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MARCH 2020

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SMART**

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Adelaide Clauss by Procopio Photo



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READERS' RESPONSES

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

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

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Shen Yun is based in New York, not China, and is in no way affected by the coronavirus situation.

Mar. 10-11

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Single Page Design



Calendar of Events



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PJ Feinstein
Managing Editor
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The Art of Creativity

It's been a really, really long time since I was an elementary school student, but I can still remember two pieces of artwork I made in art class. One was a drawing of a city street using one-point perspective. The other was a vase of flowers done in pointillism.

I may not have used perspective drawing or pointillism in any of my post-elementary school endeavors, but what I learned in art class has stuck with me all these years. And I'm not talking about technique; I basically have zero artistic ability. Instead, art helped me hone important skills like critical thinking, problem solving and perseverance that I needed in order to succeed in the classroom—and beyond.

March is Youth Art Month, and we're celebrating the visual arts in a variety of ways throughout this issue. First, we're exploring the benefits of arts education in school and sharing tips on how to store and display all of the masterpieces your kids bring home. We're also excited to showcase your children's artwork within our art story. Thanks to all of the parents who took the time to

share with us their kid's creativity. (Next month, we want to see photos of your young athletes, so get your cameras clicking!)

Also in this issue: Teaching your children how to properly wash their hands (it's still flu season, after all) and promoting positive body image in girls and boys. Amy L. Freeman writes about the challenges of having a twice-exceptional child and Jennifer Marino Walters weighs the pros and cons of language immersion programs. Plus, we meet Suann Song, a mother of two who founded the local stationery company Appointed.

We'll be sharing more children's artwork on our social media channels throughout the month, so keep sending us photos of your kids' colorful creations. I can't wait to see what your little artists have dreamed up! ■

PJ Feinstein

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SUNDAY 1

KIDS

Fairy Tale Campfire

Celebrate National Fairy Tale Week by making magic wands and listening to classic fairy tales while roasting marshmallows over a campfire. Ages 3-10.

1 p.m. at Locus Grove Nature Center, Bethesda, MD. \$7. montgomeryparks.org

FAMILY

Happy Hour

Meditate and snuggle with a fluffie of bunnies! Post-practice cider and apple juice included. Bring your own yoga mat.

10:30 a.m. at Lost Boy Cider, Alexandria, VA. \$30. bethawolfe.com

MONDAY 2

MOMS

After Maternity Leave

Returning to work soon and not sure how to be a mother with a career? This online seminar will help you get into the right mindset

and figure out solutions to stressful logistics. Through March 27.
7 p.m. at Birth Club, Alexandria, VA. \$199. thebirthclub.com

KIDS

Early Literacy Play Date

Babies and toddlers will play with early literacy toys while caregivers learn how to inspire a love of reading. Ages 3 and under.

10 a.m. at Mt. Pleasant Library, Washington, DC. FREE. dclibrary.org

TUESDAY 3

KIDS

Bilingual Storytime

Preschoolers will practice language skills through stories, songs and rhymes in English and French.

6:30 p.m. at Silver Spring Library, Silver Spring, MD. FREE. mcpl.libnet.info

FAMILY

Strong Start Playgroup

Learn about developmental intervention programs as your little one enjoys songs, sensory experiences, motor activities and stories. Registration is encouraged. Ages 2 and under.

11 a.m. at Bellevue Library, Washington, DC. FREE. dclibrary.org

FAMILY

'Bandstand'

Directed and choreographed by Andy Blankenbuehler of "Hamilton" fame, this high-energy musical tells the story of a World War II veteran who forms a band to enter a television competition. Recommended for ages 13 and up. Through Mar. 8.

7:30 p.m. at the National Theatre, Washington, DC. \$54-\$114. thenationaldc.com

WEDNESDAY 4

PARENTS

Baby Care 101

Have a newborn or will soon? Get the scoop on baby communication, sleeping, skin care, bathing and common health issues.

5:30 p.m. at Fairfax Pediatric Associates, Fairfax, VA. \$25 per couple. fairfaxpediatrics.com

KIDS

Girlogology

Get girls excited about puberty by teaching them what to expect. Discussions include development,

menstruation, mood, hygiene and internet safety. Adult must be present. Ages 8-11.

5:30 p.m. at Potomac Pediatrics, Rockville, MD. \$30 for child; \$40 for adult. girlogology.com

THURSDAY 5

PARENTS

Basic First Aid

This American Red Cross course will teach you how to perform first aid on your family, including CPR and using the AED device for cardiac arrest.

1 p.m. at Retnuh Health, Falls Church, VA. \$118. retnuhhealth.com

KIDS

Beginner Chinese Class

Children will practice basic vocabulary, sentence structure and conversation in Mandarin. Ages 5-10.

4 p.m. at Little Falls Library, Bethesda, MD. FREE. mcpl.libnet.info

FRIDAY 6

FAMILY

Safari Adventure

Get ready for a wild night of fun at March Family Night! Kids will enjoy a jungle obstacle course,

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animal-themed crafts and other activities. Children 10 and under must be accompanied by an adult. 6 p.m. at *Fairlington Community Center & Park, Arlington, VA*. **FREE**. parks.arlingtonva.us

FAMILY

'The Three Musketeers'

Join D'Artagnan and his Musketeer friends as they roam 17th-century France in an effort to save the kingdom in this Encore Stage & Studio production. Ages 6 and up. Through March 8.

7:30 p.m. at *Thomas Jefferson Community Theater, Arlington, VA*. \$12-\$15. encorestageva.org

SATURDAY 7

FAMILY

123 Andrés

Latin Grammy Award-winning teaching artists Andres and Christina get families moving, singing and playing in Spanish and English. Musical instrument "petting zoo" opens one hour prior to show times. Ages 3-6.

11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. at the *Kennedy Center, Washington, DC*. \$20. kennedy-center.org

'MASTERCHEF JUNIOR LIVE'

March 22 | \$29-65 | 6 p.m.



Talented kids show off their culinary chops in this interactive competition, a stage version of the popular television show "MasterChef Junior." *Warner Theatre, Washington, DC*. warnertheatredc.com



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CALENDAR

KIDS

Vanishing Vernal Pools

Are your kids interested in frogs and salamanders? Learn about these creatures and look for their eggs in a pool. Registration required. Ages 6 and up.
2 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center at Glencarlyn Park, Arlington, VA. \$5. parks.arlingtonva.us

FAMILY

Nature-Inspired Artwork

Welcome spring by transforming everyday materials into something new at hands-on MAKER stations and enjoy a kid-led tour of the museum.
10 a.m. at Hirshhorn National Museum of Modern Art, Washington, DC. FREE. hirshhorn.si.edu

SUNDAY 8

FAMILY

International Women's Day

Educate your kids on the global legacy of women with activities and museum tours.
Noon at National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC. FREE. nmwa.org

KIDS

Tween Book Signing

Middle grade author Ellen Oh talks to authors Hena Khan and Ron Smith about her new sci-fi book, "The Dragon Egg Princess," and signs copies for readers.
3 p.m. at Connie Morella Library, Bethesda, MD. FREE. mcpl.libnet.info

MONDAY 9

FAMILY

Family Trivia Night

Put your family's knowledge to the test for the chance to win prizes. Registration is required. Ages 4 and up.
6:30 p.m. at Chantilly Regional Library, Chantilly, VA. FREE. librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov

TUESDAY 10

FAMILY

Shen Yun Performance

Through music, dance and vibrant colors, Shen Yun showcases over 5,000 years of Chinese heritage on its world tour. Also March 11.
7:30 p.m. at George Mason University Center for the Arts, Fairfax, VA. \$80-180. shenyun.com

FAMILY

Spring Flower Arranging

Cherry blossom season is upon us! Learn why these trees thrive in the area and create an arrangement to take home. Registration required.
1 p.m. at Little Falls Library, Bethesda, MD. FREE. mcpl.libnet.info

WEDNESDAY 11

PARENTS

Children's Anxiety Workshop

Does your kid get overwhelmed by fear and perfectionism? Learn the best ways to address these issues, including flexible thinking, asking for help and calmness methods.
7 p.m. at Country Day School, McLean, VA. \$30. countryday.org

FAMILY

'Drumming with Dishes'

In this kid-friendly production, an energetic child and her shy imaginary friend cook up some music in a very special kitchen. Ages 2-5. Through Mar. 15.
10 a.m. at Atlas Performing Arts Center, Washington, DC. \$15. atlasarts.org

THURSDAY 12

KIDS

St. Patrick's Day DIY

Calling all leprechauns! Get ready for St. Patty's Day with a fun craft. Ages 5-9.
4 p.m. at Davis Library, Bethesda, MD. FREE. mcpl.libnet.info

PARENTS

Baby Basics

Learn tips and tricks to survive your first nights at home with a newborn! Get advice on diaper changes, swaddling, car seat positioning and other basics.
7 p.m. at Einstein Pediatrics, Vienna, VA. FREE. einsteinpeds.com

FRIDAY 13

FAMILY

Birthday Bundles

Many children can't afford to celebrate their birthdays. Volunteer with your kids to box up cake mix, candles and handmade cards for children in need.
6:30 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom, Falls Church, VA. \$8-\$18. templeroodefshalom.org

SATURDAY 14

FAMILY

Magi-Whirl Magic Show

Multiple magicians take the stage at this award-winning annual magic show, presented by the International Brotherhood of Magicians.
6:30 p.m. at Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center, Alexandria, VA. \$15-\$20. imbringso.org/magi-whirl-home

KIDS

NoVA Teen Book Festival

The 7th annual book event celebrates Young Adult literature with author panels, Q&A sessions and book signings.
9 a.m. at George C. Marshall High

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School, Falls Church, VA. **FREE.**
novateenbookfestival.com

SUNDAY 15

FAMILY

Groovy Nate

Experience an educational show described as "Sesame Street" meets Parliament/Funkadelic with international instruments and puppet skits.

10:30 a.m. at Capitol Cider House, Washington, DC. \$5.
capitolciderhouse.com

KIDS

Tales with Tails

Children can read aloud to a certified therapy dog, a fun way to practice their literacy skills. Ages 4-12.

3 p.m. at Cleveland Park Library, Washington, DC. **FREE.** dclibrary.org

KIDS

YA Author Event

Meet Sarah Watson, creator of the TV series "The Bold Type," as she reads from her new novel, "Most Likely," about a future female president's senior year of high school.

6 p.m. at Solid State Books, Washington, DC. **FREE.**
solidstatebooksdc.com

MONDAY 16

MOMS

Postpartum Core Work

Learn how to maintain a strong core during pregnancy and how to rebuild it postpartum.

6:30 p.m. at The Well, Washington, DC. \$45. bewelldc.com

FAMILY

St. Patrick's Day Theatrics

Commemorate Irish writers through sketches, dance, music and a performance by Synetic Theater.

6 p.m. at Cherrydale Branch Library, Arlington, VA. **FREE.**
arlingtonva.libcal.com

TUESDAY 17

KIDS

My Favorite Cookie Workshop

Bring your little cookie monster to this trial class, where they will create their favorite dessert out of clay and paint. Ages 18 months-6 years.

9:30 a.m. at Kidcreate Studio, Alexandria, VA. **FREE.**
kidcreatestudio.com

PARENTS

Positive Parenting

Get advice on constructive communication, fostering a close relationship with your child and coping with your own anxiety.

7 p.m. at Lotus Point Wellness, Bethesda, MD. **FREE.**
lotuspointwellness.com

WEDNESDAY 18

KIDS

DIY Dreamcatchers

It's time for sweet dreams! Make your own decorative dreamcatcher using provided supplies. Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.

4 p.m. at Potomac Library, Rockville, MD. **FREE.** mcpl.libnet.info

PARENTS

Enhancing Emotional Intelligence

Two psychologists share how you can support your child's emotional development with tips on fostering their emotional awareness.

7:30 p.m. at Edlavitch DCJCC, Washington, DC. \$18-24.
edcjcc.org/calendar

THURSDAY 19

KIDS

DIY Tissue Flowers

Create a flower bouquet out of tissues to celebrate the beginning of spring. Ages 8-12.

4 p.m. at Wheaton Library, Silver Spring, MD. **FREE.** mcpl.libnet.info

KIDS

Watercolor Workshop

A local artist will teach your child how to sketch and paint with watercolors. Registration is required. Ages 9-16.

4:30 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library, Burke, VA. **FREE.**
librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov

FRIDAY 20

KIDS

Drawing Cartoon Comics

"Star Wars" fans will learn how to draw the Mandalorian and Baby Yoda. All supplies included.

9 a.m. at Comic Logic Books & Artwork, Ashburn, VA.
comiclogicva.com

KIDS

Wobbly Walkers

Sing, dance and clap to nursery rhymes and enjoy stories with your toddler. Ages 13-24 months.

10:30 a.m. at Westover Branch Library, Arlington, VA. **FREE.**
arlingtonva.libcal.com

FAMILY

Career Panel for Teen Girls

A diverse group of successful business women share how they landed their dream jobs. Registration is required.

10 a.m. at Capitol View Neighborhood Library, Washington, DC. **FREE.**
obongbeltonfoundation.org

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SATURDAY 21

PARENTS

Infant CPR

Learn what to do if your baby is choking and how to give CPR in an emergency.

4 p.m. at NOVA Birth Partners, Silver Spring, MD. \$35. novabirthpartners.as.me/CPR

FAMILY

Melodic Voyages

The Maryland Classic Youth Orchestras will play several pieces that highlight the historical evolution of the symphony.

7 p.m. at the Music Center at Strathmore, North Bethesda, MD. \$15-25. strathmore.org

SUNDAY 22

FAMILY

Baby Yoga & Play

Learn ways to support your little one's development and your own mental health through yoga. Baby must be pre-crawling and at least 6 weeks old.

11 a.m. at Hill Center at the Old Naval Hospital, Washington, DC. \$20. hillcenterdc.org

MONDAY 23

KIDS

Pokémon Club

Spend time with likeminded Pokémon fans! Have fun coloring, answering trivia questions and watching a movie on the big screen. Bring trading cards or video games, if you'd like.

4 p.m. at Cleveland Park Library, Washington, DC. **FREE**. dclibrary.org

FAMILY

College Readiness Workshop

From choosing a school and major to paying for college, expert Valarie Austin offers advice to high schoolers and their parents. Registration is required.

7 p.m. at Wheaton Library, Silver Spring, MD. **FREE**. mcpl.libnet.info

TUESDAY 24

KIDS

Music Transformed

Upcycle old vinyl records into a new work of art. All supplies included. Ages 8-12.

4 p.m. at Wheaton Library, Silver Spring, MD. **FREE**. mcpl.libnet.info

BLOSSOM KITE FESTIVAL

March 28 | **FREE** | 10 a.m.



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Washington FAMILY

washingtonfamily.com/fullcalendar

f t i p

WEDNESDAY 25

KIDS

Me and You-kelele

Sing along to favorite songs played on the ukulele to help kids build oral language. Bring your own ukulele, if available.
10:30 a.m. at Little Falls Library, Bethesda, MD. **FREE.** mcpl.libnet.info

KIDS

M.A.D. Teens

Your teenager will be making a difference (M.A.D.) by crafting blankets for the Animal Welfare League. Ages 12-18.
4 p.m. at Richard Byrd Library, Springfield, VA. **FREE.**
librarycalendar@fairfaxcounty.gov

THURSDAY 26

KIDS

Crafting Tiny Books

Teens can celebrate National Reading Month by making key chains, jewelry and pins out of tiny books.
5 p.m. at Twinbrook Library, Rockville, MD. **FREE.** mcpl.libnet.info

FRIDAY 27

FAMILY

Yoga, Baby!

Babies will enjoy yoga movements with music. Bring a towel or mat. Ages 6 weeks to 11 months.
11 a.m. at Kate Waller Barrett Branch Library, Alexandria, VA. **FREE.**
alexlibraryva.org

FAMILY

Family Social Hour

Enjoy unlimited tapas and happy hour drink specials, plus cake decorating and games for the kids.
4 p.m. at Mola, Washington, DC. \$15-30. moladc.com

SATURDAY 28

FAMILY

Children's Africana Book Awards Festival

Children's and YA books on Africa are honored at this annual festival.

Kids will enjoy art activities, storytelling, face painting and opportunities to meet authors and illustrators.

11 a.m. at Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, Washington, DC. **FREE.** cababooks.org

SUNDAY 29

FAMILY

Rocknocos Concert

Start your Sunday with award-winning kid's music from popular local band Rocknocos.
10:30 a.m. at Capitol Cider House, Washington, DC. \$7.
capitolciderhouse.com

FAMILY

Ideas of Bark Festival

Pooches deserve special events, too! Bring your furry best friend for an afternoon of games, prizes and fun.
1 p.m. at Grist Mill Park, Alexandria, VA. **FREE.**
fairfaxcounty.gov

MONDAY 30

KIDS

Marvelous Mars

Young scientists are invited to learn about Mars while participating in STEM activities. Ages 5 and up.
4:30 p.m. at Petwork Library, Washington, DC. **FREE.** dclibrary.org

TUESDAY 31

FAMILY

Montgomery County National College Fair

Is your child beginning the college search? Talk with representatives from hundreds of colleges and ask questions about campus life. Also on April 1.
9:45 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. at Montgomery County Agricultural Center, Gaithersburg, MD. **FREE.**
nacacfairs.org

— BY IVEY NOOJIN



Montgomery County Humane Society is a private, non-profit, no-kill cat and dog rescue that does not receive any operational funding from the government or from national humane societies. It relies on the support of the community to keep its doors open.

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That is the question on many area parents' minds

BY JENNIFER MARINO WALTERS

Three years ago, my husband and I agonized over a decision—whether or not to enroll our twin boys, then in kindergarten, in a Spanish immersion program the following year. Their school is one of 17 Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) that offer language immersion starting in kindergarten or first grade.

And FCPS is not alone. Several school districts throughout the D.C. area offer their own language immersion programs (see sidebar). The enrollment lotteries for a lot of these programs are now open, which means many local parents are currently facing the same dilemma we did.

ALL ABOUT IMMERSION

Area schools offer two types of immersion programs: one-way and two-way programs. One-way immersion programs include mostly native English speakers who are learning the target language. Two-way programs combine native speakers and learners of the target language.

In both types of programs, students spend at least half their day learning in the target language. In partial immersion programs, students learn math, science

and health in the target language and the rest of the subjects in English. In full immersion (less common), all instruction is in the target language.

The benefits of language immersion are plenty. According to the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., learning a language at an early age enhances children's brain development, expands their cultural awareness, helps them think more flexibly and increases job opportunities later in life. Bilingual children outperform monolingual kids in problem solving, pattern recognition and divergent thinking.

Studies by the RAND Corporation and researchers at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, have also found that immersion students score better on standardized reading and math tests than their non-immersion peers by late elementary school.

Elisabeth Harrington, supervisor of the World Languages Office at Arlington Public Schools (APS), says that APS students enrolled in language immersion programs also eventually outperform their non-immersion peers in standardized

tests. But she says that's not usually the case in the earlier years.

"The benefits of immersion are long-term," Harrington says. "Test scores might be lower at first, so parents just have to trust the process."

VARIED EXPERIENCES

When my husband and I were making our decision, our biggest concern was what actual immersion families thought of the program. And we found that while some families loved immersion, others felt it wasn't right for their children.

Melissa Chabot's son is in the kindergarten Spanish immersion program at Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Sciences in Falls Church, Virginia. "We are having a wonderful experience," she says. "My son is getting to know kids with diverse backgrounds and experiences and learning about other cultures. He loves it."

Sarah Clark's sixth-grade daughter and second-grade son love being in German immersion at Orange Hunt Elementary School in Burke, Virginia. Clark's daughter is in advanced math and can hold conversations with her German relatives.

"The kids have a great sense that different people have different perspectives," says Clark. "They know that there is more than one way of looking at something."

But Mary Oborski pulled her son out of German immersion at Orange Hunt in second grade because she felt his teachers weren't a good fit for him. Since there's usually only one set of immersion teachers at a school, switching an immersion child to a different class typically means pulling him or her out of the program.

"My child was much calmer and happier after I switched him," Oborski says. "He is currently in fourth grade and is doing great."

Another mother, who asked to remain anonymous, also pulled her second-grade daughter out of Spanish immersion at Ravensworth Elementary in Springfield, Virginia, in the early '90s because the child was getting stressed about not understanding her homework and projects.

"Many of my friends also took their children out of immersion because they were developing upset stomachs and had lots of tears and frustration," she recalls.

Though Harrington acknowledges that not every parent and child will like immersion, she says parents shouldn't automatically count children out based on their personality or learning disabilities. "I believe every child is capable of succeeding in language immersion," says Harrington.

Ultimately, we decided to enroll our boys in Spanish immersion, and we are thrilled

with our decision. They are thriving in third grade, and they get through their math homework just fine (with a little help from Google Translate). And this year, we have already entered our kindergarten-age daughter into the lottery.

"Our world is getting smaller because of connectivity," says Harrington. "So if you want your children to be global thinkers who are more accepting and understanding of other cultures, then language immersion is a gift you can give them." ■

Jennifer Marino Walters is a freelance writer specializing in parenting and lifestyle topics. She is also the author of 12 books for children, with two more on the way. Jennifer lives in Burke, Virginia, with her husband and three children. When she's not writing, she loves to explore the D.C. area with her family!

**Immersion students
score better on
standardized reading
and math tests than
their non-immersion
peers by late
elementary school.**

Considering Immersion?

Here are some tips from parents who have been there, done that.

- 1** Figure out transportation. Some school districts (like APS) offer bus service for immersion kids, but many don't. So if your kids will be going to a school that's not their zone school, figure out how you'll get them there. "It takes us an hour round-trip each day for drop-off and pickup, plus extra for any evening activities," says Clark.
- 2** Consider friendships. Clark says most of her kids' classmates live near the school, so she has to drive their children to friend's houses. Therefore, they don't know kids in their own neighborhood very well.
- 3** Meet the teachers. Oborski recommends meeting the immersion teachers at your child's potential school ahead of time to determine whether they might be a good fit for your child.
- 4** Talk to parents. Reach out to parents of immersion students at the potential school to hear about their experiences.
- 5** Give it a shot. Still not sure about immersion? Just give it a try. You can always take your child out of the program. "If it doesn't work for your child, don't think twice—pull him or her out," says Oborski. ■

LOCAL IMMERSION PROGRAMS

Below are four area school districts that offer language immersion programs. These programs are typically filled via lottery systems, and some of those lotteries are open now. If you don't see your child's school district on the list below, just ask the administrators if an immersion program exists.

Arlington Public Schools

apsva.us/world-languages/immersion-program/

Grade at time of entry: K and middle school

Language: Spanish

Lottery deadline: Feb. 3–April 15 for K; middle school has a separate enrollment process

District of Columbia Public Schools

dcps.dc.gov/DL

Grade at time of entry: K or 1 (except at Columbia Heights Education Campus, which has a structured late-entry program)

Language: Spanish

Lottery deadline: The deadline was Feb. 3 for high school and March 2 for grades K-8, but visit myschooldc.org to learn more.

Fairfax County Public Schools

fcps.edu/academics/world-languages-immersion-programs

Grade at time of entry: K or 1, depending on the school

Languages: Spanish, French, German, Japanese, Korean

Lottery deadline: March 20 for grade K; late registration opens April 2. Registration for grade 1 closed Feb. 20; late registration opened March 5. Late applications will be added to the end of the waiting list in the order of date received.

Montgomery County Public Schools

montgomeryschoolsmd.org/curriculum/specialprograms/admissions/immersion.aspx

Grade at time of entry: K-5, middle school

Languages: Spanish, French, Chinese

Lottery deadline: April 24; middle school has a separate enrollment process ■

ART IS SMART

The value of creativity in the classroom

BY PJ FEINSTEIN AND ADRANISHA STEPHENS



At a time when school districts across the country are eliminating art programs due to budget cuts and the prioritization of standardized testing, Arlington Public Schools (APS) in Virginia stands out as an exception.

“We are so fortunate in Arlington. I’ve been in central office for 19 years, and we have never had a cut to the arts,” says arts education supervisor Pam Farrell. “We are so strongly supported by our superintendent, our school board and our community so much so that three years ago when we were facing a big budget deficit, the number one thing the community voted to not cut was the arts.”

The APS community understands the value of arts education, including visual art. When elementary school students are building with clay or middle schoolers are learning how to do portraiture, they’re aren’t just having fun. They’re also learning skills that translate into all aspects of their lives, including literacy, planning and awareness, creativity and critical thinking, explains Farrell.

“In visual art classes, the kids are basically solving problems as they’re making art. And so the amount of decisions they have to make – which way to go, which colors to select – really, really impact their critical thinking,” she says.

TEACHING “HABITS OF MIND”

Michelle Silberberg, a photography teacher at Northwood High School in Rockville, Maryland, says that visual art can teach learners about layout, perspective and balance, all techniques that are necessary for visual presentations of academic work.

Right now, her students are creating a photography project surrounding mental illness. “It’s a tough topic and I am here to help them and support



The arts can provide gains in literacy, planning and



Allison, 11,
Maryland

them,” says Silberberg. “We are discussing how they can make that into a visual project and the importance behind it.”

They have also tackled issues such as domestic violence. “There’s a lot of random violence in lyrics and shows, but we don’t freak out about it because we see it all the time,” she says. “We’re exposed to it so much that it becomes this normal thing. But it’s not normal how we normalize domestic violence in the U.S. And that’s what I investigated with my class.”

Silberberg adds that arts education also teaches resilience.

“A lot of time, especially in art, if somebody messes up, they are like, ‘Oh well, I need to start over.’ But that’s not necessarily the case,” she says.

Instead, she challenges her students to figure out how to make it work, such as scratching up or melting negatives to come to an end result that makes them feel proud.

“And that can go to any subject or any life experiences,” says Silberberg. “If something doesn’t work out the way that you wanted it to, how can you move past the initial negative emotions and move forward to something that you’re happy with?”

This idea of resiliency or bouncing back actually relates to a concept called “Habits of Mind” that Farrell mentions when discussing the benefits of arts education.

“It’s really that critical thinking and application to the task and carrying through, because you have to keep working through your visual problems when you’re creating a piece of art,” she says, adding that knowing when to stop can be just as important, too.

“Because if you go too far then it’s going to be unrecognizable, right?”

INTEGRATING ART IN THE CLASSROOM

When designing the APS curriculum, Farrell first looks at the Virginia Standards of Learning and the National Visual Arts Standards by grade level, incorporating a diverse group of artists that “relate to all of our student population and interests,” she says. Because every school has access to the other general educators’ plans for the year, visual art teachers will often co-plan with classroom teachers to do arts-integrated projects, such as Virginia history or tessellation for math.

At Montgomery Blair High School in Silver Spring, Maryland, Sandra Jacobs-Ivey has been integrating art into her curriculum for more than 30 years. “I don’t know how you cannot use art in the classroom. It’s been a part of my pedagogy for a while,” says the AP Literature and Bridge English teacher.

For Jacobs-Ivey, it started the first year she became a teacher. She decorated her classroom with art prints and motivational quotes, often referencing the prints in student assignments and requiring the kids to respond to them. Later, she had students create stories around a creative aspect of a piece of art.

“It was a really good way for them to tap into critical thinking,” she says.

Jacobs-Ivey also incorporates art into her lessons to make complicated concepts easier to understand. Take “Hamlet,” for example.

“Act Three is imbued with soliloquies where the imagery is just overflowing, so I had the students create visual representations of the speeches,” she says. “And they later mentioned to me, ‘I’ve really loved doing this because it made me understand the speech more,’ and ‘It helped me to have another avenue to express my understanding of the written text.’” ■

awareness, creativity and critical thinking.



SHOW & TELL

ARTISTIC ABILITY

BY PJ FEINSTEIN



A STILL LIFE OF SPRING FLOWERS BY KEIRA, 12, OF SOUTH RIDING, VA.

IN HONOR OF YOUTH ART MONTH, we asked you to submit photos of your child's artwork—a drawing, a painting, a sculpture, whatever—so we could celebrate their creativity and talent with our readers. Here are some of the masterpieces we received that were made by young artists from around the DMV.



LUCY, AN 8TH GRADER AT LOWELL SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON, DC, TAUGHT HERSELF HOW TO USE THE APP PROCREATE SO SHE COULD DRAW COSTUMES INSPIRED BY PIECES OF FABRIC AND OCEAN LIFE.

CELEBRATE
YOUR CHILD'S
CREATIVITY
AND TALENT

ARTWORK: COURTESY OF THE ARTISTS; SWIRLS & CURLS: GETTY IMAGES/
DIGITALVISION/VECTORS/BEASTFROMEAST

How to create a gallery wall like a pro

Meredith Forte is a big fan of framing and displaying children's art—and not just because coming up with creative solutions to empty walls is part of her job.

"I witnessed kids coming home and seeing their artwork on the wall and it makes them feel almost famous," says Forte, who offers mobile picture-framing and design services through her company, Frame Avenue Design. "That their mom or dad took the time to frame it and hang it and have something special for them. It gives them encouragement and promotes creativity."

Forte loves creating gallery walls for her clients of their children's artwork to hang in the rooms where the kids hang out: basement rec rooms, playrooms and even their bedrooms.

TO CREATE YOUR OWN GALLERY WALL OF KIDS' ART, FOLLOW FORTE'S PROCESS

- 1 Choose a mix of personalized artwork such as painted handprints, artwork that's special to your child and anything that can pass as abstract art. "Adult artists can sometimes make art that looks like a 5-year-old made it. So why not frame a 5-year-old's art that looks like an adult did it," says Forte.
 - 2 Use picture frames that are either 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches or 11 inches by 17 inches, which fit the "two basic sizes of construction paper that schools have," she says.
 - 3 Pick picture frames that can be easily opened, so you can swap out artwork when your child brings home something new.
 - 4 Stick with white frames and white mattes. "It's simple, it looks pretty, it looks clean on the walls, and then the artwork sort of pops," says Forte.
 - 5 Decide which style of gallery wall you prefer: grid or organic. "Gallery grids are great for people who are Type A," she says. In a grid, all of the frames are the same size and hung in symmetrical rows and columns. Organic grids, on the other hand, come together like a puzzle.
 - 6 Arrange your picture frames on the floor below the wall where you plan to hang them in order to determine the size and placement of your gallery wall. "You sort of fit the pieces together," she explains. Once you like how it looks, hang it up!
- If any of this sounds complicated, just remember: "One of the main things about gallery walls is don't overthink it," says Forte. ■



10-YEAR-OLD AVERY USED COLORED PENCILS TO DRAW A BIRD IN HER BACKYARD LISTENING FOR HIS FRIENDS.



What to do with all that artwork?

A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZER WEIGHS IN

GO BIG

Kids often bring home artwork on paper that's larger than 8 1/2 inches by 11 inches. Rather than folding their masterpieces to fit in letter-size file folders or binders, professional organizer Libby Kinkead of Potomac Concierge prefers storing artwork in portfolios—those big, black cases with handles that artists use to carry their work.

Another option is to store both flat pieces and three-dimensional creations in clear plastic bins. "You can have bins per year, per child, per school," says Kinkead.

LABEL, LABEL, LABEL

"You're not gonna remember a watercolor when you have more than one child," she says. As a favor to your future self, write your child's name and the date on the back of every drawing or painting they bring home. And don't forget to label the outside of the portfolio or bin, too.

TOSS THE NOODLES

Unfortunately, certain pieces just won't store well. "Anything that's made out of macaroni or rice or whatever ... those aren't good

keepers because they attract bugs, they break, then you open it up and there's all those pieces at the bottom," says Kinkead. If you simply can't part with a preschool noodle craft or feel emotionally attached to something fragile, wrap the piece in tissue paper before placing it in a bin.

BE SELECTIVE

At the end of the school year, sort through your child's portfolio or bin and ask them to pick out their favorites. "So instead of keeping 75, keep 25," she says. But don't stop there! Continue the culling process regularly to keep their growing collection of artwork manageable. And remember: If they can't remember what they drew, it might not be worth keeping.

GO DIGITAL

Rather than saving physical pieces of art, preserve the memory of your child's handiwork by snapping a photo. Display their artwork on a digital frame or print them in a coffee-table style book. "It's kind of like the photo album of your trip to wherever, you also have a photo album of the art from grades three to five," she says. ■



A SELF-PORTRAIT PAINTED BY 6-YEAR-OLD ANAYA.

NEXT UP

Kid athletes! Email us a photo of your sports superstar at editor@washingtonfamily.com and it just might be featured in our April issue!



JILL, 11, OF BURKE, VA, DREW A SUPERHERO AT A WORKSHOP FOR MILITARY FAMILIES AT THE WORKHOUSE ARTS CENTER.

**"I WITNESSED KIDS
COMING HOME
AND SEEING THEIR
ARTWORK ON
THE WALL AND IT
MAKES THEM FEEL
ALMOST FAMOUS.
THAT THEIR MOM
OR DAD TOOK THE
TIME TO FRAME IT
AND HANG IT AND
HAVE SOMETHING
SPECIAL FOR THEM.
IT GIVES THEM
ENCOURAGEMENT
AND PROMOTES
CREATIVITY."**

— Meredith Forte

ART CLASSES FOR KIDS

ALL CHILDREN HAVE NATURAL CREATIVITY, even if it manifests itself as coloring outside the lines. Those macaroni necklaces and glitter explosions and Crayola chaos that populate childhood happen because kids have such an extensive imagination. Art then becomes a great vehicle for learning, growing and having fun. With that in mind, we put together a list of 15 local art studios where your child can grow as an artist. For more inspiration, check out the listings under "Guides" at WashingtonFamily.com.



✧ **ABRAKADOODLE, MULTIPLE LOCATIONS, VA**

Abakadoodle offers art classes for kids ages 20 months to elementary-school-aged, allowing them to play with paints, wire, clay and more. They also provide art camp during the summer and holiday breaks and host Arty Parties, including an ARTrageous art teacher, activities, lessons and lots of materials. abakadoodle.com

✧ **ANNA BANANA ARTS AND CRAFTS, WASHINGTON, DC**

Anna Banana offers classes for kids ages 2-8 and special half-day camps on federal holidays so your little artists can spend that time creating masterpieces. It also has a summer camps for 4-8 year olds. annabananaartsandcrafts.com

✧ **ARTJAMZ DUPONT STUDIO, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

ArtJamz is truly a creative zone (even the walls are painted with artwork) and has classes and opportunities for the entire family. Paint parties and graffiti parties are a great way for kids to make their mark, and both children and adults can participate in a freestyle session or a guided class. artjamz.com

✧ **BLUE GIRAFFE ART STUDIO, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Blue Giraffe offers art classes for kids ages 3 and older, including painting, drawing, collage making, stuffed animals and more. Half-day camps are offered on federal holidays to add some imagination to no-school days. bluegiraffedc.com

✧ **LITTLE LOFT STUDIOS, TAKOMA PARK, MD**

Children as young as 2 can begin their art journey in Art Exploration class. Older kids can dive into mathematical art, comic creation or painting and printmaking. Their next six-week spring session begins April 19 through May 31. Kids also can attend Little Loft Studios for summer camp, and evening and weekend workshops are available for all members of the family. littleloftstudios.com

✧ **LITTLE PICASSO, ANNANDALE, VA**

Little Picasso offers beginner and intermediate classes for kids ages 5 through third grade. Then, students can move on to the Junior Prep program where there is less step-by-step instruction and more independent work. High school artists can take Portfolio Prep, which helps teens build a strong and complete portfolio for college admissions at the top art schools around the world. littlepicassoart.com

✧ **RENAISSANCE ART CENTER, GAITHERSBURG, MD**

The Renaissance Art Center believes that art is an important foundation for various pathways in life and offers classes for children ages 3 and up in painting, pottery, animation and sculptures, plus instruction for home schoolers. renaissanceartcenter.com

Other great locations:

✧ **MASON COMMUNITY ARTS ACADEMY, VA** masonacademy.gmu.edu

✧ **THE ART LEAGUE, VA** theartleague.org

✧ **ART SPACE HERNDON, VA** artsherndon.org

✧ **CAPITOL HILL ARTS WORKSHOP** **WASHINGTON, D.C.** chaw.org

✧ **WASHINGTON STUDIO SCHOOL** **WASHINGTON, D.C.** washingtonstudioschool.org

✧ **ART WORKS NOW, MD** artworksnow.org

✧ **STONE BRANCH SCHOOL OF ART, MD** stonebrancharts.com

✧ **VISARTS, MD** visartscenter.org

—ADORA BROWN

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF A CLASSICAL EDUCATION IN THE DIGITAL AGE?

CHARLOTTE FOSTER, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT CHAIR
& SUSAN GLAZIER, ASSISTANT HEAD OF SCHOOL
WESTMINSTER SCHOOL
ANNANDALE, VA 22003

American children are growing up in the digital age, many of them spending several hours a day looking at screens at school. On their own time, they dive into social media and devote countless hours to video games. A recent multi-year study by the American Psychological Association shows that high-school-aged teens spend more time texting and on social media than reading. As a result, parents, teachers and psychologists are finding increasing problems among children, including moody behavior, shorter attention spans, decreased ability to focus on academics and a lessening in empathy for others.

Classical education provides the antidote to every one of these alarming trends. Classical education is a systematic, age-appropriate approach to teaching children how to think, how to build values and develop strength of character, how to discover and improve on individual talents and how to present themselves successfully

in the greater world. Its building-block approach nurtures the child's interest in learning, ability to concentrate and pay attention for extended periods of time, read for depth of understanding and express thoughts and opinions clearly and persuasively. The child's mind is actively and imaginatively engaged in comprehending rather than passively receiving a flow of digitized information.

Ultimately, the goal of a classical education is to teach the student how to think critically and act creatively, how to tackle and solve unfamiliar problems and how to meet challenges with optimism and setbacks with resilience. These are the very skills that prepare children for a challenging and unpredictable future.

Additionally, parents are beginning to push back against the overwhelming amount of school-day screen time, according to the Washington Post. They are concerned that their computer-dependent children are losing

ground in their academic understanding and skills as well as their personal development. They also resent that computer use in school interferes with their parenting decisions about their own children. While developments in technology have been empowering and exciting, parents and schools are learning that computers are not the automatic educational boost they once hoped.

There is no magic bullet or digital course that produces a well-rounded, knowledgeable, courteous and confident person of good character. However, there is a proven way, and Westminster School stands by its 58-year history of delivering a classical education in a nurturing, forward-looking environment. The achievements of our graduates, both academic and personal, testify to the effective and lasting influence of a rich, carefully designed and well-implemented classical education. ■

SEE OUR AD, PAGE 7



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ARTS

Children's Repertory Theater

Imagination Stage in Bethesda, Maryland, presents two unique shows for kids in repertory this month: "Zomo the Rabbit: A Hip-Hop Creation Myth" and "Thumbelina."

Repertory theater features the same company of actors performing in different shows during a particular time period.

"We love the rep format at Imagination Stage because in addition to two stories, our young audiences get a terrific lesson in theatricality," says Janet Stanford, founding artistic director. "Not only does our versatile set transform from one world to another, our performers are seen playing wildly different characters."

Nominated for a Helen Hayes award during its original 2009 run, "Zomo the Rabbit" is a hip-hop

adaptation of a Nigerian folktale. The story puts a local spin on the global tradition of trickster tales, taking place at various Washington, D.C., landmarks. It plays through March 22.

Making its world premiere, "Thumbelina" reimagines Hans Christian Andersen's classic fairy tale as a multimedia play using live video projections, puppetry, dioramas and other theater magic. Inspired by Kamishibai, a form of Japanese street theater, it tells the story of a tiny girl on a mission to find her place in the world. "Thumbelina" runs through April 5.

Both performances are best for ages 4 and up. Tickets cost \$15-\$35. For more information, visit imaginationstage.org. ■

—PJ FEINSTEIN

EDUCATION

Special Needs Forum

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) will host its annual "Extraordinary Minds in MCPS" Forum on March 18 to inform parents of children with autism spectrum disorder about public school placements and services for students with special needs.

The evening will begin with an introduction to MCPS's

autism services, which provides support to approximately 2,300 autistic students. Then parents can participate in informational breakout sessions designed to help them play a meaningful role on their child's Individual Education Program (IEP) team.

The two hour-long sessions will cover a variety of topics, including organizational strategies for students, transition planning and resource and funding opportunities. The "Program for Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills" and "Unstuck and On Target" curriculums as well as the "Zones of Regulation" program will also be discussed.

This free event will be held at Julius West Middle School, Rockville, Maryland, from 6-9 p.m. For more information, visit xminds.org/event-3739056. ■

—PJ FEINSTEIN

PARENTING

Quick tips for a calmer household

OK, first, a bit of a disclaimer: There are no real quick tips to making your kid-filled household immediately calmer, says Maryland-based parenting coach Cindy Shuster. As much as we might want that magic wand, what we have instead are easy entry points to parent better and to change the energy dynamic in a room.

Here's how: First, Shuster says, keep in mind "where we are plugged into the negative behavior." She uses her own family of three boys as an example. After dinner, she might have sent the boys downstairs to play, relieved for a moment to herself. And they might have played well together for a while, but "the second the mayhem broke out, they got my biggest energy," she admits. The accusations of "why can't you play nicely" flew.

Sound familiar?

Instead of losing our cool, parents in this situation could praise the good behavior—the cooperation, the inside voices and more—while it was happening.

"The same excitement we show their bad behavior, we need to show them when they are doing things right," she says.

Tantrums? The same principle applies. Give those outbursts so little energy that they are no longer exciting for the child.

"We need to be more mindful about how we are showing up," says Shuster, who was a classroom teacher before she became a certified parenting coach. That included completing a graduate program with 100 hours of pro bono coaching. She now coaches parents across the country and holds community workshops for parents.

Want more of her insights? Find her at parentcoachcindy.com. ■

—JESSICA GREGG





2020 Summer 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.



OVERNIGHT CAMPS

BURGUNDY CENTER FOR WILDLIFE STUDIES

Ages: 8-15
burgundycenter.org
703-842-0470
Capon Bridge, WV
Categories: Swimming

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804-314-6656
Cowpasture River Hwy
Millboro Springs, VA
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Overnight Camping, CIT Program

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CIT program: 6th-12th grade
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beauvoirschoolsummer@cathedral.org
202-537-6485
3500 Woodley Rd NW
Washington, DC
Categories: Day Camp, Boys &
Girls, Extended Day, Arts and
Crafts, CIT Program, Dance,
Drama/Theatre, Educational
Activities, Field Trips, Music,
Swimming

CAMP HALF-BLOOD, DC

Ages: 7-14
camphalfbloodbklyn.com
info@plato-learning.com
Rock Creek Park, Picnic Area 13
Washington, DC
Categories: Day Camp, Sports,
Drama/Theater, Educational
Activities Theatre, Music

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goethe.de/dc/germancourses
germancourses-washington@
goethe.de
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& Girls, Teens, Extended Day,
Drama/Theatre

DAY CAMPS MARYLAND

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Ages: 4-14
barrie.org/camp
camp@barrie.org
301-576-2818
13500 Layhill Rd
Silver Spring, MD
Categories: Day Camp, Boys &
Girls, Sibling Discount, Extended
Day, Transportation, Arts and
Crafts, Boating, CIT Program,
Computers Cooking, Dance,
Drama/Theatre, Educational
Activities, Field Trips, Hiking,
Horseback Riding, Martial
Arts, Swimming

BASIS INDEPENDENT SUMMER

Ages: 2-18
Affiliation: BASIS Independent
McLean
basisindependent.com/summer
mclean-summer@
basisindependent.com
703-854-1253
8000 Jones Branch Dr
McLean, VA
Categories: Day Camp, Boys &
Girls, Teens, Arts and Crafts, Dance,
Drama/Theatre, Educational
Activities, Field Trips, Music

BETHESDA BIG TRAIN BASEBALL SUMMER CAMP

Ages: 5-12
bigtrain.org/summercamp/
davids@bigtrain.org
301-365-1076
10600 Westlake Dr
Bethesda, MD
Categories: Day Camp, Boys &
Girls, Extended Day, Sports

BRETTON WOODS

Ages: 4-17
BWRC.org
camp@BWRC.org
301-948-3357
15700 River Rd
Potomac, MD
Categories: Day Camp, Boys
& Girls, Teens, Extended Day,
Transportation, Arts and Crafts,
Boating, CIT Program, Hiking,
Special Needs, Sports, Extreme
Sports, Swimming

CAMP ACCOMPLISH

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melwood.org/recreation-
programs/camp
recreationcenter@melwood.org
301-870-3226
9035 Ironsides Rd
Nanjemoy, MD
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Camp, Boys & Girls, Teens, Sibling
Discount, Transportation, Arts and
Crafts, Cooking, Drama/Theatre,
Educational Activities, Field
Trips, Horseback Riding, Music,
Overnight Camping, Special
Needs, Sports, Swimming, Yoga

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scott.swick@catapultlearning.com
201-588-8048
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Discount, Extended Day, Arts
and Crafts, CIT Program, Dance,
Drama/Theatre

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flyingkicktkd.com
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manormontessori.com/
summer-camp
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Bethesda, MD
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Discount, Dance

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mocorec.com/guide
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Horseback Riding, Special
Needs, Leadership

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spring-bilingual.org
info@spring-bilingual.org
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whitmansummerncamp@gmail.com
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14131 Seneca Rd
Darnestown, MD
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ashburnice.com
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703-858-0300
21595 Smith Switch Rd
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brooksfildschool.org
camp@brooksfildschool.org
703-356-5437 ext. 2
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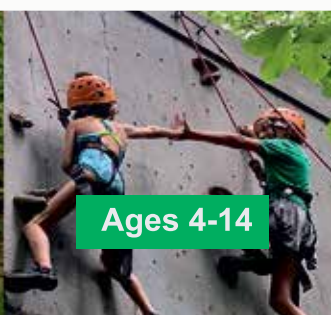
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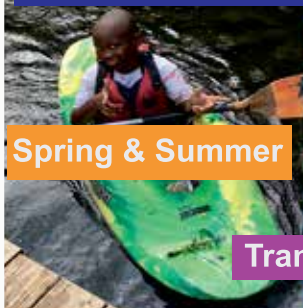
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burgundyfarm.org/summer-
programs
summercamp@burgundyfarm.org
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3700 Burgundy Rd
Alexandria, VA
Categories: Extended Day,
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9115 Georgia Ave
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3800 Concorde Pkwy
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Ages: 3-14
westminsterschool.com
campgriffin@
westminsterschool.com
703-340-7268

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3819 Gallows Rd
Annandale, VA
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kayschool.org
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703-264-9078
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4000 Lorcom Ln

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encorestage.org
info@encorestage.org
703-548-1154
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Arlington, VA
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Ages: 4-18
harmoniaschool.org
harmonia@harmoniaschool.org
703-938-7301
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CuppettPACdance@gmail.com
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How to Make

A COLORFUL YARN WREATH

Usher in spring with décor for your front door

BY LINDSAY PONTA

Have you noticed that you see wreaths everywhere around Christmas, and then they're suddenly just ... gone?

A wreath is such a simple way to make a big décor impact, especially for the tricky-to-decorate front door area. They're so versatile that it's a shame to leave them for winter. So I've created a colorful, textural design that makes wreaths a very now trend to brighten up your March doorway.

And don't feel limited to the color palette I used. You can incorporate the colors you commonly use in your home décor, experiment with new combinations or let your kids choose their favorite colors. This project is a great opportunity for everyone in the family to express their creativity.

Supplies

Styrofoam wreath
Flexible measuring tape
Pen or permanent marker
Yarn in a variety of colors, textures and weight
Sharp scissors
Pom-pom makers in different sizes
Glue
Crochet hook
Wreath hook

Instructions

1. Measure the circumference of your Styrofoam wreath.
2. Divide that measurement by the number of yarn colors you're using to determine the size each section of yarn will be. For example, if your wreath measures 20 inches around and you're using five different yarns, each yarn section will be four inches.
3. Note the size of each section by marking your wreath with a pen or marker.
4. Tie on your first yarn, and add a dot or thin line of glue to secure the knot and tail.
Tip: Start with your thickest, heaviest-weight yarn. You can use that section to gauge how thick to wrap the other sections.
5. Wrap the yarn all the way around the first marked section.
6. When you finish the section, tuck the tail under the wrapped yarn on the back of the wreath, and secure it with glue.
7. Repeat steps 4-6 for each section on your Styrofoam wreath.

Tip: If you're using a thinner yarn, you may need to double or triple wrap it until it's nearly as thick as the yarn in your first section.

8. Use your pom-pom makers, available at craft stores or Amazon, to create pom poms in a variety of sizes and colors.

Tip: Use your larger pom pom makers for thick, heavy yarns and smaller makers for thin, lightweight yarns.

9. Trim pom poms so they're fluffy and round, leaving the two long tails untouched.

10. Tie pom pom tails around the wreath as tightly as you can. Use the crochet hook to pull tails through the wrapped yarn on the back of the wreath, and secure them with a dot of glue.

11. Repeat step 10 to add a second layer of smaller pom poms.

Tip: Don't tie the second layer as tightly as the first or they'll smush the larger pom poms.

12. Trim off any excess tails from the back of the wreath, and hang using a wreath hook. ■

Be sure to share pictures of your wreaths on social media with #washingtonfamilymag so we can see your creativity. Happy crafting, friends!

Lindsay Ponta created the DIY and lifestyle website Shrimp Salad Circus in 2009 to inspire busy women to live perfectly imperfect creative lives. Find easy DIYs and recipes at shrimpsaladcircus.com.





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The best way to prevent getting sick, whether with pink eye, a cold or even the flu? Wash your hands.

Hand Hygiene 101

How to teach your kids to properly wash their hands

BY PJ FEINSTEIN

If you ask my kindergartener about pink eye, he'll tell you that it's caused by touching your butt and then touching your eye.

It's graphic, I know, but it turns out there's some truth to his disgusting explanation.

"Pink eye is caused by a virus same as viruses that cause runny nose and cough and ear infections," says Dr. Linda Fu, a general pediatrician at Children's National. It just so happens that the adenovirus that causes pink eye can be spread through, well, poop.

Viruses, including adenovirus, are transmitted when you touch any mucous membrane — eyes, nose or mouth — with germ-y hands. The best way to prevent getting sick, whether with pink eye, a cold or even the flu? Wash your hands.

Proper Handwashing Technique

One reason why little kids get sick so often is because they aren't washing their hands properly ... if at all. There's almost always something they'd rather be doing than spending even one more second in the bathroom after using the toilet.

So it's our job as parents to help our kids understand why handwashing is critical, says Dr. Fu. She suggests explaining to them that germs make them sick, and if they don't like being sick, then it's important to wash their hands.

However, successful handwashing requires a bit more time and effort than simply squirting some soap into their palms and rinsing it off. Children (and grown-ups, too) need to rub their soapy hands together for at least 20 seconds — or the time it takes the sing the ABCs — because it's the lathering that actually reduces the number of germs.

Foaming hand washes make it easier for little kids to generate a lather; however, proper handwashing technique is more important than the type of soap.

"As long as they're generating lather and getting all parts of the hand and washing for long enough, any type is fine," says Dr. Fu.

After 20 seconds of handwashing, it's time to rinse and dry hands with a towel—but it has to be clean "If you're using a towel after somebody who hasn't washed their hands so well then that's just re-infecting the hand," she says. If you're unsure whether a towel is clean, you can use a paper towel or, as a last resort, air dry.

And, of course, if someone at home is sick, make sure to change out your hand towels frequently.

The Moldy Bread Experiment

Still need help convincing your kids that proper handwashing can help keep them healthy? Conduct your own version of the hand hygiene experiment that went viral in a Facebook post at the end of last year.

To test the cleanliness of their students' hands, two elementary school teachers placed five slices of white bread in separate plastic bags and taped them to their classroom wall. The control slice went into a baggie untouched (use clean tongs or turn the bag inside out to pick it up). Three more slices were bagged after being touch by kids with dirty hands, kids who used hand sanitizer and kids who washed with soap and water. The last slice was wiped on a Chromebook before being sealed in a baggie.

After a few days, the control slice and the slice handled by kids who had properly washed their hands looked about the same. The hand sanitizer slice had one large mold spot on it, and the slice touched with dirty hands was more than partially moldy. But the grossest slice was the one rubbed on the Chromebook. It was almost completely covered in dark green mold.

Dr. Fu hasn't seen the experiment online, but she isn't surprised by the results.

"Everybody is concerned when they see somebody sneezing near them. But don't forget, germs can also survive for several hours on surfaces such as Chromebooks," she says. "Even if you aren't around somebody who is sick, you may be touching something that has germs on it."



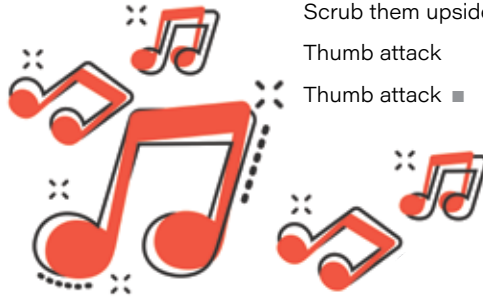
That's why Dr. Fu stresses that kids wash their hands before eating in addition to washing them after using the bathroom. And then, the key to preventing illness is to "avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth throughout the day, especially in the winter when there are so many viruses and germs going around," she says. ■

Almost 10 years ago, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wrote its own handwashing song to the tune of "Happy Birthday." Sing it twice from beginning to end:

Wash hands well each day
To keep germs away
Scrub with soap and water
And be on your way

More recently, two Canadian doctors rewrote the lyrics to "Frère Jacques" to reflect the World Health Organization's handwashing method:

Scrub your palms
Between the fingers
Wash the back
Wash the back
Twirl the tips around
Scrub them upside down
Thumb attack
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Together, all parents can fight back against the negative messages. Informed parents can promote healthy habits and lifestyles and cultivate positive body image for everyone in the family.

Distorted Lens

Improving messages that shape a child's body image

BY COURTNEY MCGEE

A new year is well under way, and spring is looming on the horizon. How have you fared with your resolutions?

Many of us used the turn of the decade to mark intent to change day-to-day routines and make self-care a priority. Overall, those motivations are very positive. A new year presents fresh opportunity to evaluate our lifestyle and set healthy goals. Often, those goals stem from our body image.

Perception drives our mood when it comes to body image. We all know that bodies are different in size, shape and functionality. But the way we perceive our bodies in comparison with others can be complicated. When parents want to change the way they look and set unrealistic goals, or if they want to impose dramatic changes in diet or nutrition on a family, it's important to tread carefully.

Shiri Sadeh-Sharvit, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist specializing in body image and eating behaviors. She is also co-author of the book, "Parents with Eating Disorders: An Intervention Guide," an evidence-based, practical manual that aims to prevent disordered eating from being passed down through generations.

Feed kids good sense

"Kids see and hear everything, and that's how they make sense of the world," says Sadeh-Sharvit. They can internalize the statements and messages we make through our words and actions. "It is important to make sure what we 'feed' our kids, at dinner and through messages, is healthy."

And negativity inevitably trickles down to children. Parents should try to avoid speaking too harshly about calories and weight or making appearance-based comments, suggests Sadeh-Sharvit. "If parents talk negatively about bodies—even if only talking about their own body, their own silhouette and their own aesthetic goals—kids hear it all."

Risks for girls and boys

Criticism seems stronger related to females, so parents tend to focus more worry on girls, but boys can also be subjected to negative body image. In general, body standards for boys do cover a wider range in shape, weight and appearance than girls' perceived ideals. But a 2016 study in the *Journal of Pediatrics* found that among children ages 9 to 14, more than half of girls and boys were dissatisfied with their body shape.

And it begins even younger than that, according to Sadeh-Sharvit. She notes that studies have shown when children as young as 3 were given Barbie and Bratz or Ken and Hulk type dolls to play with, they quickly internalized the standards of beauty. Many preschool-aged girls and boys expressed negative body image after playing with dolls that exhibited an idealistic physique.

But dolls are just one aspect among the barrage of ads, television programs, magazines and people around us every day that display the distorted views of our culture when it comes to body goals. There is an abundance of unrealistic standards and criticism for those who can't meet them.

The impact of social media

For kids who are a bit older, does social media stir the pot? "Social comparisons have been always an immanent part of interpersonal interactions. The interest in what other people are experiencing and doing and comparing ourselves to them is what makes us human," notes Sadeh-Sharvit. Social media provides even more opportunities for weight stigma and body dissatisfaction.

"Many of the girls, boys and adults I work with tell me that they feel worse after watching other people's posts, especially when they wear bathing suits, look tanned or are very muscular. I recommend my clients to reduce their social media consumption and to consider unfollowing

or ‘muting’ accounts that make them feel negatively about their bodies and their relationships,” Sadeh-Sharvit says. “This is a huge concern that I wish more parents would discuss with their kids.”

It comes down to recognizing where the risks are, communicating and making the most of the positives. “Let’s not forget that social media could also be an avenue for activism and for connecting with people and groups that support body positivity,” she adds.

Opportunity and intervention

Sadeh-Sharvit reminds us that it’s absolutely natural for kids to notice body differences and feel inclined to point them out. “When kids start to talk about appearance, it can present opportunity to address health and nutrition, and that is a good thing.” But if the concerns seem driven by a child’s self-criticism or the criticism of others, if a child becomes less social, if habits change dramatically or if a parent gets a gut feeling that self-consciousness is going too far, it is good to talk about it with your child’s pediatrician.

The pediatrician can check BMI and developmental growth curves to determine if there are any abnormalities, stunted growth, increased weight gain or other things going on. Puberty can be an especially tricky time for self-image, and the pediatrician can help reassure your child that the changes they are going through are normal phases. A pediatrician visit can also be a great opportunity for a non-parent authority figure to chat with kids and get a feel for whether their perception of their own appearance is healthy. If it is not, they can help create a plan to guide your child to a happier, healthier self-image.

Model healthy messages

Girls as young as 5 sometimes talk about dieting or restricting foods, saying that if they eat sweets they should walk around the block afterwards, etc. Those ideas are most likely mirroring what they hear at home. In examining your child’s views on body image, be prepared to hear that some of what is driving their self-criticism is coming from you—from the things you say and do, even unintentionally.

“Parents certainly aren’t likely to try to sabotage a child’s self-esteem, but it’s always a good idea to take a personal inventory of the way you model health ideals,” Sadeh-Sharvit says. “Parents can reinforce positive health ideals—micronutrients, what it is to be healthy, diverse food consumption (kids need carbs), a focus on being strong and healthy and confident.”

Help kids discover how capable and awesome their bodies can be by finding outlets for activity that suit the child’s individual interests and personality—whether it is through organized sports, fitness classes or just running around and climbing at the park. Encourage them to realize that their body is designed to do amazing things when they make healthy choices to fuel it thoughtfully and move it regularly. ■

Courtney McGee is a freelance writer, cancer warrior, runner/triathlete and compulsive Candy Crusher. She lives in Towson with her husband and their three children and high-maintenance rescued hound dog.



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Gifted With Learning Disabilities

What it really means to be twice-exceptional

BY AMY L. FREEMAN

Now and then throughout my son's childhood, I wondered whether something was amiss. For example, the way he wrote certain letters seemed odd, like starting at the bottom of a "p," where I would start at the top. He often couldn't follow what I thought was a clear a series of instructions, such as "Go upstairs, get your homework, put on socks." He'd start a freehand drawing, scribble a few lines, then seem to lose interest.

I knew he was smart; he started reading at age 2. So when it came to his penmanship, I figured he'd work it out. When he couldn't follow instructions, I assumed he just wasn't paying attention. When he seemed disinclined to draw, I hoped he'd find other hobbies.

Then in fifth grade his academics started to sputter—a sprinkling of Cs and Ds among the As. I reached out to his teachers, the school learning specialist and finally, a neuropsychological testing service. They diagnosed him with attention deficit disorder (ADHD), executive functioning and motor-sensory integration challenges and also giftedness.

That was the first time I heard the term "twice-exceptional" or 2E used to describe someone who is gifted and has learning disabilities. Once I realized I was raising a 2E, I knew had to change how I parented, so I reached out to Paul Rubenstein, a Maryland-certified therapist with degrees in special education and clinical social work. Although he's my son's therapist, he's helped me, and my son, rebuild the way my son must approach tasks both at home and at school.

"Children who are 2E are often misunderstood and often misunderstand themselves," says Rubenstein, whose own son read at a college level in fourth grade but couldn't tell time until he was 14. "Imagine what that feels like from the inside out: a brain that moves at supersonic

speed in one area but at a snail's pace in another."

But 2Es are hard to spot. "Sometimes giftedness camouflages learning challenges, sometimes attentional problems mask superior cognitive ability," says Rubenstein. He suggests parents faced with what they feel is an underachieving child shouldn't just assume the child is slacking. Rather, they should ask themselves, "What's going on with my kid?"

"If parents are baffled by a child who has terrific ability but underperforms, it's wise to consider why this happens rather than relying on the intangible and relatively useless bromide of 'just try harder,'" he says.

In Rubenstein's experience, a child who seems capable beyond her years but can't write a coherent sentence, or who completes his homework but never turns it in, is probably not lazy or unmotivated. The biggest clue that a child is twice-exceptional is if the child is bright but just can't seem to perform as their intellect indicates they should.

While parents should ask "why" a child is struggling, Rubenstein says schools must ask the "what" and "how" questions. Simply knowing that students can be both gifted and learning disabled goes a long way. Because 2Es can have such a broad range of gifts and disabilities, he urges schools with whom he works to look at the individual child's strengths, learning styles and specific needs for accommodation.

Unfortunately, 2Es are frequently under identified and their struggles often dismissed because their giftedness can make their rollercoaster grades or erratic performances look like laziness. This puts them at risk for depression, anxiety, underachievement and social withdrawal. "Parents and schools can mitigate much of the stress and anxiety by identifying kids who are 2E and naming the complexities of being both gifted and learning disabled," says Rubenstein.

Meanwhile, the newly diagnosed 2E child might have emotional issues to unpack, as they work to recalibrate their own self-worth.

"2E kids have a lot of knowledge about themselves that's often hard to express," says Rubenstein. A 2E's inability to easily do what they see their peers doing, or what they think they should do, can cause intense distress, as they struggle with heavy pressure to perform and as they try to dig out from having been labeled as "slacking off."

I remember the day I tiptoed into my son's bedroom to share his diagnoses with him, worried the label would upset him. Instead, he punched a fist in the air and

shouted, "I knew it wasn't my fault!"

With new supports in place, he's improving, albeit more slowly than he (or I) wants. But at least now, if someone tells him he needs to "try harder," he can tell them he needs to "try differently." ■

Amy L. Freeman's bylines include The Washington Post, Parents.com, HuffPost, GoodHousekeeping.com and many others, including the 2018 Writer's Resist Anthology. She divides her time between freelance writing and serving as Development Director for The Writer's Center in Bethesda, MD.

"If parents are baffled by a child who has terrific ability but underperforms, it's wise to consider why this happens rather than relying on the intangible and relatively useless bromide of 'just try harder.'"

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According to the Journal of Pediatrics, 3.2 percent of children between the ages of 3 and 17 have been diagnosed with depression.

Depression and Disability

What parents and caregivers need to know

BY ERICA RIMLINGER

Depression in all children, with or without a disability, remains prevalent. According to a study published in the March 2019 issue of the Journal of Pediatrics, 3.2 percent of children between the ages of 3 and 17 have been diagnosed with depression.

Adolescents with disabilities, particularly those with autism, have a higher risk for depression, multiple studies have found. However, those studies vary widely on how much higher this risk may be. Further complicating matters, developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders can mask the signs and symptoms of depression—or at least the ability to report one's symptoms. This makes making it more difficult to detect depression or anxiety in a child, not just for researchers, but for parents and families as well.

Washington FAMILY spoke with Dr. Carmen López-Arvizu, medical director of the Kennedy Krieger Institute's psychiatric mental health program, about this issue. López-Arvizu treats individuals with psychiatric illness in the context of developmental disabilities and is also a faculty member in the department of psychiatry at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Is having a disability a risk factor for depression?

Not all disabilities are the same and we can't generalize the risks of mental health comorbidities. There are not many studies specifically investigating the mental health of individuals with intellectual disabilities beyond prevalence reporting. We are seeing more studies coming out on autism, but we lack the lifelong trajectory data on individuals with mental health problems. The National Institute of Mental Health estimated in 2017 that approximately 19 percent of all adults over 18 in the U.S. live with mental illness. They do not separate disability from that number.

Are children with autism at greater risk for depression? There have been conflicting studies on this.

Yes, the results are conflicting because it depends on the population's language and cognitive function. It reflects the difference between those who are able to communicate their depressive symptoms and the ones who are unable to do so. Research is less inclusive of the lower functioning individuals with regards to mental health.

How can parents tell the difference between the expected mood changes of childhood/teenage years and a mood disorder?

We need to keep a closer eye on our adolescents with disabilities as the symptomatology might be subtle. Parents are the best advocates for their children. They are the first to notice a difference in mood or behavior. When that happens, it is a priority to consult with their primary care doctor to rule out any condition that can be addressed that might affect behavior. We often see ear or urinary infections that present with behavioral changes. We should never assume a situation is behavioral or primary to the disability.

If there is a concern that seems more severe or there is no identifiable physical cause, the time to take action is as soon as possible. We should not let the stigma of a psychiatric evaluation get in the way of seeking mental health support.

What experience or qualifications should a parent seek in a mental health practitioner if their child has autism?

It depends on what you are trying to address. It should be a psychologist who uses evidence-based treatments that have been studied in autism or in the specific difficulties that are the target for treatment

such as anxiety, depression or poor social skills. If the patient is not verbal and the goal is to address challenging behaviors, you will need a behavioral psychologist. If you don't know where to start, seeing a neurologist, a developmental pediatrician or a child psychiatrist who has experience in treating individuals with autism can be helpful, as they can guide you on the more specific treatment approaches indicated for the presenting problem.

Is there a difference in the way depression is diagnosed in kids with disabilities?

The criteria are the same. The difference is in how to ask the questions that represent the symptoms. It takes experience and tact to do a full review of symptoms. Diagnosis and treatment of mental health conditions in persons with developmental disabilities can be challenging and has to be adapted to the individual. Limitations in their ability to self-report symptoms of mental distress may mean that healthcare needs can go unrecognized and unmet. Healthcare professionals report feeling unqualified and uncomfortable caring

for patients with disabilities. Disability education should be part of cultural competency requirements in medical education.

Is there a difference in treatment?

Psychopharmacological treatment is similar. Much more difficult is to find clinicians who are educated or willing to learn about this population. We notice this more when psychotherapy is indicated. Trained clinicians who understand disabilities, either physical—for example, spina bifida or cerebral palsy—or cognitive, like intellectual impairment or autism, are very rare. At Kennedy Krieger Institute, we are lucky to have them, but families report this is a barrier to obtain treatment or even an initial evaluation.

Are there preventative steps parents of kids with disabilities can take to forestall depression?

Yes, to a degree. We know social environments are increasingly being recognized as contributors to poor mental and physical health. Environmental contributors are highly relevant to the health of persons with developmental disabilities. Well-identified

examples are the lack of adequate social interactions and feelings of exclusion and accessibility to the world in general.

Literature has shown individuals with cerebral palsy and comorbid neurodevelopmental disorders have a higher risk of mental health disorders. However, a diagnosis of CP or another developmental disability alone brings a higher risk for inadequate access to health care and health screenings, trauma from abuse, neglect or intrusive therapeutic procedures, poverty related to unemployment and underemployment and social isolation stemming from communication difficulties, transportation barriers and limited social opportunities. All these factors can be treatable and modifiable to avoid their contribution to primary depression or anxiety.

We still have much to do. We know that community support, standards of living and working conditions and opportunities, as well as political and economic factors, affect access to care for identification and treatment of mental illness.

However, one determinant of positive outcome is family involvement and advocacy. They can make all the difference. ■

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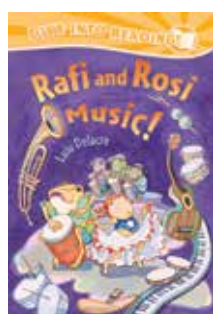
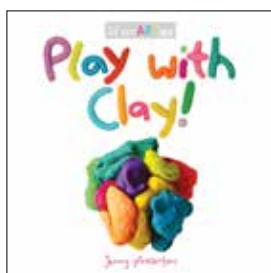
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12 Children's Books About Art and Creativity

Some people use their creativity to rebel against bullies, some use it to avoid bedtime. From smushing clay to trying stand-up, these recent releases feature characters exploring art and creativity in a wide-range of activities and situations, sparking plenty of imagination in readers of all ages.

BY JENNIFER ROTHCHILD, COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT LIBRARIAN, ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



YOUNG READERS

'Rafi and Rosi Music'

By Lulu Delacre

Even though they're tree frogs, Rafi and Rosi still deal with normal sibling tensions. Luckily their shared love of Puerto Rico's music and dances gives them common ground in their relationship.

'Beautiful Shades of Brown: The Art of Laura Wheeler Waring'

By Nancy Churnin and Felicia Marshall

Growing up, Laura didn't see many paintings of people who looked like her. When she became an artist, she spent hours mixing different shades of browns to use in her paintings. Pair this book with a trip to the National Portrait Gallery to see her work in person.

'Vera Vance: Comics Star'

By Claudia Mills,

illustrated by Grace Zong

Vera loves her after-school program about making comics, but her mother isn't sure of its educational value. Although Vera has a hard time saying what she wants, she finds her voice in the comics she creates.

PICTURE BOOKS

'Play with Clay'

By Jenny Pinkerton

A blob of clay becomes a ball, a snake, a flower and more as it gets smushed and coiled and played with in this fun board book.

'Friday Night Wrestlefest'

By JF Fox,

illustrated by Micah Player

Bedtime has never been as much fun as this playful wrestling match between Dangerous Daddoo and his kids Peanut Brother and Jellyfish. Things really get going when Mama-Rama and Big Bald Baby enter the ring.

'Pitter Pattern'

By Joyce Hesselberth

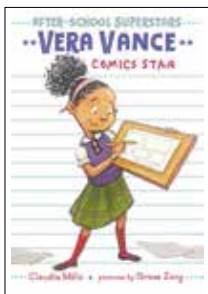
Lu notices patterns everywhere she goes — from the diamonds on the wallpaper to the notes in a song. Young readers will love looking through the illustrations to see all the patterns they can find, too.

MIDDLE GRADE

'The Mystwick School of Musicraft'

By Jessica Khoury

All Amelia wants is to be a Maestro — the most powerful magical musicians — and the Mystwick School of Musicraft is the first step.



But when she finds out she was admitted by mistake, she has two months to prove she belongs.

'The Boy Who Became a Dragon'

By Jim Di Bartolo

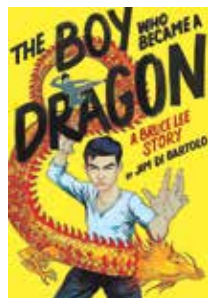
This graphic novel biography is a great introduction to martial artist and movie star Bruce Lee. A child actor, he was known for getting into fights until he enrolled in martial arts school. He combined his talents for a successful career until his early death.



'Me and Banksy'

By Tanya Lloyd Kyi

Dominica's school has a new state-of-the-art security system, but someone is leaking footage online to embarrass students. When the teachers don't seem overly concerned, Dominica and her friends launch a Banksy-inspired protest while searching out the bully.

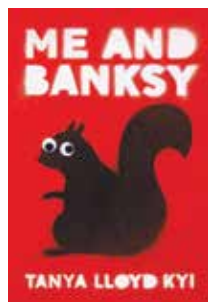


YOUNG ADULT

'The Plain Janes'

By Cecil Castellucci, illustrated by Jim Rugg

After moving to the suburbs, Jane befriends several other girls with the same name and they start a guerrilla art group to change their lives and town. This reissue combines the original 2007 release, 2008's "Janes in Love" and a brand-new story.



'Crying Laughing'

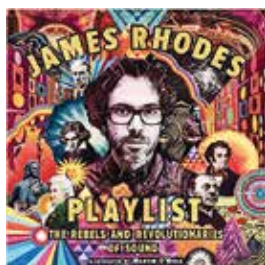
By Lance Rubin

Winnie knows she's funny, but after a disastrous stand-up set at her bat mitzvah, she's given up performing. She reconsiders her stance when asked to join the school improv team, finding a place to laugh when other aspects of her life start to spin out of control.

'Playlist: The Rebels and Revolutionaries of Sound'

By James Rhodes, illustrated by Martin O'Neill

A classical pianist, Rhodes introduces readers to composers and music that may initially seem dull, showing how they lived their lives like rock-stars and how their work laid the musical foundations for everything that came after. ■



Happy Birthday, Ezra Jack Keats!

Each month we celebrate a birthday of literary significance

Ezra Jack Keats was born in Brooklyn, New York, on March 11, 1916. As a young child, Keats loved the arts and spent most of his time drawing and painting. At the age of 8, he entered the workforce, earning a living as a sign-painter.



As time went by, Keats continued to perfect his craft and received several awards for excellence in art, which served as much needed motivation in an industrial world.

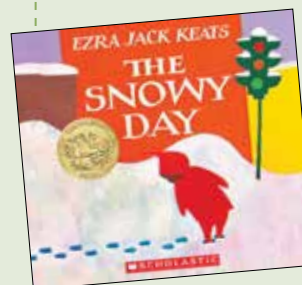
Following graduation and the sudden death of his father, Keats committed himself to becoming an artist. He was hired to illustrate a number of children's books, leading him to coauthor the children's book "My Dog Is Lost!" with Patt Cherr in 1960. The first book he wrote and illustrated himself, "The Snowy Day," was one of the only books of its time to feature a child of color as the protagonist. It won the Caldecott Medal in 1963.

Keats' books are renowned for their multiracial characters and inner-city sceneries. Born to a Jewish family during the Great Depression (his given name was Jacob Ezra Katz), Keats understood the hardships caused by poverty and cultural discrimination and wanted every child to feel included in his stories. His life work embodies his dedication to illustrating the lives of children who are often underrepresented in literature.

Keats wrote 22 children's book and illustrated 85 children's books, including "Whistle for Willie," "Peter's Chair," and "Pet Show." In 1980, Keats was awarded The University of Southern Mississippi

Medallion for outstanding contributions in the field of children's literature. He died on May 6, 1983 at the age of 67. ■

—MAYA HENRY



Meet Suann Song

BY PJ FEINSTEIN



OCCUPATION: Founder and Creative Director of Appointed

LIVES: Chevy Chase, MD

WORKS: Ivy City, D.C.

HUSBAND: Eugene Hong

CHILDREN: Ike, 13 and Novie, 2

We're looking for local parents who are juggling multiple priorities, including work, passion projects or hobbies, to feature in our new Mom/Dad Life column. Send your nominations to editor@washingtonfamily.com.

What do you love about the work you do?

I'm so fortunate to have my dream job. I have loved paper, design and organization (yes, organization!) for as long as I can remember. And the fact that I get to create products and a brand that revolves around those three things is pretty great.

What do you love about being a mom?

I have two kids—a 13-year-old boy and 2-year-old girl—so each day is very different, busy and full. And sometimes it gets to be a lot while running a growing company, but I do love having such a full life and being able to create a happy and healthy home life for my kids.

What's something that makes juggling motherhood and your career a little bit easier?

I try to have a flexible work schedule. I leave the office at 4 p.m. every day so that I'm able to pick up my kids from school. I've come to realize and accept that you can't do it all and you have to make concessions to make both work, and that it's OK.

What do you love about raising kids in the D.C. area?

I think D.C. is one of the best areas to raise kids. I love the accessibility and the diversity in activities for both my toddler and teenager. For our toddler, we love Imagination Stage, Nook (which just opened a new location closer to us in Bethesda) and the National Zoo. With our teenager, we explore D.C.'s great food scene and try to catch a good play or show at the Kennedy Center or Warner Theater. We also love the schools that our kids go to and feel very fortunate for the education they are able to have here.

What's something your family loves to do together?

We love to travel. Whether it's an overnight trip within driving distance or flying to the beach, both of my kids love to travel and a good hotel! We usually squeeze in a trip every other month, and we take one international trip a year—last year it was Japan. Close-by, we like to go to Philadelphia or New York by train. We also recently drove to Pittsburgh, which has a great children's and science museum and great food. This spring break we're looking forward to flying to Panama City, Florida, and visiting Rosemary Beach, which is a very charming and quaint beach town.

How do you take care of your mental and physical health?

Running and yoga are essentials for me. I try to attend at least one yoga class a week. Down Dog Yoga in Georgetown and Core Power Yoga in Tenleytown are my favorite; I consider Core Power's Yoga Sculpt class a perfect workout. And I run three times a week. It's my favorite time to both unwind and think. I come up with some of my best ideas for work while running. My favorite place to run is through Rock Creek Park.

What are five things you can't live without?

iPhone, notebook, coffee, snacks (nuts, chocolate and Puree Juice for me, and granola bars, goldfish crackers and trail mix for the kids) and a good book. I recently finished Bob Iger's "The Ride of a Lifetime" and highly recommend it.

What would you do if you had one hour without any responsibilities?

A manicure! That's a luxury that I usually get around to doing a couple of times a year. ■

Read our extended interview with Suann Song at washingtonfamily.com.

NOMINATIONS HAVE STARTED



Nominate your favorite people, places and things in the DMV!

The winners are chosen by popular vote, so let your friends know it's time to cast their ballot. As a business, share with your audience to help you win the title of "Best" in your category!



Nominations close March 9

Voting for the winners starts on April 1. Winners will be contacted in June, and the results will be in the July issue of Washington FAMILY magazine.

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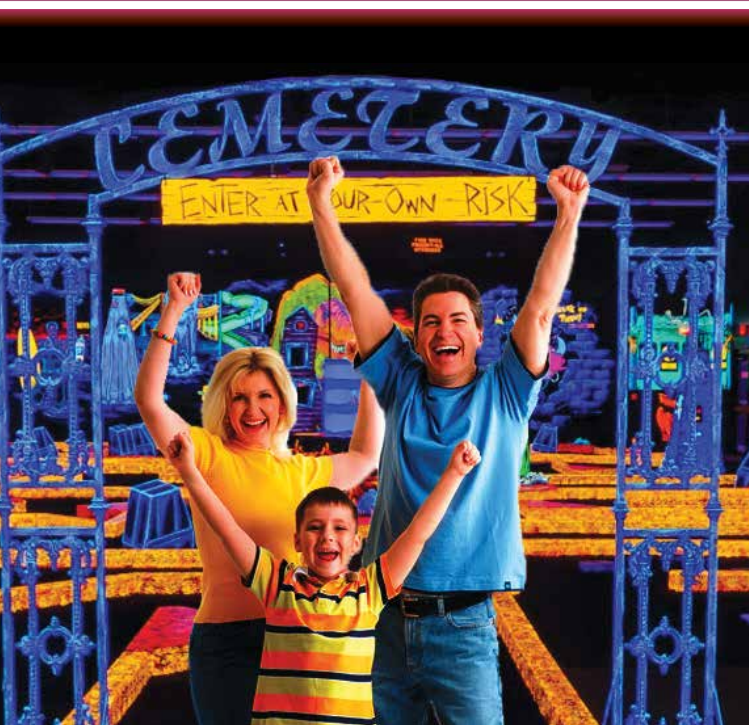


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