop since 2013, or plays air ukulele like a miniature Jake Shimabukuro. Or perhaps you’re familiar enough with all the benefits of music literacy — from brain building to learning self-discipline — that you’re determined to provide a music education for your child. Is it time for private lessons?

Choosing the right approach and finding the right teacher for a child’s first instrument lessons may seem overwhelming, particularly if you don’t have a musical background. But if you think you’re ready to make the commitment, here are some key questions to explore before getting started.

Is she ready?

This is perhaps the most challenging question. Just because your child loves to sing or bang on toy instruments doesn’t mean she’s ready to study music formally, although showing consistent interest in an instrument is a good indicator. Music lessons require discipline, patience, a certain physical maturity and — depending on the approach — basic reading ability. Ideally, children should be able to sit still and focus on a task for 10–15 minutes.

What age is best? Aural approaches to music teaching, such as Suzuki (more on this follows) mirror the way children learn to speak and are suitable for younger children around the age of 4 or 5. Notation-based approaches work best with students who can read (or at least recognize the letters A through G) and can manipulate written symbols pretty easily, generally around 8 or 9 years old.

If you’re not sure if your child is ready, you could start with a program such as Music Together’s Big Kids curriculum. Designed for 5- to 7-year-olds, Big Kids incorporates singing and movement to bring students in tune with their main musical instrument — their body.

“We deconstruct songs in our collection down to main pitches. We use percussion instruments and props to help learn musical terms,” says Monica Hernandez, codirector of the Music Together program at Music Center of the Northwest (mcnw.org).



No matter which instrument your child chooses, make sure that it is correctly sized and sounds good.

Which instrument?

First and foremost, your child should like the sound of the instrument they choose. Many kids start with piano and violin. The piano offers instant gratification at the push of a key, both instruments can accommodate even the smallest hands, and teachers for both are abundant. They also make great “gateway” instruments; I started on violin and transitioned to the double bass as soon as I didn’t have to stand on a chair to play it.

But many other instruments are fine as starters, too — from the ukulele (increasingly popular for its small size and ease of strumming) to child-size guitars and recorders. Even the largest instruments are now available in sizes suitable for the smallest hands and lungs. (Though be warned: If your child takes up the double bass, you might find yourself investing in a bigger car down the road.)

No matter which instrument your child chooses, make sure that it is correctly sized and sounds good. And there is no need to buy: Stores such as Ted Brown have reasonable monthly rental rates (\$27–\$60, depending on the instrument; tedbrownmusic.com), and the rental payments can be applied toward the purchase of the instrument.

Which method?

There are a few either/or choices that can help you find the best approach for your child.

Aural or written? There are two general approaches to teaching music to young children: aural and written. In aural-driven methods, students learn by listening and imitating their teacher (and fellow students). Musical notation is introduced only after a student has a firm grasp of his or her instrument. The Suzuki method is perhaps the best-known aural-first approach. Students have individual and group lessons, with the group lessons offering a form of positive peer pressure. One possible downside: Parents are expected to attend lessons, take notes and practice with kids — a commitment that can be difficult to sustain for busy families.

“Written” approaches are probably what most people think of when they think of music lessons, with an emphasis on learning to sight-read. I would argue that reading music results in more independent musicians from the outset: Students can download or buy sheet music to all kinds of songs and work on them on their own. Reading music can also lead more quickly to ensemble playing. The downside is that students trained in the written tradition might have trouble picking up music by ear and improvising. >>

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4–8 Keying in to music lessons

continued from page 37

Classical, jazz or rock? On the one hand, when anyone first starts learning an instrument, certain fundamentals common to all genres have to be mastered: names of strings, how to hold a bow, the names of the piano keys and so on. On the other hand, the last 10 years or so have seen an uptick in less-traditional establishments, such as the School of Rock (*seattle.schoolofrock.com*), which offers a curriculum tailored for budding rockers. But all styles of music require dedication and practice to excel; pop and jazz are in no way easier than classical, nor is classical inherently more tedious and boring.

Fun or fundamentals: You also want to make sure that the approach you settle on focuses on not just songs, but also music and technique. (For example, I would not recommend the “Play Piano in a Flash!” program by Scott Houston, “The Piano Guy,” which forgoes all technique in favor of the end results: Use whatever fingers you want to play the songs.) Most approaches balance technical training with learning songs.

Performance expectations are

something else to consider. Is your child interested in performing in public? Some teachers offer a variety of performance activities, ranging from traditional recitals to the “dueling pianos” format used by Off the Wall Music Studio (*offthewallschoolofmusic.com*) in Wallingford, in which students play and sing while engaging the audience.

Once you’ve honed in on an approach, how do you find a teacher who’s a good fit? J.K. Simmons may have won an Oscar for his portrayal of an abusive music teacher in the movie *Whiplash*, but his character is hardly representative of the many compassionate teachers out there.

Start by asking everyone you know for teachers and studios they recommend. Once you have identified a couple of candidates, ask if your child can take a sample lesson or two. Look for a teacher who is encouraging but not afraid to critique — who motivates students with patience, good humor and praise when deserved.

Susan Baer, a Suzuki violin teacher/trainer on Whidbey Island, says, “Students are motivated if they feel

successful and learning is engaging. Tasks are broken down into small steps, achievement is recognized, and the effort put forth is celebrated.”

As far as cost, many music teachers rely on private lessons as their main source of income, and they like to be able to count on a fixed income every month. Lesson prices in the Seattle area vary greatly, but tend to range from \$30 to \$50 for a half hour.

After your child has had a few lessons, check in. Ask what she has learned, what was fun, what was challenging and how the teacher helped.

If after a couple of lessons, you feel that the teacher is not a match, be honest. It could simply be that the approach does not meet the needs of you and your child. It’s worth moving on to find a teacher who will encourage your child to work hard, persevere and take pride in his or her accomplishments. ■

Michael Berry teaches music courses in the University of Washington system and is active as a freelance double bassist in the region. He lives in Tacoma with his wife and six-month-old daughter.

lessons on practice: low- and high-tech ways to ease the grind

For many families, the lessons are the easy part — it’s practice that’s the real challenge. Here are some tips:

- **In the beginning, short, consistent practice sessions are best**, sometimes as little as five minutes a day. This allows the child’s body to adjust to the demands of making music and keeps the practice time within their attention spans.
- **Try to have kids practice at the same time every day** so it becomes a habit.

And while **technology** can’t practice for a child, it can help in other important ways:

- **Recording lessons via your smartphone** voice recorder is a great help at practice time (ask your teacher before recording).
- **More private teachers are now offering virtual lessons** through video chat programs such as Skype and FaceTime. This can be particularly useful for students in rural areas where private teachers may be hard to find.

- **A metronome app such as Tempo** (*itunes.apple.com*; \$2.99) will help students learn to keep a steady beat.
- **The Cleartune** (*bitcount.com*; \$3.99) app offers an easy-to-read chromatic tuner so that students can tune their instruments and improve intonation.
- **Music theory apps such as Tenuto** (*musictheory.net*; \$3.99) and **Music Theory Pro** (*musictheorypro.net*; \$4.99) allow students to practice naming notes, spelling scales and identifying key signatures.

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Private school admission

How to situate your student for success

By Nora Martin and Edan Shahar

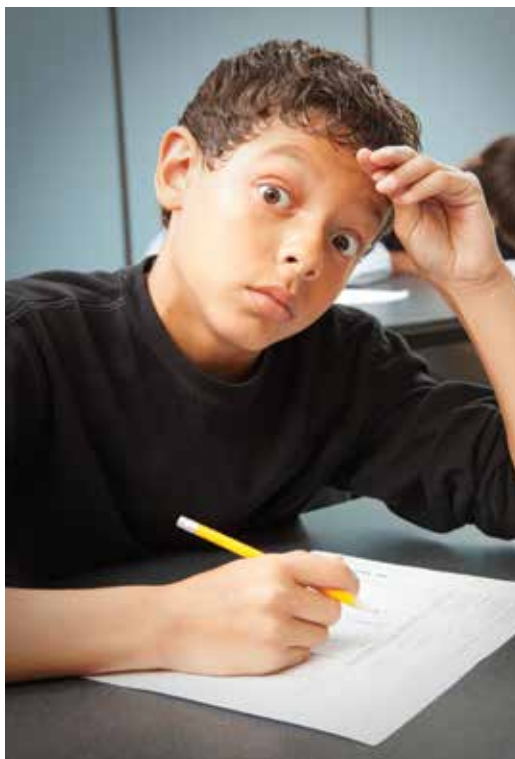
There are many reasons why a private middle school or high school could be the best option for your student: Some children need and thrive on the extra teacher attention, while others relish the additional academic challenges or more plentiful arts programs. Introverted students often do better in smaller classes, and bullied students can feel safer in private school environments.

Private schools can offer families a lot, but the admissions process, which can begin a year or more ahead of the entry year (as early as fourth grade for students looking at private middle schools), might seem daunting. The first hurdle many families find in their research is the following set of abbreviations: ISEE and SSAT. No, these are not the latest

versions of bird flu, but rather the two- to three-hour multiple-choice exams that most private schools require for admission. For many families, these exams bring confusion and anxiety.

Just like every human endeavor, the key to success with these tests is preparation. Strategic planning alleviates test anxiety and can deliver

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What you need to know

How should I decide which school is right for my child?

Some factors parents consider when targeting choice private schools are: coed versus single gender, religious affiliation, location, reputation, sports or arts offerings and general school culture. While a particular school may be the most appealing to you and your child, many private schools are highly competitive, so applying to several is a good idea.

Which test should my child prepare for? Each school decides which test it prefers. At the end of this article, we have listed which Seattle-area schools accept which entrance exam. As these preferences can change, we recommend you check the websites of the schools to which your child is applying.

Some notable ISEE/SSAT differences:

- **Guessing strategy:** There is a guessing penalty on the middle-level and upper-level SSAT, but none on the ISEE. This can sometimes increase feelings of anxiety for nervous test takers.
- **Type of writing sample:** The ISEE asks the test taker to write an expository essay, while the SSAT requires a creative writing sample from most students (the upper level gives students a choice between a creative prompt and an essay prompt).
- **Verbal section:** The ISEE has vocabulary-based sentence completions, while the SSAT features analogies. >>

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ages + stages

9–15 Private school admission

continued from page 41

For more details, and to help you decide which test to choose for your student, check out our “SSAT or ISEE” post at: iseepracticetest.com/blog/ssat-or-isee.

How to prepare

Check out the test-prep road map:

Now that you know which schools you and your student are interested in and which test(s) your child will be preparing for, the next question is: How does your student get ready?

Six months before test date:

- Give your student a diagnostic practice test to determine her current readiness.
- Have your child begin to study 20 or so vocabulary words every week.
- Consider tutoring. Many of the best test-prep tutors are fully booked by fall. If your student is behind in any particular section, it's a good idea to start brushing up now.

Three to four months:

- Have your student become acquainted with requirements of the writing sections and start practicing with sample prompts.
- If your student had no major difficulties on the diagnostic, have him start prepping three months before the test. This will maximize comfort and performance.

Two months:

- Continue proctoring full-length ISEE or SSAT practice tests for your student every one to two weeks.
- Make sure your student is familiar with ISEE/SSAT test-taking strategies.
- Have your child complete a practice essay every week using a realistic prompt.

One month:

- Ensure that your student is comfortable with each section's pacing.

- Encourage your child to practice relaxing and feeling calm during the test.

One week:

- Make sure your child sleeps well and eats healthy foods!
- Discourage last-minute cramming — your student is well-prepared at this point.

The day before:

- Collect all test taking tools (pencils, pens, water, snacks, etc.).
- Discourage your student from doing too much schoolwork or becoming physically exhausted on this night.
- Encourage your student to relax and head to bed early!

Test day:

- Prepare a solid breakfast with some protein for your child.
- Smile and encourage your student to enjoy the fruits of preparation.

When to test? Plan to have your child take the test in the fall before your school applications are due. In the Seattle area, the last test date is often in January, and families typically want to begin preparing the spring or summer before. While you can schedule a December or January date to maximize your student's time for test prep, you don't want to sign up for the very last possible date, in case your child is ill at that time. Check the websites of the schools to which you want to apply to determine your student's last possible test date.

Many families register for the official ISEE or SSAT in the late summer or mid-fall. Learn more or register at:

ISEE: erblearn.org/parents/admissions-testing-isee

SSAT: ssat.org/test/registration

Tame anxiety

Both students and parents are sometimes plagued with anxiety over these exams. For students, the best preventive measure is threefold: giving themselves plenty of time to prepare, having a wise tutor on their team, and not having an overly anxious parent at their side.

You can remind your child:

- The entrance exam is only one piece of their application.
- Neither the ISEE nor the SSAT (nor the SAT nor the ACT) tests their value as a person.
- The ISEE is a test of how well they take the ISEE, and the SSAT is a test of how well they take the SSAT. Therefore, they can improve with practice, especially if they take the time to build their vocabulary and learn new math concepts.
- Conquering this test will help prepare them for future tests

such as college entrance exams (SAT or ACT).

- Becoming more proficient in math, reading and writing will make them a stronger student; confidence in their abilities makes school more enjoyable and exciting.
- Their test scores do not determine their happiness or success in life.

And most importantly, help your student do his or her best, knowing that your family's love and admiration do not depend on any test score or percentile. ■

Nora Martin is a co-founder of Test Innovators, the lead test writer and editor, and an experienced standardized test prep instructor and tutor.

Edan Shahaar, co-founder of Test Innovators, has extensive experience in technology companies as well as being a tutor.

which schools accept which exam?

Accept ISEE only:

- Archbishop Murphy High School
- Bishop Blanchet High School
- Eastside Catholic School
- French American School of Puget Sound
- The Perkins School
- Seattle Preparatory School
- Soundview School
- University Prep
- Villa Academy

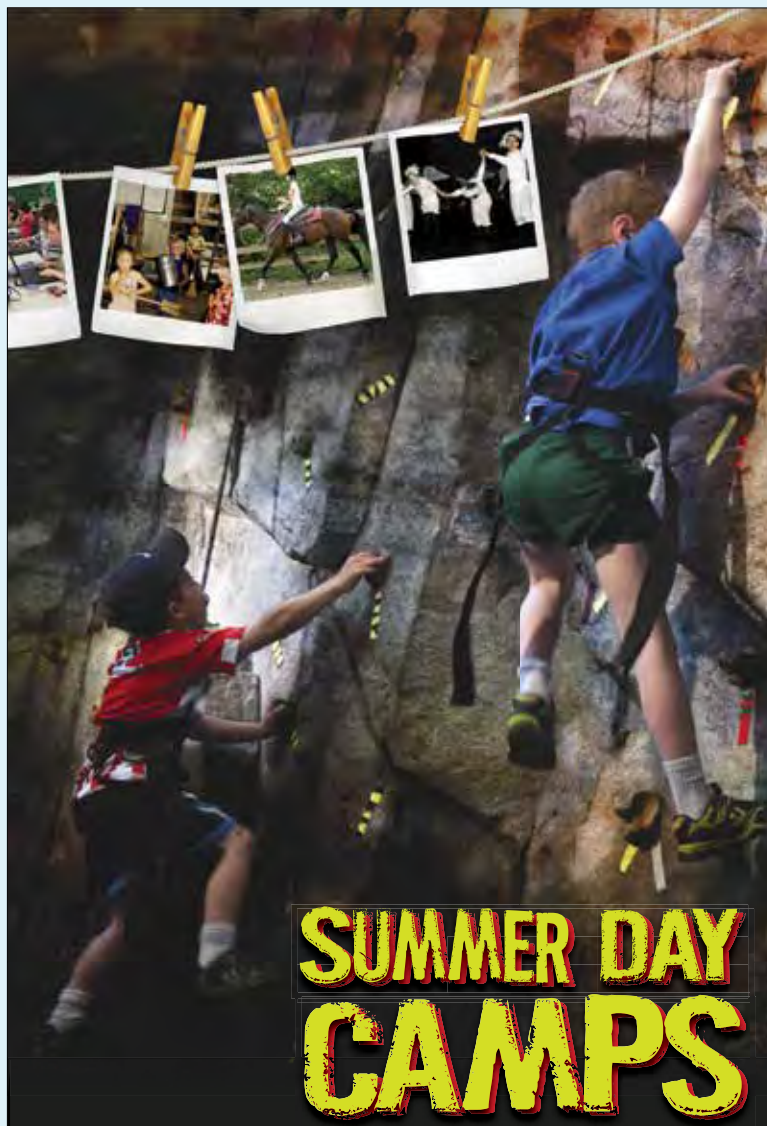
Accept either ISEE or SSAT:

- The Bear Creek School (ISEE preferred)
- Bellevue Children's Academy
- The Bush School (ISEE preferred)
- Charles Wright Academy/Annie Wright Schools
- Eastside Preparatory School (SSAT preferred)

- The Evergreen School
- Forest Ridge School of the Sacred Heart
- Lakeside School (SSAT preferred for grades 6-12; SSAT only for grade 5)
- The Northwest School
- Vista Academy at Open Window School
- The Overlake School (SSAT preferred)
- Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences
- Seattle Girls' School

To take a test innovator's diagnostic ISEE or SSAT:

ISEEpracticetest.com
SSATpracticetest.com



Registration for Bellevue Parks & Community Services' Summer Day Camps is now underway!

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Jet Setters: Around the World and Back Again

Asian Art Museum

Week Two: July 20-24

Explorers: Past, Present, and Future Art

Asian Art Museum

Week Three: July 27-31

Superheroes: Saving Planet Earth

Olympic Sculpture Park

Visit seattleartmuseum.org/kids for more details.

Each week includes a visit to the Seattle Art Museum. Registration required. To register or get more information, call 206.626.3144 or email samcamp@seattleartmuseum.org.

SAMkids
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seattleartmuseum.org

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Super special-needs camps

Summer camp is a place for kids to make friends, try out new experiences and build confidence. Kids with special needs can pursue these experiences at camps equipped with adaptive facilities and skilled staff. Here is a sampling; find more at parentmap.com/specialcamps.



CAMPS FOR KIDS WITH AUTISM

Choose from camps such as **Aspiring Youth Summer Camp**, which offers traditional day camps and themed camps; or **Apex Summer Camp**, a program of the UW Autism Center for kids with autism spectrum diagnoses and their siblings and peers.

CAMPS FOR KIDS WITH MEDICAL CHALLENGES

Camp Korey at Carnation Farm is a free program on a huge farm, with medical personnel on staff; **Stanley Stamm Summer Camp** is an overnight camp experience for kids being treated for serious illnesses at Seattle Children's; and **Camp Agape NW**, a day camp in Gig Harbor, aims to give "children with cancer a chance to feel normal" and "siblings a chance to feel special."

CAMPS FOR KIDS WITH A RANGE OF SPECIAL NEEDS

In Everett, **Camp Patterson** offer kids with developmental, physical and/or behavioral challenges a classic camp experience that promotes a positive self-image and teamwork; **Seattle Children's Playgarden** in south Seattle offers camps in its magical park with themes like Garden Explorers and Green Thumbs; and **Outdoors For All** lets kids of all abilities to dig into outdoor sports and recreation. **Little Bit Therapeutic Riding Center** offers its therapeutic riding program in a camp experience, striving to "improve the bodies, minds and spirits of children and adults with disabilities"; and **Kiwanis Camp Casey** touts "the best week of the year" for its overnight campers with physical disabilities on Whidbey Island.



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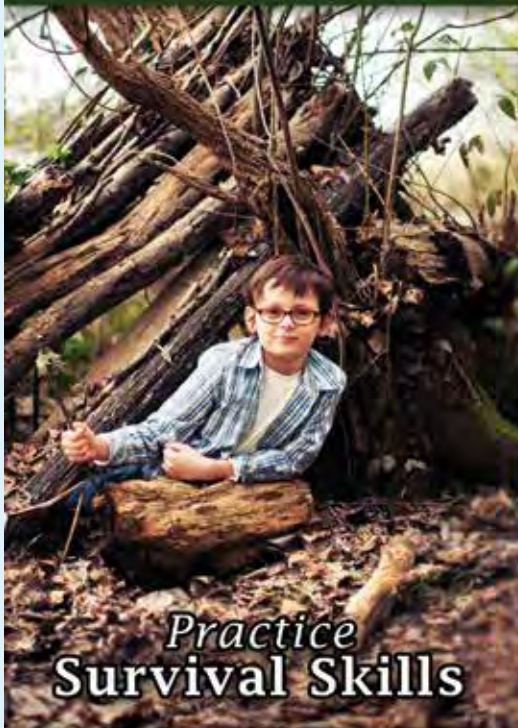
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see pg 32

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greenstage.org/summercamp

Q&A

ask the experts



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How do I help my child manage frustration when something isn't working out?

Q: My child is very hard on herself when she's working at something but it's not working out the way she wants it to (for example, building a Lego tower or learning to write letters). How do I help her to have patience with herself and to keep trying?

A: The only way children develop resilience is by living through frustration. Over the long term, children benefit when we are there as a loving, caring supporter without desperately trying to make their problems go away.

Start by not offering helpful suggestions. Avoid saying, "It's not that big of a deal" or, "Just relax" or, "Don't rush." All those admonishments lead to smoke coming out of a child's ears. If she could relax, she would relax.

Instead, validate your child's experience: "It's hard to want the tower to stay up, but it continues to fall. I can't imagine how frustrated you are right now!" Don't forget to "cluck" in sympathy: "Oh, sweetie, gosh, this is hard!" Then, if she seems receptive, you might ask, "How can I help?"

This question is delivered not out of your neediness (I want to avoid this tantrum), but out of compassion. It can also work to say, "Should we take a break?" The key is asking, not telling. Anything that helps your child not feel alone on the island is recommended, but this doesn't require that you come up with a fix.

For children, the storms do pass. We can make the storm worse when we talk a lot. Be steady and calm while she has the visceral body wave of agitation. You are quietly there, or making wordless physical contact if that works for her. Try a hand on a shoulder, a little shoulder rub or bring her head close to you. Often this works better than verbal compassion. Still, don't say, "Give me a hug!"

It's essential for parents to figure out how to be that calm presence. Internally repeating a word like peace or a phrase like It's OK, we will get through this storm may help. Part of this is about letting go of what you've made it mean for your child to be successful and accepting how things are.

Ultimately, redefine what it is to help your child. You may not help her complete the task, but you can help her learn how to ride out the storm of frustration.



*Marriage and family therapist Susan Stiffelman has worked with families to create greater harmony and connection between parents and children for more than 30 years. Her book *Parenting with Presence: Practices for Raising Conscious, Confident, Caring Kids* came out in April.*

When will this game of musical beds ever end?

Q: Since we moved to a bigger house, our boys (ages 2 and a half and 4) come to our room several times nightly. They are downstairs from us at the other end of the house. We have a new baby, and it is difficult listening to them crying and screaming. Often I let them sleep in our bed or on our floor, which is a terrible habit. Help!

A: Sleeping somewhere new and other changes related to moving can really affect sleep. A new baby is another new huge thing for your children. They are processing all of this, which includes waking more at night. All humans wake two to six times every night!

I am a fan of making up a bed on your bedroom floor. This isn't a terrible habit. This is letting them know if they need extra support, you are there for them. The bed doesn't need to be comfortable: a blanket and pillow on the floor. They may realize their own beds are much more comfortable.

You always want them to start the night in their own. Make sure there's a safe, lit path to your room. Set up boundaries for sleeping on your floor. Talk to them from your bed. If they don't follow the rules, take them back to their beds.

When life has become calmer for everybody, begin making changes. Start with a clear request: "Now I'd like you to spend all night in your bed."

Try using a clock with a set time that they can come to your room. Take them back to their rooms if they come earlier. Add in more conditions or devices, and one will work for each of your kiddos. Is it that you need to give some sort of incentive, such as sticker charts or choosing the day's park after a successful night?

Going back to sleep independently after waking only works if they are falling asleep independently at the night's beginning. Work on becoming less involved at this time. I like to have my clients who sit with their children as they fall asleep find simple reasons to leave the room during this time. Try saying, "Oh, I have to go to the restroom! I'll be right back." Every night, increase the time you are out of the room, always coming back in. Eventually, they will fall asleep on their own, and you are not breaking any trust. Of course, this may not be where you are right now, with a new home and a new baby. A lot of this is about accepting that this is happening now and managing how to make it easier for everybody.



Rebecca Michi is a British-born and -trained children's sleep consultant based in Seattle. She works with families all over the globe. Find her at rebeccamichi.com.

Get YOUR questions answered!

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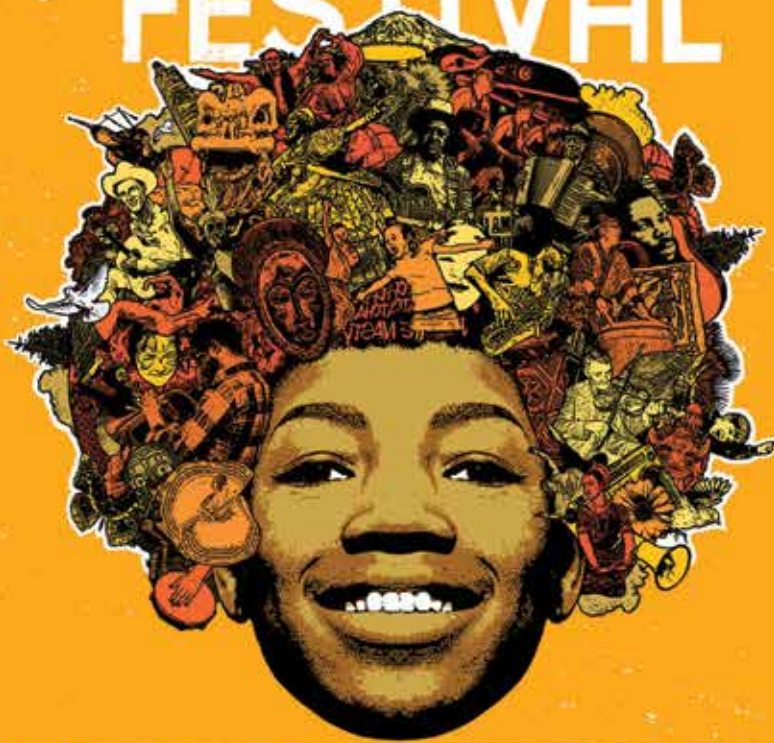
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