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DIRECTORIES
INSIDE

Washington FAMILY

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NOVEMBER 2021

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DMV Mom Mimi Markopoulos

Celebrates
Thanksgiving
with Family

Adoption
Competency

Choose-and-Cut
Christmas Trees

Kids & COVID-19
Vaccines



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Parents await approval of the COVID-19 vaccine for 5- to 11-year-old kids. **Page 28**



STEVE BOURSIQUOT/ALL OR NOTHING STUDIOS

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

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Special Series



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Events



Family Matters
Family Fun



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In the Spirit of Giving

Well before Black Friday—or Thanksgiving week, for that matter—the hype for holiday shopping begins. Soon we find ourselves scrolling on our devices to check out all the “stuff” that will be on store shelves, on sale and on our radar. Every year, the holiday shopping momentum starts earlier and gets more intense.

Last year, Statista presented results of a survey that asked U.S. consumers how much money they plan to spend on Christmas gifts for their children. Twenty-four percent of respondents reported between \$50 to \$100 per child, and 17% said their spending was more than \$200 per child.

While some may view November as the prelude to the holiday shopping season, isn't it time we focused on cultivating a spirit of giving and service? One of the most gratifying ways to enjoy this season is doing some good for others. In this issue, staff writer Eleanor Linafelt details several volunteer opportunities available for parents and kids in our area (page 26).

November is National Adoption Month, a time when

we focus on the unique needs that adoptive families face. Our feature on adoption competency (page 15) illustrates how specialized training can help mental health professionals effectively understand and respond to the needs, challenges and experiences of children and their foster, adoptive and kinship families.

Finally, it's my pleasure to greet you as the new editor for *Washington FAMILY*. I'm looking forward to meeting you on this page and sharing what you can find inside this magazine with you. We at *Washington FAMILY* want to make our publication a true resource for you and your family. Our staff welcomes your ideas for future stories. Email me at mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com.

I hope that you and your family will be inspired to do something good and give back to those in need in the DMV. *Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!* ■

Michael Vyskocil



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HERE'S WHAT WE'RE LOVING FOR KIDS THIS MONTH

BY ELENA EPSTEIN,
DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL
PARENTING PRODUCT AWARDS

For more product reviews, visit nappaawards.com

MARIAGISINA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Corner Crush

Drop your tokens into the rotating tower and play around the corners to score four in a row. Explore this fun game of memory and strategy with a twist. \$19.99, ages 7+, biggcreative.com

Discovery #MINDBLOWN Career Play Doctor Kit

This 32-piece deluxe playset features an anatomy model, blood-pressure monitor, clipboard, working kid's stethoscope, eye chart and more. \$32.50, ages 6+, discoverymindblown.com/products



Marshall's Transforming City Fire Truck

Fresh from the new "PAW Patrol," this set features the tallest ladder, rescue slide and net and a water cannon with projectiles. You'll also find a Marshall pup figure. \$54.99, ages 3+, spinmaster.com

CoComelon Bedtime JJ Doll

This musical friend comes with seven sounds and phrases. Just squeeze JJ's tummy and listen as he says iconic phrases and plays a clip of the "Yes, Yes Bedtime" song! \$19.99, ages 18 months+, jazzwares.com/brands/cocomelon



LEAVES: OLGA KOPYLOVA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



Adora Amazing Girls 18-inch Claire Doll

Your child can enjoy hours of imaginative play with this new friend who is confident, ambitious and entrepreneurial. Her new hobby is making and selling jewelry with her mom and best friend. \$46.73, ages 6+, [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Disney Ring It On

Race to find matches for your Disney characters. Make time to play this easy, fast-paced game for kids and families. \$14.99, ages 6+, [playmonster.com](https://www.playmonster.com)

Mickey and Friends Magical Treats

Order lunch from a magical food truck and help sort everything out by matching colors, food, characters or the number of stars on each card. \$19.99, ages 8+, [ravensburger.us](https://www.ravensburger.us)



Ryan's World: Chef Ryan's Fridge Surprise

Find all 15 surprises inspired by Ryan's favorite treats in this giant refrigerator, featuring lights, sounds and a working ice cube dispenser and dry-erase board. \$49.99, ages 3+, [justplayproducts.com/products/ryans-world-chef-ryans-fridge-surprise](https://www.justplayproducts.com/products/ryans-world-chef-ryans-fridge-surprise)



Angel High

Trendy pint-size dolls feature stylish and swappable fashion accessories. Each doll includes 10 surprises. Why not collect all seven dolls? \$9.99, ages 3+, [zuru.com/brands/jitty-bitty-pretties/angel-high](https://www.zuru.com/brands/jitty-bitty-pretties/angel-high)

{TOP 10}

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN

November Activities for Families

Explore these fun activities in and around the Washington, D.C. area



THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

LIFE OF A NEURON

Introduce your little ones to the wonder of the human brain with a visually stimulating experience at Washington, D.C.'s Artechouse. Families can discover together as they "walk through a neuron" from prebirth to death in this immersive learning experience created in collaboration with the Society for Neuroscience.

Tickets start at \$17 (free for children ages 4 and younger.) Ages 16 and younger must be accompanied by an adult ages 18 or older. artechouse.com/category/dc

NOV. 4, 5 & 10

TINY TOT: FLUFF AND FEATHERS

Spend the day with your toddler learning about nature through hands-on learning. Children ages 18 to 35 months will get some one-on-one time with a family member doing activities such as songs, crafts, finger plays and mini hikes at the Long Branch Nature Center at Glencarlyn Park in Arlington, Virginia. *Free. Register online or call 703-228-4747. parks.arlingtonva.us*



NOV. 4, 5 & 11

NO SCHOOL ART DAY CAMP

Students out of school for holidays and other scheduled days off can spend their time from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Create Arts Center doing projects such as painting, drawing, sculpture and collage. Designed to line up with Montgomery County Public Schools, DC Public Schools and several local private and charter schools, the day camp in downtown Silver Spring offers a fun and stimulating alternative to the school day.

Admission is \$75 per day; \$8 per day for before care and \$20 per day for after care. createartscenter.org



THROUGHOUT NOVEMBER

LUMINOCITY FESTIVAL HOLIDAY LIGHTS AT ROER'S ZOOFARI

Immerse yourself in a wonderland of light at Roer's Zoofari in Vienna, Virginia. Festival mascot Lumi will take children of all ages and family members through the LuminoCity Festival, a festive outdoor experience featuring towering lit-up sculptures of animals and other artwork. *Tickets start at \$22. luminocityfestival.com*



NOV. 7

PAW FESTIVAL AT HAPPY TAILS DOG PARK

Bring Fido to his own festival in Crownsville, where he can get a professional fall mini photo session, toys and free snacks and treats. You'll find plenty of things to do for the rest of the family to enjoy too, including food trucks, alcoholic drinks for adults and fall crafts and games. The festival runs from noon to 8 p.m.

Tickets are \$5 (or free to dog park members) and the cap is 100 guests. The first 50 to register online will receive a free swag bag. Pre-register for the photoshoot running between noon and 4 p.m. happytailspetresort.com



NOV. 11 & 18

KIDDIE CONDUCTOR TROLLEY TIME

All aboard! The National Capital Trolley Museum is hosting "Kiddie Conductor Trolley Time," a special series for toddlers ages 12 to 36 months. Each session will have a story, sensory activity, craft and trolley ride. November's themes are "Welcome Fall" on Nov. 11 and "Happy Thanksgiving" on Nov. 18.

Tickets are \$15 per class; adults are free with child admission. dctrolley.org



NOV. 13

15TH ANNUAL PARADE OF TRABANTS

Families can learn a bit of history—and have some fun too—with the Cold War-era Trabant car. The International Spy Museum holds the only Trabant rally in the United States, bringing the rare East German cars (rumored to have been made of cardboard) to L'Enfant Plaza. Experts will be on hand to share stories over festive music from the Alte Kameraden German Band. Enter a raffle to win a ride in a Trabant, try some Berlin-style graffiti or climb into tiny spaces in the way those escaping East Berlin did. *Free. spymuseum.org*



NOV. 14

FAMILIES OUTSIDE: FOREST HIKE

Put on your sturdy shoes and get ready to hike up to 1 mile exploring the John Hayes Forest Preserve at Croydon Creek Nature Center in Rockville. The naturalist-led midday excursion will give families an opportunity to see what lives and grows around the center.

Admission is \$6. Registration is required, and children must be accompanied by adults. rockvillemd.gov



NOV. 20

THE ROARING TWENTIES

Girl Scouts can "travel back in time" a century to the 1920s to learn about the women who lived and worked at Tudor Place Historic House and Garden in Washington, D.C. in this 1½-hour (one-hour virtual) event. Brownies can earn a Dancer badge, and Juniors can earn a Playing the Past badge by creating a 1920s character and planning a living history party.

Tickets are \$10. Registration is required. tudorplace.org



NOV. 20

BLENDED FAMILY DAY BOOK LAUNCH

Blended families of all types can gather together for an all-day event including a meet and greet and reading from author Zoie Seay with her new children's book "The Luckiest Child: Becoming a Blended Family." From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., families can enjoy free crafts and games for all ages, an art lesson for teens and free seminars from family therapists, coaches and professionals. Local vendors, hot lunch and a silent auction will also be available at Moose Loyal Order Arl, in Falls Church, Virginia.

Tickets are \$12 for children, \$18 for adults or \$55 for two adults and two children (which includes two raffle tickets). arlington1315.org



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Creating Family Experiences Through Crafting

By day, Mimi Markopoulos works as a realtor throughout Washington, D.C. and Maryland, but her passion is spending time at home with her family doing crafts, sharing recipes and other lifestyle tips.

"You know how some people like to meditate or do yoga? Me ... I like to craft and like to create things," she says. "That's my time to just unwind and think. It's very therapeutic for me."

Her lifestyle blog, *Life on Crosscut Way*, chronicles her home life in Damascus, Maryland, with her husband, George, and her daughters, Sofia, 6, and Olivia, 5.

"Anything I buy for myself to do, I buy for them too," Markopoulos says of her daughters.

Markopoulos fell in love with crafting about two years ago, and with time at home during the COVID-19 pandemic and an interest in social media and content creation, the blog felt like a natural fit. People love her organizing tips the most, she says, and she draws inspiration from Pinterest and the holidays especially (see her ideas for a children's Thanksgiving table on page 12).

Washington FAMILY caught up with Markopoulos to learn more about what inspires her and how she balances family life with blogging full time.

What inspired you to start a lifestyle blog? When did you realize it was really resonating with people?

I was always so inspired by other bloggers and spent so much time on social media that I decided it only makes sense to share my tips and tricks as well.

In what ways has your family gotten involved?

My husband is my biggest cheerleader. He helps me every step of the way. My kids have gotten involved with my partnerships and have earned their first paychecks at 4 and 6 years old! We naturally do everything together as a family, so sharing all of that has been quite organic.

FAMILY FAVES

RECIPE: *I'd have to say our favorite is s'mores quesadillas!*

CRAFT TO DO WITH THE FAMILY: *Anything involving painting*

LIFE HACK: *Pack lunches the night before—trust me.*

WAY TO SPEND A WEEKEND WITH YOUR DAUGHTERS: *Crafting together for sure*

BOOK TO READ TOGETHER: *"Someday" by Alison McGhee (it makes me cry every single time)*

VACATION SPOT: *We really love Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, sooo much.*

RAINY-DAY ACTIVITY: *Crafting!*

What do your kids like the most?

My kids love all of the things I create for my blog. They tell me countless times a day how much they love my creativity. They were so proud of me when I was featured as a Michaels and Cricut Official Maker. I am so proud to be able to show my kids how to create a career out of a passion and to go after what you love and believe in.

As a working parent, how do you balance creating and crafting for the blog with everything else?

Very simple ... I include my kids when I craft. They absolutely love creating with me. I also find myself staying up late to get things done around the house.

What do you love about being a parent?

I love watching my kids grow into kind girls. I love how they love me unconditionally. ■

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN

5 PLACES TO CHOOSE OR CUT YOUR OWN CHRISTMAS TREES IN THE DMV

Are you looking for family-friendly activities to do with your kids this holiday season? If you've already grabbed your pictures with Santa, load up the car and make a trip to choose or cut your own Christmas tree. Whether you're looking for variety, pet-friendly options or shopping and snacking spots, this list of farms in Northern Virginia, Maryland, D.C. and beyond has you covered.

JOE'S TREES

5110 Cumberland Gap Road

Newport, Virginia

Open Nov. 13 | Tuesday through Sunday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For a festive experience, head to this Newport choose-and-cut farm for weekend hayrides after Thanksgiving for \$1 (free for ages 5 and younger), possible Santa sightings on weekends in early December and custom greenery and ornaments from the gift shop. Trees are hand-sheared and include Fraser, Canaan, concolor and Korean firs; white and Scotch pines; Colorado blue and Norway spruces and arborvitae ranging from 6 to 15 feet.
540-544-7303. joestrees.com

MEADOWS FARMS NURSERIES & LANDSCAPE

Multiple locations including Frederick, Maryland, and Manassas, Leesburg, Herndon, Great Falls and Chantilly in Virginia

Open Sunday, Oct. 31 through Wednesday, Nov. 24 (trees anticipated by Nov. 20) | Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. | Open Friday, Nov. 26, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

With many locations throughout Virginia and one in Frederick, Maryland, Meadows Farms Nurseries & Landscape offers plenty of options for families seeking Christmas trees this season. Activities vary at each location, but shoppers can expect refreshments such as hot chocolate, along with appearances from Santa. Tree varieties include Fraser, Douglas, concolor and balsam firs. 703-327-3940. meadowsfarms.com.

NAUGHTY PINE NURSERY

18200 Elmer School Road Dickerson, Maryland

Opens Friday, Nov. 26 | Weekends, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; weekday appointments if needed

Dogs are welcome to join the family in choosing a Christmas tree this season at this pet-friendly, family-owned and operated farm serving Montgomery County since 1992. Varieties available this year include choose-and-cut Douglas firs, Norway spruces and a limited supply of Colorado blue spruce trees. Precut Fraser and balsam firs will also be available. 301-842-7075. npnursery.com.

POTOMAC FARM MARKET

9045 Congressional Parkway

Potomac, Maryland

Opens Friday, Nov. 26 | Daily, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

This family-run farm market specializes in locally sourced goods and caters to its neighbors and nearby communities. Families shopping for Christmas trees can stop in for a festive photo-op with the farm's seasonal backdrop and select from precut

regional North Carolina Frasers, with some Douglas firs expected this year. The farm also carries wreaths and a large selection of firewood for those chilly, cozy nights.
240-620-9216. potomacfarmmarket.com.

SNICKERS GAP TREE FARM

34350 Williams Gap Road, Round Hill, Virginia

Opens Friday, Nov. 26 | Weekends, 9 a.m. to sunset; weekdays noon to sunset

More than 37,000 trees (in various stages of growth) abound amid views of the Loudoun Valley. Take a tractor ride to the lot and select from Mountain Slow Grown Douglas firs—which the farm has grown on site for 41 years—along with some Serbian spruces and young balsam firs. Also for sale are fresh, local and handmade wreaths and gifts, including lifetime tree stands handcrafted in Maryland. Snack on hot dogs and soft pretzels or warm up with hot spiced cider and hot chocolate.
540-554-8323. snickersgaptrees.com ■





How to Create a Kids THANKSGIVING TABLE

BY MIMI MARKOPOULOS

Every year, we have the honor of hosting Thanksgiving in our home. There is something special about getting together with your family to feast on delicious homecooked food, watch some football and enjoy everyone's company.

We normally host around 30 plus people, so we never have a traditional seated dinner for the adults. But the kids get their own table.

I believe making a special space for kids to enjoy Thanksgiving at their table enables them to express who they are and learn from peer interaction in a way that isn't as easy when sitting among all the adults.

My kids' table is different each year. I like to follow a theme, and I love to have something creative for the kids to do on it.

TABLE SETTINGS

When you're entertaining kids, keep your table settings simple. I am big on paper and plastic tableware. Make it pretty and make sure you can recycle the tableware.

This year, I bought the most adorable Meri Meri Turkey paper plates and placed them over a white "charger" with a rose gold rim. I use air quotes because they aren't chargers; they're plastic plates. They work well and look beautiful, and I guarantee you the kids won't miss the china.

AN ACTIVITY

I am huge on crafting and DIYs. This year, I decided to keep the table settings simple with coloring place mats.

If there's one thing kids love to do, it's coloring. Give them a coloring placemat and some crayons, and they are set. I think these place mats also give a fun youthful feel to the tablescape. I used miniature terra cotta plant pots to hold the crayons. I felt that it kept in theme with the setting and provided a fun and untraditional piece to the table.

THE CENTERPIECE

I love to create a picturesque moment, so the centerpiece always needs to be kid-friendly and aesthetically pleasing. I used two pumpkins from Michaels that I hand painted a few years ago. I placed my sea grass and straw turkey that I purchased from Target on a cake stand for some height

variation and set two candles between the turkey and the pumpkins. The kids felt that the items gave off a very grown-up vibe and loved it. The jute table runner over the white tablecloth anchored the centerpieces and completed the look.

Last year, we passed around a faux pumpkin and a pen and encouraged the kids to write something they are grateful for on it. This pumpkin was very special, and we still have it today. Anything you can do to encourage gratitude is fitting for Thanksgiving Day. ■

Editor's Note: Read more about mom and DIY lifestyle blogger Mimi Markopoulos from Damascus, Maryland, in our "Parent You Should Know" story on page 10.



Bethesda's **AIDEN ADAMS** Smashes YouTube with Music Video 'For Elise'

BY LINDSAY C. VANASDALAN



A day in the life of a 7-year-old child might include playing sports, attending school and hanging out with family and friends.

For Aiden Adams, his time also includes performing in music videos.

His song "For Elise"—an ode to his best friend—is a rock rendition of Beethoven's "Für Elise." The video was released on YouTube Sept. 4. Nearly a month later, it has more than 60,000 views. His YouTube channel has more than 8,000 subscribers. The song is also available on iTunes.

"This song is only for Elise./She holds the keys/To love and peace/For Elise," Aiden shares through his song.

The Montgomery Virtual Academy student lives in Bethesda with his parents and three siblings. Except for the guitar solo, Aiden arranged the song and wrote the lyrics. The choice of music came naturally. When he thought of the name Elise, the Beethoven composition just popped into his head, he says.

In the video, sweeping aerial shots show Aiden's shoulder-length hair flopping as he runs through a tree-lined field. The camera zooms in to show him plucking petals off a red rose and reclining in a velvet turquoise armchair.

"We were going for this really kind of glam rock 'n' roll look," says Aiden's father, Neal Adams.

But he was quick to point out that many of the creative ideas were his son's suggestions.

"He came up with a lot of the ideas on his own," Adams says. "He said, 'I want to be in this big field, and I want a pond nearby.'"

So they drove an hour and a half at 5 a.m. to Wolftap Farm, in Gordonsville, Virginia, and Aiden's older brother edited footage that his friend filmed on a drone, along with close-ups from Adams' phone.

"I felt very happy," Aiden says about the video's popularity online—although this experience is hardly the first time the 7-year-old has found fame.

His website, aidenbooks.com, shows

numerous video projects online—from mashups to fun challenges—and he has written five books. He even has fans. (A Miss Susan from his neighborhood brought him Legos because she liked his videos.)

Aiden wrote his first book about a search for sheep in New York City when he was only 4 years old. Adams illustrated most of the books, which are self-published on Amazon.

"Finally, it became real and I was so amazed," Aiden says. "I like imagination, and I like stories."

Adams says Aiden has always been keyed into his imagination.

"Even at the age of 2, he would sit with me at my desk, and I would have my papers that I worked on, and he wanted his own set of papers," he says.

Most of Aiden's stories have an underlying message or lesson—something very important to him. His first music video—released in March—was a song called "I Love You Earth," which featured a message about caring for the planet.

"It's important to send messages to the world that help the Earth and everyone on Earth," Aiden says. "My books also do that same thing. So that's my goal."

In fact, Aiden has a lot of goals in life. "I also want to be (an) actor. And also a doctor. And also a president. And a rock star," he says. But Adams says no matter what they are, Aiden's family will be there to support him.


"We're just letting him be a kid and do what he enjoys," he says. "My main goal is to encourage him and help him achieve his goals."

"And before they had kids, they were achieving their goals!" Aiden says of his parents.

Currently, Aiden's goals include releasing more books (his next book, "Buttons," is out this October) and starting a band. Once he has eight songs under his belt, Aiden says he'll perform them with others—including with Elise, who plays piano.

"We're really proud of him," Adams says. "He works very hard." ■

PROVIDED PHOTOS/NEAL ADAMS



FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS can be complicated. Families that come together through foster care, guardianship and adoption often experience added layers of complexity. One constant for all these families is the experience of loss. For some children and their parents and caregivers, these losses loom large, creating significant challenges. Families often fail to understand the significance of these losses and struggle to cope with and respond effectively to the unique experiences of grief, which can lead to difficulties in the household.

Some losses are more ambiguous than others and lack the finality that is necessary for an individual to come to a sense of peace and closure. Not knowing one's birth story, having missing information or having information but not knowing if or when you'll ever see birth family members again can create significant distress for children and youth.

Loss can also be further complicated when the child's adoptive family does not publicly acknowledge or support the child. The fact that the birth family may be physically gone from their lives doesn't mean that they are emotionally and psychologically absent. Further, many children also lose a sense of their identity if they are now being raised in families and communities that are culturally or ethnically different from their family of birth.

advocate for **ADOPTION COMPETENCY**

BY DAWN WILSON

Specialized training helps mental health professionals understand the needs, challenges and experiences of children and their foster, adoptive and kinship families

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When the losses we experience are not appropriately recognized and supported, it makes processing grief more difficult. This situation can impact the security and stability of the child's current family placement, possibly lending itself to the very disruption the child or youth fears.

Youth may experience happiness at feeling safe and secure in a foster home yet sadness that their birth parent was not able to provide such care. Other times children feel relieved to have the permanency of being adopted yet angry at the circumstances that led to adoption. They may also fear that this home may also not prove to be truly permanent. These complex feelings may lead children or youth to experience anxiety, depression or other behavioral and mental health challenges.

Imagine having all these complicated feelings at the same time while others are telling you how wonderful it must feel to be adopted. Of course, adoption is wonderful, and it is a significant protective factor, particularly for children and youth with traumatic and compromised beginnings who are at higher risks for developmental, health, emotional, behavioral and academic challenges. But the adoption doesn't erase the past. When children and parents lack supports from people who understand their unique needs, the stability of the home can be compromised.

These families need mental health

professionals with specialized training to understand the impact of loss and early adverse experiences and help youth and their families address the challenges they may be experiencing. This specialized training is called adoption competency.

ADOPTION COMPETENCY BENEFITS FOR FAMILIES

Many therapists and mental health professionals receive little to no specific training in graduate school on the needs and challenges of adoptive families. Studies conducted by both the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) and the North American Council on Adoptable Children indicate that adoptive parents often have difficulty finding services to meet their unique needs or had to go through multiple providers before finding a therapist who truly understands the issues and experiences relevant to adoption.

Untrained therapists who lack adoption competency will not be able to assess the situation accurately, which will impact treatment strategies leading to ineffective interventions.

Adoption-competent practices save families the stress and despair of implementing tools and responses in their homes that don't best serve the family's needs. Various adoption-capable supports can help and greatly assist in creating a holistic environment where families can thrive. When children have

support and services that help them process their past traumatic experiences, they are better able to develop healthy and appropriate coping skills. Similarly, when parents are provided with tools and strategies that make sense based on their adoption experiences, they can better provide support and stability for their children.

C.A.S.E. therapists have been trained under their own accredited, nationally recognized Training for Adoption Competency (TAC) program and have the skills, insight and experience to help families navigate the many obstacles that affect them. TAC is accredited by the Institute for Credentialing Excellence. This comprehensive, evidence-based training is designed exclusively for licensed mental health professionals providing clinical knowledge and skills needed to effectively serve the adoption kinship network.

THREE SIGNIFICANT REASONS WHY ADOPTION COMPETENCY MATTERS

Adoption competency has implications for everyone involved with adoptions.

I Adoption Competency Helps Kids and Families Thrive

Many children who experience foster care and adoption have experienced early trauma in their lives, which can lead to behavioral and mental health difficulties. The impact of these experiences compromise well-being in the family system.

Adoption competency refers to professionals who have had specific training about the needs,

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challenges and experiences of children and youth and their foster, adoptive and kinship families. Infusing adoption competency in the provision of casework and clinical practice is essential to keep kids and families strong. Adoption-competent supports help children with these unique experiences and create an environment where they can thrive.

II Adoption-Competent Practice Helps to Support Permanency

When children and parents don't have individuals who understand the needs of adoptive and foster families, it can affect the family's home life. This situation has a grave impact on children. Children who age out of foster care without a permanent family environment are at risk for a host of difficulties, including homelessness, substance abuse and mental health challenges.

When children have services that help them process their past traumatic experiences, including their grief and loss, they are better able to develop healthy and appropriate coping skills. Similarly, when parents are provided with tools and strategies that make sense based on their adoption experiences, they are better able to provide support and stability for their children.

Adoption RESOURCES for Families

The Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) is a national leader in mental health services for the foster care and adoption community. Visit adoptionsupport.org and WashingtonFAMILY.com for links to the following adoption resources:

A free family resource packet containing articles for the adoption, kinship and foster care community (downloadable at <https://adoptionsupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Resource-Packet-2.25.21-Final.pdf>).

Articles, fact sheets and podcasts on topics related to adoption and foster care (<https://adoptionsupport.org/education-resources/for-parents-families>).

Books and merchandise (<https://store.adoptionsupport.org/shop/booksandmerchandise>).

"Strengthening Your Family" live monthly webinar series (<https://adoptionsupport.org/syfwwebinars>).

III Families Will Get the Right Help

Research demonstrates that adoptive parents often have to go through multiple providers before finding a therapist who truly understands the issues and experiences relevant to adoption.

Untrained therapists who lack adoption competency will not be able to assess the situation accurately, which will impact treatment strategies leading to ineffective interventions. For many reasons, clinicians and caseworkers often

lack training specific to the adoption experience, limiting their abilities to practice effectively with this vulnerable population. Adoption-competent practices save families the stress and despair of implementing tools and responses in their homes that don't best serve the family's needs. ■

Dawn Wilson, MSW, is the director of the National Training Institute for the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.) based in Burtonsville, Maryland.

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confidently, think independently, and
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Ages Served: 3-10
Open House: Call to schedule a tour.

Mindfulness, nutrition, Spanish, dance,
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Discover this co-ed independent day school for infants to eighth graders in Falls Church, Virginia. Congressional School prepares young learners for future success, inspiring them to question, collaborate, create, and lead.

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Grades: Preschool-Grade 8
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As the area's leader in educating academically gifted children, Feynman School features extraordinary programs in science, math and language arts.

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Harmonia School offers outstanding performing arts programs. It includes instrumental and voice lessons and early childhood classes. Harmonia's theater department offers one of the finest musical theater and acting programs that culminate in productions. The classes are offered to all ages and all levels. Highly educated and experienced teachers provide the instruction.

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Tours are available by appointment

Children learn in an intimate and unpretentious atmosphere, where they respect themselves and others and care for the environment around them. Holly Brook offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries

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7209 Quiet Cove

Alexandria, VA 22003

703-354-3446

pincrestschooll.org

admissions@pincrestschooll.org

Ages: 3-12

Hours: 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.

Please email for more information.

Pinecrest School is a fully accredited progressive school offering small class sizes, hands-on curriculum, an individualized approach and a focus on a balance of academics and social and emotional well-being. Offers preschool through sixth grades, summer camp and before- and after-care services.

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1928 Isaac Newton Square West

Reston, VA 20190

703-481-2922

restonmontessori.com

office@restonmontessori.com

Hours: 7 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

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Children learn in an intimate and unpretentious atmosphere, where they respect themselves and others and care for the environment around them. Holly Brook offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help children develop more fully the potential within them. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of a child and offers individual attention to his or her whole development.

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Hunter Mill Montessori School provides an intimate and nurturing environment for children ages 2 years 9 months to 6-year-olds to develop their independence through the Montessori experience. Hunter Mill offers a complete educational and social environment and uses the discoveries and methods of Dr. Montessori to help children develop more fully the potential within them. The school provides a program specially suited to the needs of a child and offers individual attention to his or her whole development.

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AUTISM: Sensory Issues - & - Therapy Solutions

BY ANGELA WEST

CHILDREN DIAGNOSED WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) can often exhibit sensory issues such as hyper- or hypo-sensitivity to various stimuli. As many as 70% to 96% of those diagnosed with autism can display signs of sensory dysfunction. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association added sensory sensitivity to a list of symptoms that help diagnose ASD. Much like symptoms of autism, sensory dysfunction can vary widely. Children can quickly become overwhelmed and manifest their anxiety in disruptive behaviors. Those with sensory issues can have both hyper- and hypo-sensitivity across multiple senses or even the same sense at times.

Both types of sensory sensitivity affect how a child with autism processes and reacts to various stimuli. Some children may under-respond to stimuli and have low sensitivity to pain, which can cause them to rub their arms or legs, wear tight clothing or look for things to touch and taste. Others might recoil at loud sounds or bright lights.

To determine the best therapy solutions for your child, you should ask, "Is it a sensory issue that is causing a behavioral response?" The first step is to observe your child's behaviors and what leads to the reactions. Is there a loud noise before your child acts out? Does your child seek sensory experiences by taste and touch? These responses could be signs of hyper- or hypo-sensitivity. Since sensory dysfunction can cause added stress and anxiety, therapy is beneficial for mitigating responses and easing a child's fears.

A few therapy solutions can help your

child and your family work through sensory dysfunction. Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Therapy is a scientific, evidence-based treatment that uses positive reinforcement, data analysis, visual supports and parent and caregiver involvement. Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) can provide sensory mitigation techniques through sensory integration therapy and may work collaboratively with occupational and speech therapists.

Occupational therapy uses physical activities and strategies to guide children gradually through processing the sensory stimuli they encounter in their environment. Speech therapy can help with sensory-rich or sensory-reducing activities depending on the child's specific needs. Cognitive behavioral therapy uses gradual introduction to sensory stimuli to increase a child's tolerance as time progresses.

The best way to determine the most

appropriate therapy for your child is to seek an assessment with an autism service provider. During the evaluation, a therapist can test your child's sensory sensitivities and help work with you to find the best course of treatment.

In the meantime, you can also engage your child with sensory toys such as sensory mats, putty, sand, slime, squeeze balls, fidget spinners and more. A quick internet search for sensory toys for autism can provide additional options. ■

Angela West, M.S., BCBA, LBA, founder and chief clinical officer of Behavioral Framework (behavioralframework.com), is board-certified and licensed as a behavior analyst in Virginia and Maryland. With more than 15 years of mental health and ABA experience, Angela has diverse programming and behavior management knowledge. Angela has developed and expanded ABA programs in Maryland and Virginia.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that the right care from birth through childhood optimizes an individual's health and overall success in life. Is it any wonder that child care can be daunting for parents to navigate?

We asked several experts to help explain the nuances and trends of modern child care to make this vital subject less overwhelming and more empowering for parents.

The Cost of Child Care

Berna Artis, board president of the District of Columbia Association for the Education of Young Children, notes that many parents are forced to make their child care decisions based on cost. "High-quality education is expensive ... we want educated professionals who know child development, who know the science of it For that, we need a highly qualified workforce in this profession."

Tyrone Scott II, director of government and external affairs at First Up, an organization that champions high-quality early care in Southeastern Pennsylvania, points out the high-cost threshold. Sometimes two semesters of college can be less expensive than today's child care expenses. In another example of how the current child care landscape fails to be equitable, Artis notes that the vital child care providers are one of the groups of professionals in the United States who make the least amount of money.

The cost of high-quality care is a cost that, Artis argues, can't be passed on to families through tuition. She emphasizes advocating for public funding streams supporting early education expenses to allow more families to benefit from more high-quality programs.

Currently, low-income households may qualify for subsidized child care through their city's or state's early childhood services or Head Start programs across the nation.

An Emphasis on Early Learning

"With each passing year, there is more and more data to support the fact that the first five years of a child's life are crucial to their physical, emotional and social development," says Douglas Lent, communications director of Maryland Family Network, an organization that champions the interests of young children and their learning environments.

"These little brains are developing at an alarming rate—1 million new neural connections form every second," Lent adds.

Adults in children's lives are "always teaching them," he says, whether they're aware of it or not. While parents are a child's best and most important teachers, many parents can't be with their child 24 hours a day. This reality, he notes, explains how the idea of child care has transitioned into early learning.

"As brain research became more available ... child care providers wanted to use that (research) to improve the traditional care that was being given," Scott explains. "We also saw the advent of pre-kindergarten and Head Start programs around this time," which, when studied, showed many gains.

Although child care started as work support—and many families still use it for this purpose—providers saw the value in using this time to focus on children's development, Scott notes. "Practitioners moved from the old philosophy of 'watching' children to engaging and teaching them."

According to Artis, "We really need to focus on social and emotional development. If a child cannot regulate his or her feelings and cannot sit still and pay attention, academics will suffer naturally."

As such, early learning programs should be warm, nurturing and conducive to play. She explains, "Children learn everything through exploration and play because that's in their nature."

Child Care as Infrastructure

Modern child care is not limited to one specific format.

“What’s great about the early education system is that there is room for everyone. Each family has to make the choice of what is best for them,” says Scott. “While most people think of child care as a Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. service, there are providers who serve families overnight, on part-time bases and even with emergency drop-off services.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit and schools went remote, many child care organizations adjusted to take in more school-aged children for full day care to accommodate the needs of families, he adds.

At the same time, Lent says, the pandemic hit many child care providers hard. When many parents kept children home, organizations found themselves losing tuition. They also found themselves having to spend additional money on revising their health and safety procedures.

“We have seen many, many programs struggle during the pandemic. Some have closed their doors for good If more child care providers close their doors, there simply won’t be enough care to support the rest of the workforce,” Lent explains. This impact, he emphasizes, is why it is vital that policymakers see child care as infrastructure and support providers, parents and employers with solutions.

By Megan Conway

EARLY LEARNING CHILD CARE TRENDS IN 2021

A Focus on Philosophy and Approach

With this background information in mind, how can parents find the right option for their family’s needs?

Artis recommends that parents first look at the philosophy and approach of the child care program in question. “Is it research and evidence-based? Then the next would be the curriculum. Is it responsive to children’s needs, or is it just one size fits all?” she asks.

Artis also suggests that parents look for inviting environments—at the least a good mixture of instructors’ experience and educational backgrounds, the ability for children to play outdoors, a constructive approach to discipline and guidance and diversity in all ways.

Scott shares a promising development. Many states now have a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) that helps you recognize the level of care your child will receive. “The national standard of high-quality early education is still accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children,” he says.

In terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lent encourages parents not to be afraid to ask child care providers questions such as, “what are your sanitizing, drop-off and pickup, masking and vaccination policies?”

Advocacy and Action

“I think the big takeaway for parents,” Scott says, “is that we, as Americans, recognize the importance of high-quality early learning for our children. This (realization) is leading to many more states and local municipalities investing more in early learning. Fifteen years ago, I do not think a major city would have had families fighting for a sweetened beverage tax to pay for high-quality pre-kindergarten. We are moving to a system where the people caring for your infant are not just loving people, but highly trained professionals.”

And, if we continue to advocate for these ideas, our future generations will be better for it. ■

BY ELEANOR LINA FELT

Discover Family Volunteer Opportunities in the

DC



Volunteering as a family is an extraordinary way to give back to your community while spending quality time together. Many people in our communities are in need of support, and the Washington, D.C. metro region hosts many organizations that provide assistance with everything from food and baby diapers to housing.

The following volunteer opportunities in the DMV offer age-appropriate tasks for young helpers so that all members of your family can give back together.

ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ARLINGTON

2650 S. Arlington Mill Drive, Arlington, VA 22206
703-931-9241
awla.org

The Animal Welfare League of Arlington improves the lives of animals by providing resources, care and protection. The organization offers assistance to pet owners in need, including a free pet care essentials pantry and resources for those experiencing health or housing crises. One exciting volunteer opportunity for youth is the Paws & Read program that lets children from kindergarten through eighth grade read aloud stories to animals at the shelter.

BETHESDA CARES

7728 Woodmont Ave., Bethesda, MD 20814
301-907-9244
bethesdacares.org

Bethesda Cares provides supportive housing to those who do not have it. Its goal is not to manage homelessness, but to end it. This group also operates a soup kitchen, clothing closet and shower program. Individuals can find multiple ways to volunteer with Bethesda Cares, from helping out with the meal program to working in the office. Check with the organization for age-appropriate tasks for kids elementary ages and older, including making cards and assembling snack packs.

CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK

4900 Puerto Rico Ave. NE, Washington, DC 20017
202-644-9800
6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, VA 22079
571-482-4770
capitalareafoodbank.org

The Capital Area Food Bank is Washington's leading hunger relief organization, which provides meals to 12% of the DMV's population. You can assist with these remarkable efforts by donating food, delivering groceries, packing and sorting items at the food bank, distributing fresh produce at community farmers' markets, tending to gardens and more. Capital Area Food Bank welcomes individual volunteers and groups.

FOOD & FRIENDS

219 Riggs Road NE, Washington, DC 20011
202-269-2277
foodandfriends.org

Food & Friends serves food to Washington-area residents who are living with HIV and AIDS, cancer and other life-challenging illnesses to provide them with the nourishment they need to manage their illness. The organization prepares and delivers specialized meals and groceries designed to meet the needs of their clients, offer nutritional counseling and create a sense of community for those who might otherwise feel isolated. Groups are welcome to volunteer together, and the organization has many ways that young people can help deliver and prepare meals.

GREATER DC DIAPER BANK

Mailing address: 1532 A St. NE,
Washington, DC 20002
Warehouse address: 8860 Monard Drive,
Silver Spring, MD 20910
202-656-8503
greaterdcdiaperbank.org

The Greater DC Diaper Bank addresses a problem that many Washington-area families in poverty face: being unable to meet all of their needs, including buying diapers for their children. This organization provides basic baby needs and personal hygiene products. Families are invited to volunteer together at the organization's warehouse location in Silver Spring. All ages are welcome to help bundle diapers, organize the baby pantry and review inventory. Read more about the Greater DC Diaper Bank and its founder, Corinne Cannon, in the November 2020 issue of *Washington FAMILY* at WashingtonFAMILY.com.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA FAMILY SERVICE

10455 White Granite Drive, Suite 100
Oakton, VA 22124
571-748-2500
nvfs.org

Northern Virginia Family Service offers an array of services to local families to ensure financial, emotional and physical well-being, including immigration legal services, youth initiatives, workforce development and more. Its goal is to empower individuals to become healthy, involved members of their communities. The organization presents family-friendly volunteering opportunities that allow young people to help out through various group activities and drives.

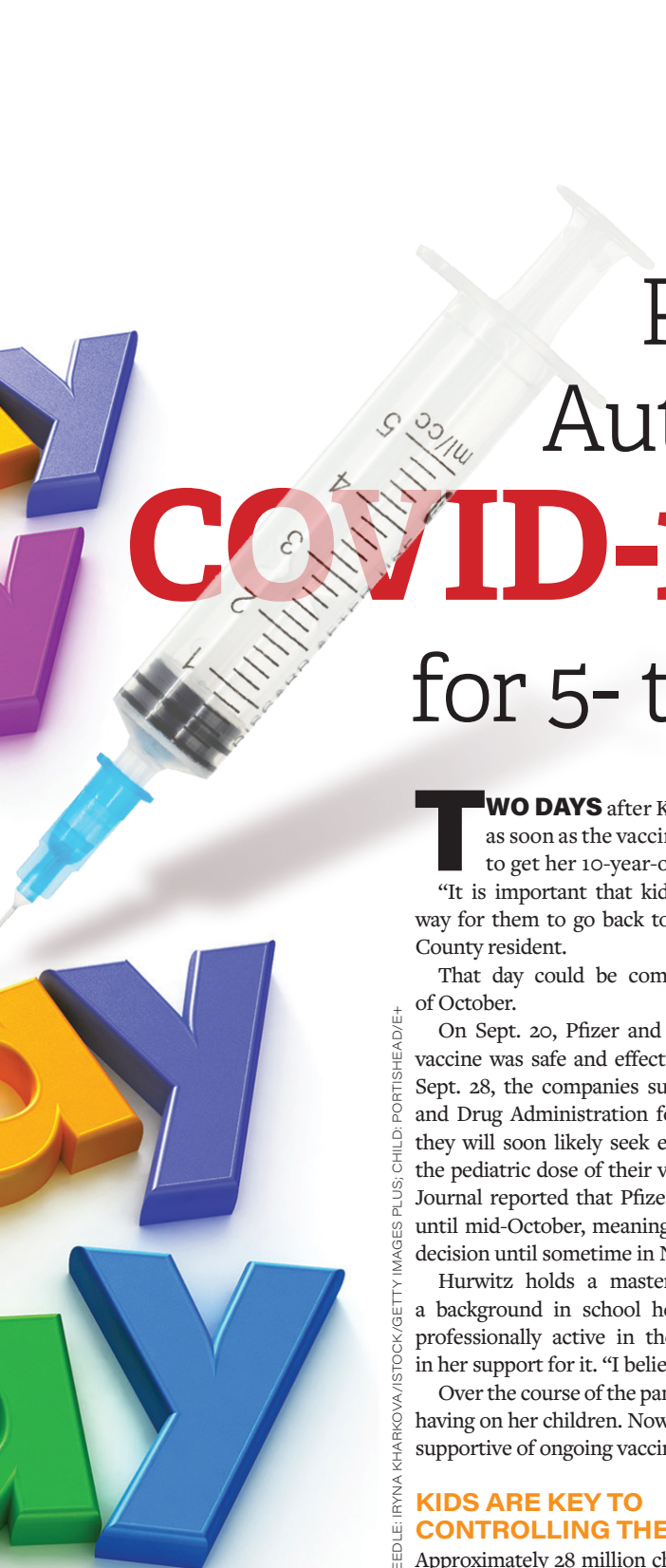
WE ARE FAMILY

1525 Newton St. NW, Washington, DC 20010
202-487-8698
wearefamilydc.org

This Washington-based organization provides inner-city seniors with free services, advocacy and companionship. We Are Family relies on volunteers to build relationships and community with older adults. In addition to providing services such as groceries and gift deliveries, the organization advocates for the rights of seniors and organizes events. Families can volunteer to deliver groceries together or contact We Are Family to learn about additional current and upcoming volunteer opportunities. ■







Parents Await Authorization of **COVID-19 Vaccine** for 5- to 11-year-old Kids

T**WO DAYS** after Kate Hurwitz's oldest son turned 12, he was vaccinated against COVID-19. And as soon as the vaccine has been approved for children younger than 12, she says she will be rushing to get her 10-year-old and 6-year-old children vaccinated as well.

"It is important that kids can be kids, and vaccines are the fastest way for them to go back to normal," says Hurwitz, a Montgomery County resident.

That day could be coming soon, as early as by the end of October.

On Sept. 20, Pfizer and BioNTech announced that their vaccine was safe and effective for children ages 5 to 11. On Sept. 28, the companies submitted their data to the Food and Drug Administration for initial review, indicating that they will soon likely seek emergency use authorization for the pediatric dose of their vaccine. However, the Wall Street Journal reported that Pfizer might not finish its application until mid-October, meaning that the FDA might not make its decision until sometime in November.

Hurwitz holds a master's degree in public health and has a background in school health policy. Although she is no longer professionally active in the public health community, she is resolute in her support for it. "I believe in science," she says.

Over the course of the pandemic, Hurwitz saw the toll that the emotional trauma of extended isolation was having on her children. Now that there is a tool—a vaccine—to expedite the end to this isolation, she is fully supportive of ongoing vaccination efforts for young children.

KIDS ARE KEY TO CONTROLLING THE PANDEMIC

Approximately 28 million children ages 5 to 11 in the United States would be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine, a group far greater in size than the 17 million ages 12 to 15 who became eligible in May. While most kids face a much lower risk of severe illness, inoculating them is an important tool in controlling the pandemic. Children made up more than a quarter of new cases for the week ending Sept. 23, the American Academy of Pediatrics reported.

Yet inoculations have lagged among older children; only about 43% of U.S. children ages 12 to 15 have been fully vaccinated, compared with 66% of adults, according to federal data.

So far, the Pfizer vaccine is the only one available to Americans younger than 18. In June, Moderna filed for authorization of its vaccine for adolescents ages 12 to 17. In July, Johnson & Johnson announced plans to begin studying its single-dose vaccine for that age group this fall.

Parents are slowly becoming more comfortable



BY RUDY MALCOM

CALENDAR: FRANK-BOSTON; NEEDLE: IRYNA KHARKOVA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS; CHILD: PORTISHEAD/E+

with the idea of their children getting vaccinated. In mid-September, around when schools reopened and hospitalizations and deaths soared due to the highly contagious delta variant, the Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a nationally representative survey. Thirty-four percent of parents interviewed say they would have their children ages 5 to 11 vaccinated as soon as possible, up from 26% in July.

For Rockville resident Jacqueline Renfrow, whose three children are younger than 12, the vaccine cannot come quickly enough, “I am at the point where my kids’ mental well-being has to take priority,” she says. “Watching them over the course of almost two years—they were not themselves—it was hard to watch.”

The mental and emotional toll isolation was taking on her children eventually reached a tipping point. Renfrow sends her kids to after-school activities—in-person and masked-up.

“I just cannot worry every minute about them, so I throw a mask on them and take the proper precautions,” she says. “They cannot stay inside forever.”

What Do Parents Think About the Vaccines?

Ilya Burdman, who works in cybersecurity, recalls how his parents suffered from COVID-19 during the summer of 2020, before the vaccine was available.

“They had to go through two weeks of pretty much not being able to get up. They had difficulty breathing, and I don’t want that experience for my children,” he says. “It’s something I would try to prevent as much as possible.”

“The vaccine is very important to have,” he adds. “It’s extremely safe, and I think COVID will not be going away anytime soon.”

Both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been linked in rare cases, particularly among young men, to myocarditis, a condition that causes an inflammation of the heart muscle. However, concern about this side effect could be reduced by the lower doses that children would receive of the Pfizer vaccine. In Pfizer’s trials, the smaller doses produced similar antibody responses to those seen in a study of 16- to 25-year-old individuals who received full doses.

Some parents worry about the relatively small size of the trials and about a lack of long-term data on the safety of the shots. In general, parents tend to be skeptical of new

vaccines. For example, while the varicella vaccine, which protects against chicken pox, was highly effective and showed few side effects, parents were hesitant to adopt it once the FDA approved it in 1995, with only one-third of eligible adolescents fully immunized by 2008.

Sharone Lerner Cheskis says her 13-year-old son, then 12, was among the first to get the vaccine when it was approved for his age group.

“He was bouncing off the walls excited,” she says. “It’s really made us feel more comfortable. He’s around a lot of other kids, so it’s important for us that he has that layer of protection.”

“For our younger son,” who’s 9, “we’re going to do the exact same thing,” she adds. “Both my boys play sports. They’re in public school—we’re just around a lot of people.”

Cheskis is a speech-language pathologist at Prince George’s County Public Schools. She says that the pandemic has been hard for many of the kids that she sees since it has prevented them from talking with people outside of their families.

“There’s been a certain amount of drop in skill,” she says, adding that the vaccine would help “kids to get back to closer to where they were” before COVID-19.

Lucy Leibowitz, a pediatric psychologist, says it is “too soon” to say how the pandemic overall will impact children in the long term, as “we are still very much in it.”

She plans to vaccinate her 7-year-old child as soon as she can, which would bring “peace of mind” when visiting family. However, her 4-year-old child would remain ineligible.

“I am at the point where my kids’ mental well-being has to take priority.”

—Jacqueline Renfrow



“It would probably be similar to how things were when my husband and I got vaccinated,” she says. “It’s not drastically going to change what we’re doing.”

However, Leibowitz says, changing public health guidelines and conditions can be confusing for kids.

“I took off my mask while talking to one of my kiddo’s friend’s parents at an outdoor playdate, and my 7-year-old said, ‘Mom, put your mask back on,’” she says, “I explained, ‘We are both vaccinated. We are outside, and I made the determination that this is safe.’”

As the pandemic ebbs and flows and as vaccines and more information become available, Leibowitz advises parents to be open with their children about their decisions about participating in certain activities.

“Rather than just saying, ‘You have to do this,’” she says, “explain the reasons why you do this in kid-appropriate language.” ■

Mid-Atlantic Media staff writer Ben Kahn contributed to this article. This story originally appeared in the Washington Jewish Week.

Adolescent Diabetes Is On the Rise

Here's What Parents Should Know

BY MEGAN CONWAY

In recent years, health experts have noted rising rates of diabetes, both among the general population and in adolescents.

We spoke with Dr. Paula G. Newton, director of pediatric endocrinology at the University of Maryland Center for Diabetes and Endocrinology, and Dr. Brynn Marks, pediatric endocrinologist at Children's National Hospital, to find out more adolescent diabetes.

Overview

Two types of diabetes exist: Type 1 and Type 2. According to Newton, "Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition where your immune system—which is supposed to fight germs, bacteria and things that make you sick—instead starts attacking (your pancreas). Your pancreas can no longer make insulin." As a result, an individual's blood sugar increases. To address this increase, a person must treat this condition with insulin.

Marks adds, "While the exact cause of Type 1 diabetes is unknown, viral infections are thought to be a possible trigger in genetically susceptible individuals." This disease, she explains, develops in stages.

Newton reports, "Type 2 diabetes is more related to weight, exercise and diet. When people are diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, often their pancreas can still make insulin—and often makes an increased amount of insulin—but it is still not enough to keep ... blood sugars in the normal range." This type of diabetes, Newton says, is usually initially treated with insulin. However, "as the blood sugars improve and (patients) make lifestyle changes, many can decrease the amount of insulin required and can utilize more oral medications."

Risk factors and health consequences

Risk factors for diabetes depends on the type. Newton points out that those with Type 1 diabetes have a greater likelihood of having a family member with other autoimmune conditions. People with Type 2 diabetes are more likely to have a parent or close member of the family with insulin resistance or Type 2 diabetes.



In addition, Newton says, "The risk of Type 2 diabetes (differs with) race and ethnicity, with American Indians, African Americans and Latinx (individuals) being most at risk."

Age also contributes to risk. "Type 2 diabetes is more common in people over age 10 and those ... in puberty as compared to younger children." Finally, a major Type 2 diabetes risk factor is lifestyle. Weight gain, lack of exercise and eating high-calorie and high-fat foods in large amounts are contributing factors.

Newton further explains, "Adolescents with Type 2 diabetes are at increased risk for other metabolic conditions such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure," and "complications of persistent high blood sugars such as visual impairment, kidney disease and neuropathy (numbness, weakness and pain in the feet and legs)."

Current trends

According to Newton, one in 400 people younger than age 20 have Type 1 diabetes. "The incidence in minority populations (African American and Latinx communities) has shown a slight increase over the past several years," Newton says.

"At Children's National, we saw an increase in both cases of Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes over the last three years," notes Marks (1). Current research from her organization does not suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic caused the increase in cases of Type 1 diabetes. However, "as a viral infection may precede the development of Type 1 diabetes by years, we will need to watch trends in the number of cases for years to come in order to fully answer this question."

Newton points out that even prior to the pandemic, the number of Type 2 diabetes in the under-20 U.S. population was increasing at an alarming rate (2). The University of Maryland Medical Center noted a "statistically significant increase in ... children and adolescents less than 20 years of age newly diagnosed with diabetes (over the last year)," with most of this increase driven by an increase in the rate of Type 2 diabetes.

Prevention and screening

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports no current known cure for Type 1 diabetes, but Marks notes, "With insulin therapy and recent developments in Type 1 diabetes technologies, we are able to successfully treat Type 1 diabetes and people can live near normal lives."

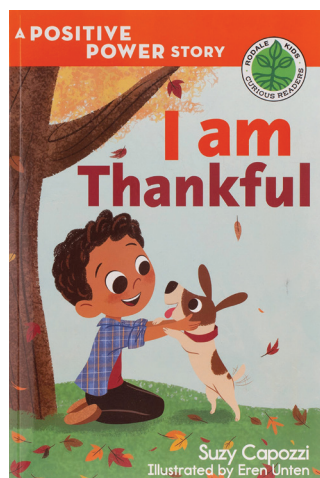
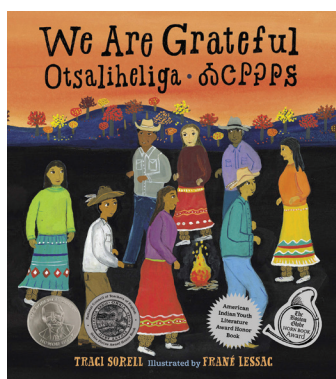
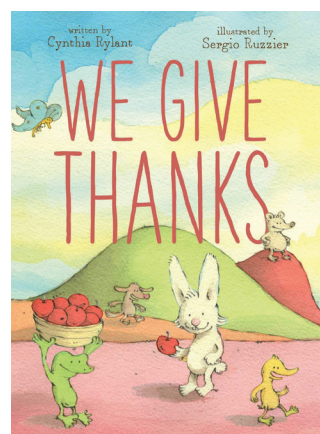
Several lifestyle changes can help individuals prevent Type 2 diabetes. Marks advises, "Staying active and eating a healthy, well-balanced diet can help to maintain normal glucose values."

Newton recommends that the family contribute to meal planning that includes choosing fruits and vegetables in lieu of high-calorie, high-fat foods. Sleep is important, and Newton reports that a consistent eight to 10 hours a night is optimal for children in school.

Parents should look out for potential concerning signs of diabetes, says Newton, which include, "increased thirst, increased urination, bedwetting in a previously dry child, sudden unexplained weight loss and gastrointestinal symptoms such as persistent vomiting." If parents notice these symptoms, Newton suggests first contacting your child's pediatrician. If screening indicates a concern for diabetes or pre-diabetes, your child will be referred to a pediatric endocrinologist for further treatment. ■

Sources:

- (1) Marks et al, *Horm Res Paediatr*, 2021, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34564073/>
- (2) "Youth-Onset Type 2 Diabetes Consensus Report: Current Status, Challenges and Priorities," Kristen J. Nadeau et al, *Diabetes Care*, Sept. 2016, 39(9), 1635-1642, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27486237/> DOI: 10.2337/dc16-1066



Give Thanks with Books About Gratitude

Start off the holiday season on a grateful note with these books about giving thanks and giving back.

Discover stories that point out everyone we can thank in our lives and explore the nuances behind the history of the first Thanksgiving.

BY JENNIFER ROTHSCHILD, COLLECTION ENGAGEMENT MANAGER
ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

PICTURE BOOKS

"Thank You, Neighbor!"

by Ruth Chan

A young girl walking her dog reminds readers to not only feel grateful for all people in their lives but to also tell them "thank you" as well. As the girl and dog stroll through the neighborhood, she notices all the people that make her community stick together, from the firefighters rescuing a kitten and the sanitation workers collecting garbage to the letter carrier delivering the mail. She says "thank you" to all of them, reminding us that this simple phrase can help make people feel part of their community.

"We Give Thanks"

by Cynthia Rylant,
illustrated by Sergio Ruzzier

A frog and rabbit explore their town to issue a special invitation to everyone they come across. On each step of their travels, they also find something to be thankful for. At the end of the day, everyone gathers for a giant feast. Told in rhyming couplets with watercolor illustrations, this story offers a gentle reminder to be thankful for many of the things we often take for granted.

"We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga"

by Traci Sorell, illustrated by Frané Lessac
Members of Cherokee Nation say "otsaliheliga" (oh-jah-LEE-hay-lee-gah) to express gratitude, something the family in this book does frequently as they go through a year of Cherokee festivals, holidays and celebrations. Sorell, a member of the Cherokee Nation, includes several other Cherokee

words and cultural symbols in the text. More information is included in the book.

EARLY ELEMENTARY

"I Am Thankful"

by Suzy Capozzi, illustrated by Eren Unten

On Thanksgiving, a young boy spends his day listing the things he's thankful for. A busy day of helping in the kitchen, running a turkey trot, playing football and eating lead to many things to be grateful for. Some things are small, like having the day off school, and some things are bigger, like being thankful that his firefighter father and his co-workers work to keep the town safe, even if it means he has to miss the family feast.

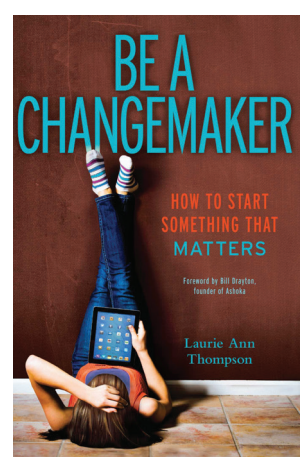
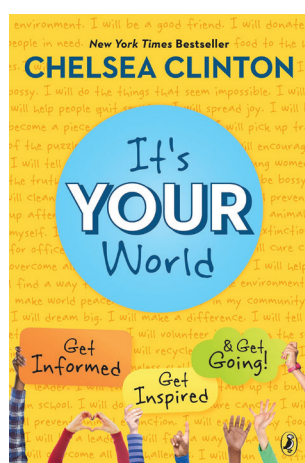
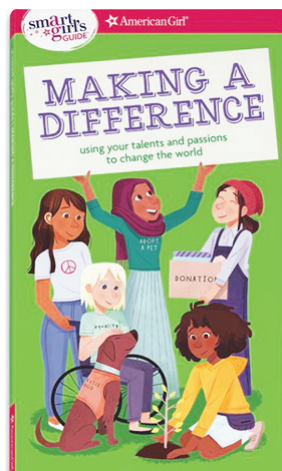
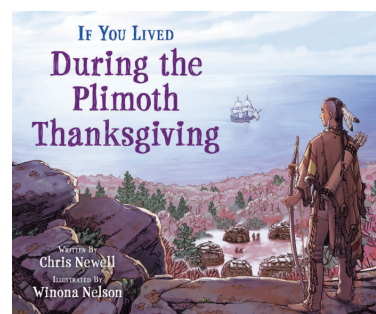
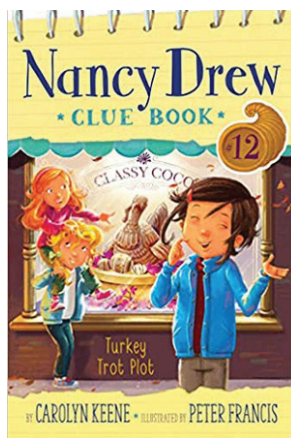
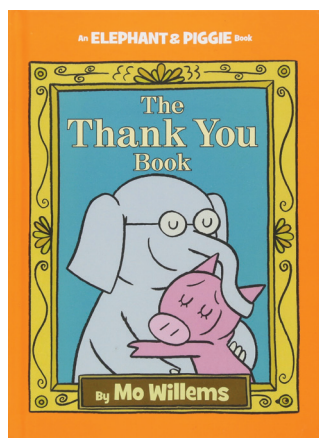
"Volunteering (Spreading Kindness)"

by Brienna Rossiter

Vibrant photographs and clear, simple text introduce different ways beginning readers can help their communities, such as cleaning up litter or distributing food. This empowering text shows younger kids concrete ways they can give back, despite their age.

"The Thank You Book" (An Elephant and Piggie Book, 25)

written and illustrated by Mo Willems
In Elephant and Piggie's final adventure, Piggie tries to thank everyone she can, but Gerald is worried she'll forget to thank the most important person of all. Piggie embarks on her "Thank-a-Rama" anyway, and with Gerald's help, she makes sure everyone is recognized.



MIDDLE GRADE

"Nancy Drew Clue Book: Turkey Trot Plot"

by Carolyn Keene,
illustrated by Peter Francis

The Nancy Drew Clue Books feature Nancy, Bess and George as elementary school students, investigating mysteries in a format that invites readers to help solve the case. For this year's turkey trot race, the friends hope to win the costume contest and get the chocolate turkey prize. But when the turkey goes missing, the owner of the fancy new chocolate shop bans kids from her store forever, unless Nancy and her friends can find the real thief.

"If You Lived During the Plimoth Thanksgiving"

by Chris Newell,
illustrated by Winona Nelson

In this accessible book written by a member of the Passamaquoddy tribe, the facts and myths surrounding relations between the Wampanoag and English colonists and the story of the first Thanksgiving are thoroughly explored and examined. While focusing on life in and around the Plimoth colony, the story also covers the creation

of the national Thanksgiving holiday and similar celebrations in other cultures.

"A Smart Girl's Guide: Making a Difference: Using Your Talents and Passions to Change the World"

by Melissa Seymour,
illustrated by Stevie Lewis

Full of lists, quizzes, tips and inspiration, this book is a complete guide to finding what readers are interested in and how they can use their talents to make a difference in their communities and the wider world. By breaking down the steps and providing plenty of guidance along the way, middle-grade students can turn the otherwise daunting task of "changing the world" into realistic and doable actions.

TEENS

"It's Your World: Get Informed, Get Inspired & Get Going"

by Chelsea Clinton

Chelsea Clinton dives into several issues facing the world today, including poverty, global warming and gender equity. After a data-filled introduction to an issue, she shows how young people are currently working to alleviate the problems and has

several ideas for ways teen readers can also get involved in the solutions.

"Dear Haiti, Love Alaine"

by Maika Moulite and Maritza Moulite

After a school presentation gone wrong ends up with Alaine getting suspended, she's shipped off to Haiti—a land she knows from her parents' stories but has never explored herself. While there, she spends her days volunteering for her aunt's charity, which helps children in economic need in stark juxtaposition with the estate Alaine's family lives on. Along the way, she gains a deeper knowledge and appreciation for Haiti and learns more than she imagined about her family's past.

"Be a Changemaker: How to Start Something That Matters"

by Laurie Ann Thompson

Thompson uses her experience in nonprofit work to create a practical guide for teens who want to give back to their communities. In addition to inspiration and tips for helping readers find what they want to do, Thompson outlines items like business plans, fundraising and legal issues they may need to know. Discover this guide that inspires readers while not shying away from the small details. ■

AVOID MOM BURNOUT

This Holiday Season

BY ORLESA POOLE

When I was growing up, two things would always happen in my home on Christmas Eve. We would all get new pajamas, and my mom would always argue with us about some small and inconsequential—at least to the rest of us—part of Christmas planning. My siblings and I could never understand why she would choose Christmas Eve to be so particular and nag us about the littlest things. It just made no sense.

As an adult (and mom), I now realize that my mom's fussing was about so much more than us cleaning our rooms or liking our new pajamas. At a time when we were out of school and excited about new presents and special treats, my mom was always overwhelmed and burned out. She spent so much time and energy making the holidays special for us that she wasn't able to enjoy them herself. When we were having Christmas movie night, eating treats and sleeping, mom was cooking, cleaning up after us and up all night preparing for the next day. After all that, of course, she flipped her lid when we didn't want to wear our matching pajamas!

I'm sure most moms can relate. Although the holidays are absolutely beautiful, for a mom, they also come with increased levels of stress, anxiety and burnout. Here are my biggest tips for moms—and what I'll be doing—to prevent burnout this holiday season.

Ask for help

As moms, we think it's all on us. Whether we don't want to bother our partner or want to preserve the magic of the holidays for our children, we often take on more than we can handle.

This year, when you're making your to-do lists, think about which things can be outsourced to a local bakery, decorating expert, catering service or your partner and kids. Having help or tasks completed by someone outside of your family won't take away the magic of the holidays. It frees up time and mental space for you to enjoy your family and allow them to enjoy you. Seriously,



Orlesa Poole and her son Corey

does your family want everything baked from scratch or a mom who isn't stressed out and has time to spend with them?

Adjust your expectations—and drop some balls

When you're deciding what needs to be done to make the holidays a success, ask yourself why something needs to be done. Is it because that's what you were taught "should" happen during the holidays, or is it because the activity is something of importance to you that brings joy to your family? If it's not something that's absolutely necessary—I'm looking at you holiday cards—drop it! The priority here is making the holidays special for everyone, not doing every single thing.

Participate in the fun

The holidays are meant to be enjoyable for you also. Take some time away from tasks to be present with your family. If you simply don't have the time because there is too much to do, go back to the first two suggestions. A pared-down holiday with a happy mom is always better than extravagance and stress. ■

Orlesa Poole is the founder of Managing Motherhood Psychotherapy in Washington, D.C. and Bowie, Maryland. She specializes in helping emotionally overwhelmed moms find the calm and confidence they need to actually enjoy parenting. To learn more about her services, visit psychotherapyformoms.com.

SHALA GRAHAM PHOTOGRAPHY

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