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Special Series



Calendar of
Events



Family Matters
Family Fun



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Let's Hear It for the Dads

In a recent study conducted by The Ohio State University, researchers found that highly educated men from dual-earning couples who were more stereotypically masculine — competitive, adventurous and dominant, etc. — displayed more positive parenting behaviors than men with fewer “old-fashioned” traits. The catch: They also had to believe that dads should be highly involved with their kids.

“These men are combining traditional aspects of masculinity with new nurturing ideals to create new fathering identities. They may be in the midst of transforming fatherhood,” says Sarah Schoppe-Sullivan, psychology professor and lead author of the study.

You know who else is transforming fatherhood? Stay-at-home dads. In this issue, Mid-Atlantic Media staff writer Eleanor Linafelt explores the challenges unique to SAHDs, as they often refer to themselves, who struggle to find a social network of like-minded dads and have to steel themselves for possible judgement from those wondering why they don't have a “real” job.

As we go to press, nearly 38% of the total U.S. population has been vaccinated, and with mask mandates being

lifted across the county, many of us are eager to dine indoors and start traveling again. But is it really safe to do those things if our young kids haven't been inoculated yet? Contributor Sophie Panzer asks what parents everywhere want to know: What are our options?

Here's something I'm planning to do with my boys this summer: grab a sweet treat at all 10 D.C.-area ice cream shops listed in our Family Fun story. We'll also be visiting our neighborhood pool. Speaking of swimming, our Parent You Should Know this month is Tom Dolan, a two-time Olympic champion, whose eponymous swim schools in Northern Virginia were recently acquired by Big Blue Swim School. Dolan wants to teach kids how to be safer swimmers and to help them build important life skills along the way. He's also happy to let his students wear his Olympic medals, in case you're wondering.

Stay safe, and happy Father's Day to all the different kinds of dads out there. ■

PJ Feinstein



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{TOP 10}

*Family Activities in June
Around the DMV*

BY KATIE BEECHER

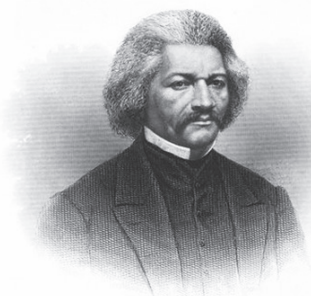
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JUNE 6

**WORLD HERITAGE
FESTIVAL**

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eventbrite.com



3

ONGOING

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Reserve free timed-entry passes online.
americanhistory.si.edu

4

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nationalharbor.com



5

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butlersorchard.com.

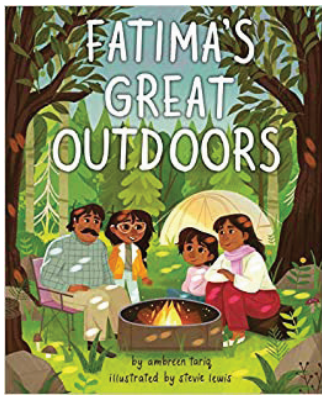
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ONGOING

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JUNE 15

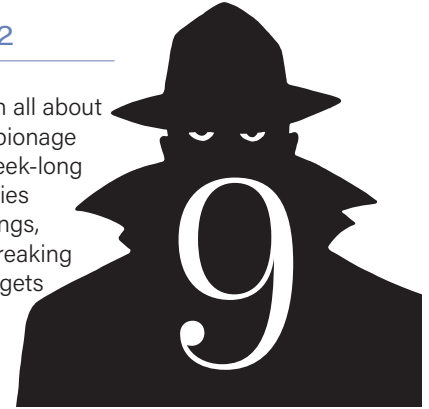
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'FATIMA'S GREAT OUTDOORS'**

Ambreen Tariq, founder of @BrownPeopleCamping, talks about her debut picture book, "Fatima's Great Outdoors," and her goal of getting more people of color to hike and camp.
politics-prose.com

JUNE 28 – JULY 2

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spymuseum.org



JUNE 25 & 26

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bbqindc.com

10



JUNE 27

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A Conversation with Tom Dolan

The two-time Olympic gold medalist has been teaching local kids how to swim for nearly a decade

BY PJ FEINSTEIN



Tom Dolan recalls a conversation with a parent of one of his young students shortly after opening his first Tom Dolan Swim School in Northern Virginia. The 5-year-old had just gotten comfortable putting his face in the water, and his father wanted Dolan's help mapping out strategies to ensure his son would get into college on a swimming scholarship.

"He probably didn't want my answer," says Dolan, who suggested that the dad give it some time "I'm really big into having kids try a lot of different activities and seeing what strikes their little personalities and passions."

Dolan, 45, isn't in the business of creating the next Tom Dolan — a swimming superstar who set two world records and won two gold medals and one silver in the Olympics.

Instead, his goal since 2012 has been to teach kids to be safer swimmers and to help them build important life skills along the way. He doesn't even have aspirations for his own kids — Hannah, 7; Nora, 6; Fitz, 4; and Connor, 3 — to become competitive swimmers.

"What I hope is that they find something that they truly love, and that their passion for it runs as deep as my passion was, and will always be, for swimming," Dolan says. "Whether that's playing an instrument or playing chess or finding it in a sport — that comes without any judgment from me whatsoever."

The father of four and his wife, Maryellen, live in Falls Church, about two miles from where he grew up in Arlington. He keeps his Olympic medals at home, much to the delight of his children, who will randomly ask to see them.

"I'll always say to them, 'Guys, you can always look at them. Because it's not about the metals. It's about the stories that Daddy shares with you about what I did to get to this point to be lucky enough to have these, and that's what you need to learn,'" says Dolan.

In March, Dolan sold his eponymous swim school, with locations in Dulles and Falls Church, to Big Blue Swim School. He'll stay on as president of mid-Atlantic operations, a transition that will allow him to continue sharing his passion for swimming with the community.

Washington FAMILY spoke to the busy dad and entrepreneur about the highs and lows of parenthood.

What is your favorite part of the day?

The morning — although I'm not a morning person, thanks to years of swimming way too early in the morning. I drive my kids to school each morning. It's a special time and a great way to start the day. We have routines we follow, like calling out restaurants or places we pass on our drive. The kids also love to sing songs on our way. I love hearing

their stories and sharing fun messages and thoughts to set up the day.

What's the most challenging time of the day?

The transition at night from work to daddy time and bedtime. I think all parents can relate to this. It's not easy to compartmentalize those tough workdays when I walk into the house, switch to playtime with daddy and help get four kids ready for bed. I want to be as present as possible for those bedtime conversations with my kids.

What do you love doing with your kids?

I love playing with them! We love soccer, baseball, tag and whatever game we can think of in our backyard. My kids share my wife's and my competitive spirit, so they love any race or game against me.

What do you do that embarrasses your kids?

Since my kids are still young, I have not reached the point of embarrassing them. I know it's coming soon, though! I'm sure I will be a significant source of embarrassment for them, just like all parents.

What are you looking forward to this summer?

Swimming! My kids love swimming in our summer pool, and we love going to Bethany Beach to swim in the ocean. This summer, in particular, we are looking forward to traveling for the first time in over a year.

What do you want for Father's Day?

I coach my son's t-ball team. What a Father's Day gift it would be if my team of 4- to -6-year-olds actually listened to me! Even if just for one game or practice. Other than that dream, just some nice weather so I can go on a hike or play in the backyard with my kids. ■

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BY ELENA EPSTEIN,
DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL
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Explore words about places kids love with this bilingual learning book. Go to the beach, the farm, the park and more in any season and discover words in English and Spanish about things to bring and surprises to find. \$17.99, ages 18 months+, store.leapfrog.com





FAMILY **FUN**

ICE CREAM

for Everyone in the

DMV

BY ELEANOR LINA FELT

Ice cream used to only be a treat for the D.C.-area elite. In 1784, George Washington splurged on a “cream machine for ice” and made sure Mount Vernon’s kitchen was stocked with 10 ice cream pots. These days, thankfully, ice cream is widely available all over the DMV — and for a much cheaper price than what Washington paid. In fact, there are so many ice cream shops across D.C., Maryland and Northern Virginia that it was hard to narrow down a list.

These 10 are particularly well-loved spots, with a far-ranging variety of both unusual and classic flavors, many of which are handmade with local ingredients.

Ice Cream Jubilee

Ice Cream Jubilee is all about the flavors. Even its “classic” options are unusual: Thai iced tea, banana bourbon caramel and honey lemon lavender are all often on the menu. Each of its three locations also offers a rotating selection of seasonal flavors. **301 Water St. SE, Washington, D.C.; 1407 T St. NW, Washington, D.C.; 4238 Wilson Blvd. #143, Arlington, Va. icecreamjubilee.com**

Mount Desert Island Ice Cream

Thoughtfully made by hand with ingredients from sustainable local suppliers, the ice cream at Mount Desert Island is remarkably creamy and flavorful. The fruits, herbs and vanilla pods they use are fresh and real – no artificial flavoring here – and you taste it. **3110 Mount Pleasant St. NW, Washington, D.C. mdiic.com**

Thomas Sweet Ice Cream

This well-loved old-fashioned Georgetown ice cream shop has a long list of flavors and toppings. If you order one of their signature blend-ins, they’ll mix up to three toppings of your choosing into your ice cream. Thomas Sweet also offers frozen yogurt, chocolates and fudge for those with an extra sweet tooth. **3214 P St. NW, Washington, D.C. thomassweet.com**

Moorenko’s Ice Cream

Susan Soorenko founded Moorenko’s in 2002 to provide pure, tasty ice cream to her children. After studying with ice cream experts in New York and a gelato maker in Italy, she created the creamy and rich ice cream available at this Silver Spring spot (and in grocery stores across the area) that your children can now enjoy, too. **8030 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, Md. moorenkos.com**

York Castle Tropical Ice Cream

This Rockville store boasts unique Caribbean ice cream flavors, including guava, lychee and soursop, in addition to classics like vanilla, chocolate and butter pecan. York Castle Tropical Ice Cream is a local favorite with offerings that you can’t find just anywhere else. **827 Hungerford Dr., Rockville, Md.**

Sarah’s Handmade Ice Cream

Started by a Bethesda mother-daughter team, Sarah’s Handmade Ice Cream uses primarily local ingredients for their small-batch, all-natural recipes. What’s even sweeter is that Sarah’s is committed to serving the community;

throughout the pandemic, they donated hundreds of ice cream scoops to local hardworking healthcare workers. **10219 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda, Md.; 5241 River Road, Bethesda, Md. sarahshandmadeicecream.com**

Great Falls Creamery

A perfect stop after a day hiking with the kids at the nearby Great Falls Park or Scott’s Run Nature Preserve, Great Falls Creamery is a family-friendly shop with low prices and friendly service. While the main attraction is the ice cream, the creamery also sells local treats, including baked goods, maple syrup and other dairy products. **766 Walker Road, Great Falls, Va.**

Lil City Creamery

Opened in 2015, this Falls Church shop is big enough for an ice cream freezer and an extensive collection of retro character toys — and that’s about it. Enjoy your cup, cone, milkshake or cookie sandwich, made from ice cream sourced from Woodside Farm Creamery in Delaware, at nearby Mr Brown’s Park. **114 W. Broad St., Falls Church, Va. lilcitycreamery.com**

Pop’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream

These recipes date back to the 1940s, when Ray “Pop” Giovanni served his ice cream to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt at the White House. This old-fashioned Alexandria shop continues his legacy, offering specialty sundaes and a long list of flavors. **109 King St., Alexandria, Va. popsoldfashionedicecream.com**

The Creamery

The oldest ice cream shop in downtown Alexandria, operating for over 30 years, The Creamery makes their ice cream and frozen custard daily with quality local ingredients. They offer southern regional flavors, including orange chocolate chip, lemon custard and banana pudding. **110 King St., Alexandria, Va. creameryalexandria.com** ■



IT'S A VERY REAL JOB

BY ELEANOR LINA FELT



THE UPS AND DOWNS OF BEING A STAY-AT-HOME DAD

Zane Sebasovich initially decided to stay home with his two children to save money on daycare, but quickly grew to appreciate being a primary caregiver.

"I'm making a lot more value in return than I would if I was working my tail off to pay for somebody else to do something that is my superpower," he says. "I'm not just watching the kids, I'm teaching them to play games, I'm working through their tantrums and I'm working on myself and how I deal with the stresses of the moment."

But even though Sebasovich takes pride in caring for his children, he still gets asked when he plans to get a "real job."

The national percentage of dads who stay at home with their children has nearly doubled over the past 30 years and an increasing number of them say it's because they want to be more involved with their kids. However, as the total number of SAHDs, a common acronym, is still relatively low, fathers who are primary caregivers often feel isolated. While SAHDs tend to be satisfied with their decision to be more involved in their children's lives, there is a stigma for men who choose to stay home with their children rather than return to the workforce, as well as for men who ask for help in dealing with their sense of loneliness. Even so, they try to overcome these challenges by connecting with other dads through organized groups, conferences and social media.

"I'm just trying to be seen," Sebasovich says, which he adds is hard to admit as someone who has significant privilege as a white cisgender man. "There's a shame for even having the fear of not being seen."

A common challenge for SAHDs is the lack of a parenting support network.

"Taking care of children can be pretty lonely and

it's stressful at times," Jay Fagan, a professor of social work at Temple University and co-director of the Fatherhood Research Practice Network, says. "A lot of women have peers with children who they can socialize with, and that's not so easy for men to do."

What's worse, SAHDs often feel uncomfortable

The national percentage
of dads who stay at home
with their children has
nearly doubled over
the past 30 years.

looking for support from other fathers. "People seem to think guys don't need that type of thing or that only moms should flock together," agrees Tito Bryson, a SAHD. "It comes off as less masculine, but [socializing with other SAHDs is] great for mental health and increasing your general happiness."

Bryson describes the bond he has created while staying at home with his two daughters as "one of the most fulfilling things I've done in my life," but he finds it hard to connect with other parents. "When I take the girls to the park you primarily see other women as caregivers," he says. "It's not that the moms do anything in particular to make me feel

As area schools resume on site in the fall, where will that leave your child in the classroom?

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excluded; I believe it's more of a subconscious thing for people."

Some SAHDs do manage to form groups with other fathers who are primary caregivers. Before moving to Pennsylvania, Alexander Mustico, a father to three who has been a SAHD for eight-and-a-half years, joined a local dad group in Virginia.

"I immediately found it an extremely useful resource of both veteran dads who could show me the way, as well as fellow new dads who were experiencing the same new challenges that I was," he says.

However, when he moved, Mustico found that the local group of SAHDs was much less active than his previous one, due to what he, like Bryson, believes were gendered reasons. "Men in general are not good at expressing their feelings and because of that, getting them to show up to a dad group and then keep showing up is impossible. I think it is just the nature of men and machismo," he says.

Eventually, Mustico found the support that he wanted again through attending HomeDadCon, an annual convention hosted by the National At-Home Dad Network, an organization that provides advocacy and support for fathers who are primary caregivers. "HomeDadCon brings SAHDs together from across the country for professional development and networking," Mustico says. "It was at that convention that I truly felt I had 'met my tribe' and entered the 'brotherhood of fatherhood.'"

Despite dealing with stigma and isolation, SAHDs tend to ultimately find significant value in being highly involved in their children's lives.

"The research has tended to show a fairly high level of satisfaction that stay at home fathers have in caring for their children," Fagan says. "They don't particularly perceive themselves as being un-masculine, or they've redefined what it means to be a man and what it means to be masculine. They see caregiving as something that is acceptable."

Sebasovich recognizes the challenges of being a SAHD, but treasures the special moments he is able to have with his kids. Recently, when Sebasovich was going through a rough patch with his children, he took a step back and realized that parenting is "kind of like Christmas lights."

"There will be this unexpected beautiful moment that lasts for just a second and then a long, green, twisted, not-so-pretty cord that attaches to the next moment," he says. "It's those little moments that make the long parts so worth it."

And, he adds, "It's a very real job." ■

BUILDING YOUR PRENATAL CARE TEAM

Here's what to know about the different types of prenatal care providers

BY JENNIFER MARINO WALTERS



You're pregnant — yay! Before you begin all the fun stuff like decorating the nursery and picking out baby clothes, you'll need to make an important decision: Who will help care for you and your baby during pregnancy and childbirth? Read on to learn about your options, so you can put together a prenatal care team that will best meet your needs and goals.

Obstetrician/Gynecologist (OB/GYN)

More than 90% of women choose an OB/GYN — a physician that specializes in women's reproductive and general health — as their prenatal care practitioner. OB/GYNs oversee prenatal check-ups, ultrasounds and tests. They also take care of non-pregnancy-related female needs, such as pap smears, breast exams and contraception.

OB/GYNs almost always deliver babies in hospitals. They are the best choice for women with high-risk pregnancies — those who are over 35, are underweight or overweight, are carrying multiples, have had a problem with a previous pregnancy, or have a health problem such as diabetes or high blood pressure. OB/GYNs are also trained to perform Caesarean sections (C-sections), which account for more than 31% of U.S. births, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Keep in mind, though, that OB/GYNs are more likely than midwives to use surgical and technological interventions, such as episiotomy (an incision made in the perineum to make more room for the baby) and a vacuum or forceps during delivery. And if you're hoping to labor without drugs or an epidural, an OB/GYN may not be right for you.

Family Physician

A family physician can serve as your primary care provider, your OB/GYN and the baby's pediatrician, thereby meeting all of your family's medical needs. But family physicians typically don't perform C-sections, so if complications occur, you'll need to switch to an OB/GYN.


Midwife

A midwife is not a doctor, but a trained health-care professional who cares for women during pregnancy, labor and delivery, and post birth.

"Midwives are trained to support the natural process of birth in a way that is holistic and family-centered ... while providing the least amount of intervention necessary," says Paige Barocca, a midwife with Moonstone Midwifery in Maryland.

That makes midwives a great choice for women who want to avoid an epidural or labor-inducing drugs (though midwives can prescribe these if the woman changes her mind). Midwives are also more likely than doctors to offer breastfeeding and lactation support.

While midwives often perform hospital births, many also deliver babies at birthing



CREATING A BIRTH PLAN

A birth plan will help you communicate your birth preferences to your medical team. Here are some of the main things to include:

- LOCATION:** Where do you want to give birth? Most women give birth at a hospital, but hospitals differ in the types of birthing rooms they offer and the protocols they follow. Home births offer women with low-risk pregnancies much more comfort, but you won't have the amenities of a hospital if something goes wrong. Birthing centers feel more relaxed than hospitals but offer some of the same medical amenities.
- PAIN MANAGEMENT:** Do you want to try to give birth without an epidural or pain medications?
- INDUCTION:** Do you want to be induced if your labor is going slowly, or would you rather have more time to let things progress naturally?
- ATMOSPHERE:** Do you want to play music? Would you like a certain type of lighting? Do you want to use a birthing ball or have the freedom to move around during labor?
- TYPE OF DELIVERY:** Would you like to try for a water birth? If you've had a C-section before, do you want to try for a vaginal birth after Caesarean (VBAC), or would you rather schedule another C-section? If you opt for a C-section, do you want to see the baby coming out?

A doula can help you come up with any other items to include in your birth plan. Just remember that these are simply guidelines, not requirements, and that they may need to change based on how your labor goes and whether any complications arise. ■

centers or, like Barocca, in women's homes. Many health insurance plans cover midwife deliveries at a hospital, but not at a birthing center or home. However, birthing centers and midwives are typically less expensive than hospitals and physicians.

Karissa Harris of Burke, Virginia, used midwives to deliver her third baby at a hospital via water birth.

"Even though she was my biggest baby by almost a pound, her birth did not result in any tearing like my first two did," Harris says. "I attribute that in part to the midwives and their willingness to let me listen to my body."

There are three main types of midwives:

- A certified nurse-midwife (CNM) is a registered nurse with a graduate degree in midwifery. CNMs are certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) to perform births in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

- A certified midwife (CM) has a graduate degree in midwifery and is certified by the AMCB.

- A certified professional midwife (CPM) is educated via a midwifery school, apprenticeship or other professional courses before being certified by the North American Registry of Midwives. CPMs typically perform home or birthing center births and cannot prescribe most medications.

Midwives cannot perform C-sections, so you may be transferred to an OB/GYN if there's an emergency.

Doula

A doula is a trained pregnancy and labor companion who provides emotional and physical support to the mother and her family and helps to ensure that a woman has the birth experience she wants. A doula will generally meet with a family at least once during the

pregnancy to get to know them and to discuss their birth plan (see sidebar). The doula can help the woman find a physician or midwife, educate her on childbirth options and help ease her anxieties and concerns.

“Once a family hires me, I am theirs,” says Elizabeth Oldham, owner and CEO of Doulas of Northern Virginia. “We’re walking through this together, and they know that they have somebody they can lean on through the pregnancy.”

During the birth, the doula will employ various techniques to help the mother and her partner (if she has one) relax. This can include massage, aromatherapy, music and more. The doula will also serve as an advocate to help ensure the family’s preferences are followed.

Stacey Trost, a mother of two, hired a doula for the birth of her first daughter. The doula helped Trost move into various positions to ease her pain, guided her through meditations and spoke with the medical team to ensure her wishes were met.

“She was firm on my behalf, and I really appreciated that,” recalls Trost. “I felt so very looked after. I don’t know what I would have done without her.”

Like midwives, doulas are an excellent choice for women who want a natural childbirth with few interventions. Studies have shown that women who use doulas are less likely to have C-sections, epidurals, pain medications and labor-inducing drugs. Doulas can also help reduce the length of labor, improve mother-baby bonding and increase the chance of breastfeeding success.

What all of these prenatal care providers have in common is their desire for you to have a healthy pregnancy and baby.

“We are not just growing babies,” says Barocca, “but growing resilient parents who are taking an active role in their children’s lives from the very beginning.” ■



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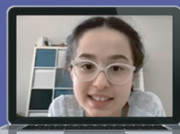
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DIAPERS

demystified

BY ALIZA FRIEDLANDER

When it comes to choosing diapers, you'll find two types of parents: the ones who are committed to cloth diapering and the ones who are determined to use disposable diapers.

How do you decide which type of diaper is best for your baby?

"You need to look at your priorities," says Jocelyn Albertson, a certified birth and postpartum doula, who provides educational classes through The Flourish Fund, a new experiential baby registry. Here, Albertson and other parenting experts share the pros and cons of both cloth and disposable diapers to help you make the right choice for your family.

**WHAT ARE
THE DIFFERENCES
BETWEEN CLOTH AND
DISPOSABLE
BABY DIAPERS, AND
WHICH IS BEST FOR
YOUR BABY?**

Deep Dive into Disposables



WHEN MOST of us think about diapers, disposable ones such as Pampers, Luvs and Huggies are what come to mind. They are more popular than cloth diapers, making up approximately 95% of diaper use, according to The Green Guide.

“The vast majority of U.S. parents choose disposable diapers, at least for some of the time ... especially in the beginning when baby can have a poopy diaper after each feed,” says Sharon Mazel, who co-authored the fourth and fifth editions of “What to Expect When You’re Expecting” and other books in the series.

Disposable diapers allow for quick, easy diaper changes. However, with convenience comes cost. Disposable diapers cost about \$2,500 over the duration of the time babies are in diapers. If you want to use disposable diapers that are more environmentally friendly, such as those made by Honest or Seventh Generation, the cost can be even higher.

Pros

- **Ease of Use:** Since disposable diapers are so common, most people already know how to use them, so there won’t be a learning curve for your babysitter, family members or childcare provider. Plus, the ability to change a diaper and toss it on the fly is key for many parents.
- **Timesaving:** No washing or drying is required with disposable diapers — and less laundry at this stage of baby’s life is a good thing.

Cons

- **Chemicals:** Disposable diapers are typically made with bleach and dyes (the dyes are what makes the cute patterns), although some more natural diapers use less chemicals than others. “You can’t get rid of all chemicals because that’s what keeps the disposable diapers absorbent and prevents them from leaking,” says Albertson.
- **Cost:** You could easily buy and discard several thousand disposable diapers before your child learns to use the toilet. Is it any wonder why the industry enjoys approximately \$30 billion or more in annual revenues?
- **Environment:** Disposable diapers are said to make up about 50% of a family’s waste. Approximately 3.6 tons of disposable diaper waste will end up in landfills, according to a report in the journal *Advances in Technical Nonwovens*.

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Cloth Diaper Characteristics

WHILE DISPOSABLE DIAPERS are more widely used, cloth diapers are making a comeback.

“To succeed with cloth diapering, you must have the information,” says Albertson, who cloth diapered both her daughters. “Like everything, if you don’t have the support you won’t stick with it.”

Prefolds are the most basic form of cloth diapers as well as the most economical—about \$2 each. Folded into an absorbent rectangle, they sit inside a waterproof diaper cover, which you purchase separately. When it’s time for a diaper change, simply swap out the soiled prefold for a clean one and wipe off the diaper cover.

Pocket diapers have a built-in absorbent pocket for removable inserts, and all-in-one diapers, where the absorbent layer is already attached to the waterproof outer layer. Both can only be used once before washing, and they tend to cost a few dollars more than the combined price of a prefold and a diaper cover. Still, they are less expensive than disposable diapers.

While cost is a big benefit, the downside to cloth diapers is the commitment. Cloth diapers require a lot of washing, but you can make the process easier (*see sidebar*).

Pros

- **Earlier Potty Training:** Some people believe that babies who wear cloth diapers potty train earlier because they can feel the wetness.
- **Natural:** Prefolds, inserts or all-in-ones are made from cotton, terry cloth or flannel without any dyes or gels.
- **Reusable:** You can use the same cloth diapers with each of your kids. The upfront cost may be more than disposable, but you can find long-term savings, especially if you plan to have more than one child.

Cons

- **More Diaper Changes:** Since they aren’t made with chemicals, cloth diapers are less absorbent than disposables, so be prepared to change baby’s diaper more often. You’ll also have several more loads of laundry each week, which, besides being time consuming, can result in higher water and electricity bills.
- **The Inconvenience Factor:** Learning how to use cloth diapers requires a little more effort than disposables, and some daycare providers are reluctant to allow them. Also, if you have to change a cloth diaper while you’re out, you’re stuck with it until you get home.

While some parents swear that cloth diapers prevent diaper rash better than disposables, there’s no compelling evidence for this claim, according to the Mayo Clinic.

“Diaper rashes can happen to all babies,” Mazel says. “The best way to prevent diaper rash is to change your baby’s diaper often, and after cleaning your baby’s bottom, let it dry completely. I use the diaper to fan baby’s tush before applying diaper cream or ointment. Otherwise, you’d just be trapping in more moisture, leading to discomfort and a greater chance of rash for your baby.”

Different Choices for Different Parents

IF YOU’RE STILL on the fence, you can

consider another option: hybrid diapers. Pairing reusable cloth diaper covers with a disposable inserts, hybrid diapers are more convenient than cloth diapers and less wasteful than disposable ones. Pampers Pure Protection Hybrid Diapers, for example, produce 25% less landfill waste compared to their Pure Protection disposable diapers, according to the Pampers website.

In the end, deciding on diapers is going to come down to what’s best for your family. Parents should weigh the pros and cons, figure out their priorities and make the choice that works for them. While not everyone will agree on what type of diapers is best, everyone agrees that diaper decisions are an individual choice. ■



HOW TO WASH CLOTH DIAPERS

1. Flush solid waste down the toilet.
2. Presoak heavily soiled cloth diapers in cold water.
3. Wash diapers in hot water with a mild detergent and bleach.
4. Double-rinse diapers in cold water.
5. Skip fabric softener and dryer sheets.

SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC



Diaper Insecurity Amid COVID-19


Diapers are a necessity, but they aren’t affordable for everyone. With the pandemic, diaper insecurity is at a high. According to the National Diaper Bank Network, local banks experienced a 300% increase in diaper demands and other essentials for babies.

“Here in Baltimore, we have seen demand for diapers skyrocket,” says Amina Weiskerger, executive director at ShareBaby, a nonprofit providing basic items to low-income children. “We increased our distribution by 300%, (which) continues to persist as diaper prices remain high.”

Prior to COVID-19, an estimated one in three families faced diaper need, but Weiskerger says that the needs are so much greater as a result of lockdowns, job losses, supply scarcity and illness.



YOU'RE
VACCINATED



Since the COVID-19 vaccine rollout began in December, health experts have touted the shots as a pathway back to normal life.

While it will take months for the United States to reach herd immunity, many fully vaccinated adults are dining indoors, gathering with friends and making plans to travel again.

For parents with children under 16, however, it's more complicated. While most children between the ages of 12 and 15 are now eligible to get the shot, many parents will be hesitant to let their kids get vaccinated before the long-term effects are established. Doubtless those concerns will be even greater for parents of younger children, and the vaccine isn't expected to be approved for the 2-through-11 age group until fall at the earliest. Until the entire family is vaccinated, parents must decide what levels of risk they are willing to take when it comes to making plans.

"The question is, where do we qualify children in terms of risk?" said Dr. Neil Rellosa, a pediatric infectious disease physician at Nemours duPont Pediatrics. "We know that children overall are at a lower risk of developing severe disease, but it doesn't mean they don't get infected."

Most children who are infected have mild or asymptomatic cases. However, Rellosa has treated some young patients who develop multisystem inflammatory syndrome, a serious condition that results in the inflammation of organs and other body parts, which has been linked to COVID-19 infections.

Dr. Aimee Ando, family medicine physician and director of diversity, equity and inclusion at Penn Medicine, said coronavirus cases among children are rising even as the percentage of vaccinated adults increases.

There could be many reasons behind this spike, including schools reopening for in-person learning, the relaxation of social distancing regulations in some areas, the spread of highly contagious variants and better access to testing.

Dr. Susan Coffin, pediatric disease specialist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, said families with

unvaccinated children should continue to exercise caution when socializing with other households. Indoor playdates and large family gatherings are still not recommended.

"Unfortunately, when we're thinking about people gathering who are unvaccinated, the same principles still need to hold in terms of keeping your gathering sizes small, keeping them outside, keep-

ing participants masked and having a more consistent small cohort that you get together with rather than a different playmate every day of the week," said Coffin, who also co-leads CHOP's coronavirus response.

Guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say vaccinated individuals can gather inside sans masks and social distancing with other people who are fully vaccinated. But the CDC also notes that vaccinated individuals can gather indoors with unvaccinated people who are not at increased risk of severe infection from one household at a time. In other words, according to Ando, a family in which all eligible members are vaccinated and the children are unvaccinated can be inside with a similarly vaccinated family — though she recommends keeping these visits limited.

She added that it's important to maintain open and honest communication about safety with friends and family when planning in-person interactions. This includes discussing vaccination status, recent travel and if you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms.

BUT YOUR KIDS AREN'T. NOW WHAT?

BY SOPHIE PANZER

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What about long-awaited visits with grandparents, many of whom have not been able to hug their grandchildren in over a year? Rellosa said that vaccines greatly reduce seniors' risk of infection, and provided that fully vaccinated grandparents seldom attend indoor social events, visits with grandchildren are unlikely to infect children with COVID-19. Rellosa said that when he takes his own children to visit their grandparents they hang out indoors and give hugs — albeit while wearing masks.

As for parents who have been dreaming of returning to the gym or a date night inside a restaurant, they can do so...on a limited basis, according to Ando.

"I think having an occasional date night out is fine, but I wouldn't have it become a regular practice," she said.

And for parents who are wondering whether a summer getaway will be possible this year, Coffin said travel is reasonably safe as long as children take the usual precautions, like consistent mask-wearing and hand-washing. For air travel, Coffin recommended finding direct flights to reduce exposure to the virus. Rellosa agreed

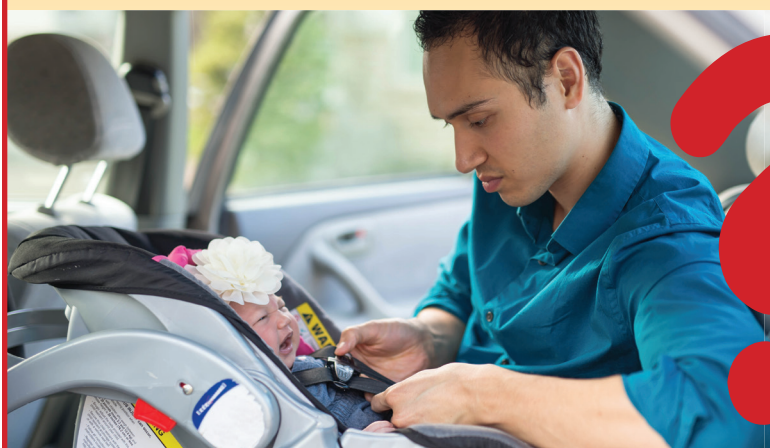
that travel should not be a major source of outbreaks, provided travelers maintain masking and social distancing.

But even though these safety precautions can reduce risk during travel, Ando said she's not planning to fly or take a train with her children any time soon; not only would the kids be required to quarantine before returning to daycare, but any travel makes you more likely to come into contact with residents of states that prematurely loosened restrictions and are experiencing unchecked community spreads. For her family, she said, it's not worth the risk.

Ultimately, the doctors agreed that parents must weigh factors like their children's health conditions, childcare arrangements, community's level of transmission and the behavior of close contacts to determine the level of risk they can tolerate before their children are vaccinated.

Which is to say that, ultimately, you have to decide what you're comfortable with. But unlike last summer, at least you have some options this time around. ■

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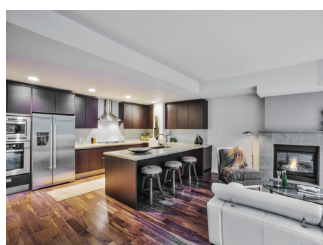
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Debunking Summertime Myths

The truth behind some of the season's biggest misconceptions

BY LAURA BOYCOURT

With summer just around the corner, families are gearing up for some fun in the sun. But before we kick off a season full of beach trips, barbeques and boats, it's time to set the record straight regarding some common summertime safety myths.

If it's cloudy, I can ditch the sunscreen

Dr. Alison Ehrlich, a board-certified dermatologist at FoxHall Dermatology in Washington, DC, says a sunburn is possible even if it's overcast.

"You can still get a sunburn on a cloudy day," she says, noting that water, snow and even certain types of clouds can reflect rays from the sun and amplify its harmful effects.

Ehrlich recommends applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen rated SPF 40 or higher 30 minutes before heading outdoors and re-applying every two to three hours. She also suggests wearing a full-coverage hat, UPF clothing and sunglasses, since eyes can be damaged from sun exposure.

If someone is drowning, they'll be splashing in the water

Bonnie Alcid, CEO of British Swim School Central Maryland, says that while movies may show people thrashing about, calling for help and waving their arms, that's not always what happens when someone is drowning.

In many instances, "it's a silent danger,"

she says. "It happens so quickly, we don't have the opportunity to see or most importantly even hear what's going on."

Lapses in adult supervision — even brief — are particularly dangerous, Alcid says. It only takes about two minutes for a child to become unconscious once they're submerged. What's more, small children can drown in just an inch of water.

"Parents need to be diligent to always have eyes on their kids," she says. "As much confidence as you may have in your child's ability to swim, it's the other factors that one after another will decrease your child's ability to save themselves."

Alcid also warns parents that swim floaties, which don't always keep kids vertical, are not Coast Guard-approved life saving devices and shouldn't be used to teach children how to swim.

Ticks are only a risk in the woods

According to the Center for Disease Control, ticks can be found in your own yard or neighborhood, not just in thick forest. From grassy areas to gardens to your pet's coat, ticks know few bounds.

To prevent tick bites, apply an Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellent like DEET or picaridin before heading outdoors. If you're going hiking or camping, spray your boots, clothing and gear with permethrin in a well-ventilated area, then let it dry.

The CDC also recommends avoiding

wooded areas with high grass and checking your clothing and your body for ticks when you return home.

I can swim, so I don't need a life jacket

Even for confident swimmers, wearing a life jacket is a crucial part of summer water safety, especially if you encounter the unexpected.

According to the BoatUS Foundation, “more than two-thirds of all boating fatalities are drowning incidents and 90% of drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket.”

The National Park Service, which sees countless summertime visitors, stresses that conditions at natural bodies of water are typically quite different from those at the average community pool. Even strong swimmers can be overcome by the water, warns the NPS.

In some places and situations, you may be required by law to wear a life jacket regardless of your age or ability. Check uscgboating.org for your local regulations.

You need to wait 30 minutes after eating to swim

Dr. Amanda Caswell, associate professor and program director of athletic training at George Mason University, says this long-held summertime myth has no legs to stand on — or swim with.

A review by the American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Committee published in the International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education found “no evidence supporting the link between eating before swimming and drowning.”

When it comes to how our bodies work, Caswell says there is no basis for waiting to swim after enjoying a meal.

I only need to hydrate if I'm thirsty

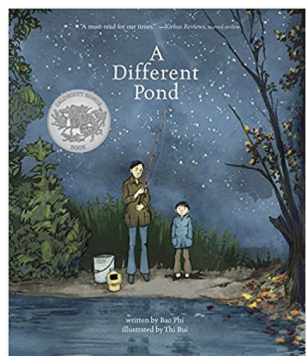
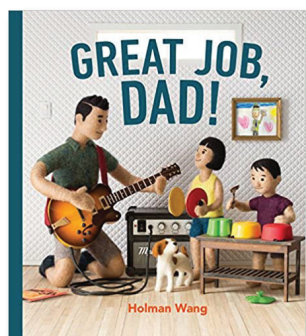
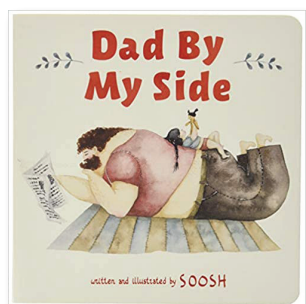
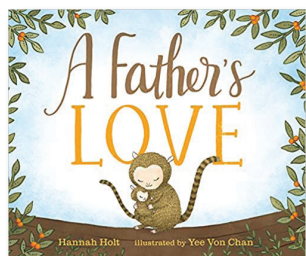
The truth behind this one, Caswell says, is that feeling thirsty means you're already behind when it comes to water intake.

“If you are going to be out in the heat, sun and humidity,” Caswell explains, “hydrate before going out and during activity.”

Furthermore, sports drinks are not the best way to stay hydrated, she says.

“The amount of sports drinks needed to replenish electrolytes after activity is an amount that is not possible for a person to intake in one setting. The best source of hydration before, during and after activity is water combined with a balanced nutritional diet,” Caswell says. ■





We Love Dads!

13 books devoted to fathers
and father-figures

This month on Father's Day we honor dads of all sorts.

BY AMY K. ALAPATI, HEAD OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AT THE DAMASCUS BRANCH OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

PICTURE BOOKS

A FATHER'S LOVE

Written by Hannah Holt, illustrated by Yee Von Chan

Is your father's love bright like the sun? Maybe it has deep roots or soothes your hurts. From emus to seahorses, playful illustrations and rhyming text explore the different ways animal fathers nurture their children, just as human fathers do. Scientific end notes point out traits unique to each of the nine featured animals, making this book interesting for older preschoolers as well as toddlers.

MY PAPI HAS A MOTORCYCLE

Written by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña

There's nothing Daisy Ramona enjoys more than adventuring with her Papi, who spends time with her even after a long day at work. Safely perched atop Papi's motorcycle, they explore their vibrant yet changing community in this jaunty picture book splashed with Spanish. A tribute to the author's old neighborhood, it's also a love-letter to her father. Daisy's joy is amplified by award-winning illustrations that bring her family and their city to life. Just right for ages 3-8.

DAD BY MY SIDE

Written and illustrated by Soosh

You can be so brave and learn so much when your dad is by your side. And sometimes he can learn from you, too. Whimsical watercolors set the mood for a gentle recounting of all the ways a big, burly daddy cares for his tiny daughter, and all the ways she helps and cares for him in return. Young children will find connections to their own lives in the day-to-day activities shared by this sweet pair.

GREAT JOB, DAD!

Written and illustrated by Holman Wang

This dad has a day job, but after work he discovers

that being a father is a combination of many professions. Waiter, chauffeur, judge — even librarian! How many different careers can one dad have? Readers will be fascinated by the needle-felted figures and detailed scale-models that illustrate the book; Wang's description of his creative process might inspire resourceful families to make dioramas of their own.

EARLY ELEMENTARY

A DIFFERENT POND

Written by Bao Phi, illustrated by Thi Bui

In the pre-dawn hours, a boy rises to join his immigrant father on a fishing trip to catch their evening meal. Along the banks they meet others, watch the stars, recall loved ones from a faraway place and time, and relish each other's company. The bond between father and son is tangible, and while the story has somber notes, the evocative illustrations in this Caldecott Honor book create a bright, immersive environment for readers ages 5-8.

INDIAN SHOES

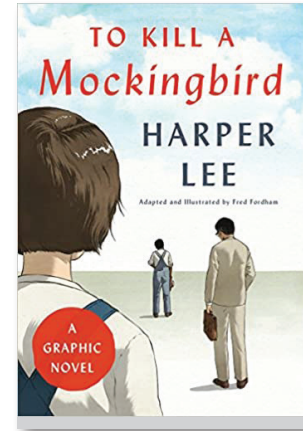
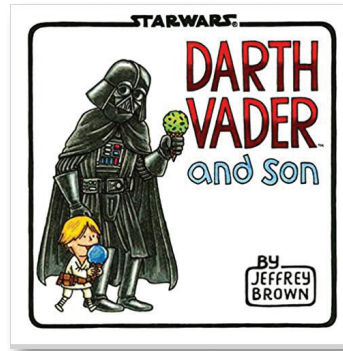
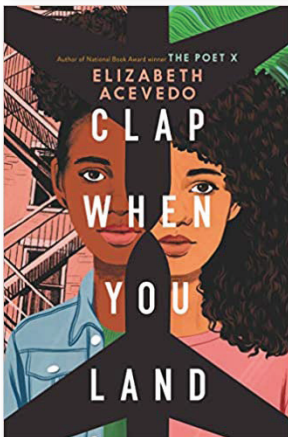
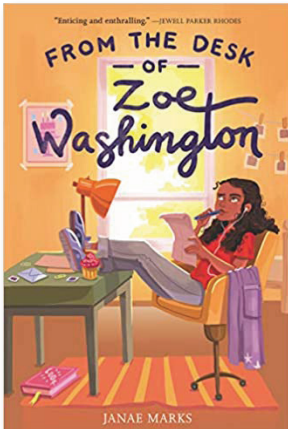
Written by Cynthia Leitich Smith, illustrated by MaryBeth Timothy

Ray, a Cherokee-Seminole boy, trades his favorite neon hightops for a pair of old moccasins to give to Grampa Halfmoon, who is both mother and father to Ray. The worn leather shoes remind Grampa of home, far from the city where they now live. Vignettes of Ray and Grampa's daily activities are interwoven with gentle humor, great compassion for others and a deep love for one another. Exquisitely written, this gem suits grades 1-3 or reluctant older readers.

MY DADDY RULES THE WORLD

Written and illustrated by Hope Anita Smith

A working dad enjoys a game of catch when he



gets home. A dad far from home misses his child. A stay-at-home dad might have the best job of all. Colorful collage illustrations add spirit to this mix of fun and observant poems. Good for independent readers or for reading aloud. Pair with the award-winning "In Daddy's Arms I Am Tall: African Americans Celebrating Fathers," illustrated by Javaka Steptoe.

MIDDLE GRADE THE CROSSOVER

*Written by Kwame Alexander,
illustrated by Dawud Anyabwile*

Identical twins Josh and JB learned their awesome basketball skills from their legendary dad, whom they both love fiercely, but that's where the similarities end. The boys know the best ways to hurt each other, and as their talents grow so does their feud. When confronted with a devastating event, they wonder if their love for their father can bring them together. Based on the Newbery Award-winning novel-in-verse.

FROM THE DESK OF ZOE WASHINGTON

Written by Janae Marks

Zoe has never known her dad; he's been in prison her whole life. So when she gets a letter from him for her 12th birthday, she's surprised that he writes as if they've always been in touch. During their ensuing sort-of-secret correspondence, Zoe learns something shocking and wonders if she is clever and brave enough to stand up for what is right. This realistic fiction for readers in grades 5-7 concludes on an optimistic note.

THE LIST OF THINGS THAT WILL NOT CHANGE

Written by Rebecca Stead

Life is change: some good, some not so good, and some just... different. Bea knows that there are some constants, and she struggles to cope with her insecurities by reminding herself of these anchors: the love of her mom, her dad and her

dad's soon-to-be husband, Jesse. As Bea makes big plans for the wedding, she is most excited about gaining a sister, but the reality is not quite what she anticipated. Told in Bea's authentic voice, this warm family story simply glows.

YOUNG ADULT CLAP WHEN YOU LAND

Written by Elizabeth Acevedo

Camino Rios of the Dominican Republic loves her Papi. Yahaira Rios of New York City loves her Papi. Neither knows the other exists, but when their beloved Papi's plane falls from the sky, they discover they are inextricably bound by his astonishing secret. As the truth unfolds, the sisters must decide how to move forward: alone or together? Mature content makes this novel-in-verse suitable for older teens.

DARTH VADER AND SON VADER'S LITTLE PRINCESS

Written and illustrated by Jeffrey Brown

From small child to rebellious teen, these slices of everyday life show typical kids with their typical dad — who is also a Jedi Knight-turned-Sith Lord. Whether begging for a new toy or the keys to the Imperial Shuttle, Luke and Leia must contend with their dad's Force-ful powers. Brimming with sardonic humor and fractured references to the three original movies, these slim volumes of cartoons will appeal to teen and adult Star Wars fans.

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

*Written by Harper Lee, adapted and
illustrated by Fred Fordham*

Integrity. Love. Wisdom. There is one man in literature who embodies all the qualities we value in a "good" dad: Atticus Finch, father to Scout and Gem. This graphic novel retelling of the 1960 classic will attract reluctant readers and presents a fresh take for those who have already embraced the original. Addressing disturbing topics such as racism and injustice in the 1930s Deep South, this is recommended for mature teen readers. ■

Tying One On

By Anita Brienza

I was seven, knees tucked up into my nightgown, leaning against the headboard of my parents' unmade bed. I would drift into their room some mornings while my father got ready for work. He was handsome and tidy; his thick black hair tamed with Brylcreem, Old Spice floating with every step, shiny black wingtips laced up tight. The tie went on last, and I asked my question before he looped it around his collar.

"It's easy," he said. That morning, I learned the four-in-hand method, and for the next week, I tried it on all my mother's scarves, helpfully hanging them from the hooks in her closet.

In the '70s, during my "Annie Hall" phase, I used Dad's lesson again on thrift-store ties. I pulled the wide end down long on the right with the shorter skinny end on the left. Wide over skinny side – twice – then wide end through the loop and tighten the knot. So easy.

Whole decades went by when there were no ties that needed my expert touch — until I did some volunteer work with an organization that raises people out of challenging circumstances.

The clothes, furniture and housewares they collected and distributed were in pristine condition. When they were helping to furnish a client's home, they pulled entire rooms of furniture together that were aesthetically pleasing. They took the same approach with clothing, which was displayed as if in an upscale department store.

My first assignment was to help a group of men with forthcoming job interviews select the right outfits. They were cheerful and polite — recently released from prison, excited about new clothes and the possibility of employment.

"Is it hard to tie a tie?"

One of my clients was Darius, only 19. He had sad eyes and close-cropped hair, and I stood nearby as he chose a navy suit and two pastel shirts. When he walked over to the tie rack, he paused uncertainly, looking but not touching. I joined him, pulled two prints that went well with his choices and said, "Why don't you try on all of the pieces together and see how they look?"

"I've never had a suit before." He hesitated and, almost in a whisper, said, "I don't know how to tie a tie."

"Oh!" I said. "Watch this!" I slipped the ties around my neck, showed him how to loop and loop again, slip the wide end through and knot them. Then I loosened them and handed them over.

Darius walked into the dressing room. I heard him kick off his sneakers and the rustle of jeans being exchanged for softer fabric. He tried both shirts and ties on with the suit, coming out each time to show me. His transformation was a happy shock to us both.

"You look good, Darius," I said. "Really sharp." He smiled and nodded at me, one quick modest dip of the chin, then into the dressing room to change clothes in reverse. He came out with his suit, shirts and ties on hangers. One tie could be slipped over his head and tightened, but the other was undone.

I thought of my father, and how he would smile when I told him that his quick lesson one morning before he left for work reached a young man years later who needed it, too.

"I'm gonna keep one like this," Darius said, running his hand over the shirt with its still-knotted tie. Then he pointed to the shirt with the loose tie. "And I'll practice on that one." ■



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A close-up photograph of a dog's face, likely a Weimaraner, with brown and white fur and striking light-colored eyes. The dog is looking slightly to the left.

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