

Washington FAMILY

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JANUARY 2023

Smart. Local. Parenting for the DMV.

5
PLACES FOR
INDOOR FUN

**CODING AND
AUTISM**

**CHOOSING A
SUMMER CAMP:
WHY START NOW?**

**NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTIONS
FOR FAMILIES**

*Henry
jumps for joy
in Leesburg*



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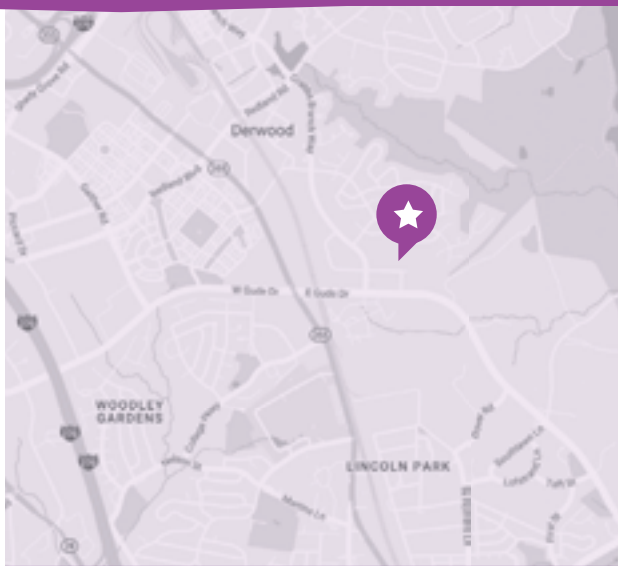
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HEATHER M. ROSS

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READERS' RESPONSES

We welcome your feedback — on specific articles, overall themes and anything else related to editorial content. Enter your comments on the Feedback tab of our website: info@washingtonfamily.com.

Please note we reserve the right to edit or refrain from publishing comments we deem inappropriate.

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WE WANT
YOUR
FEEDBACK

Washington FAMILY

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Let's Start Something New Together

Happy New Year! It's 2023, and with each new year comes more adventures, opportunities and memories with loved ones to cherish.

It's not so important that we stick to our New Year's resolutions... but it is helpful to use the start of the year to set healthy goals as a family! Contributing writer Jennifer Marino Walters shares some fun, easy goals parents and kids can work toward together (pg. 20).

What other new ideas will 2023 bring? Introduce your children to new skills such as sewing (pg. 11) or coding, and learn why the latter can be a great career option for children who have autism (pg. 22). You might even need a new pediatrician this year. Here are the questions you should be asking before you make the switch (pg. 24).

Camp season is also upon us! Many summer camps have already opened registration, and spots are going fast. In "Choosing a Summer Camp: Why Start Now?" contributing writer Faygie Holt explores what you can be thinking about in your search (pg. 12).

Already chosen a camp? Don't forget these overnight essentials (pg. 15).

We at *Washington FAMILY* are excited to embrace a new year—whatever triumphs and challenges it may bring. Check out our Family Fun feature to start your year off right with five places for indoor learning and play (pg. 10).

Lindsay C. VanAsdalan

PERFORMANCES FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES



AGES 7+

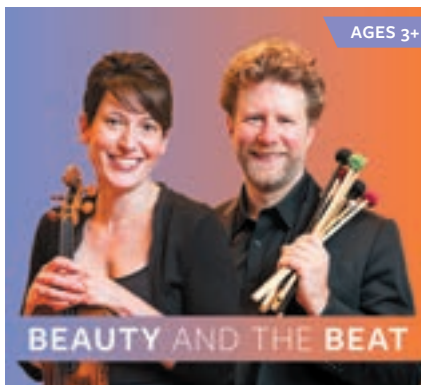
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No Excuses, No Limits

by ILL-ABILITIES™

Be inspired by **ILL-ABILITIES™**—the international all-star breakdance crew of seven of the world's best disabled dancers. *No Excuses, No Limits* takes audiences on a journey of each dancer's story through dance, music, audience interaction, and a gained understanding of the limitless possibilities that any person can hold.

Jan. 13–15 | Family Theater



AGES 3+

NSO MUSIC FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

Beauty and the Beat

Explore the magic of instruments joining forces.

See NSO principal second violinist **Marissa Regni** and NSO assistant principal timpanist/percussionist **Scott Christian** in an exciting program exploring the magic created when the violin and percussion join forces. This melodic and rhythmic ride proves that no matter how different the instruments are, they can come together to make some beautiful music.

Feb. 4 & 5 | Family Theater



AGES 3+

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

123 Andrés

Move, sing, and play in Spanish and English.

Join **Andrés** and **Christina** on an exciting cultural exploration of Latin America through an introduction of language, music, and dance. The Latin Grammy®-winning music duo **123 Andrés** is back by popular demand and on the heels of their recent Grammy®-nominated release! Their catchy songs and lively, interactive concerts get the whole family dancing and learning—in Spanish and English.

Sat., Feb. 11 | Family Theater

Kennedy-Center.org
(202) 467-4600

Groups call (202) 416-8400
For all other ticket-related customer service inquiries, call the Advance Sales Box Office at (202) 416-8540

Kennedy-Center.org/COVIDsafety

The Kennedy Center

HERE'S WHAT WE'RE LOVING FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY THIS JANUARY

BY ELENA EPSTEIN,
DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL
PARENTING PRODUCT AWARDS

For more product reviews, visit nappaawards.com

TERA VECTOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Naturalistas Fashion Dolls

A sleek line of contemporary natural-hair dolls representing the beauty and uniqueness of naturally textured Black hair. \$12.99-24.99, ages 3+, mynaturalistasas.com



Solitaire Chess Magnetic Travel Puzzle

Combines the rules of chess with peg solitaire to bring you a fun and challenging brain-teaser experience. \$14.99, 8+, thinkfun.com



Purse Pets Print Perfect

Interactive purses that really blink and respond to touch. Features new trendy designs and stylish details with more than 30 new sounds and reactions. \$26.99, ages 5+, spinmaster.com



Letters & First 100 Words Flash Cards

Make learning fun with 50 colorful, double-sided flash cards. Learn about letters and 100 words across four categories: foods we eat, things at home, animals and things that go. \$14.97, ages 18 months-4 years, amazon.com



The Animal Adventurer's Guide

Packed with hands-on activities and projects that bring you closer to wild animals, from feathery birds and furry mammals to slippery herps, crawly arthropods and other intriguing invertebrates. \$17.95, ages 5-9, shambhala.com

Bedtime Defenderz

A line of vigilant and fierce plush heroes that battle villains hiding in the dark to help kids overcome bedtime fears. They come with a comic book, a power band slap bracelet and a glow-in-the-dark belt buckle to help kiddos feel safe and secure at night. \$29.99, ages 3-7, bedtimedefenderz.com



Pixobitz Studio

Magically transform your custom designs into 3D creations by using a spray of water. Decorate with the included PVA accessories. \$29.99, ages 6+, spinmaster.com



CaDA Elements Mighty Airplanes

Lay out your runway, build your own unique airplane and let your imagination soar with this immersive and play-packed set. The all-new clip brick can be used with paper, cardboard or even leaves, letting kids build beyond traditional construction sets. \$24.99, ages 6+, decadastore.com

VIP Pets Cats

Arrives in a cat-shaped perfume vessel that has a unique UV light reveal. Shine the UV light on your doll for glowing neon hair and designs. Collect six neon cats, each with hair 11 inches long, and eight accessories to create the most glamorous hair styles. \$19.99, ages 5+, imctoys.com

Pokémon Flame & Flight Deluxe Charizard

Fully interactive with more than 30 unique lights, sounds and movements. Includes a 2" Pikachu figure and launcher for training. \$29.99, ages 8+, jazwares.com



Disney Doorables Let's Go! Around The World Multi Peek

Open the airplane doors to discover an exciting destination. All come with a unique collection of five, six or seven figures and collector cards. These charming surprise toys take kids around the world. \$12.99, ages 5+, justplayproducts.com



GIGABOTS

Featuring a new line of six intergalactic action figures that transform from their energy core capsules into a 13-inch fully-articulated action figure. They can be disassembled and stored again in their original capsule. \$16.99, ages 5+, giga-bots.com



NAPPA Awards has been celebrating the best in family products for 32 years. For more product reviews and gift ideas visit nappaawards.com

{TOP 10}

Family Events for January

Escape the winter blues with these
fun family events in the DMV

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

DMV WINTER LANTERN FESTIVAL

1

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, TIMED
ENTRY BETWEEN 5-9 P.M.; RUNTIME
UNTIL 10 P.M.

Lerner Town Square at Tysons II, 8025 Galleria Dr., Tysons, VA, 22102

See Lerner Town Square at Tysons II transformed into a dazzling holiday light display with more than 1,000 Chinese lanterns, each handmade by artisans with decades of experience. Families can enjoy interactive light swings, seesaws and tunnels. Don't miss the unique and artistic lantern displays featuring mammoths, polar bears, penguins and more.

\$29.99, \$17.99 youth ticket | winterlanternfestival.com

ME AND MY LITTLE ARTIST - ART PROGRAM

THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, 6 P.M.

We Art Fun, 19847 Century Blvd., Ste. G, Germantown, MD. 20874

Teach your little one to have fun and create with other parents at the We Art Fun main studio every Friday! Enjoy an engaging morning of colors and crafts intended for parents or guardians and children ages 3 to 8 months. Registration is required.

Prices vary, \$21-50 | we-art-fun.com/classes

2

SQUEAKERS AND MR. GUMDROP

JAN. 1, 11 A.M. – NOON

1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Rd., Tysons, VA, 22102

Enjoy a captivating nonverbal production of Squeakers and Mr. Gumdrop, a play that follows the wintry story of Mr. Gumdrop's annual holiday party, and Squeakers, the curious mouse. See how these two very different characters work together despite their differences to get all the holiday preparations done in time for the party! Reserve tickets online.

Free | 1ststage.org

3

"SEASON'S GREENINGS" HOLIDAY EXHIBIT

4

JAN. 1-2, 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.

U.S. Botanic Garden, 100 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Don't miss your last chance to catch the USBG's 2022 "Season's Greenings" garden featuring poinsettias, holiday décor and famous D.C. landmarks grown from plants! Families can enjoy a beautiful walk with inspiring and dazzling displays and an outdoor train display.

Free | usb.gov/holiday



5

BABY LAP TIME AT THE LIBRARY

JAN. 12, 1 - 1:30 P.M.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library - Central Library,
901 G St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Introduce your pre-walking baby to the joy of reading and enjoy a positive social environment with other parents and caregivers at one of D.C. Public Library's local branches. This Story Time experience includes stories, songs and rhymes for your little one (ages birth to 5 years) to enjoy their early steps in learning.

Free | dclibrary.libnet.info

6

ST. JAMES ELITE HIGH SCHOOL
BASKETBALL SHOWCASE

JAN. 13-16, SCHEDULE TBA

The St. James Sports, Wellness and
Entertainment Complex, 6805 Industrial
Road Springfield, VA 22151

Catch one of the nation's premier high school basketball showcases, the St. James MLK Classic. You and your family can get psyched for more than 20 of the best girls' and boys' teams in a faceoff with days of action-packed moments, brought to your court by the future stars of the sport.

\$20-30 | thestjames.com/mlk-classic

7



AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
PAINT NIGHT

JAN. 18, 6 - 8 P.M.

Meadowside Nature Center, 5100 Meadowside Ln., Rockville, MD. 20855

Learn about the basics of acrylic painting as a family and as a community. Local artist Ellen Mansfield will provide instruction and support for this activity. Every participant will receive a pre-sketches canvas to take home at the end of the class. Participants can bring their own peanut-free snacks and drinks. Register online.

\$40 | montgomeryparks.org

8

SING BOOKS WITH EMILY

JAN. 21, 11 A.M.

Mary Riley Styles Public Library, 120 N. Virginia Ave., Falls Church, VA 22046

Children of all ages are invited to join Emily in exploring the world of illustrated song with this free sing-along event. The accompanying sing-along tracks include fun and unusual instruments like the ukulele, glockenspiel and kazoo.

Get ready to embark on a musical adventure as a family.

Free | singbookswithemily.wordpress.com



9

LUNAR NEW YEAR PARADE

JAN. 22, 2 - 5 P.M.

Sixth & I, 600 1 St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001

Join Mayor Muriel for this year's Lunar New Year parade! The whole family can enjoy a colorful and diverse ceremony with traditional performances and a firecracker finale. The assembly time is at 1 p.m. The parade will step off at 2 p.m. and the ceremony will begin at the end of the parade route at about 3 p.m.

Reserve a spot online.

Free | Reserve: eventbrite.com/e/moapia-presents-lunar-new-year-parade-tickets-465864010797

10

IN-PERSON LUNAR NEW YEAR
FAMILY CELEBRATION

JAN. 28, 11:30 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Smithsonian American Art Museum, G St. NW
& 8th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20560

Join other families at the Smithsonian American Art Museum as they celebrate the annual Chinese and Korean celebration of the Lunar New Year. The celebration is free to attend and will include performances, crafts, food and more family fun! Kids can learn about the importance of the Lunar New Year across cultures and explore the Smithsonian American Art Museum's collections with a scavenger hunt. Registration is encouraged.

Free | americanart.si.edu

Family Fun Out of the Cold

5 Places for Indoor Learning and Play

BY HEATHER M. ROSS



During the chilliest months of the year, families everywhere are spending more time indoors—but that doesn't mean an end to family fun! In the D.C. area, there's a little bit of every kind of fun, including educational, interactive and playful indoor spaces. Here are five family-centric spots in the DMV that will keep your kids making memories all winter long.

Bowlero Bethesda

5353 Westbard Ave., Bethesda | Monday through Thursday, 4-11 p.m., Friday, 2 p.m. to midnight, Saturday, noon to midnight, Sunday, noon to 10 p.m.

There's something for every member of the family at Bowlero with food, cocktails, fun lighting and pop music. This bowling alley has 34 lanes and an arcade stocked with popular titles like "Mario Kart", "Pac-Man" and "Jurassic Park Arcade." When it comes to food, the alley has you covered with the 6-pound "Behemoth Burger," lane-side wings, veggie spring rolls, pizza and more. Reserve your lane online at bowlmor.com.

ClimbZone of Laurel

13200 Mid Atlantic Blvd., Ste. 130, Laurel | Monday through Tuesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday through

Sunday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The ClimbZone in Laurel, Maryland is a massive indoor climbing arena with 75 different themed walls for daring kids to conquer. All climbing walls at ClimbZone are individually themed with hand-painted art to admire and inspire. The ClimbZone also features a GameZone with classic arcade games so you and your family can bond like it's the 90s again. climbzone.us/laurel

Encore Stage & Studio

3701 Lorcom Lane, Arlington, VA | Show times vary

Encore Stage & Studio is theatre by kids, for kids. Encore's mission is to inspire kids to develop their creativity, empathy and confidence as they create meaningful connections with peers and enrich their communities. These cold-weather months can make kids feel trapped and gloomy, but theatre is a healthy escape, and with eight fully-staged professional productions a year, Encore is the place to do it. Even if your little one has stage fright, there's a lot they can learn just from watching other kids their age perform. To catch a show, check the Coming Soon/Now Playing tabs online.

encorestageva.org

Shadowland Laser Adventures – Gaithersburg

624 Quince Orchard Road, Gaithersburg | Monday, noon to 6 p.m., Wednesday, noon to 7 p.m., Thursday, noon to 6 p.m., Friday and Saturday, noon to 10 p.m., Sunday, noon to 7 p.m. Explore a multi-level carpeted arena with walkways, alleys, bridges and towers as misty fog fills the air. Upbeat music, colored lights and darting laser beams heighten this one-of-a-kind laser-tag experience. Shadowland Adventures features special powers, spells and viruses spread by "GEMs." Each adventure is different, so the fun is limitless. Shadowland also has locations in Columbia and Springfield/Alexandria. shadowlandadventures.com

National Air and Space Museum

Sixth Street and Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. | Monday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Explore outer space, meet the minds that took humans to the skies and beyond and the tech that made the moon landing possible. Little astronauts, future engineers and curious kids alike can learn to reach for the stars with this educational adventure. Reserve at airandspace.si.edu.



DIY

WF

Parent-and-Me Sock Snowmen

Learn basic sewing for this festive
winter craft

STORY AND PHOTOS BY HEATHER M. ROSS

Making a snowman is a highlight of the winter season, however, in lieu of snow, rice will do. Here's how you and your child can make a friendly seasonal decoration or holiday gift for grandparents in seven simple steps.

STEP 1: The base

Start out by opening your white tube sock and pouring in two-thirds of a cup of rice. Gently shake the sock until you have the rice at the bottom. Then, pinch the sock above the rice and twist the upper portion slightly to hold the ball shape in place. Use a rubber band around the bottom of the twisted portion of the sock.

Tip: This is a great time to teach your child about measuring!

STEP 2: The middle

While we used rice for the bottom portion, you'll want to use cotton for the middle and top. This is so your snowman will be bottom-heavy and less likely to tip over. Stuff this middle section with cotton until it is only slightly less plump than the bottom portion. Repeat the rubber band process.

Tip: Using thin rubber bands will make it easier to hide them between segments.

STEP 3: The top

Repeat Step 2 for the third and final segment of your snowman's body. Fold the leftover sock over the top rubber band to form the hat.

STEP 4: The eyes

Using the needle and thread, attach two black buttons on the top segment for eyes. For a basic hand-sewing tutorial, visit thesprucecrafts.com/learn-stitches-and-hand-sewing-projects-2978472.

Tip: If you cannot attach the buttons by sewing, superglue will also work, but strong adhesives should only be used by adults.

STEP 5: The torso

Attach three buttons to the abdomen of your snowman in a vertical line. Try to line up the buttons to be directly between where the eyes on the top portion are attached.

Tip: If you're having trouble keeping the buttons in a straight line, you can use a ruler and lightly dot along the edge with a permanent marker. Then, use the dotted line as a guide for securing your buttons.

STEP 6: The scarf

Cut an inch-wide strip of felt fabric to be one foot long. Feather the ends with your scissors. Then, fold the strip in half so both ends of the fabric are touching. Wrap the strip around the "neck" of your snowman and pull the feathered ends through the loop formed by folding. Pull gently until the scarf is snug and completely covering the joint where the top and middle segments meet.

STEP 7: The hat

You already formed the base of the hat by folding over the top portion of the sock. Take some time to adjust it so that the eyes are properly exposed. Secure the hat in place with the white thread. If you have remaining buttons, you can use them to decorate the brim of the hat for added cuteness!

Congratulations! You now have your snowman. Place him on the mantle, the counter or table to show off your teamwork and creativity! ■



What you'll need:

- White tube socks
- Buttons
- Sewing needle
- White thread
- Felt fabric
- Scissors
- Measuring cup
- Rice
- Cotton
- Rubber bands





WHY START NOW?

BY FAYGIE HOLT



CAMP GRAPHIC: PHOTOCO;
CAMPER: FATCAMERA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS;
ABOVE: COURTESY OF CLUB SCIKIDZ MD



CHOOSING A CAMP >>>

“SLEEPAWAY CAMP
IS THE BEST. IT TEACHES
KIDS TO BE THEIR BEST
SELF, TO GROW
INDEPENDENTLY,
TO BE PART OF A
COMMUNITY AND
EXPLORE THEIR
IDENTITY IN WAYS
THAT ARE DEEP AND
MEANINGFUL AND
MAKE FRIENDS
FOR LIFE.”

—JAMIE SIMON

It may not be the first thing that comes to mind as the snow begins to pile up in the Mid-Atlantic, but winter may be the best time to lock in a summer camp program for your child.

While there is “no wrong time to look for a camp,” according to the American Camp Association (ACA), open enrollment for many camps starts in January, so it’s a good idea to have your preferred camp options narrowed down before then.

“Some camps fill quickly, so there may be waitlists,” notes an ACA spokesperson. And the enrollment period is earlier than ever. Some camps even began registering kids at the end of last summer.

At Club SciKidz MD, a science and technology camp which has several locales throughout Maryland including in Baltimore and Anne Arundel County, registration began right after Thanksgiving on Small Business Saturday. And, according to co-owner Andrea Gible, “We had the biggest opening week ever. While there are still plenty of spots available, a few camps are sold out already— in Howard County we are almost 50% full!”

Last year, following two years of COVID-19 pandemic precautions, parents eager for their children to have fun registered them for camps as early as possible. That meant some longtime campers were shut out of their summer home for lack of space.

That’s what happened to the Lisa family of Broomall, Pennsylvania last summer.

“We’ve been going for years to one camp, and I didn’t usually register my kids until February or March,” Stephanie Lisa

explains. “Then, last year, the camp was fully booked in December. It didn’t matter if you were a returning camper. I was very upset about it, but they couldn’t add any bunks or more kids.”

Although Lisa ended up finding a much different camp that year that her boys loved, to avoid being put in the same position again, she is already on the hunt for the right camp experience this summer for her sons Steven, 10, and Elliott, 8.

She’s also weighing the all-important question: Are they ready for sleepaway camp?

“I’ve toured four sleepaway camps, did research on two more and then the same thing with two day camps,” Lisa says. “It’s almost like interviewing for a private school or a college. You need to make sure the atmosphere, the personality of the people working there and the program itself offer what your kids need and like.”

“Sleepaway camp is the best,” says Jamie Simon, senior advisor of camps and talent at the national JCC Association. “It teaches kids to be their best self, to grow independently, to be part of a community and explore their identity in ways that are deep and meaningful and make friends for life.”

Simon, also the CEO of Camp Tawonga in California, suggests parents use sleepovers to test if their kids are ready for a sleepaway camp.

If your kids have never slept away from home and can’t get to sleep without you being there, it’s probably not the year to try overnight camp, says Simon, who consults with camps across the East Coast. “But if they go on sleepovers, and they like sleeping away from home, that’s a sign they might be ready.”

Rachel Steinberg, of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania, who serves as manager of new family engagement and community at Camp Harlam, also in Pennsylvania, says when looking for a camp, it’s important to consider your goals for your child’s summer experience.

“There are hundreds of amazing camp options to consider, so it’s important to hone in on the things that are important to you and them. That could be things like values, the facility, program offerings, inclusion, etc.,” she says. “There are traditional camps that offer diverse programmatic experiences and specialty camps that offer kids more depth in their experience around a particular interest area like sports or arts.”



Catoctin Quaker Camp, based in Thurmont, Maryland, makes it easier for families torn between day camps and sleepaway opportunities. Though kids still stay at camp base for a week, the program combines camp days with activities including games, arts and crafts and swimming and two-day overnight excursions where kids bring their own bedding, food and gear.

Some families might also factor in the experience level a camp program has into their decisions. Catoctin Quaker Camp just reached its 100th summer in 2022. Another Thurmont camp—Camp Airy, a Jewish camp for boys—will reach its 100th anniversary in 2024.

“There are big camps and small camps, religious camps, outdoor-adventure camps, etc.,” Steinburg says. “Ultimately, I would encourage families to find a camp that they think will be the best for their child and their family; a place where they believe their child will be set up for success.”

Gibble, who co-owns Club SciKidz MD with Matt Bogusz, agrees that parents need to take each child into account, as what works for one may not work for all.

“Think about what situations and environments your child is successful in. If they do better with a schedule and set activities, a traditional day camp with lots of unstructured free time probably isn’t the best fit,” she explains. “If your child loves being rough and tumble and being outdoors and can always ‘find something to do,’ an outdoor camp that offers sports, swimming and good ol’ day camp fun may be the right fit.”

“CAMP, IS NOT
SOMETHING TO DO TO
KEEP KIDS BUSY FOR
THE SUMMER; IT’S A
SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENT
IN HELPING YOUR
CHILD GROW.”

—STEPHANIE LISA





**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
SUMMER CAMPS IN GENERAL
AND FIND A CAMP FOR YOUR
CHILD,** the American Camp

Association maintains a list of camps on its website, [ACAcamps.org](https://www.acacamps.org). There, parents can also learn about the ACA accreditation process for summer camps.

“Also, some camps are repetitive in activities from week to week, so if they’ll be attending multiple weeks, you may want to find a camp that offers more variety,” she adds.

Finding the right environment is just one of the keys for summer camp success, says Robyn Shrater Seeman, of Rockville, Maryland, whose kids range from ages 7 to 17.

“We have four kids, so one challenge is coordinating schedules — between camp schedules and family plans like traveling or seeing relatives, and between camp and school schedules,” she says. “Another is finding camps that meet with each kid’s interests, and then seeing what will fit our budget.”

This year, her two oldest will be working at area camps, while the two youngest enjoy local day camps.

Overall, Shrater Seeman continues, “We look for a camp that is warm and inclusive. Whether it’s a general camp or a specialty camp like theater or baseball, a warm and inclusive atmosphere is

really important to making it a positive experience.”

Before making a final decision, parents should also find out if their camp of choice has received accreditation from the ACA, which would indicate it has strict operational measures in place in areas like health, safety and risk-management. Camp officials advise parents to “interview” the camp director, talk to parents whose children are already in the program and make sure they are comfortable with what they are learning from these discussions.

Lisa says she’s narrowed down her choices—one sleepaway camp and one day camp, depending on which route she and her husband, Steve, feel is best—and will be making a decision shortly. But she knows it’s not a decision she could have made lightly.

“Camp, is not something to do to keep kids busy for the summer,” she says. “It’s a significant investment in helping your child grow.” ■

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Beyond Bug Repellent

BY HEATHER M. ROSS

ESSENTIALS FOR OVERNIGHT CAMP

EVERY YEAR, the highlights of camp season are different. A new friend made, a new hobby discovered or perhaps a new favorite food. But the hard part of dropping your kids off is always the same. The worry, the rush and, inevitably, the forgotten items.



We spoke to local camp directors to find out what kids need most at sleepaway camp. Here's what you can expect your child will need for those longer stays, including a checklist to make packing a little less worrying.

Liz Heilbrunner, the director of Camp Horizons in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley; Grant Larsen, the director of Camp Wabanna in Edgewater, Maryland; and Lisa Handelman, the director of Capital Camps in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, share what kids forget the most when packing for camp below.



BEDDING AND GEAR

Bug bites aren't always the first thing to come to mind when packing for summer camp, but with many summer camps having activities near or on the water, or surrounded by nature, maybe they should be. Kids should be sure to pack bug spray and sunscreen to keep their skin safe and healthy so they can focus on having fun.

When it comes to clothing, don't bring any outfit that can't be replaced. At camp, kids are active, kids get dirty and sometimes clothing items can get misplaced.

Kids should also bring at least two towels. This is because, if they swim multiple days in a row, their towel may not have had time to dry yet. Another good reason to bring a second towel is because kids may swim in natural bodies of water as well as in a pool.

"Pillows are the No. 1 thing kids forget to bring," Heilbrunner says.

Kids also frequently forget to bring a backpack, toothbrushes and toothpaste. But, according to Heilbrunner, the item she relied on most back when she was a camper was a small folding seat she could use to keep herself up off the grass and stay a lot more comfortable.

With all the running around, climbing, jumping and other activities at camp, it's also easy to get dehydrated. Kids should always bring a reusable water bottle to camp to stay comfortable and safe.

Above all, it's important to remember that unique camps have unique activities, and parents should always check with the camp about specific gear their child may need. According to Larsen, kids signing up and going to Camp Wabanna have often-times forgotten or not known to bring fishing gear.

COMFORT ITEMS

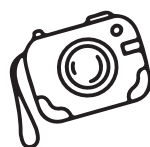
"Know that camp is an adventure, and it has ups and downs. It's possible to be homesick AND have a great time," Handelman says.

It's very common for children, especially younger children, to experience some homesickness. This doesn't mean they won't have a great time, but there are things you can pack to ease them into this new experience.

Pack a comfortable sweatshirt, a stuffed animal, a picture from home and some paper for them to write letters about their experiences. Even if they don't mail the letters, it can be comforting to write like they're talking to their loved one.

DAILY FUN

At camp, most of your child's time will be filled with making friends, staying active, learning and experiencing new things. But, at every camp, there's also downtime to consider. For the moments between the madness, kids should pack a book to read, a journal to keep track of their experiences and other non-electronic pastimes. ■



✓ Don't forget! (* THESE ITEMS ARE AMONG THE MOST FORGOTTEN)

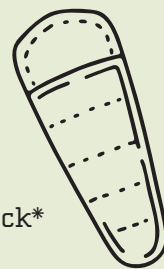
- ☐ Bedding [pillows included!]
- ☐ Clothes to get dirty
- ☐ Bathing suits
- ☐ Towels



- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Toothpaste*



- ☐ Toothbrush*
- ☐ Book
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ [Optional] Backpack*





2023 Camp Directory

With each new milestone that our children reach comes the need for information to guide them (and us) through this stage. This is particularly true when our children are old enough to attend summer camp. How do we know which camp is right for them? In an education-centered community like ours, there can be a lot of options — where do we even get started? Right here, actually, with these listings. Read about these camps, what they offer and the ages they serve. Then visit their websites to learn more. On our website, *WashingtonFAMILY.com*, you can find even more listings to help you in your search. Be sure to check back on our website and in our magazine in upcoming months for more stories and helpful tips. Good luck! Here's to a great summer.

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bcwsdirector@burgundyfarm.org
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Harrisonburg, VA 22802

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kirchenwald@lutherancamping.org
717-964-3121
1 Cut Off Road, Lebanon, PA 17402
 Summer location: Lebanon County, PA
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camptalltimbers.com
info@camptalltimbers.com
301-874-0111
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Rockville, MD 20852 (administrative office)

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imaginationstage.org/camps/

summer-camps

registration@imaginationstage.org

301-280-1660

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INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Ages: 3-12

ismw.org; info@ismw.org

301-365-5888

10450 Auto Park Ave., Bethesda, MD 20817

Drama, music

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manormontessori.com/summer-camp

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11200 Old Georgetown Road

Rockville, MD 20852

5450 Massachusetts Ave.

Bethesda, MD 20816

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gosilverstars.com

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301-352-5777

14201 Woodcliff Court, Bowie, MD 20720

Gymnastics

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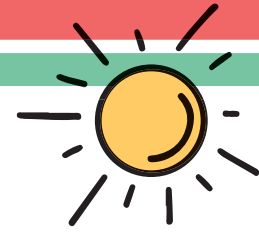
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Annandale, VA 22003
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Girls only, teens, educational activities

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congocamp.org
info@congocamp.org
703-533-0931
School Affiliation:
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3229 Sleepy Hollow Road
Falls Church, VA 22042
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Riding, Swimming

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703-938-7301; 204-F Mill St., NE
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mgta@gmu.edu
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educational activities

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Activities

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restonmontessori.com
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ctrbalarts@aol.com
703-273-5344
3955 Pender Drive, Suite 105
Fairfax, VA 22030
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mcl-summer@basisindependent.com
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Activities, Martial Arts, Music, Photography,
Sports, Sports - Extreme

*Editor's note: Information provided
for these camps is subject to change
after this issue goes to press.
Please contact the camps directly
to confirm details and related
COVID-19 protocols in effect at
these camps.*

*Look for more information about
summer camps and camp programs
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Great New Year's Resolutions for Kids

Healthy goals kids can set in 2023 – and how parents can help

BY JENNIFER MARINO WALTERS

It's a new year, and that means a new opportunity for families to make positive changes in their lives. And that doesn't only apply to the grown-ups. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), New Year's resolutions can be a great way for kids to focus on forming new, healthier habits.

"As a mom of three, I know how important it is to set healthy goals with kids, and to be realistic about those goals," says Lanre Falusi, MD, FAAP, a Washington, D.C.-based pediatrician. "Kids also love having something to work toward, [like] keeping track [of their progress] on sticker charts."

Now that it's January, sit down as a family to discuss what resolutions each person would like to make in the new year. If you need inspiration, here are some ideas for kids' New Year's resolutions, suggested by the AAP, local experts and parents.

❁ I WILL SPEND LESS TIME ON SCREENS ❁

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, kids ages 8-18 get an average of 7 hours and 30 minutes of screen time each day for entertainment. Not only does that decrease their physical activity, but it cuts into valuable time they can spend bonding with others.

To help kids—and the entire family—cut down on screen time, designate blocks of time when all devices must be turned off or placed in a bin. This can be while you're having dinner, enjoying a game night or going on a family walk.

"Kids are growing up in a world where they have technology constantly pulling at their attention," says Rachel Noble, a licensed professional counselor in Washington, D.C. "If they don't put guardrails on screen time, they don't ever quite connect with the people that are right in front of them."

❁ I WILL SPEND MORE TIME WITH MY FAMILY ❁

The Takash family in Arnold, Maryland always makes New Year's resolutions that focus on togetherness.

"We have crazy schedules, but we've committed to eating dinner together at least once a week," says mom Andrea.

Sara Reimers, a Hanover, Maryland mother who created the app Kid Friendly Maryland,



encourages families to get out and have adventures together—even if the chores are piling up or you're feeling lazy. Whether it's visiting a local museum, checking out a new playground or any other fun activity, you'll be creating priceless family memories that will last a lifetime—and the laundry (and your pillow) will still be waiting for you when you get back.

"There are so many great adventures in store for you and your kids, but you have to be willing to walk out the front door first," Reimers says. "I challenge you to just go for it, and in the process be amazed at how wonderful the world looks through the eyes of your children."

☀️ I WILL EAT MORE COLORS ☀️

And no, that doesn't mean feasting on Skittles and cotton candy. It means eating fruits and vegetables in a variety of colors—what nutritionists call "eating the rainbow." Fruits and veggies get their colors from chemicals called phytonutrients, which also provide antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits. The goal is to eat one to two servings of each color per day.

"I have a handout I give my own kids and clients to track their color intake," says Elizabeth Owens, a certified nutrition specialist in Burke, Virginia. "My son loves checking off the circles for each color."

☀️ I WILL TAKE CARE OF MY TEETH ☀️

Kids should resolve to brush their teeth twice

a day, preferably in the morning after breakfast and at night before bed. While parents should help younger children brush, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry says most kids are ready to brush independently by age 7 or 8.

"Use a timer or play a song lasting about two minutes, and divide those minutes equally among all the areas of the mouth," says Dr. Srotalina Khanna, a dentist at Bethesda Family Smiles in Maryland. "For younger kids, try using fun toothpaste flavors or toothbrushes with characters that appeal to them."

Parents should also start flossing kids' teeth as soon as they have two or more teeth that are too close together for a toothbrush to clean between. And kids can cut down on sugary snacks and drinks that cause tooth decay.

☀️ I WILL GET MORE EXERCISE ☀️

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends kids ages 6 to 17 get 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day. This will help them maintain a healthy weight and blood pressure, decrease their risk of diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, boost their confidence and mood and strengthen their muscles, bones, joints and heart.

Kids who play sports could easily meet this 60-minute daily goal, but those who don't may need an extra push. Encourage your kids to move more by making it fun and doing

it together. Go for a family walk, bike ride or swim. Play catch in the backyard or shoot some hoops in the driveway. Set up a scavenger hunt or obstacle course. Or, turn up the music and have a living-room dance party.

☀️ I WILL FOCUS MORE ON THE GOOD AND LESS ON THE BAD ☀️

Being a kid isn't always easy. There are friend problems, school struggles and sports tryouts gone bad. And just like adults, kids can easily get caught up in what's going wrong.

Instead, kids can choose to focus on the good parts of their lives. One way they can do this is to practice mindfulness.

"Mindfulness is learning to control your thoughts instead of letting them control you," says Noble.

Parents can help kids be more mindful by teaching them to take deep breaths and think about things that make them happy. You can also give kids something to do that will take their mind off whatever is bothering them, such as coloring.

"When a person gets immersed in a project, we call that a 'flow state,'" says Noble. "They're so focused on this thing in front of them that everything else just melts away."

No matter what New Year's resolutions your family makes this year, we wish you a healthy and happy 2023! ■



Out of
[theCoderSchool's]
first round of kid
coders a few years
ago, 13 went on to
get scholarships to
computer science and
cybersecurity programs
around the country.

Coding: A Good Career Path for Autistic Children?

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

For parents of autistic children, “learn to code” is not a snarky rejoinder to the absence of computer skills. It’s a legitimate suggestion for a career path.

Many children who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) struggle to find employment once they come of age, according to experts, who estimate most American adults with autism cannot find work. Now, hundreds of thousands of teenagers with autism are maturing into adulthood, and 10-15% of the population now either has ADHD or autism. Yet, in recent years, coding has developed into a large-scale option for this community in search of both employment and a place in society. Tech companies have grown to like the attention to detail and commitment to repetition that often goes hand-in-hand with autism, among other qualities.

And for area parents in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. who are interested in coding as a career for their child, there are options for getting started down that path.

Chad Hamel opened a local branch of national nonprofit theCoderSchool in Ashburn, Virginia three years ago. Today, the school is helping almost 300 kids learn to code. And Shelly McLaughlin, program director for Pathfinders for Autism in Hunt Valley, Maryland (the largest autism research center in the state, which also helps families who are looking for a specialist or other help for children with ASD), notes how big of a help coding has been for her own son.

“It’s not a token job. It’s an actual job,” McLaughlin says of coding. “A lot of individuals with autism can become very focused on something.”

Hamel and his wife opened theCoderSchool because they saw that the activity could make a difference for their son, Cooper. Cooper had hydrocephalus, an abnormal buildup of fluid in the brain, as a baby

and needed surgery at 3 months old. He had some delays as a kid, Hamel says, but learned to code in elementary school. His parents immediately noticed a difference in his self-esteem.

Now 8 years old, Cooper loves coding, and his father describes him as “happy and sweet” and “a whole different kid than he was when he started kindergarten.”

So for their students at theCoderSchool, the Hamels take a similar approach as to what they did with Cooper. Students receive one-to-one or two-to-one training and are able to tailor programs to their interests. Some kids design their own analytic programs, while others are more into art, Hamel says. The computer becomes an intermediary between kids, who may be uncertain of their social skills, and coaches. But as time goes on, they all work together.

“They have their coaches and they enjoy that time. It’s a safe environment,” he says.

Out of the school’s first round of kid coders a few years ago, 13 of them went on to get scholarships to computer science and cybersecurity programs around the country. One student—who had never coded before the program—earned a place in a cybersecurity program at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

“They’ll come to us and do a free trial, and we determine what their skill level is. Some kids have never coded before. Some have at other schools,” Hamel says. “We talk through what their goals are.”

When McLaughlin’s son Hunter, who has autism, was little, he would dump sets of LEGO onto the table, examine the pieces and find the one he needed, according to his mother. Then, he would build a 4,000-piece object, like the Death Star from “Star Wars.” “And he would go to the next step looking in the book, and it was like the piece he needed just levitated,” she says. It was that ability to focus, McLaughlin



Classes at the CoderSchool can help kids unlock untapped potential and find their niche. In addition to Ashburn, the CoderSchool has another location in McLean, Virginia.

explains, that made Hunter a natural fit for coding, too.

The Pathfinders program director has noticed the same quality in autistic employees she has encountered at her center. One of them is “low-verbal,” the director says, meaning he rarely engages in verbal communication. But he does data entry, and he does it faster than a normal employee. McLaughlin says no one else can keep up with him.

An institution like the CoderSchool can help a child get started, or as McLaughlin explains, you can let your child lead the way.

Hunter taught himself to code by finding classes and activities online, she says. Once a child taps into their interest, it may make sense to seek out a program in the community, McLaughlin adds. Hunter later attended a summer tech camp at a local community college.

Data entry, like coding, is predictable.

It operates according to a routine. Other humans are unpredictable, especially in their use of non-verbal language, according to McLaughlin. While the director says she does not recommend the coding path for all autistic children, she agrees it is a great opportunity for many of them at the moment.

“There’s a lot of interest in hiring individuals with autism,” says Trish Kane, deputy director of Pathfinders. ■



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Tips for Selecting a Pediatrician

BY CHERYL MAGUIRE

Being pregnant with a new baby is exciting and a little scary. Before your baby is born, you may feel overwhelmed with information and decisions that you need to make regarding their care. Figuring out who will be your child's doctor is one of the most important decisions you need to make as a parent.

As a mom of three kids, I remember this process well. Before my twins were born, I met with a pediatrician and had a list of questions. A lot of people in my community used this doctor, and he answered all of my questions, but I didn't really like his personality.

"When choosing a pediatrician, it's important to trust your instinct," says Dr. Ruby Dey, a pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente practicing in Columbia Gateway.

I overlooked this "red flag," ignoring my instincts, and I decided to use him anyway. About six months later, my kids had two different issues that he didn't address, so I switched doctors. Fortunately, my kids are all fine and thriving, but hopefully you won't have to switch doctors like I did.

Here are some tips to help you find a doctor who is a good fit for you and your family.

Ask for Recommendations

If you are a new mom in a new community like I was, it may be difficult to find recommendations. Asking local mom groups who they use for a doctor is a great place to start your search. You can ask your own primary care doctor and OB-GYN for their suggestions, too.

"Ask around at your prenatal group, any nurses you know, people at your house of worship or clubs," suggests Dr. Virginia Keane, an attending physician and the director of the Complex Primary Care Program at Mt. Washington Pediatric Hospital in Baltimore.

She explains that people

love to talk about their pediatricians and will usually steer you in the right direction for who to interview. Your insurance company or the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) website, which lists pediatricians by locale, are other great sources.

Location

Hopefully, your child will not need to visit the doctor often, but when your child is sick or hurt, you don't want to have to travel a long distance.

One time, my son was having trouble breathing because he had pneumonia. My doctor's office was only five minutes away, and the physicians told me to bring him in immediately and they gave him a cortisone shot. He was breathing better within minutes, and I was grateful the practice was close to our house.

Doulas of Northern Virginia suggests considering the following questions in its "Guide to Choosing a Pediatrician."

"If your baby's doctor is not available, can they see other doctors in the practice? How can you contact your child's doctor after hours or in an emergency? How soon are phone calls and electronic messages returned? Is there a nurse line?"

Experience

This is a tough one because I've dealt with experienced doctors that were so rigid that they misdiagnosed an issue. I've also seen new doctors that made mistakes because of their inexperience. But Dr. Dey says that being new to the field might not matter.

"Keep in mind that if a pediatrician doesn't have much experience, they can consult with their more experienced peers if needed," she says. "At Kaiser Permanente, our pediatricians are part of a large multispecialty practice with access to hundreds



DR. VIRGINIA KEANE

"When choosing a pediatrician, it's important to trust your instinct."

—DR. RUBY DEY

of experienced pediatricians and specialists."

You might not be concerned about the length of time they have been practicing, but you can make sure they are board-certified as a pediatrician by The American Board of Pediatrics.

Interview Questions

Make sure to interview at least three different doctors to get a broad range of options. While you are there, you should pay attention to the waiting room, office and patients. Is it clean? Are there a lot of people waiting? Here are some questions you could ask:

Why did you decide to be a pediatrician?

What hours do you work?

Am I able to see you the same day for a sick visit?

What if I need to see a specialist? How is that handled?

What hospitals are you affiliated with?

What if I disagree with your diagnosis? How would you respond?

What is your philosophy about vaccines, breastfeeding, antibiotics, counseling, discipline and medications?

What are the practice's policies towards vaccination? What is the availability of sick visit appointments? How are the after-hours calls handled? Answering service, nurse call line?

What are the cancellation and no-show policies?

"Some pediatricians offer group meet-and-greets while others set up individual

meetings or phone calls with expecting parents. While these aren't meant to be interrogations or medical consultations, a good doctor will be willing and happy to answer your questions during this initial introduction," notes Doulas of Northern Virginia's guide.

Above all, don't compromise on care, and remember that you can always switch providers.

"A good pediatric practice will function as a medical home, providing care that is comprehensive, patient-centered, coordinated, easy to access and committed to quality and safety," says Dr. Keane. ■

Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter. Her writing has been published in The New York Times, National Geographic, The Washington Post, Parents Magazine, AARP, Healthline, Your Teen Magazine and many other publications. She is a professional member of ASJA. You can find her on Twitter @CherylMaguireos

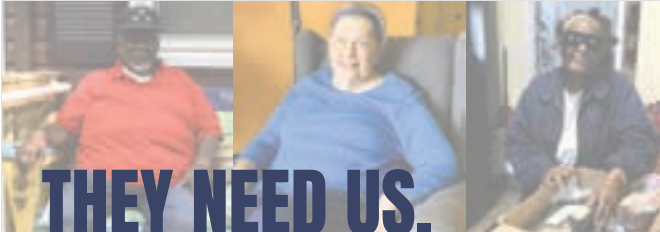


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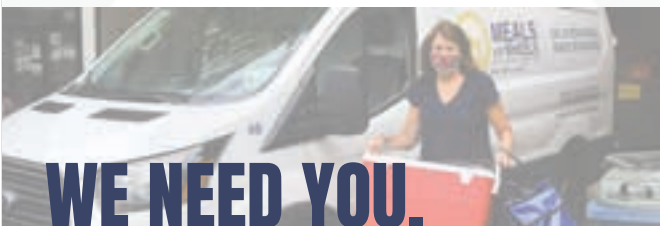
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The Renauld family, left to right: Nathan, Laura, Henry and Andy at Altitude Trampoline Park in Leesburg, Virginia

Laura Renauld

BY SASHA ROGELBERG

Before she authored children's books "Porcupine's Pie," "Bear's Bicycle" and "Squirrel's Sweater," among others, Laura Renauld, 44, was a third grade teacher at Wampus Elementary School in Armonk, New York and a field trip educator at the Strong National Museum of Play in Rochester, New York.

The Leesburg, Virginia resident believes that books are "soul food" and incorporates her love of literature and years as a teacher into the parenting of her two children, Henry, 13, and Nathan, 12.

"I tried to bring these teaching practices to my parenting with lots of read-alouds, trips to the library and free play time, especially outside," she says. "I made a conscious decision not to over-schedule my kids, while also encouraging them to try new things and exposing them to varied experiences."

When she's not instilling the values of reading to her kids, she's working on her Woodland Friends Series, published by Beaming Books,

which uses woodland creatures to tell stories of perseverance, adapting to change and the meaning of friendship.

What do you love about parenting?

One of the great joys of being a parent is watching your children work toward a goal, then seeing the pride of accomplishment on their faces when they succeed. This was true as my boys took their first steps, and it is true today when they perform in a band concert or make it onto [the] base for the first time in a little league game. As a parent, I try my best to nurture, encourage, comfort and cheer as my kids go through the whole process of learning, growing, failing and achieving.

What's one thing you hope your kids learn from you and your career?

Perseverance. I was writing for almost 10 years before I got my first book deal. That's

more rejections than I can count! In that time, I wrote many stories, honed my craft, found a supportive critique group and learned about the business of publishing. And I'm not done yet! Nos still pile up a lot quicker than the yeses. I hope my kids pursue their passions, tune out the naysayers and never stop learning!

What's been your biggest parenting fail?

This is probably not the biggest, but the one that comes to mind right away involves trick-or-treating. When my youngest was 3 or 4, he had a plush horse and rider costume where his legs were two of the horse legs. The hooves covered his feet, so I forgot to put his shoes on once he was in costume. The poor kid went trick-or-treating on a drizzly night with just socks on his feet! We laugh about it now, but that Halloween could have had a very different ending if he had stepped on something sharp.

How has being a teacher informed your parenting style? What are some skills from teaching that can be transferred to parenting, and what are some skills that can't be transferred?

The importance of reading to your child cannot be understated. Studies have shown that children have better educational outcomes if they are read to every day. Hands-on and play-based learning are also critical for a child's development as they build an understanding of the world and how to interact with the people in it.

How have your children been influenced by storytelling? What stories have they come up with on their own?

I've been reading to my kids since they were babies. It's like they were steeped in story elements. Combine that with a child's natural propensity to engage in imaginary play, and their own stories were born. Whether it was telling tales while building elaborate train layouts, officiating stuffed animal weddings or collaborating with friends to build an elaborate imaginary world, I've been so pleased to have a front-row seat to my boys' stories. As I like to tell students during author visits, if you use your imagination, you are already a storyteller. ■

Family Favorites

Family meal:

Spaghetti and meatballs, plus garlic bread, is a family favorite. Apple slices can be found on the dinner table most days of the week.

Family activities:

We are a musical family. Mom and Dad sing and the boys each play more than one instrument. Henry plays trombone in band, took guitar and tenor sax lessons and is currently teaching himself alto sax. Nathan takes private violin lessons, plays French horn in school and sings for his part in the school musical.

Vacation spots:

We spend a lot of time in Vermont and Connecticut

visiting family. We also like Disney World and a quiet farm getaway at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Favorite books:

When I asked the boys what their favorite family read-aloud was, "The Penderwicks" five-book series by Jeanne Birdsall got the most enthusiastic shout-out. But there are so many great books! Other series we have loved: "Endling" by Katherine Applegate, "Mice of the Round Table" by Julie Leung and "Land of Stories" by Chris Colfer. A couple of picture books that we read again and again when they were little are "10 Minutes Till Bedtime" by Peggy Rathmann and "If I Built a House" by Chris Van Dusen.

Listen.
Parents

Speak.
Boys



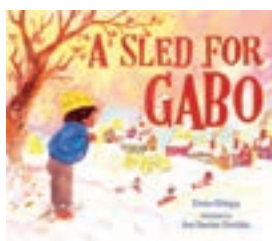
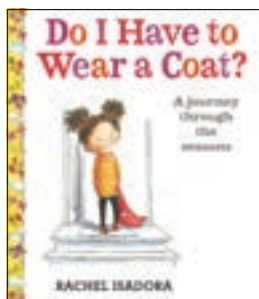
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Warm Up with Winter Reading

12 Tales of Seasonal Joys and Reflection

BY TORA BURNS, DC PUBLIC LIBRARY

While winter days can be shorter, the joy of reading can last a long time. These books are intended to help encourage little ones to find the joy in winter and help more experienced readers find the stories that will keep them turning pages on long winter nights.

BIRTH TO AGE 5

"Do I Have to Wear a Coat?"

by Rachel Isadora

Rachel Isadora's charming vignettes capture the four seasons with details that young children will love. Isadora highlights winter's outdoor fun, including ice skating and fun in the snow in a style reminiscent of her books "My Dog Laughs" and "I Hear a Pickle." Readers will love the answers and activities celebrated in "Do I Have to Wear a Coat?"

"Sweetest Kulu"

by Celina Kalluk and Alexandria Neonakis

Kulu is an Inuktitut term of endearment given to babies and young children. Written by acclaimed Inuit throat singer Celina Kalluk, "Sweetest Kulu" is a bedtime poem that describes the gifts given to a newborn baby by the Arctic animals. Told by a mother, "Sweetest Kulu" is infused with the traditional Inuit values of love and respect for the land and animals.

"The Tea Party in the Woods"

by Akiko Miyakoshi

Kikko's father forgot the pie he was supposed to take to her grandmother. When she tries to catch him by following her father's footprints in the snow, she finds a large house she has never seen before. Kikko looks in the window and sees a small lamb wearing a coat who asks, "Are you

here for the tea party?" Award-winning author and illustrator Akiko Miyakoshi's "The Tea Party in the Woods" is a beautiful original fairy-tale picture book with twists that will engage and entertain.

AGES 5-8

"A Sled for Gabo"

by Emma Otheguy and Ana Ramirez Gonzalez

Gabo wants to go sledding, but his socks are cotton, his hat is too small and he has no sled. Thankfully, Gabo has help. His mom fixes his clothes. Then, as he hunts for a sled, neighbors, relatives and new friends show Gabo what he can do with the things he has. Emma Otheguy's "A Sled for Gabo" snowbound story features unforgettable characters who naturally shift between English and Spanish and helps kids develop an appreciation for their support circle and possessions.

"Ten Ways to Hear Snow"

by Cathy Camper and Kenard Pak

Lina wakes up to silence on a snowy winter morning. As she walks to her grandmother's house to help make warak enab, she observes the snowmen and other things that may go unnoticed in her winter neighborhood. In "Ten Ways to Hear Snow," Cathy Camper shows children a basic understanding of mindfulness and empathy.



"Brave Irene"

by William Steig

Irene Bobbin's mother, a dressmaker named Mrs. Bobbin, isn't feeling well enough to deliver the gown the duchess plans to wear that evening. So, Irene volunteers to do it for her. But with a mighty snowstorm brewing, Irene has her work cut out for her. "Brave Irene" sends readers on a wonderful adventure as she saves the day.

AGES 9-12

"The Magic in Changing Your Stars"

by Leah Henderson

Ailey Benjamin Lane is a gifted dancer. He knows he will be the Scarecrow in his school's production of "The Wiz." But after his classmate did better than him at auditions, Ailey tells his Grampa that he is giving up dancing. His Grampa tries to keep him from giving by telling him how he gave up his dreams of tap dancing even after the unofficial Mayor of Harlem, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, gave him a special pair of tap shoes. Ailey tries on the shoes and is instantly transported back to Harlem in the 1930s. He meets the 12-year-old version of his Grampa. Ailey wants to help his young Grampa face his fears. But what happens if the past is changed? Will he ever make his way home? "The Magic in Changing Your Stars" time-travel adventure shows the importance of believing in yourself.

"Tidesong"

by Wendy Xu

Sophie is a young witch whose magic could use some improvement. Her mother and grandmother want her to attend the Royal Magic Academy—the best magic school—and send Sophie to relatives she's never met. These relatives don't teach Sophie magic, and her frustration gets the better of her. Sophie attempts magic on her own, and the spell mixes her magic with the magic of a water dragon named Lir. Lir is skilled at magic but is trapped on land and has no memories of home. Sophie might ace her entrance exams with Lir's help, but that means stopping him from regaining his memories. Can she prove herself with his help?

"Winterfrost"

by Michelle Houts

Bettina is in charge of the house, the farm and baby Pia when her parents have to leave. With Christmas around the corner, Bettina doesn't set out the traditional bowl of Christmas rice pudding for the nisse. Bettina doesn't believe nisse are real, so what harm would come from forgetting? But nisse are real, and baby Pia disappears. To find her sister and make things right, Bettina travels to the miniature world of these mischievous folk.

AGES 13-19

"Elatsoe"

by Darcy Little Badger

Elatsoe is an Apache teen living in an alternate version of America. The magic and knowledge of Indigenous and immigrant groups shape it. Elatsoe can raise the spirits of dead animals and speak with other spirits. When her cousin dies, his ghost tells her that he was murdered. As Elatsoe tracks down the killers with help from her family, her best friend Jay, and the memory of her great, great, great, great, great great grandmother, the town's dark past presents a bigger mystery to unravel. Will the secretive townsfolk and a mysterious Doctor stop her from finding the truth?

"Black Was the Ink"

by Michelle Coles

Malcolm Williams hasn't been okay for a while. He's angry and feels like nothing good ever happens to teens like him in D.C. With violence in his neighborhood increasing, his mother sends him to his father's family farm in Mississippi. Malcolm is not happy. When his great-aunt tells him that the State is acquiring the farm to widen a highway, he doesn't care. But then, one day, he nods off while drawing in the attic and wakes up looking through the eyes of his ancestor Cedric Johnson in 1866. As Cedric, Malcolm meets Hiram Revels, Robert Smalls, and Black leaders who made American history during the Reconstruction era. Even after witnessing their bravery, Malcolm is not convinced. He knows that the gains these statesmen made were almost immediately stripped away. So why should he try now? Can Cedric's experiences help him construct a better future? Or will he resign himself to resentment and defeat?

"Year of The Reaper"

by Makiia Lucier

Lord Cassia was an engineer's apprentice on a mission entrusted by the king. But an ambush by enemy soldiers leaves him in jail for three years. When he returns home after the war ends, he finds that the royal court and their enemies have taken refuge in his castle. An assassin targets those closest to the queen, and Lord Cassia joins the search for a killer. He bonds with a talented young historian named Lena and discovers that the motive for the attacks is more important than the assassin's identity. As they look through the past, they find a secret that could send the kingdom back into war. ■



Becoming a ParentPreneur

BY JAMIE RATNER

I am a wife, mother of two, entrepreneur and founder and CEO of CertifiKID. If I could go back in time and tell the younger me that someday I would be a CEO, I probably wouldn't believe it. Being an entrepreneur is probably one of the most difficult professions to have. Because it's not just a job. It's a way of life and a personality that takes years of learning and experience to develop into something that could satisfy your soul and (hopefully) turn a profit.

My story of becoming a "ParentPreneur" begins with my early love for deals. I remember as a young kid in Rockville using the Entertainment Coupon Book religiously to help decide what activities my family and I would do that day and where we would go for meals. My sister and I were obsessed with a book called *Free Stuff for Kids* where we would write to places to get a free pencil or sticker.

When the Groupon phenomenon appeared, I was an early and avid follower, but with two kids under age 2, I wasn't looking for deals to spas and restaurants. This led to my "aha" moment as I thought how great it would be if there was a deal website geared to what parents wanted and needed. Those moments of realization, or epiphany, come once in a blue moon. My advice: Don't brush them off; they could turn into something incredible.

This moment led me to create CertifiKID and acquire Macaroni KID just 10 years later. Now, the two companies combined are one of the largest parent-focused digital media and advertising companies in the United States, reaching millions of families nationwide.

When my husband Brian and I started CertifiKID in 2010, I had no business background but held a deep desire to start and create something of my own. So, I just broke down each piece of the puzzle and



went for it, Googling what I did not know and creating Facebook and Instagram pages as social media platforms to build a community. We implemented a "Community" feature on our Facebook page so that people could easily find their local CertifiKID Facebook group. This let us share specific deals located in their area, which allowed us to foster the relationships we've built with the parents and the local businesses there. Between CertifiKID and Macaroni KID, there are more than 1,000 Facebook pages throughout the U.S. With persistence, we were profitable after just one month of selling deals.

With the help of Brian and a fantastic team of, primarily, moms, we've expanded

our business nationally, ran thousands of deals and sold millions of vouchers. We went on "Shark Tank" in 2019 and secured a deal with Kevin O'Leary (aka "Mr. Wonderful"), our first external investment and one of his biggest investments in 10 seasons on the show. It was an unforgettable moment I did not believe was possible for someone like me.

Twelve years and millions of dollars later, my husband and I have written and published a book called "ParentPreneurs: A Decade of Deals From a Messy Minivan." It tells our rollercoaster story from each of our unique perspectives of starting and growing our business and mixing business, marriage and parenting at every stage. It includes tips to help parents, who — like us — might want to take the leap to start a business together.

Below are a few tips we've learned along the way that we hope will inspire others who are following their own "aha" moments:

- Don't let bad personal timing get in the way of a great idea.
- Think of the glass as half full when you start, and then half empty when you succeed.
- Hire people who are passionate about your business.

• When you plateau (and you will), look in the mirror, make no excuses, work harder and have no fear of mixing things up.

• In business and in life, don't let negative events just happen TO you; you must own them so you can find your way THROUGH them. ■

Jamie Ratner is the CEO and founder of CertifiKID and was named one of Greater Washington's top women business leaders by Washington SmartCEO. A soccer mom and entrepreneur (aka "ParentPreneur"), she's a leading expert in the daily deal, parent and digital media space. She lives in Potomac, Maryland with her husband, son and daughter.



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