



FALL
LECTURES

**Building
resilience**

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'cause parenting is a trip!

ParentMap



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These mini quiches use whole wheat bread for the crust, so they come together quickly and work wonderfully for either breakfast or a filling after-school snack. Watch PCC Chef Jackie Freeman make these flavorful, portable meals with her helper Cainen and his mom Kerry. pccnaturalmarkets.com/healthykids



A healthy start to the school year

Get the day rolling with a hearty make-ahead breakfast of our Mini Corn Quiches. And to provide healthy fuel throughout the day, we've put together a simple checklist suggesting healthy, appealing lunch ideas that give kids some control and flexibility as they rush through school's short lunchtimes. Download the list at pccnaturalmarkets.com/r/2774.

Mini Corn Quiches

Make mini ham, egg and corn quiches for an on-the-go breakfasts or as snacks to fuel your day.

MAKES 8

8 slices whole wheat sandwich bread

Butter, for bread

1/2 cup fresh corn kernels

1/4 cup chopped ham

2 teaspoons chopped fresh chives

1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese

6 eggs

Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350° F.

Remove crusts from sandwich bread and gently roll out to about 1/4-inch thick. Lightly butter one side of each bread slice. Line 8 muffin cups with bread slices, buttered side down, trimming the overhang, as needed.

Evenly divide corn, ham, chives and cheese between each muffin cup. Whisk eggs with salt and pepper, and divide between each muffin cup. Bake until eggs are set and lightly golden, about 15 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before serving or refrigerate and serve chilled.

RECIPE BY JACKIE FREEMAN, PCC CHEF

EACH SERVING: 170 cal, 8g fat (3.5g sat), 170mg chol, 460mg sodium, 14g carb, 2g fiber, 2g sugars, 11g protein



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COMING IN OCTOBER

OUR SPECIAL-NEEDS ISSUE

- ParentMap's *Learning Guide*, a special education insert
- Aging up with autism
- A guide to sensory issues

COVER PHOTO: KALI 9 / ISTOCK



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navigate great stuff daily!



Little white lie

All (OK, most) kids do it at some point. They tell a lie, and we're left figuring out how to turn this frustrating behavior into a teaching moment. It turns out there are developmental reasons for truth-stretching. Once you understand the whys, you can build honesty successfully: parentmap.com/lying.



Get out of your restaurant rut

Hungry to explore the nuances of Indian food with your family? From tandoori roti, saag paneer and naan of northern Indian cuisine to the tangy dosas and idlis of southern Indian food to street food such as papri chaat, Padmaja Ganeshan-Singh breaks down where to eat, what to order and how to make your kids into lifelong fans of this flavorful cuisine. Holi moli, sign us up! parentmap.com/indianeats

Grub on the go

Many families find themselves in the same situation come fall: school schedules, tons of activities, kids going in a million different directions. As much as we value a sit-down family meal, sometimes we can't help needing to feed on the go. Our fresh-from-the-fridge food roundup brings you brilliant options, from salad shakers kids will actually love to sandwich sushi (say what?!) and crafty quinoa. Dinner winners! parentmap.com/foodonthego

Conference confidence

Have you ever wondered how to make the most out of a parent-teacher conference? What should you focus on the first time you sit down with your child's teacher? What questions should you ask? Should you do homework? We've got your cheat sheet just in time to kick off the school year: parentmap.com/teacherconference.

Let's hang out (We like you!)

Parenting is no fun without friends, and it's tough to be all parent, no fun. Let us bring the good stuff to you: Sign up for the newest parenting news, stories and advice, as well as insider tips on the most fun family outings, food ideas to feed your brood, and inspirations for holiday and home. We promise, it's better than espresso and a puppy: parentmap.com/enews.



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PUBLISHER/EDITOR Alayne Sulkin

DIGITAL DIRECTOR Patty Lindley

EDITORIAL

MANAGING EDITOR Natalie Singer-Velush

OUT + ABOUT EDITOR Elisa Murray

EDUCATION EDITOR Alison Krupnick

AGES + STAGES EDITOR Mia Lipman

CALENDAR EDITOR Nancy Chaney

PROOFREADER Sunny Parsons

CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Schatz Alton, Will Austin, Sharon H. Chang,

Heather Rae Darval, Deanna Duff,

Tiffany Doerr Guerzon, Jessica Minier Mabe

PARENTMAP.COM

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER Julian Haight

SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR Rory Graves

PUBLISHING ASSISTANT Alyssa Johnson

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Christina Boyer

ADVERTISING

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE, SEATTLE
Anne Doss Hardy

ACCOUNT MANAGER, EASTSIDE
Ida Wicklund

ACCOUNT MANAGER,
NORTH SEATTLE AND SNOHOMISH COUNTY
Dani Carbary

ACCOUNT MANAGER, PIERCE AND THURSTON COUNTIES
Stephanie Brandt

AD TRAFFIC MANAGER Elisa Taylor

SALES COORDINATOR Lisa Salkind

MARKETING/EVENTS

MARKETING DIRECTOR Jo Gubas

MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER
Ayva Larson

EVENTS MANAGER Merideth MacRae

ART + PRODUCTION

DESIGN + PRODUCTION Emily Johnson

PRODUCTION DESIGN Amy Chinn

ADMINISTRATION

BUSINESS MANAGER Barbara Cohen

ACCOUNTING ASSISTANT Tara Buchan

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/DISTRIBUTION
Angela Goodwin

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT Taracina Ullevig

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dear reader

From roots to wings

*"There are two things we should give our children:
One is roots and the other is wings."*

— Henry Ward Beecher

Each August, our big family is blessed to be able to convene on the shores of Lake Michigan before everyone heads back to the frenetic pace of back-to-school life. For a brief moment, time seems to stand still as we end our summer delighting in the country living of Union Pier, Mich.

Life is simple in these parts. The essential daily decision: "Beach now or beach later?" Each morning our motley crew arises, then shuffles to The Whistle for coffee or cinnamon chip muffins. We hit the beach late afternoon, chill until sunset, play ferocious team charades, and embrace the day's grand finale with a barbecue for 20. Magnificent!

We're accustomed to the sad September separation as the Chicago cousins head east and the Seattle Sulkins head back west. But there has been an even more dramatic change this year: Our kids seem to have all grown up. They're getting jobs, working in places as far away as Tel Aviv, and joining cousins on the East Coast.

The not-so-long-ago baby Maya (13) towers over every one of the near dozen twentysomethings. She's despondent at the prospect of being the only one of this assemblage to live at home this fall.

In one fell swoop, our newly married daughter and her husband, along with our recent college graduate son, will head to New York to advance their respective careers. Sadly, this reduces our ritual Friday night Shabbat dinners by 50 percent. Thankfully, they will all be together. We feel these three have what they need as they venture out to seek their fortunes. Will your kids be ready to leave home? Find out this month: ("Reality bites," p. 52).

In our family, we've hopefully given our children strong roots, which provide confidence, courage and determination, along with decades in an environment of unconditional love and acceptance.

This often heard "roots and wings" quote above sounds a bit corny. But you just might find yourself relying on it one day soon to counteract your melancholy as blessed and once-battling offspring leave the family roost holding hands.

For the lucky little ones left under our tutelage, flip fast to p. 31 to plan your fall arts frenzy! I feel the same as our superb Out + About editor, Elisa Murray, does — wanting to book as many of these fast-selling arts tickets as possible.

Finally, in this moment at the start of another school year, take pause and consider this month's feature ("Understanding your child's universe of learning," p.23). It offers a practical guide to better grasping (or questioning) the academic plans and powers in your child's school in order to better help your child learn.



Sharon



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Laid off

By Tiffany Doerr Guerzon

Last September, I was laid off. After 14 years of backbreaking, emotionally draining labor, with no vacation time or sick leave, and with workdays often lasting a full 24 hours, I was no longer needed.

Or at least that's how I felt when the last of my three kids started school.

Last summer, I joyfully awaited the big day. My baby would enter first grade, and I would finally have all three of my kids in school full-time. My children are spaced several years apart, which meant that I'd had at least one child home with me during the day for nearly a decade and a half. I enjoyed this individual time with each of my kids immensely. We attended music classes, story time at the library and play groups. We pieced together puzzles and played games like Zingo and Sequence for Kids. Sometimes we just snuggled on the couch and watched cartoons. All those things were lovely, but it was time for a new stage of motherhood.

I had given up my career as a physician assistant to stay at home when my first child had been born. I don't regret that move, but I've observed other stay-at-home mom friends struggle emotionally when their kids finally joined the ranks of full-time schoolkids. So I tried to ready myself. A few years ago, I started writing for magazines, slowly building up my freelance business with the goal that it constitute at least a part-time job by the time my last child entered first grade. I thought I was prepared.

As the lazy, hazy days of summer came to a close, I happily contemplated all I would do with my free time come September. I could go to exercise classes without paying for child care! I could watch the news without my kids overhearing stories about murder and mayhem. I could complete home-improvement projects without constant interruption. I could enjoy silence.

It seemed like everyone else had an opinion on how I should feel about my baby going into first grade. Some acted like I was being released from jail. Others treated me as if I was graduating after a very long time in college. My teenage daughter was concerned. "Won't you get lonely, here all by yourself?" she



asked. I assured her that I would be fine.

I was certain that I wouldn't be one of those moms who cry as the school bus pulls away from the curb on the first day of school. After all, I'd practically danced home from the bus stop after putting my youngest into half-day kindergarten.

When the big day came, I didn't cry. But for the first couple of weeks, I felt uneasy. I wandered around the house, not motivated to do anything. I felt melancholy. I was irritable and short-tempered. Maybe I should have cried after all.

Instead of feeling like I'd been released from prison, or experiencing the euphoria of graduating after a long stint of hard work and dedicated study, I felt like I'd been laid off.

I was certain that I wouldn't be one of those moms who cry as the school bus pulls away from the curb

The feeling mirrored how I felt when I'd actually been laid off from a job before I had kids. I'd known my last day was coming, and I even welcomed the break from a job I'd come to dislike. But when the time actually came to walk out the building, I felt angry and sad. *What do you mean you don't need me anymore? Didn't I do a good job? How can you say I'm a valuable employee when you're telling me you no longer need my services?*

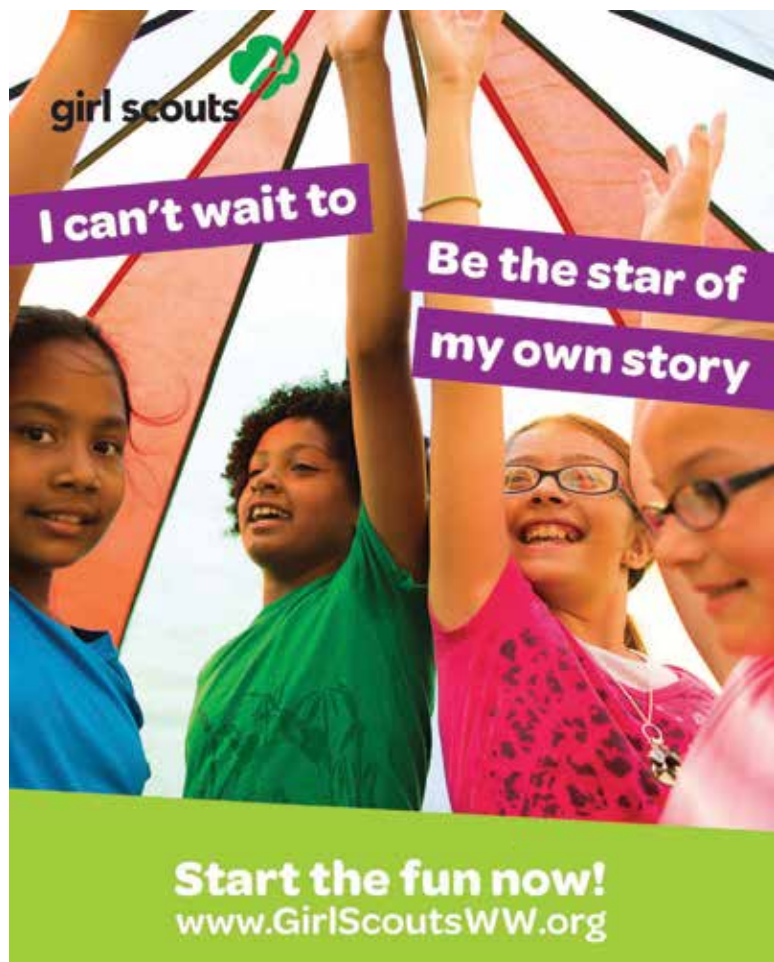
After spending 14 years dedicating my energy and time to being a full-time mom, the adjustment was not easy. Not only was I less needed, but now, instead of me being the CEO of our home — with final say over our schedule — I was fully ruled by the rhythms of elementary school.

In the end, I did adjust to my new stage of life after a couple of months. I've found that my hours alone are restorative, and I relish the time I do have with my children even more. I've been able to devote more time to my writing, and I volunteer in my kids' classrooms. I realize that I

am still needed, but on a part-time, on-call basis. And besides, the end of the school day comes awfully quickly.

This summer, my full-time job was restored temporarily, but by September, I will be laid off again. We'll see how I feel this year. ■

Tiffany Doerr Guerzon is a freelance writer and the mother of three children. Read more of her writing at TDGuerzon.com.



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Heads up

How to spot and avoid non-sports concussions

By Jessica Minier Mabe

“Mommy, I don’t feel good. I think I need to go to bed.” My 7-year-old son, Henry, stood in front of me, glassy-eyed and nauseated. Normally, his asking to go to bed half an hour early would have set off alarm bells, but I was sick myself. Figuring he was coming down with whatever I had, I put him to bed. Looking back, I could easily have killed him.

The next morning, I found out Henry had hit his head on the concrete floor of the garage while playing. I rushed him to the pediatrician’s office, but our regular doctor was away. The on-call pediatrician instructed us to stop activities that caused Henry any pain. This meant that for the first two weeks of his recovery, my son played as he normally would. He would usually stop after a moment, saying he had a headache. What we didn’t know was that the doctor’s advice was wrong, and we were causing brain damage to our son.

According to the journal *Continuing Education in Anaesthesia, Critical Care & Pain* in 2013, “traumatic brain injury (TBI) is the leading cause of death and disability in young adults in the developed world.” Concussions are a mild form of TBI. Though there has been a great deal of media attention about concussion dangers in sports, “The majority of kids’ concussions come from falling, riding bikes and other accidents,” says Richard Ellenbogen, M.D., a neurosurgeon at Seattle Children’s Hospital.

This makes it critical for parents to learn to recognize the signs of concussion themselves.



Ninety percent of concussions do not result in loss of consciousness, so Ellenbogen suggests that parents think of a concussion as “any neurologic change that differs from the baseline.” Symptoms include headache, nausea or vomiting, unusual behavior, irritability and sensitivity to light or noise.

A child who exhibits these symptoms after hitting his head should see a doctor. While most kids recover quickly from concussions, Ellenbogen explains that “10 percent are more challenging and require treatment by a specialist.”

Emergency preparedness

If a concussion clinic is not available, the emergency room may soon be the best place to go. Megan Moore, assistant professor at the University of Washington’s School of Social Work, has been studying the possibility of social workers helping with TBI

treatment for adults who come to the ER. Moore and her team developed SWIFT, an intervention method in which social workers offer education and resources on TBI treatment and recovery.

The preliminary results have been promising for adults suffering from TBI, preventing what’s known as “functional decline” after they leave care. Moore is working to develop a similar intervention for families and children who come to the ER for concussion treatment. This could help doctors provide patients with another layer of treatment for head injuries.

Even when a concussion is clearly present, knowing when to seek medical care can be difficult. D’Lyn Lee of Auburn, Wash., struggled with what to do when her then 10-year-old daughter, Sydney, fell on the playground last year. >>

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wellness

Heads up

continued from page 13

"She had a headache, her head was sore at the sight of impact, and she felt a little sick to her stomach," Lee says. Though she thought a concussion was likely, Lee wasn't sure if they needed a trip to the doctor. This changed when the symptoms didn't go away after a few hours. Sydney's behavior "just seemed off," Lee recalls, so she took her daughter to the emergency room, where Sydney was diagnosed with a concussion and had her activities restricted until she was symptom-free.

Sending a child with a concussion back to school is "a double-edged sword," Ellenbogen says. "Children often can't concentrate, can't focus, but a child who is out for too long can fall behind." He suggests sending children back for half-days until they show they are ready for a normal schedule. A child who is still struggling after the advised recovery time should be reevaluated by a concussion specialist.

Think fast

Rapid intervention is especially critical in preventing repeat concussions. Though researchers are not yet sure why, Ellenbogen says, some children are at greater risk of second-impact syndrome (SIS), which occurs when a second concussion follows an initial head strike before the first injury has had time to heal. This causes the brain to swell rapidly and may lead to death. When parents worry about a child missing activities, Ellenbogen reminds them, "What's more important than a practice or a game? The child's life."

Repeat concussions may have long-term consequences. My son's recovery was made more difficult by the repeat concussions he sustained until we saw our regular pediatrician, who quickly put him on a concussion plan. Henry was prone to sudden bouts of crying, experienced visual migraines and couldn't complete even the simplest

homework. Four months of school passed before he seemed back to normal.

The lifetime risks associated with repeat concussions are still being discovered. "We don't know everything, but this is the area where research is being done," Ellenbogen says. "We do know that the benefits of sports and other physical activities for children far outweigh the risks." Parents should help mitigate potential injury by teaching kids to engage in physical activities safely, such as wearing helmets when riding bikes.

Although Henry does not have permanent cognitive difficulties three years after his initial injury, he does get migraines and is at greater risk for repeat concussions. Had we received the right treatment immediately, much of this would have been prevented. Now when Henry hits his head, we drive straight to the concussion clinic. ■

Jessica Minier Mabe is a private tutor and writer who lives with her partner and their three children.

concussion tips

Dr. Ellenbogen advises:

Educate your kids: Children need to know to report any head strikes they receive.

Watch for behavior changes: A change in personality and mood after a head strike indicates the child needs to see a specialist.

"If in doubt, sit the kid out": Children who have suffered a concussion should not return to play until they have been cleared by a doctor.

Eyes on girls: Girls who play the same sports as boys have a higher rate of concussion and take longer to recover.



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AFTER-SCHOOL SPECIAL: Kids & Quality Programs

By Hilary Benson

When Rebecca Schneir's son Eli started kindergarten last year, he loved his teacher, the classroom and making new friends. It was what went on *after* school that got bumpy.

When his parents tried to enroll Eli in the well-regarded after-school program at West Woodland Elementary in Seattle, where he attended school, there was a long waiting list. "That was the first crazy thing, and I'd had no idea," says Rebecca Schneir. They opted for another program that transported kids to a nearby facility.

At pickup time, Schneir would find her son — normally a social, energetic boy — sitting sullenly on a couch. And there were other red flags.

"I'd go to check him out, and there was just a sign-out sheet by the door. No adult, no one saying, 'Bye, Eli.' It was odd," his mother says.

One day after school, the 6-year-old refused to get on the bus and started to cry. The Schneirs pulled their son out and ultimately found another program through the **YMCA of Greater Seattle**, where Eli now thrives.

What makes one after-school program a positive experience while others fall short? The window between 3 and 6 p.m. was long viewed by some providers and parents as downtime, playtime or a dead zone in a child's day. Common thinking was that kids needed to be supervised, but beyond that, what happened didn't really matter.

It turns out it does matter.

While the importance of early childhood education is well recognized, the field of after-school youth and summer programs is now evolving in exciting ways. A survey of 68 studies of after-school programs found that students participating in high-quality programs went to school more often, behaved better, received better grades and performed better on tests than their peers, according

to the **Afterschool Alliance** (afterschoolalliance.org), based in Washington, D.C.

As recently reported by the **Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality** (cypq.org), a national leader in this field, a study of more than 500 Nashville, Tenn., students found that youths enrolled in higher-quality programs had fewer disciplinary referrals. Higher levels of program attendance combined with higher quality were related to greater improvement in math grades during the school year.

As Joe Bertoletti, field services director at the Weikart Center, points out, "The great thing about out-of-school time is it's flexible, so it can match the interests of young people."

What if your after-school program not only supervised your child and kept him safe, but also helped uncover hobbies and passions, encouraged better academic performance, and facilitated positive social and emotional experiences — even filled in learning gaps left by the tightly packed school day?

A group of youth advocates, seeing a lack of consistent assessment and support for quality programming, believed such a goal deserved focus and funding. Five years ago, the nonprofit **School's Out Washington** (schoolsoutwashington.org), in partnership with the Seattle-based **Raikes Foundation** (raikesfoundation.org), rolled out a road map for youth-serving programs to achieve highest quality. It is known as the **Youth Program Quality Initiative**, or YPQI.

To envision a model ranking good, better and highest-quality care, imagine a pyramid: At the base is a physically and emotionally safe environment. Built upon that should be a supportive environment, topped by solid peer interaction and, at the apex of a high-quality program, youth engagement where children choose their activities,

take the lead in planning them for the group, and receive time to reflect on and process what they are learning.

In 2009, the Seattle YMCA's program at Hamilton International Middle School was one of the initial groups to implement the YPQI. "This initiative has been really transformative," says Erica Mullen, YMCA executive for education initiatives. "This isn't about high-stakes scoring of staff. Site supervisors do assessments, but we also do cross-observations so staff see things from a different perspective and can say to each other, 'I saw you do this; I want to do this, too.'"

The initiative was such a positive experience for the staff and 200-plus students at Hamilton that the organization expanded to other sites and to the YMCA's elementary-school-age programs in 2011.

One afternoon during the YMCA's program at Arbor Heights Elementary in West Seattle, Isaac Hale, assistant program supervisor, asks the 20 or so kindergartners through second-graders sitting in a circle if any of them want to share something about their day.

Kids eagerly talk about a field trip they went on or an ice cream snack they had. Afterward, they vote on their afternoon activities and are given leadership roles in art or science projects.

"After-school programs are overlooked and underappreciated," says Hale. But, it looks like things are working here — the Arbor Heights program has grown in four years from 22 kids to 55.

There are no uniform standards or guidelines for after-school programs in Washington or any other state. This past April, School's Out launched a set of quality standards that all groups serving youths outside the classroom can now adopt voluntarily. These standards cover everything from the cultural responsiveness of a program to students' safety and wellness to professional development for staff and volunteers.

"I wish I'd spent more time checking things out," mom Rebecca Schneir says. "I just didn't know." ■

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



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Common Core, one year later

By Alison Krupnick

Comedian Louis C.K. joked about it. This summer, conservative radio talk show pundit Glenn Beck convened a “call to action” (broadcast in hundreds of theaters nationwide) to encourage citizens to stop it.

One year after widespread implementation, the Common Core State Standards (also known by its acronym, CCSS), the national education road map for English language arts and math instruction that was barely on anyone’s radar last September, has become a political hot button that could feature prominently in the upcoming presidential election. Presumed GOP presidential candidate Bobby Jindal, governor of Louisiana and an early Common Core supporter, has reversed his position on the standards. Jindal is calling for his state to pull out of Common Core and, as a result, is now subject to a lawsuit from the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and other groups. Other presumptive candidates, such as New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, are carefully assessing which way the Common Core winds blow.

Want to have some fun?

Get on Twitter and search the hashtag #ThanksCommonCore to see the societal evils these new school learning standards are associated with. One example: the fact that hot dogs come in packs of eight, but their buns come in packs of six.

#ThanksCommonCore.

The standards were originally adopted by 46 states and the District of Columbia; three states (Oklahoma, South Carolina and Indiana) have pulled out of Common Core as of last month, with others threatening to follow suit.



Some states are keeping the standards, but bowing out of the standardized tests associated with them. There are two different Common Core assessment consortia in the U.S. — Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) — with roughly half of the states that have adopted Common Core in each one. Both consortia will debut their assessments during the 2014–15 school year.

How did an attempt to apply consistent education guidelines for America’s students as a means to increase academic rigor and be more competitive with international students become such a hot potato? Where do we go from here?

Whose standards are these, anyway?

The essence of the Common Core debate is over who should control education. Though the standards were developed at the state level through a collaborative process, the fact that they are meant to be applied nationally and are supported by the U.S. Department of Education smacks of “big government” control to some.

Education is mostly funded and controlled through state and local jurisdiction. However, in recent decades, federal education funding has been tied to compliance with federal education policy, as mandated by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a



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Easing back into the groove



You've bought school supplies and clothes. You primed early morning reveille by having them get to bed on time. Now it's September, and despite your preparations, your family is having trouble adjusting to a new schedule. Here are some tips to help make the summer-to-school transition less bumpy:

- 1. Bid farewell to summer.** Plan something low-key yet special for Labor Day weekend that allows your family to revel in summer memories. As you walk your kids to school on the glorious September days ahead, admire the glistening spider webs and changing leaves.
- 2. Invest in meal planning.** The days of free-range summer grazing are over, and meals must happen on schedule. As a family, agree on some favorite, easy dinner options for the first few weeks of school. Let the kids help choose healthy after-school snacks to have on hand.
- 3. No weekend sleepovers.** Anxious to reclaim their summer freedom, your kids may be begging to sleep over at friends' houses. Some parents swear by the "no September sleepovers" rule. Don't underestimate your kids' needs for sleep and downtime.
- 4. Take it easy on yourself.** You don't have to cook gourmet dinners daily, host nightly discussions about current events and clean your house from top to bottom. Arranging carpool, overseeing homework and going to weekend soccer games is enough for now.

The rain will be back soon enough. You can dive into getting organized then.

— Alison Krupnick



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Common Core

continued from page 19

law that dates back to the George W. Bush administration and that many feel is overdue for revision. The feds decide the steps that must be taken for schools to be deemed successful. If states and districts choose not to comply with federal recommendations, they risk losing funding.

This year, Washington state became the first state ever to lose its NCLB waiver (given to states that agreed to adopt certain education measures, such as tying teacher evaluations to test scores) because it failed to revise its state teacher evaluation protocol. The result was the loss of control of nearly \$40 million in federal education funding for the state's low-income students.

What's so special about Common Core?

In addition to providing academic consistency from state to state, the Common Core State Standards distinguish themselves in English language arts by focusing on regular practice with complex texts and vocabulary, using these texts to build knowledge in a variety of subject areas. In math, there is greater focus on fewer topics, with conceptual understanding building from grade to grade.

It's important to remember that these are standards, not curriculum. One teacher I interviewed last year, responding to allegations that Common Core takes the creativity out of teaching, disagreed. "Common Core gives me a clear destination to get to, but also allows me the freedom to drive the bus."

Problems with implementation

Common Core is an unfunded mandate — which means that the ability to purchase the new teaching materials, provide teacher training and conduct

widespread community outreach needed to successfully implement the standards differs among school districts.

Jessica Vavrus, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning at the Washington State Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, is concerned that professional development for teachers suffers when education funding is in jeopardy. But, she is optimistic that Washington state's teachers can tap into a library of high-quality teaching materials offered by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, developers of the Common Core-aligned standardized tests that debut in Washington in the spring of 2015.

Last year's release of New York's Common Core test results was a touch point for the anti-Common Core movement. Critics said the tests were too rigorous, resulting in a widespread drop in scores. Some say the assessments posed an unfair disadvantage to struggling students, who were not prepared for the significant increase in rigor. Others say the lower test scores are evidence that previous academic standards were not rigorous enough.

What the future holds

Common Core will be front and center, especially as school districts prepare for the new assessments in the spring of 2015.

To quell the growing tide of criticism over the coming months, a vigorous public relations campaign is expected to get under way to dispel the myths about Common Core and reassure parents that these standards are a crucial tool in helping kids prepare for college and careers.

Learn more at corestandards.org. ■

Alison Krupnick is ParentMap's education editor.

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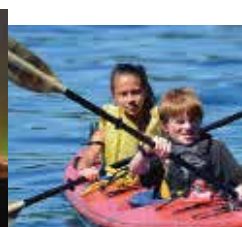
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Curriculum map: Understanding your child's universe of learning

BY ALISON KRUPNICK

It's a new school year. Amid the anticipation and flurry of back-to-school shopping for clothes, boots, backpacks and school supplies, there might be a question lingering in the back of your mind:

What will my child learn this year?

With the increased focus on the Common Core State Standards (a consistent set of learning standards in math and English language arts/

literacy, currently implemented in 43 states, including Washington) and the Next Generation Science Standards (adopted by Washington in 2013), what kids learn has come under greater scrutiny. Many of us send our kids to school with blind faith that they will learn what they are supposed to, when they are supposed to. Many parents, however, don't necessarily understand the whys and hows of learning. The changing

standards — and the conflicting reactions to them — certainly don't make it any easier.

Why are reading comprehension and multiplication tables so important in third grade? Why has there been a push for students to study algebra in eighth grade? Should kids be taught to read, add and subtract in preschool?

Really, we all want the answer to one simple, elusive question: How do kids learn best? >>



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Curriculum map *continued from page 23*

Learning snapshot

As part of your family's back-to-school preparation, it's worth moving beyond the school-supply check list and medical forms to take a look at the learning guides designed to give you a curriculum preview of the year ahead.

Did you know that children begin developing key self-management skills, also known as executive function, at birth? Noticing how your child goes about trying something new, how she responds to new situations and challenges, can give you insights into her learning style. Once he enters elementary school, you can expect your child to learn specific concepts in specific years: Your kindergartner will learn that writing can be used for different purposes; your second-grader will focus on punctuation; your sixth-grader will learn about the water cycle; and your tenth-grader will connect algebraic formulas to geometric concepts.

The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) publishes learning benchmarks from birth through grade 12 and beyond.

One of the most valuable resources for families is a brochure called *Your Child's Progress* (yourchildsprogress.com), which includes learning highlights by grade level, along with information about the standardized tests your child will be expected to take. This year's new digital version, at the OSPI website, is interactive and contains links to the complete set of **Washington State Learning Standards; The Early Learning and Development Guidelines** for children from birth to third grade, developed by the Washington State Department of Early Learning

(DEL), in partnership with OSPI and Thrive by Five Washington; the **Graduation in Washington toolkit**, which lays out specific high school graduation requirements for each year's graduating class (during the 2014 legislative session, some changes were made, impacting students in the class of 2015 and beyond); and **postgraduation guidelines** for technical education to work in different industries.

The National PTA publishes *The Parents' Guides to Student Success*. These Common-Core-aligned guides explain what students should be learning in K-8 language arts/literacy and math.

Finally, the Council of the Great City Schools publishes *Parent Roadmaps to the Common Core Standards* in English language arts/literacy and mathematics for grades K-8. These grade-level guides also provide three-year snapshots showing how selected standards build on each other.

Your child's brain in school

Understanding more about the overlap between cognitive development and grade-level expectations can help us, as parents, support and build our kids' excitement about learning, as well as understand why they have trouble when they do and intuit how to help them over learning humps.

But one expert says that expecting a child's brain development to perfectly dovetail with grade-level learning standards puts too much faith in developmental psychology. A better guiding star is the experience of teachers, who are privy to a broad range of learning styles and paces.

Daniel T. Willingham, Ph.D., is a psychologist at the University of Virginia who researches the applicability of cognitive psychology and neuroscience to K-16 education. He is the author of, among other books, *Why Don't Students Like School: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works and What It Means for the Classroom* and the forthcoming *Raising Kids Who Read: What Parents and Teachers Can Do*.

"The relationship between learning science and practice is complicated and non-straightforward," says Willingham, who also writes the "Ask the Cognitive Scientist" column for *American Educator*, in which he has tackled topics such as math anxiety, and blogs at *RealClearEducation.com*.

"Learning science at its best describes things that are true about what kids learn." But teachers may choose to use the information in different ways, he says.

For example, if a student excels at math or writing, some teachers might build on this strength. Others might see value in focusing the student on things he struggles with.

How cognitive development works

Jean Piaget, the Swiss developmental psychologist and pioneer in the field of cognitive development, popularized the idea that young children should be creators and that they develop best in a classroom based on interaction.

Piaget believed that cognitive development happened in concrete stages, a belief that Willingham says is considered suspect now.

"Now, we think development is much more likely to be gradual

across kids and within a kid.

Development seems to happen in fits and starts. One week, a student will understand a task, and the next week, she won't. You can give a student two similar problems and he will understand one, but not the other."

Based on this refined understanding of cognitive development, educators are focusing their efforts on seizing on the natural curiosity of young children, building upon concepts and integrating information across subject bands.

"When we were developing the Common Core and Next Generation Science standards, our guiding principle was that children are born investigators," says Jessica Vavrus, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning at OSPI.

"Children are born ready to learn," she says. "How do we capture that?"

Civics in preschool? Darwin in kindergarten?

Willingham and other experts believe that a child is never too young to be introduced to a broad array of subjects, so that he or she can begin building a knowledge base that will become critical in later years.

"I think we underestimate what kids are capable of," says Willingham. "I don't advocate earlier reading, but introducing kids to science, civics and drama is important. There can be more of that, starting in pre-K."

The Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines are explicit about the importance of knowledge acquisition and alignment of learning from birth to grade 3: "Young children learn best when new learning builds on what they already know and it relates to their lives." >>

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ST. THOMAS SCHOOL

Curriculum map *continued from page 25*

Knowledge is the key to reading

We often talk about “teaching” kids to read, starting with learning letters and their corresponding sounds, which children then string together into words. But building true literacy skills — the work that is happening in early grades and later, as children progress and mature — actually requires exposure to information and ideas so that children have the context to comprehend unfamiliar texts.

“If you’re not building knowledge, you are not teaching reading,” says Robert Pondiscio, vice president for external affairs at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a nonprofit education-policy think tank. Pondiscio is also a teacher and a reading curriculum expert.

“We have to stop thinking of reading as a skill to be taught, but as a condition to be created.”

Inspired by E.D. Hirsch Jr., who pioneered the theory of “cultural literacy” — the idea that reading comprehension requires not just decoding skills, but also wide-ranging background knowledge — Pondiscio is a proponent of a knowledge-rich, integrated curriculum starting in the early years.

“Kids can be interested in any subject at any age,” he says. “It depends on the context.” For example, a preschooler can study ancient Egypt and make mummies from Barbie dolls, while a fifth-grader might investigate Egyptian mythology.

Along with exposing kids to ideas so that they can accumulate knowledge, which will aid reading comprehension, Pondiscio also advocates teaching kids the mechanics of writing. In “How Self-Expression Damaged My Students,” a 2012 essay published in *The Atlantic*, Pondiscio

describes his own failure, as a fifth-grade teacher in a low-performing New York City school, to adequately teach his students grammar, sentence structure and other mechanics of writing — tools they would need to succeed in later grades and later in life.

Good writers, he writes, “have knowledge of the world that enlivens their prose and provides the ability to create examples and analogies. They have big vocabularies and solid command of the conventions of language and grammar. And if this is not explicitly taught, it will rarely develop by osmosis among children who do not grow up in language-rich homes.”

“Knowledge and skills go together,” says Willingham. “They can’t be torn apart.”

How math fits into the equation

Elham Kazemi, Ph.D., a professor of mathematics education and associate dean of professional learning at the University of Washington, College of Education, believes that students need time to learn and fully understand math concepts, building on this knowledge as they grow.

“When you are beginning to learn a concept, to move from understanding to fluency takes a couple of years,” she says.

Kazemi recommends that preschoolers do as much counting as possible to develop a sense of number sequence and “one to one” counting. They don’t need to work with symbols, but should be encouraged to do lots of object counting and building, so that they think of things spatially. She cites board games in which objects are moved a certain number of spaces as particularly valuable learning tools.

“When you are beginning to learn a concept, to move from understanding to fluency takes a couple of years”

“The most important thing in elementary school is to understand the meaning of operations, working with whole numbers, decimals and fractions,” says Kazemi. “If you don’t have that understanding, you don’t have a foundation, and new ideas are not resting on something solid. Then it becomes hard to know why you are doing what you are doing, and the effort it takes to do things correctly becomes that much more difficult.”

If a student falls behind, Kazemi advises parents and teachers to determine what the child can do, what makes sense to him or her, and at what point he or she has lost the ability to understand a concept or apply a procedure.

Most important, says Kazemi, is to nurture a child’s interest in math.

“Ask your child what he or she is learning that is interesting and worth talking about,” she says. “Focus the conversation on what is interesting, not what is easy or hard. Math is fundamentally about problem solving. You should learn something that is interesting to you and makes sense to you.”

Kazemi appreciates that the Common Core math standards put fewer concepts into each grade, giving students more time to explore and fully understand them.

OSPI’s Vavrus agrees that this is a step in the right direction. “We know

it is developmentally inappropriate to rush through a sequence that doesn’t give kids enough time to learn concepts.”

In the future, she adds, we will see high school math books that are two-thirds smaller than the ones we see today.

To infinity and beyond

Though there are standards to guide teachers, students and parents, in the end, learning is an individual process. The three most important components of a successful learning experience are the accumulation of knowledge, excitement and interest in new ideas, and perseverance when the going gets tough.

If, as has been said, teachers are guides to the universe, think of learning standards as tools to understanding different galaxies.

Get to know what your child will be learning this year and be excited right along with him or her. Supplement what he or she is learning in school with family excursions and discussions that reinforce and broaden this new knowledge.

Attend your school’s curriculum night, which typically occurs a few weeks into the new school year. This is the teacher’s opportunity to tell you not only what your child will be learning, but how he or she plans to teach these new concepts.

If you invest the time up front to understand what your child will learn and how she will learn it, you can make the most of your parent-teacher conferences, ensure your child is staying on track, and gain invaluable insights into her learning style, strengths and weaknesses. ■

Alison Krupnick is ParentMap’s education editor.

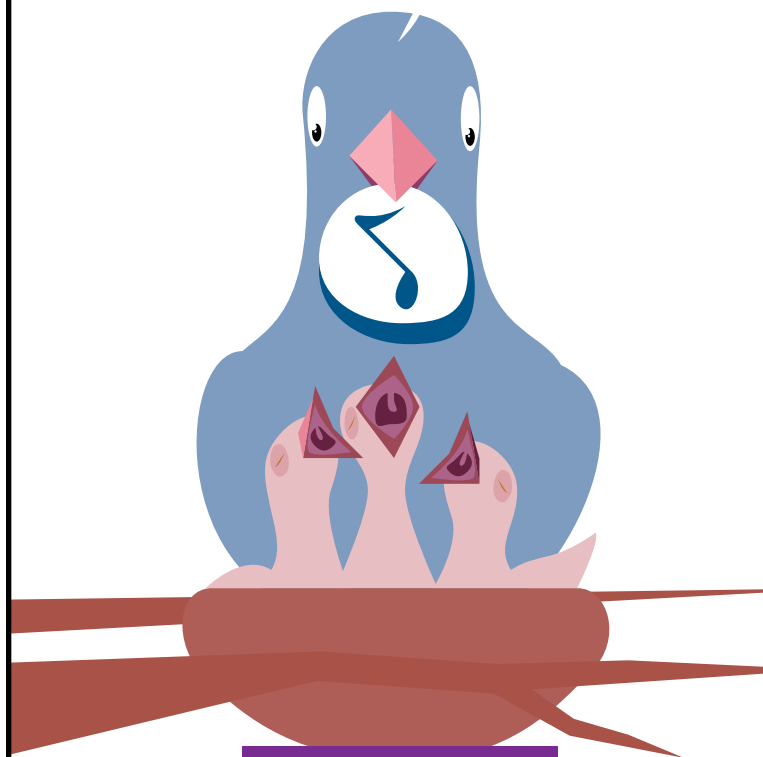
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September PICKS



LAUREN BRADEN

How About Them Apples

Pie, cider, crisp, slump, tart: These are just a few of the reasons to head to a U-pick orchard to pluck some of our state's fall bounty. Check out **Parent-Map's online apple-picking guide** for where to go, from **Jones Creek Farms** in Sedro-Woolley (more than 100 varieties) to **The Farm at Swan's Trail** in Snohomish (apples and pumpkins!) to **Stutzman Ranch** in Wenatchee (crisp Fuji apples). parentmap.com/apples



PATRICK HAGERTY

Washington State Fair

Ease back-to-school angst with a wild day at Washington's biggest fair: **Carnival rides, concerts, animal exhibits, SillyVille, wacky treats, a kids' tractor track, a rodeo and mutton-busting competitions** (kids ride sheep as if they were bulls). Sept. 5–21. \$7.50–\$10 advance tickets; ages 5 and under free (many discounts available). Shows and rides extra. Washington State Fair Events Center, Puyallup. thefair.com



BRIAN KASNYIK

Caspar Babypants at Town Hall

The indie rock star kicks off Town Hall Seattle's **awesome, affordable Family Concert series** by performing sweet, catchy tunes **from his eighth album, Rise and Shine**. Saturday–Sunday, Sept. 27–28, 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. Free for kids 12 and under; \$5 for accompanying adults. townhallseattle.org

SUNDAY



Get Out of the Rut, Aug. 30–Sept. 1, Northwest Trek

7

Puget Sound Bird Fest. It's bird-mania with guided bird walks, talks, and kids' crafts and activities. Friday–Sunday, Sept. 5–7. **FREE**; select activities have cost. All ages. Various venues, Edmonds. pugetsoundbirdfest.org
Live Aloha Hawaiian Cultural Festival. Entertainment, local Hawaiian food vendors, music workshops, keiki activities and more. 11 a.m.–7 p.m. **FREE**. Seattle Center. seattlelivealohafestival.com

14

Adventure Playground. Kids get to mess around outside with building materials and tools. Sundays, Sept. 7–28, 1–4 p.m. Admission by donation. Under age 12 with adult. Deane's Children's Park, Mercer Island. mercergov.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Mount Baker Day in the Park. Food trucks, pop-up bike park, kids' parade, treasure hunt and more family fun. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. Mt. Baker Park, Seattle. mountbaker.org/day-in-the-park

21

Crush Rush. The family-friendly version of the ArtsCrush event in Seattle is Crush Rush, a one-day arts bonanza with stage performances, busker musicians and artists, trivia contest, and opportunities to win free tickets to arts events. 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Seattle Center Armory. artscrush.org
Cast Off! Free Public Sail. Get out on the water for **FREE** at Center for Wooden Boats. Rides last about 45 minutes; sign up in person. 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Sundays. All ages. Lake Union Park, Seattle. cwb.org **ONGOING EVENT**

28

Go, Dog. Go! P.D. Eastman's classic children's book comes to life on stage in a pop-up-like exploration of movement, color and space. Sept. 27–Oct. 19. \$10; \$5 for Sunday shows for ages 1–3. Second Story Repertory, Redmond. secondstoryrep.org
Downtown to Defiance. Bring your walking shoes or your bike to travel Tacoma's waterfront, stopping along the way for fun fitness activities. 8 a.m.–noon. **FREE**. All ages. Ruston Way, Tacoma. metroparkstacoma.org

MONDAY

1

Bumbershoot/Youngershoot. Last day to see a dizzying array of music and arts, plus a fantastic Youngershoot kids' zone. \$55/day and up; ages 10 and under free. All ages. Seattle Center, Seattle. bumbershoot.org
Get Out of the Rut Celebration. Breeding season, or the rut, for deer, elk, sheep and moose, is the most dramatic time of the year at Northwest Trek. Saturday–Monday, Aug. 30–Sept. 1. Included with admission. Eatonville. nwtrek.org

8

Rotary Centennial Sprayground. Splash and play at this awesome spray park, open later than most in the region. Daily, 11 a.m.–8 p.m. through Sept. 27. **FREE**. Forest Park, Everett. everettwa.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Bow-Wows and Books. Practice reading with a new friend who is warm, friendly and a perfect listener – a certified therapy dog. Mondays 6:30–7:30 p.m. **FREE**. All ages. Seattle Public Library, Northgate Branch. spl.org **ONGOING EVENT**

15

Homework Help. At several Seattle Public Library locations, volunteers assist students on a drop-in basis on select afternoons throughout the school year. 3:30–7 p.m. Check websites for branch specifics. spl.org
Hindi Story Time. Stories told in English and Hindi with puppets, music and games. 7–7:30 p.m. Ages 2 and older with families. Sammamish Library. Registration not required. kcls.org

22

Banned Books Story Time. Enjoy stories and songs celebrating the freedom to read. For children ages 3–8 and their families. 10:30–11 a.m. **FREE**. Capitol Hill Branch, Seattle Public Library. spl.org

29

Imagination Theater. Watch and listen as Jim French records America's leading radio drama series live – featuring Private Detective Harry Nile and tales of Sherlock Holmes. 7:30 p.m. \$12. All ages. Kirkland Performance Center, Kirkland. kpcenter.org
Baby Jam. A multi-lingual, drop-in musical exploration for babies to preschoolers. Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays 11–11:30 a.m. \$10–\$12. Ages 0–5 with caregiver. Balance Studio, Seattle. babyjam.org **ONGOING EVENT**

TUESDAY

2

CoderDojo: Fall Coding Camps. Tinker, play and work with mentors to learn how to code and develop your own websites, apps and games. Sept. 2, 9 and 16. 3–5 p.m. Ages 8–18. South Hill Library. piercecountylibrary.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Chocolate: The Exhibition. Indulge in the incredible chocolate journey. 11 a.m.–5 p.m., daily through Sept. 28. Included with admission. All ages. Museum of History & Industry, Seattle. mohai.org **ONGOING EVENT**

9

Youth Civic Education Awards. Seattle CityClub recognizes five outstanding Washington State youth civic education programs. Hear from this year's winners as well as leaders such as MomsRising founder Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner. 6–7:30 p.m. **FREE**; preregister. Town Hall, Seattle. seattlecityclub.org
Tot Trek: Things With Wings. Explore Camp Long and the wonders of nature with your toddler. 10:30–11:45 a.m. \$4 per person. Ages 2–3 with an adult companion. Seattle. seattle.gov/parks

16

Lakewood Farmers Market. It's the final day of the season for this local Tuesday market. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. **FREE**; items for purchase. Lakewood City Hall, Lakewood. cityoflakewood.us
Folding Paper: The Infinite Possibilities of Origami. Don't miss this exhibit of intricate paper creations from around the world before it leaves on Sept. 21. 11 a.m.–6 p.m. daily except Monday. Included with admission. Bellevue Arts Museum. bellevuearts.org

23

MiniMOHAI. Six stations featuring reading fun, sensory activities and more. Second and fourth Tuesdays, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. Included with admission. Ages 3–5. Museum of History & Industry, Seattle. mohai.org **ONGOING EVENT**
Shake, Rattle & Roar at Zoomazium. Toddlers and caregivers are invited to sing, dance and play instruments to animal and nature-themed music. 11:30 a.m. daily. Included in admission. Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle. zoo.org **ONGOING EVENT**

30

Biringer's Black Crow Pumpkins and Corn Maze. It's opening week for this pet-friendly pumpkin patch and 5-acre corn maze. Open daily from Sept. 27 through Oct. 31. \$8 admission before 6 p.m. Arlington. facebook.com/biringers.blackcrow
Kaleidoscope Play & Learn. A group that provides a fun and age-appropriate learning environment for children ages birth to 5. 10–11:30 a.m. **FREE**. Lake City Branch, Seattle Public Library. spl.org **ONGOING EVENT**

WEDNESDAY

3

Matika Wilbur's Project 562. Don't miss this extraordinary photography exhibit at Tacoma Art Museum on contemporary Native Americans. Wednesday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Included with admission (\$8–\$10; ages 5 and under free or \$25/family) or membership. tacomartmuseum.org **ONGOING EVENT**

Play and Learn. Meet at the Crossroads stage for music, stories, art and games. Wednesdays 10–11:30 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 2–5. Crossroads Shopping Center, Bellevue. crossroadsbellevue.com **ONGOING EVENT**

10

Gracious Grandparenting. This talk, part of the PEPS Lecture Series, aims to help the triad of grandparents, parents and kids find their way to generational harmony. 7 p.m. \$15 or pay as you can. Verity Credit Union, Seattle. peps.org

Student Wednesday at BAM. Every second Wednesday, BAM invites students to visit its temporary and permanent exhibits. 11 a.m.–5 p.m. **FREE** for grades K–12 with online coupon. Bellevue Arts Museum. bellevuearts.org

17

Tacoma Resident Free Day at PDZA. City of Tacoma dwellers enjoy free admission to the zoo and aquarium today; bring photo ID and utility bill. 9:30 a.m.–5 p.m. Point Defiance Zoo & Aquarium, Tacoma. pdza.org

Apple Games at Seattle Children's Museum. Kids will try out apple-themed physical activities, such as an apple toss, apple balancing, and apple games with a parachute. 1 p.m. Included in admission. Seattle Center. thechildrensmuseum.org

24

Seattle Speaks: Universal Pre-K. A publicly funded, universal pre-K measure for Seattle is on the November ballot. What would this program look like and how should it be funded? Seattle CityClub, Seattle Channel, and Town Hall host a live, interactive conversation. 7 p.m. **FREE**, but preregister. Town Hall, Seattle. townhallseattle.org

Movies at the Museum: Lady and the Tramp. Playtime and a movie. 6–8 p.m. \$5–\$8, plus \$3 for pizza and lemonade. Bellevue. kidsquestmuseum.org

THURSDAY

4

Late Play Date. Stop by the museum for fun crafts and activities. 6–8 p.m. **FREE.** Ages 3–12 with families. White River Valley Museum, Auburn. wrvmuseum.org

Free First Thursday. On the first Thursday of the month, many of the region's museums offer free entry to all visitors. **FREE.** All ages. freemuseumday.org/sea **ONGOING EVENT**

11

North Bend Farmers Market and Summer Concert. Last day of the season to enjoy North Bend's lovely farmers market as well as live music in the park. 4–8 p.m.; entertainment begins at 6 p.m. **FREE.** Si View Park. siviewpark.org

Tugboat Story Time. Story time aboard the Arthur Foss (a 100-year-old tug) features stories about boats, kids and the sea. 11 a.m. **FREE.** Ages 2 to 5. Historic Ships Wharf, Seattle. cwb.org

18

In the Heights. This hip-hop musical, set in New York City's Washington Heights, won a Tony Award for Best Musical and a Pulitzer Prize nomination. Choreographed by Daniel Cruz. Sept. 18–Oct. 26 (Issaquah), Oct. 31–Nov. 23 (Everett). Ages 12 and up. \$30–\$67. Village Theatre. villagetheatre.org

\$1 Third Thursday Night. Get the wiggles out at KidsQuest's monthly discounted admission evening. 5–8 p.m. \$1. All ages. KidsQuest Children's Museum, Bellevue. kidsquestmuseum.org

25

The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi. The opening show of SCT's 40th anniversary season is playwright Y. C. Y. York's adaptation of the Rudyard Kipling tale, set in an enchanted East Indian garden. Sept. 25–Nov. 9. \$20–\$36. Ages 5 and older. Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle Center. sct.org

Super Circus Heroes. Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus presents humans and animals performing eye-popping stunts and tricks. Sept. 25–28. \$20–\$70. All ages. ShoWare Center, Kent. showarecenter.com

FRIDAY

5

Kids 'Krazy' Carnival. This themed family swim at Magnolia's popular outdoor Mounser Pool in Seattle includes games, activities, prizes and family fun. 5:30–7:30 p.m. \$3.75–\$5.25. Seattle. seattle.gov/parks

Washington State Fair Freebies. Opening day of Washington's biggest fair is free gate admission until noon; and Sept. 6–7 is BECU free kids' weekend. Washington State Fair Events Center, Puyallup. Find all Fair discounts and deals at thefair.com/deals.

12

Waiting for Godot. Samuel Beckett's absurdist, hilarious tragicomedy about Vladimir and Estragon could be a great fit for teens. Sept. 4–21. \$25 and up. Seattle Shakespeare Company, ACT Theatre, Seattle. seattleshakespeare.org

Preschool Trip to the Moon. A program introducing children ages 2–5 to the wonders of astronomy in the planetarium. Days and times vary. **FREE** with admission. Pacific Science Center, Seattle. pacificsciencecenter.org **ONGOING EVENT**

19

Center City Cinema Outdoor Movies. A showing of *Frozen* at Cascade Playground, in the heart of Seattle. Pre-movie entertainment begins at 6 p.m.; film shown at dusk. **FREE.** Seattle. seattle.gov/parks/downtown

Skate for the Cure and Bellevue Skate Park's 20th Anniversary Celebration. This three-day skate extravaganza – also a fundraiser for boys with ALD – includes competitions, clinics, music, carnival games and much more. Friday–Sunday, Sept. 19–21; ticket prices vary. Bellevue Skate Park. ezrocks.org

26

Shrek the Musical. Based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks film, the hilarious story of everyone's favorite ogre is part romance, part twisted fairy tale. Sept. 26–Oct. 19. Rated PG. \$20–\$29. Tacoma Musical Playhouse. tmp.org

Kruckeberg Garden Tots. Last day this season for this drop-in nature exploration that includes a plant-themed activity and craft project. 10 a.m.–1 p.m. \$7/family. Ages 2–7. Kruckeberg Botanic Garden, Shoreline. kruckeberg.org

SATURDAY

6

Pooch Pool Party. Pups take over the swimming pool. 10 a.m.–1:30 p.m. \$5–\$10 for dogs; humans are free. Stewart Heights Pool, Tacoma. metroparkstacoma.org

Salmon Return Festival. Earth-friendly art making, live performances and more. 10 a.m.–3 p.m. **FREE.** Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle. seattleartmuseum.org

Seattle Tilth Harvest Fair. Kids' parade, urban goats and, of course, amazing, fresh-harvested produce. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. **FREE.** Meridian Park, Seattle. seattletilth.org

13

Tradin' Past and Present. Relive the days of bartering. 11 a.m.–5 p.m. Included in admission. Fort Nisqually Living History Museum, Tacoma. fortnisqually.org

The Slime Run. This adrenaline-filled, messy 5K race at Remlinger Farms is filled with obstacles and "slime zones." Kids' race for ages 10 and under. Starting at 10 a.m. \$27–\$65. Carnation. theslimerun.com

20

Bug Blast. Examine bugs, enjoy buggy music, and more. 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Included with admission. The Burke Museum, Seattle. burkemuseum.org

Caspar Babypants & Recess Monkey. Two of the Sound's most beloved family-friendly bands perform. 10:30 a.m. \$12–\$22. All ages. Rialto Theater, Tacoma. broadwaycenter.org

Robothon. Robot enthusiasts share new robotic technologies and creations and compete in competitions. 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. **FREE** to attend. Mural Amphitheatre, Seattle Center. robothon.org

27

Free Entrance to National Parks. Venture out to one of Washington's three spectacular national parks, **FREE** today in honor of National Public Lands Day. nps.org

Family Workshop: Recycled Cars. Build, tinker, and learn together as you explore the world of cars every fourth Saturday. 11 a.m.–noon. Ages 4–12. \$8 per project team plus museum admission; discount for members. Le May–America's Car Museum, Tacoma. lemaymuseum.org



In the Heights, Village Theatre Issaquah, Sept. 18–Oct. 26



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Pre-K Program & Preschool Playschool!

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Children must be 100% toilet trained and must be age 4 by August 31, 2014.

Preschool Playschool (Age 3-4 years)

September 16 – May 21; 9:30am – 12 noon; T/Th

\$996 (Resident) \$1195 (Non-Resident)

Children must be 100% toilet trained and must be age 3 by August 31, 2014.

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Bellevue Parks & Community Services





Up, up and away: *Mary Poppins* soars into Village Theatre on Nov. 13

Your FALL ARTS to-do list

BY ELISA MURRAY

Confession: As Out + About editor of *ParentMap*, I get a bit overwhelmed when working on our fall arts preview. (Thought bubble: I must stop everything to book tickets to all these shows!) This fall, for example, there's *Mary Poppins*, *The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi*, a John Williams pops concert, *A Chorus Line*, *Don Giovanni* . . . it's enough to make a family consider homeschooling just to fit more arts in.

To help you prioritize fall picks for your family, this year we've organized our highlights by type of show. Whether you're looking for a splurge, a first show for your preschooler, a way to expose your kids to classical music or the show that will engage your teen, we've got the goods. As always, this is just a taste of the arts feast. See parentmap.com/fallarts for a complete list. (Two notes: If an age recommendation is not included, it wasn't listed. Holiday arts will be covered in a future issue.) >>

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Sunday, October 5, 2014 • 1–4pm
Seattle Center Fisher Pavilion Rooftop

Short stroll, fun, food, & entertainment for the whole family to promote
the acceptance and inclusion of individuals with Down syndrome.

Featured Guest: Karrie Brown, Wet Seal Model

Register or donate at www.downsyndromecommunity.org

seattlecenter • Down Syndrome • COMMUNITY ParentMap

out + about

FALL ARTS to-do list continued from page 31

THE BIG NIGHT (OR AFTERNOON) OUT

The Garden of Rikki Tikki Tavi
Seattle Children's Theatre, Seattle
Center

Sept. 25–Nov. 9

Pause for a moment to be grateful
that our region is home to one of the
top children's theaters in the nation.
Then run to buy tickets for the
opening show of Seattle Children's
Theatre's 40th anniversary season.
Playwright Y. C. York's adaptation of the
Rudyard Kipling tale expands its
sweetness and color, touching on
themes of friendship, trust and
resilience. The set is designed to
transport kids to an enchanted East
Indian garden. \$20–\$36. Ages 5 and
older. sct.org

George Balanchine's Jewels
Pacific Northwest Ballet, McCaw
Hall, Seattle

Sept. 26–Oct. 5

Why wait for *Nutcracker* to expose
your kids to world-class ballet?
By turns glittering, graceful, sassy
and imperial, the three pieces in
Balanchine's *Jewels* pay tribute to
golden ages of music and dance.
\$30–\$184. Ages 7 and older. pnb.org

**Seattle Pops: The Movie Music
of John Williams**

Benaroya Hall, Seattle

Oct. 10–12

Turn your superhero-crazy children
into symphony-philes with one
swoop of the conductor's baton in
this stirring pops concert featuring
John Williams' unforgettable film
scores, from *Superman* to *Star Wars*.
\$30–\$100; one free ticket for children
8–18 per purchased adult ticket.
seattlesymphony.org

Disney's Beauty and the Beast
Paramount Theatre, Seattle

Oct. 21–26

Your little princess — and everyone
else — will love the spectacular sets,
lavish music and story of this
Broadway production. Check
website for prices. Ages 5 and older.
stgpresents.org/paramount

Mary Poppins

Village Theatre, Issaquah and Everett

Nov. 13–Jan. 4 (Issaquah);

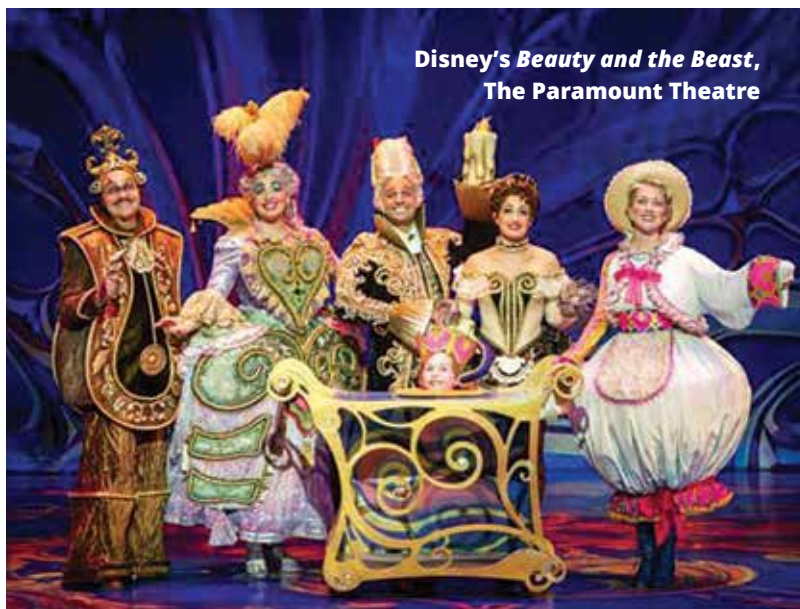
Jan. 9–Feb. 8 (Everett)

One night of seeing the inimitable
English nanny fly around Village
Theatre's stage singing "Spoonful of
Sugar" and "Chim Chim Cheree" and
your family's fall blues will vanish.
The wizards at Village Theatre should
do wonders with stage magic, too.
\$35–\$72. All ages. villagetheatre.org

**Emerald city: Pacific
Northwest Ballet's Jewels**



ANGELA STERLING



Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*,
The Paramount Theatre

AMY BOYLE

A STARTER SHOW FOR EVERYONE

Busytown

Olympia Family Theater
Sept. 26–Oct. 12

Huckle, Lowly, Grocer Cat, Farmer Pig — the complex, harmonious world of Richard Scarry's *Busytown* comes to life in this silly, joyful musical produced by Olympia's excellent theater. \$13–\$19.

Ages 3 and older.

olyft.org

Baba Yaga and the Bag of Gold

Thistle Theatre, Bellevue and Seattle

Oct. 11–Nov. 2

Thistle Theatre's bunraku puppeteers (who wear black and manipulate the puppets from below with wonderful adeptness) stage a Russian folktale about the son of a family who journeys to recover the family treasure from a notorious witch. \$10. Ages 3–12. thistletheatre.org

The Haunted Theatre: Backstage Tour & Eerie Dances

Tacoma City Ballet, The Merlino Art Center

Oct. 18–31

Who needs a haunted house when you have a haunted ballet? Tacoma City Ballet's popular Halloween tradition includes a just-spooky-enough haunted tour and ballet performances featuring bats, ghosts, witches, mummies, monsters and skeletons. Book early. \$5–\$6. All ages.

tacomacityballet.com

Big Top Rock

Teatro ZinZanni, Seattle

Oct. 18–Dec. 28

Featuring kindie rockers Recess Monkey, ZinZanni's family show is a high-energy, interactive performance of live music, dancing and top-notch circus acts under the magical *spiegeltent*. Wandering, dancing kids are encouraged. \$19–\$22. All ages. zinzanni.com/seattle



Big Top rocks ZinZanni

Hansel & Gretel

StoryBook Theater, four locations around Seattle

Oct. 25–Nov. 23

A project of Studio East, StoryBook Theater produces original, highly entertaining 45-minute musicals of well-known fairy tales — an ideal first theater experience. Here, the witch is a crazed *Top Chef* character who tries to turn Hansel into her next meal. \$11. Ages 3 and older.

storybooktheater.org

MUSICAL INSPIRATION

Caspar Babypants and Recess Monkey

Rialto Theater, Tacoma

Sept. 20, 10:30 a.m.

Beloved kindie rocker Chris Ballew performs his original brand of catchy tunes and inspired lyrics in a double show with Recess Monkey, the acclaimed trio of teachers turned rockers. \$12–\$22. All ages. broadwaycenter.org

Hallows in the Cathedral: Moonshadow

Saint Mark's Cathedral, Seattle

Oct. 17, 18, 24, 25

Seattle Women's Chorus sings spooky, moon-inspired choral music in the perfect setting — the grandness of Saint Mark's Cathedral. Check website for prices. flyinghouse.org/swc

Family Music: Beethoven Lives Upstairs

Benaroya Hall, Seattle

Oct. 25, 11 a.m.

This concert, part of the Seattle Symphony series for 6-to-11-year-olds, presents the music of Beethoven through the story of a boy named Christoph who lives downstairs from the master composer. It's an ingenious way to expose kids to the riches of classical music. \$15–\$20. seattlesymphony.org

Jazz4Kids

Benaroya Hall, Seattle

Nov. 1, 3–5 p.m.

The award-winning Seattle Repertory Jazz Orchestra presents a concert just for the short set. Kids can also “pet” instruments, watch demos and ask questions of famed artistic directors Clarence Acox and Michael Brockman. Tickets are free but must be acquired in advance. All ages. srjo.org >>

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out + about

FALL ARTS to-do list continued from page 33



Reedy fun: Jazz4Kids

A SHOW TO ENGAGE SCHOOL-AGE KIDS

Hobey Ford's Migration

Edmonds Community College,
Black Box Theatre

Oct. 11, 2 p.m.

Talk about a timely topic. Internationally renowned puppeteer Hobey Ford explores migration through the story of a Mexican girl named Beatriz, juxtaposing her journey to the United States with stories of other creatures' migrations, from monarch butterflies to sperm whales. \$10. edmondscenterforthearts.org

Mr. Toad's Mad Adventures

Seattle Public Theater, Bathhouse
Theater

Oct. 17–19

All year, Seattle Public Theater's youth troupe stages high-quality productions that are free to attend. This is a first-ever collaboration with Woodland Park Zoo, based on *The Wind in the Willows*. Free; suggested donation. Ages 6 and up. seattlepublictheater.org

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

SecondStory Repertory, Redmond
Nov. 1–23

In this musical adaptation of Judith Viorst's novel, Alexander's struggles with life's daily dramas — gum in his

United Kingdom Ukulele Orchestra

Kirkland Performance Center

Nov. 3, 7:30 p.m.

Inspire young uke players with a show by this irreverent troupe, which will demonstrate the power of their chosen instruments by performing the works of Robert Johnson, the Sex Pistols and others. \$20. All ages. kpcenter.org

Total Experience Gospel Choir

Centerstage Theatre, Federal Way
Nov. 9, 2 p.m.

Inspiration embodied. This multi award-winning ensemble is one of the most sought-after gospel choirs in the world and will share the evening with some of Centerstage's favorite singers. Check website for prices. All ages. centerstagetheatre.com



Uke said it: The U.K. Ukelele Orchestra
at the Kirkland Performance Center

hair, no dessert in his lunch, no best friend anymore — entertain and educate. \$10; all-ages Sunday shows, \$5 for ages 1–3, free for younger than 1. Grade-school age. secondstoryrep.org

Charlotte's Web

Tacoma Musical Playhouse

Nov. 1–9

A new musical version of E.B. White's classic tale about friendship, loyalty and mortality features music and lyrics by Charles Strouse (*Annie, Bye Bye Birdie*) and book by national award-winning children's playwright Joseph Robinette. \$12–\$15. Rated G. tmp.org

Short Shakes: Twelfth Night

Seattle Shakespeare Company, Center Theatre, Seattle Center
Nov. 5, 8, 10, 11

In these two 90-minute productions of one of Shakespeare's most popular comedies, two troupes of kids ages 11–18 perform all the roles, acting on the same set as Seattle Shakespeare Company's mainstage production. Free; suggested donation. Ages 6 and older. seattleshakespeare.org

EDGY FUN FOR TEENS AND TWEENS

A Chorus Line

5th Avenue Theatre, Seattle
Sept. 3–28

Puberty, gender, love, dreams, perseverance: The Tony Award-winning musical about a cast of hopeful performers explores all these themes via raw backstories, unstoppable dancing and extraordinary choral numbers and solos. \$29–\$73. Rated PG-13. 5thavenue.org

Night of the Living Dead

Youth Theatre Northwest, Mercer Island
Oct. 17–25

Break out the zombies and blood-curdling screams: Youth Theatre Northwest's annual Halloween show isn't just a haunted house, it's an entire interactive theatrical experience inspired by the cult film classic. Check website for prices. Ages 10 and older. youththeatre.org

Don Giovanni

Seattle Opera, McCaw Hall
Oct. 18–Nov. 1

Blast away any stereotypes of opera as a staid art form by spending an evening with Mozart's 1787 portrait of the unrepentant, passionate Don Giovanni. Featuring glorious music, distinctively drawn characters and a shocking finale, it should be unforgettable. \$25–\$200. Ages 13 and older. seattleopera.org

Soledad Barrio & Noche

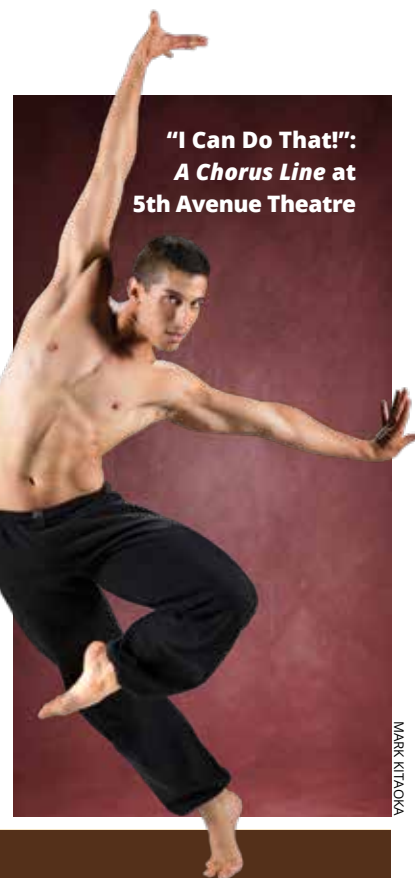
Flamenco

UW World Series, Meany Hall, Seattle

Oct. 23–25

Noche Flamenco, one of the world's most authentic and acclaimed flamenco companies, stages a world premiere, *Antigona*, based on the work by Sophocles. Watching one of the world's greatest tragedies expressed by fiery flamenco should be extraordinary. \$47–\$52. Ages 12 and older. uworldseries.org ■

Elisa Murray is ParentMap's Out + About editor and a mom of a 4.75-year-old boy, whom she intends to drag to at least 10 shows this fall.



MARK KITAOKA

8 tips for culture on the cheap

- 1 SUBSCRIBE TO A SEASON** at your favorite theater or musical organization, which cuts costs per show and helps you plan ahead.
- 2 FREE ARTS FESTIVALS** are a great way to sample many types of performances in a couple of hours. This fall, try Crush Rush on Sept. 21 at Seattle Center Armory or Seattle Children's Festival, a promising new multicultural festival on Oct. 12 at Seattle Center.
- 3 LOOK FOR MUSEUM DEALS FOR KIDS.** They abound. Kids ages 12 and younger are always free at the Seattle Art Museum and the Seattle Asian Art Museum; kids ages 14 and younger are free at the Museum of History & Industry; and so on. A number of local museums, including the Frye Art Museum and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, are always free for everyone. Find a list of monthly free museum days at parentmap.com/museumfree.
- 4 GO TO STUDENT PRODUCTIONS AND CONCERTS.** Some are free and most are very affordable. Many middle school and high school productions are excellent. And kids love seeing other kids perform.
- 5 LOOK FOR DEALS ON MUSIC.** For every adult ticket purchased to the UW World Series President's Piano or Chamber Music series, you can add two free youth tickets (ages 5–17). The Seattle Symphony offers a similar discount for Masterworks or Pops concerts through its Family Connections program. Kids ages 12 and younger are free at Town Hall Seattle's Family Concert series, which features well-known kids' musicians (accompanying adults only pay \$5).
- 6 SEATTLE CENTER'S TEEN TIX** program lets teens buy \$5 tickets for more than 40 Seattle-area arts venues, including theaters and museums.
- 7 PREVIEW OR PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN SHOWS,** often the first night in a run, are cheaper (example: tickets for Pacific Northwest Ballet's Friday preview nights are only \$12). Or organize a group outing and get a discount as well as the fun of a shared arts experience.
- 8 PARENTMAP'S ONLINE CALENDAR** (parentmap.com/calendar) lists hundreds of events a month and allows you to search for those that are free. Find more affordable events and giveaways by signing up for ParentMap's weekly enews (parentmap.com/enews) and "liking" us on our Facebook page (facebook.com/parentmap).

5 adventures to ease into fall



1

PASS THE REMOTE.

Everyone longs for a getaway amid back-to-school craziness, but we have a better idea: a family retreat. Plan a fall camping trip to Hoh Rain Forest, one of the quietest places in the U.S.; journey by boat down Lake Chelan to a unique retreat center that welcomes families; or have an off-the-grid weekend adventure high in the North Cascades. Find details and ideas at parentmap.com/retreats.



2

HIKE BACK IN TIME.

Looking for a new fall family ramble? How about to a ghost town? Older kids will love the challenge of a history hike to the famous gold-and-silver mining ghost town of Monte Cristo in the Cascades, while younger kids will enjoy searching for evidence of coal's heyday on an easy hike around Cougar Mountain. Find out where at parentmap.com/ghosthikes.



4

LEAP INTO A NEW SPORT.

If your kid is less than inspired by typical team sports, encourage her to try an off-the-beaten-path activity this fall. Unique pastimes such as parkour, bouldering, karate and circus arts are leaping in popularity and offer many benefits for kids, from focus to flexibility to self-expression. See parentmap.com/coolclasses.



5

FALL INTO FARM FUN.

From the sunflower/corn maze at Dr. Maze's Farm in Redmond to the Pumpkin Hurl that kicks off the Snohomish Valley Festival of Pumpkins, fall harvest fun abounds in September. Find a farmer's dozen of ideas for critter, corn and pumpkin adventures at parentmap.com/pumpkins.



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- Parents don't miss out on the fun of learning... enjoy engineering, science, & design challenges together with your child at our monthly Family Workshops.
- Teachers and Parents sign your child's class up for an educational experience at ACM.
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TUE, OCT 14

KIRKLAND PERFORMANCE CENTER

WED, OCT 15

ANNIE WRIGHT SCHOOLS, TACOMA

7–9pm



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TOWN HALL,
SEATTLE

7–9pm

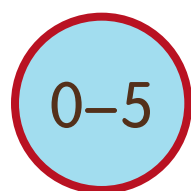


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Baby got books

Our favorite anti-bias reads for tots

By Sharon H. Chang

As populations shift and cultures become increasingly global, our children need to recognize and value the ways in which people are the same — and not the same. This progressive kind of learning is known as anti-bias education, and it not only encourages self-esteem but also helps kids understand and appreciate the experiences of others.

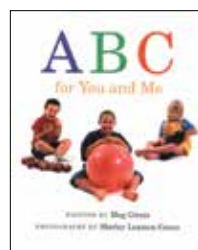
Conscious anti-bias parenting is a great way to make the world a better place, but given the busy

reality of caring for young children, it can seem daunting. That's why it's so important to weave anti-bias practice into the fabric of daily life. One of the most enjoyable ways to make this happen is by reading anti-bias children's books with our kids.

This selection of our favorite titles is organized under the four goals of anti-bias education, as defined by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards in their book, *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*.

Demonstrate self-confidence, family pride and positive social identities

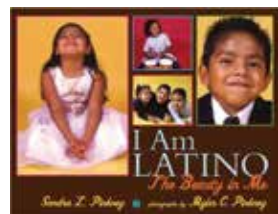
ABC for You and Me, Meg Girnis and Shirley Leamon Green



This classic-style ABC book is playfully presented by a mixed-race cast of children with Down syndrome. With bright photographs and simple text, it enables younger kids to connect happiness to living with a disability. Babies and

toddlers will have fun looking at the cheerful faces and recognizable play objects, while preschoolers will enjoy following along with the alphabet.

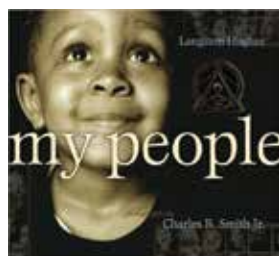
I Am Latino: The Beauty in Me, Sandra L. Pinkney and Myles C. Pinkney



Sandra Pinkney and her husband have collaborated on many gorgeous multicultural children's books in photo-essay format, including the NAACP

Image Award-winning *Shades of Black*. Their focus is on portraying and celebrating the racial ethnic diversity of all children. *I Am Latino* rejoices in the beauty of Latin descent by weaving moments of tradition with strong self-affirmations.

My People, Langston Hughes and Charles R. Smith Jr.



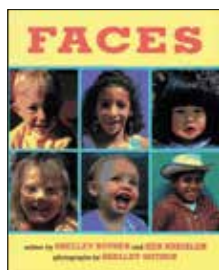
Hughes wrote this striking 33-word poem in the late 1920s. In setting images to Hughes' words, photographer and poet Smith wanted to show

that African Americans, like every other group of people, come in "all shapes, sizes, shades, and ages, and that each of us is unique." His work won the American Library Association's Coretta Scott King Book Award for illustration in 2010.

Express joy with diversity, accurate language for differences and caring connections

Faces, Shelley Rotner and Ken Kreisler

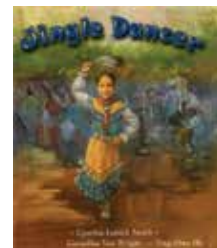
Author, photographer and illustrator Rotner has produced many titles about "self-discovery and awareness through observations and diversity." According to Rotner's website, she hopes



that "these books act as a catalyst to generate conversation and help children express their thoughts and feelings." *Faces* shows our connections through sameness

and difference.

Jingle Dancer, Cynthia Leitich Smith, Ying-Hwa Hu and Cornelius Van Wright

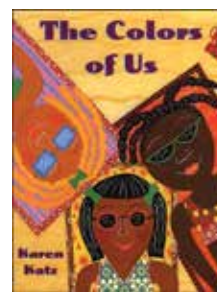


A special tale of empowerment especially for girls, this is the story of Jenna, a contemporary Muscogee (Creek) girl in Oklahoma who wants to honor her family's tradition by jingle dancing at the next pow-

wow — but she doesn't have enough jingles for her dress. So Jenna turns to the women of her Native American family and community for help in giving her dance a voice.

The Colors of Us, Karen Katz

A classic anti-bias book, *The Colors of Us* explores the multitude of gorgeous skin shades through the



eyes of 7-year-old Lena as she tries to paint her self-portrait. Reading this story together is a wonderful opportunity to discuss skin tone in a positive way with your kids. Katz's illustrations are inspired by folk art from around the world.

Recognize and have language to describe unfairness, and understand that it hurts

The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi

New immigrant Unhei is nervous to start school in America, and she's self-conscious that the other children won't like her because of her Korean



name. In the end, she finds that her classmates are far more accepting and open-minded than she thought. Author and illustrator Choi grew up in Korea and moved to New York City to study art. >>



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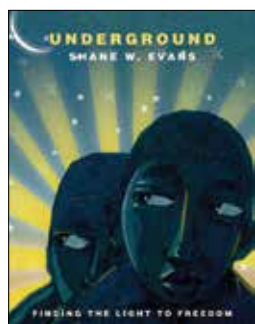
Baby got books

continued from page 39

Underground: Finding the Light to Freedom, Shane W. Evans

In one of the best picture books about slavery we've seen for young children, author-illustrator Evans does a phenomenal job of telling the story without overwhelming readers. Much is conveyed through poignant artistry rather than words, and there are different entry points into a conversation

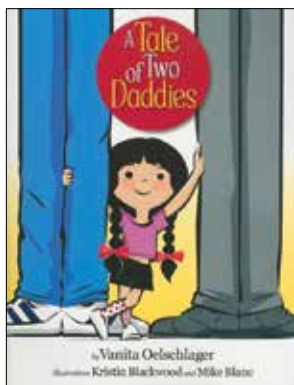
with your kids, from what it's like to be scared all the way to what it means to be free.



Demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act against prejudice and/or discrimination

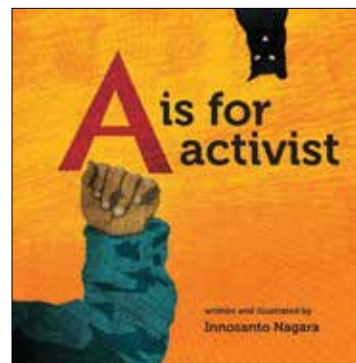
A Tale of Two Daddies, Vanita Oelschlager, Kristin Blackwood and Mike Blanc

This sleekly illustrated book shows a young girl's confident conversation with her peers about having two fathers. It's a great example of how children can deal with probing questions from playmates about non-normative identities. Her friends ask her about which of her dads does what, and our protagonist answers with ease and self-esteem.



A Is for Activist, Innosanto Nagara

Emphasizing community, equality and social justice, this board book depicts what activism looks like in an



accessible way for babies through preschoolers. While the subject matter may seem serious, the book is fun to flip through, with colorful, interesting art and a black cat mascot to find on every page. ■

Sharon H. Chang has worked with young children and families for more than a decade as a teacher, administrator and parent educator. She serves on the board of Families of Color Seattle, and as a writer she focuses on race, children and multiraciality.





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Dot-tastic invites: Grab the guide over at the Simplistically Sassy (simplisticallysassy.com) blog to create cute Lego invites by cutting blue construction paper into quarters, and then printing the party info onto each. Six cutout circles in a corresponding color, adhered with pop-ups to the blank side of each quarter, create a 3-D appearance.

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— Tiffany Doerr Guerzon



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Jump start

Facing fears and facts about grade skipping

By Deanna Duff

Erin Pinney's 6-year-old son is a voracious reader who enjoys books well above his grade level. As a preschooler, he was so advanced that his father suggested skipping a grade.

"I was concerned about the social aspects, and his preschool teacher and principal agreed," says Pinney, an elementary school teacher in Sioux City, Iowa. "Honestly, it turns out what we thought we knew was uneducated and based on fear and biases."

A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, a seminal work on acceleration, concludes that qualified kids benefit greatly from appropriate grade skipping. Enduring myths — that it harmfully pressures children or hampers emotional development — are generally unfounded.

"There is substantial evidence that there are a lot of academic and personal benefits to students who are academically accelerated," says Jonathan Wai, a research scientist at Duke University who studies exceptional talent. Grade skipping is one way of achieving those benefits for qualified students.

Making sense of skipping

The Pinneys opted to enroll their son in kindergarten as scheduled, choosing a dual-language classroom to up the stakes. But even that proved too unchallenging.

"For a while, he spent 50 minutes a day in the first-grade room for reading," Pinney says. "That was the only time when he wasn't bored and getting into trouble. He would come home and say how much he loved that time and the conversations."

After consulting with professionals who work with gifted kids, she and her husband chose to advance their son to first grade after the semester break. Pinney also read *A Nation Deceived*, which was cowritten by University of Iowa psychology professor Susan Assouline.

"Grade skipping is for those kids who are currently performing excellently but also have the potential to continue being high achievers," says Assouline, who directs the school's Belin-Blank Center, an international leader in gifted education.

Assouline codeveloped the Iowa Acceleration

Scale (IAS). Used nationwide, it outlines research, case studies, tools for assessing a child's potential and guidelines for formulating an appropriate education strategy. Among the factors considered are age, emotional maturity, family background, other school options, testing results and the child's personal feelings. The IAS is particularly useful for school districts that are unfamiliar with gifted education or do not have resources in place.



Some school districts offer advanced learning programs, which enable similar-age cohorts of students to work one or two grade levels ahead of the grade associated with their age. If you are considering advanced learning for your child, check with your school district to understand the programs offered and the requirements for entry.

A commonly cited worry about skipping is student burnout, but research indicates the opposite. Gregory Park, now a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, analyzed data as a graduate student at Vanderbilt University that tracked a total of 5,000 gifted children over a 35-year period. About 10 percent of participants skipped grades, most in early elementary school. Results showed that they excelled in later years.

"Grade skippers were far more likely to pursue graduate and advanced degrees," Park says. "There was also evidence they achieved more once they earned their advanced degree: more patents,

publications and citations. It was almost like grade skipping gave these kids an extra head start.

"I was fairly surprised," he continues. "It seemed to make a meaningful difference in the long run. From the standpoint of career achievement, grade skipping is a positive kind of intervention."

The skipping state of mind

Perhaps the most pervasive concern parents face is how skipping might impact their children's personal development. Will they make friends and fit in?

"We know the benefits regarding academic achievement, but the social and emotional development also tends to be positive," Assouline says. "If there are emotional concerns, that is not solved by holding them back. It needs to be addressed separately."

For many children, behavioral problems are actually mitigated by grade skipping. Boredom can result in acting out, while an engaging level of learning focuses attention.

"I definitely see him happier when he's getting to really learn," Pinney says of her son. "His stress and anxiety are higher when he's not being challenged."

The behavioral and social problems Pinney's son experienced in kindergarten were often due to boredom. He did not identify with his age group's level of play and conversation.

"Within two days of entering first grade, he started coming home and saying how much he liked going to school now. He'd also been having night terrors, and those immediately stopped," Pinney recalls.

Duke University's Wai has a newborn and understands the anxiety families may feel about grade skipping. But he personally supports the practice, when appropriate, because of the social benefits. In his eyes, the academic and career opportunities are bonuses.

"Of course I want my son to be successful — but I want him to be happy, and that's about personal fulfillment and engagement," Wai says. "A child loses out when they're encouraged to be mediocre and not grow." >>

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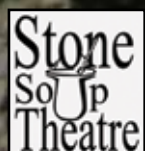


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Jump start

continued from page 45

Academically advanced students are often socially mature for their age, Wai explains. He references *A Nation Deceived* and another Vanderbilt study, "Top 1 in 10,000: A 10-Year Follow-up of the Profoundly Gifted," which indicates that any long-term adverse social impacts of grade skipping are negligible.

"Most students [who skipped grades] reported 10 or 20 years down the line that if they'd done anything differently, it would have been to participate in more [acceleration]," says Wai.

Misinformation also contributes to hesitation about skipping. During her own teacher training, Pinney does not remember instruction in accelerated education. She now works with student teachers on the topic.

"As a parent, I would have done it from the start if I'd known," Pinney says. "Now I understand how essential it is to identify our kids' talents and help them develop those gifts to their full potential." ■

Deanna Duff is an award-winning freelance writer.

read ahead

National Association for Gifted Children: nagc.org

Northwest Gifted Child Association: nwgca.org

The Belin-Blank Center: education.uiowa.edu/centers/belinblank

Davidson Institute for Talent Development (includes a state-by-state guide to gifted-education policies): davidsongifted.org

A Nation Deceived: accelerationinstitute.org/Nation_Deceived/Get_Report.aspx


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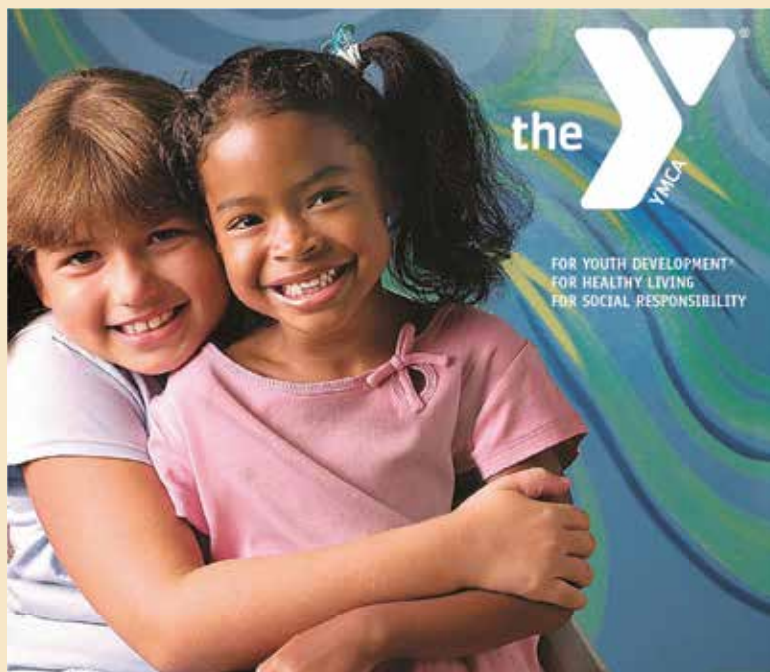
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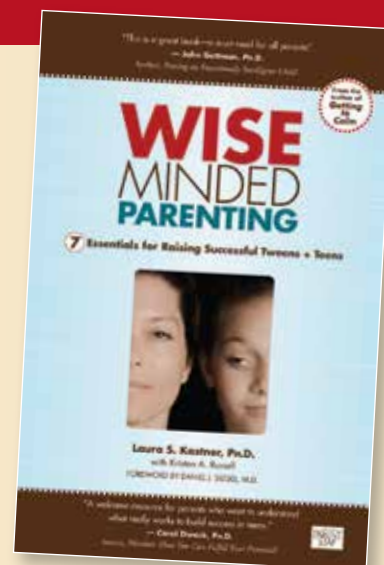
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Breaking up is hard to do

How to help kids survive a failed friendship

By Nancy Schatz Alton

The first time my oldest had a friend dilemma, she kept it to herself until she exploded in fury at the thought of going to school. I told her we would ask her teacher to help, and this childhood expert walked us through the experience. “Don’t worry, Mom,” the teacher said. “Third grade is the year these things start happening, but I got this.”

During third, fourth and part of fifth grades, children build more primary relationships and the phrase “best friend” takes on importance, says Julie Metzger, cofounder of Great Conversations (greatconversations.com), which offers classes on such topics as friendship, puberty and parenting. “Those friendships are your own choice for the first time; your parents haven’t done this work for you. There is an opportunity to be disappointed and hurt.”

Around this age, your child is starting to develop her identity and naturally gravitates to different people to explore this, says Kirsten Cullen Sharma, Psy.D., assistant professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at NYU Langone Medical Center. “Experiences with different people help them to develop their

identity and help clarify what kind of person they want to be. A friend might get mad when their friend is starting to hang out with someone else, and this is a normal reaction,” she explains.

As children enter middle school, they are thinking about sameness and reestablishing group identity, Metzger says. “Because it is the time with the most physical developmental difference, what else would you want but to create sameness? Kids are figuring out how to attach to a group safely, and how to detach safely and how to be autonomous.”



Keep your ears open

It’s a relief to know that there are tangible ways to help when your child is enmeshed in friendship drama. “One key message to remember is the power of listening. You don’t have to fix everything,” says Lawrence J. Cohen, Ph.D., a licensed psychologist and the coauthor of *Best Friends, Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children*. “The reason they clam up is [that] we lead to problem solving too fast. When they are 9, 10, 11 and 12, if we try to solve the problem, we are going to make it worse. Say, ‘I don’t want to fix this, but I want to hear about it.’”

What if your child is obviously suffering but isn’t ready to talk? “Respect that your child has a different orientation and doesn’t want to talk,” says Rachel Simmons, author of *Odd Girl Out: The Hidden Culture of Aggression in Girls* and cofounder of the Girls Leadership Institute. “While you’re in the car or in the kitchen doing something, so the conversation is casual, try saying, ‘I know something is up, and I can see you are upset. I want you to know that I am here and I really want to listen, and

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Breaking up is hard to do

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if you need me to not even say anything and to just hear it, I will.”

Simmons recommends thinking of new ways to communicate, such as email or texting. “Every parent should ask: ‘Is there any reason my kid doesn’t want to talk?’” she says. “Kids have weird ideas of what we are going to do when we hear what they have to say.”

Be the change you wish to see

After listening, consider next steps. “One thing that really helps at this age is not having all your eggs in one basket — having a second social group outside of school, in your neighborhood or church group or with cousins. This helps take the sting out of it when trouble arises,” Cohen suggests.

And don’t forget to model healthy relationship behavior. “You really have to think to yourself, ‘Am I being the very best community member and friend? Have I extended grace to someone in our

community? Did I say yes to something outside of my comfort zone?’” Metzger says. “We as grown-ups can’t control these situations where our kids are working out issues with friends, but we can control if we become better people.”

Of course, don’t expect your child to start making new friends immediately after a primary friendship ends. “If they are not ready to get back in the saddle and make new friends, honor that. They don’t have to do it on your timetable,” says Cohen.

When my own daughter was in the midst of her friendship woes, she asked me, “When does it get easier?” The clear answer was that learning how to navigate relationships is a lifelong task. But she didn’t need an answer, she just needed my compassion.

“Being able to accept that sometimes people will disappoint you — and you can still love them and move on in a relationship — takes a long time to learn,” Simmons says. “Our children need real

authentic communication, but with boundaries. Avoid getting emotional about your own friend betrayals, but let her know she’s not alone.”

This leads to the most vital piece of advice I heard while researching this story: “I’m not having the same experience as you’ — knit that on a sampler. Our children come to us with their pain, and we add our own unresolved pain,” Cohen says.

While you may want to tell your child all about your own terrible fifth-grade year, sometimes the best form of empathy is keeping quiet. This is their story, not yours. But maybe someday, just like you, they will live to not tell the tale to their own kids, too. ■

When not navigating parenthood, Nancy Schatz Alton uses her brainpower to write, edit and fact-check articles for websites and magazines. Find her blog at withinthewords.com.



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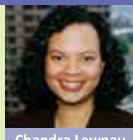


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Reality bites

10 things your kids need to know before they leave home

By Heather Rae Darval

Whether your child is 6 or 16, you know you have to prepare them (and yourself) for the day they leave home. You've taught them to be good people, think for themselves and pursue their talents. But what about signing a lease or buying groceries?

We asked the experts for their list of 10 things every kid should know before leaving home. Let their wisdom guide you toward acceptance — and your teen toward autonomy.

1 Talking to adults with respect, but not fear

Young adults may not know that they can't text a professor for an extension or that they might wind up with a pushy landlord. For practice, give them chances to interact with adults in real-life situations. "The more I am dealing with adult children, the more I see them getting run over by the 'adults' they have to deal with, like landlords [and] college admissions people," says Denise Witmer, author of *The Everything Parent's Guide to Raising a Successful Child*.

2 Managing money

From credit cards to student loans, money is a major part of a young adult's life. Allowances are a great way to teach kids about saving and spending. You can also help them craft a budget and talk to them about needs versus wants. Use your old bills and play money to introduce the concepts of "amount due" and "due date," as well as how a salary might be divvied up. For more ideas, see Mint's resource guide at mint.com.

3 Food shopping and cooking

"Your adult children don't have to be chefs, but they shouldn't be scared of an oven," Witmer says. Get your kids into the kitchen, where they can learn safe

knife and stove skills, basic recipes and healthy meal planning. Invite them to try writing a grocery list, observe while they shop, then go over the receipts together. That first solo trip can involve some sticker shock!

4 Accessing health care

Seattle University psychologist Aimee Coonerty-Femiano, Ph.D., sees many students baffled by their health plans. She suggests showing teens their insurance card, talking through their coverage, and teaching them how to make an appointment and navigate the system.

Nadine Briggs, founder and director of the Simply Social Kids programs in Tyngsboro, Mass., recently took her daughter to the doctor and had

her check in alone, then find her way to the lab and back. "Sometimes parents, me included, get used to doing certain things for our kids, and it doesn't cross our minds to have them do it for themselves," says Briggs, whose daughter has Down syndrome.

5 Staying safe

Wherever your child lives next, he'll need safety skills. Teach him to listen when his inner voice warns that a situation or a person — even a friend of a friend — is dangerous, Briggs says. Talk about handling drugs and alcohol. She also suggests a buddy system when teens go out.

6 Getting around a city

Beyond basic driving skills, teach your kids how to use public transit: Have them pay their own fare, then try reading maps and schedules on their own. Make sure they know how to use a GPS system and how to walk safely, always staying aware of their surroundings.

7 Making big decisions

From renting an apartment to picking a college major, kids face huge choices after they leave home. "Sometimes parents think we are being helpful by *doing*, [instead of] offering choices to our children or teens," says Witmer. Let them start making decisions on their own while we're there for support, she suggests, and remind them to ask for help when needed.

8 Managing time

Well before young adults require this skill to survive a college course load or their first job, parents can ease the way by having them put chore or homework schedules on a calendar and talking about how they plan to complete assignments, Witmer says.



This can be a hard sell, so your tone makes a difference. “Try to switch from nagging and constant advice-giving to a different level of conversation,” says Joyce Fagel, an academic adviser at the University of Washington. “For example, I’ve noticed that you have not yet filed the financial aid application, and I’m concerned that you may end up missing the deadline. Do you have a plan for completing this? What can I do to support you?”

9 Setting up Internet or TV service

Life without Wi-Fi? Inconceivable! Prevent no-access freakouts by researching providers where your teen plans to head after graduation. Then walk her through the steps of setting up an account, getting service

installed — and, of course, how much it will cost. You might also give her tech skills a trial run now: When something breaks or you need new service at home, delegate your teen to figure it out from start to end, stepping in only if she gets seriously stuck.

10 Handling stress

In 2013, the American College Health Association (acha.org) reported that 41.7 percent of students surveyed said they experienced higher-than-average stress. Talk to your kids about recognizing signs of stress, finding balance and seeking support when life gets too hard. Help them find a healthy stress-management habit that works for them, whether it’s yoga, running, therapy or another calming outlet.

According to an article published in *College Student Journal* in 2012, says Coonerty-Femiano, the sole significant protective factor for young adults is feeling supported by family, friends and professors. “We tell parents that they still have an important role to play and should be involved in their young adult’s life. Give them space to make choices and mistakes, but keep on supporting them,” she says. “Call them and send care packages.” ■

Heather Rae Darval is a former journalist and web editor who lives and writes in Seattle with her husband, spirited dog and precocious toddler.

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Someone you should know

By Alison Krupnick • Photograph by Will Austin

A chance encounter with then Seattle Schools Superintendent John Stanford 17 years ago turned out to be a life-changing event for **BERNARDO RUIZ**. Ruiz, who was born in Mexico, was studying English and humanities at the University of Washington. Stanford encouraged Ruiz to become a tutor. He did, and the impact he had as a mentor spurred him on to work for Seattle Public Schools (SPS) as a bilingual instructional assistant. He moved up the ranks as a family advocate, a career coordinator, and the manager of school and family partnerships. Now, as director of Equity and Race Relations, School & Family Partnerships and Native American Education for SPS, Ruiz has been nationally recognized for his efforts to strengthen school and community partnerships.

How has your community engagement work on behalf of Seattle schools evolved?

When I started, we were a compliance department, and there was a lot of mistrust from families. Now, we've set up a strong foundation to build meaningful, strategic relations with families, which are our most important stakeholders and partners.

The district leadership has realized that supporting school-family partnerships is a viable strategy. Equity and family engagement are part of SPS's strategic plan. We currently have family-engagement teams at 44 schools. This year, we will add 20 more, and the year after that, we will add 24.

Describe Family Connectors University.

The concept started because of partnerships we developed at Vanderbilt University and Johns Hopkins University. We discussed ways of building capacity for families. We knew they were eager to learn and wanted to be educated, so we re-created a family-engagement model that had been developed for special-education families in Florida.

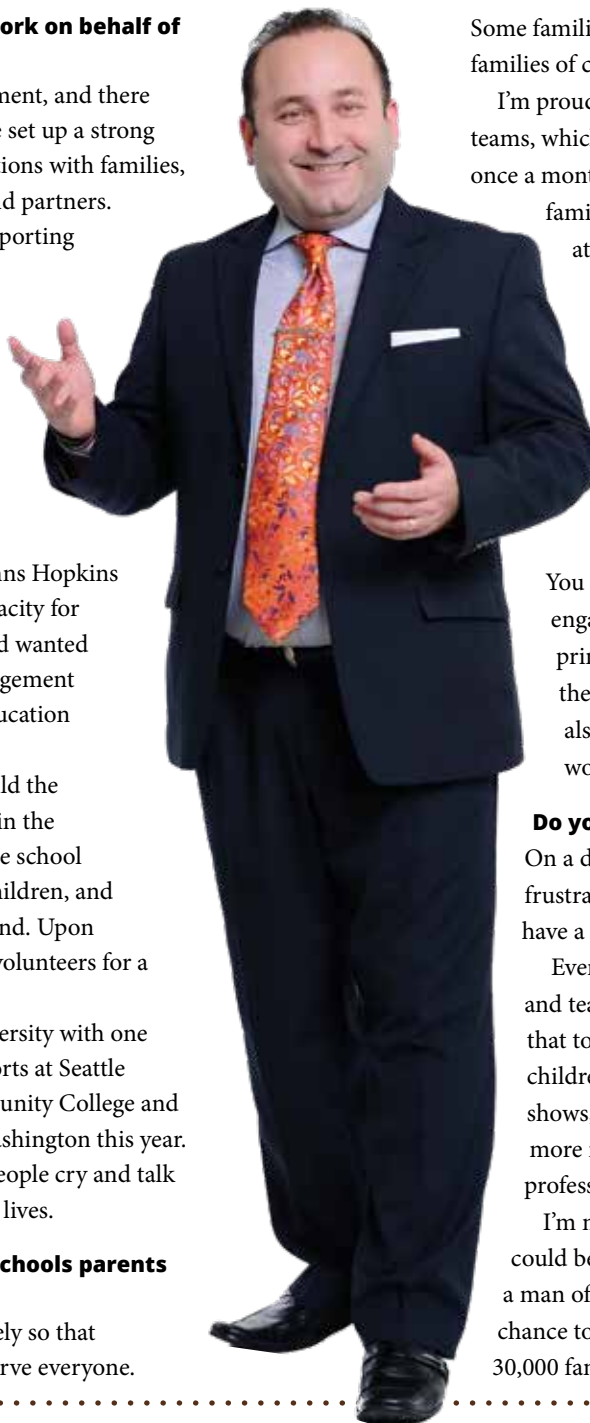
It's a free, 10-week program designed to build the capacity of families to serve as equal partners in the education of their children. They learn how the school system works and how to advocate for their children, and can earn college credit for the classes they attend. Upon graduation, participants serve as community volunteers for a minimum of one year.

We started in partnership with Seattle University with one cohort two years ago. Now we have three cohorts at Seattle University, six cohorts at North Seattle Community College and will offer three cohorts at the University of Washington this year.

The graduation ceremonies are powerful. People cry and talk about how the program has transformed their lives.

What else would you like Seattle Public Schools parents to know about community engagement?

One of our goals is to brand our work effectively so that more families are aware that we are there to serve everyone.



Some families think that our programs are only for families of color.

I'm proud of our school-family engagement action teams, which focus on student achievement. They meet once a month and include school administrators, teachers, families, support staff, community partners and, at the high school level, students.

We've created a Family Engagement Action Team book of promising partnership practices that other schools can use. School action teams have created a number of programs to engage families to learn along with their kids.

Equity and family engagement are not add-ons; they are part of the work we do.

You can't be a good leader or teacher if you don't engage families. I'm thankful to our families, principals, teachers, staff and school board for their commitment to family engagement. I'm also thankful to my wife for her support. I work long hours.

Do you ever get demoralized?

On a daily basis I talk to parents who are upset and frustrated. But once we have the opportunity to have a discussion, they have renewed hope.

Every day we meet with families, principals and teachers, and they renew my commitment that together we can build a better future for our children. When families are engaged, research shows, there are fewer discipline problems, more mutual support, and teachers stay in the profession longer.

I'm more than optimistic — I'm hopeful. We could be a model school district in the nation. I am a man of faith. I thank God every day that I have the chance to change the world for 52,000 students and 30,000 families in our school district. ■

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