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OCTOBER 2021



ON THE COVER
Jo Kosmides Edwards



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OUR TEAM

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WashingtonFAMILY.com • 301-230-2222

Craig Burke, Publisher

EDITORIAL

PJ Feinstein, Editor • 301-230-6696 • pfeinstein@midatlanticmedia.com

Michael Vyskocil, Managing Editor • 410-902-2319 • mvyskocil@midatlanticmedia.com

Eleanor Linafelt, Staff Writer • 240-432-3044 • elinafelt@midatlanticmedia.com

ADVERTISING

Account Executives

John Crooks, Alan Gurwitz, David Pintzow, Mary Ramsdale, Kim Coates Schofield,
Stacie Shapero, Sylvia Witaschek

BUSINESS

Pattie-Ann Lamp, Accounting Manager • 410-902-2300 • plamp@midatlanticmedia.com

CONTRIBUTORS

Aryssa Damron, Elena Epstein, Gina Gallucci-White, Christine Ju, Barbara Noe Kennedy,
Erika Kerr, Cheryl Maguire, Tammy McKinney, Eboni Njoku, Craig Ranallo,
Jacqueline Renfrow

CREATIVE

Jay Sevidal, Graphic Designer

James Meskunas, Digital Media Manager

MID-ATLANTIC MEDIA

Craig Burke, CEO/Publisher • cburke@midatlanticmedia.com

Jeni Mann Tough, Director of Marketing & Custom Media • jmann@midatlanticmedia.com



Special Series



Calendar of
Events



Family Matters
Family Fun



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Illustration



Single
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11900 Parklawn Drive, Suite 300 | Rockville, MD 20852 | 301-230-2222 or 703-318-1385 | washingtonfamily.com



PJ Feinstein
Editor
pfeinstein@midatlanticmedia.com

Facebook
@WashingtonFamilyMagazine

Twitter
@FAMILYMagDC

Pinterest
@familymagazine

Instagram
@washingtonfamilymag

Email us
Let us know what's on your mind.
info@thefamilymagazine.com

No Tricks, Just Treats

When Halloween rolled around last year, seven months into the pandemic, there was a lot of confusion about whether it was safe to trick-or-treat. Out of an abundance of caution, many parents kept their kids home for a spooktacular evening of family fun, including candy scavenger hunts around the house and popcorn-filled movie nights to watch spooky flicks like “Hocus Pocus.”

As of right now, it looks like trick-or-treating is back on the agenda for October 31. While many children can't wait to slip into their costumes and fill up their buckets with treats from generous neighbors, not all kids are looking forward to Halloween festivities. Many young children — especially preschoolers, who can't always tell the difference between reality and make-believe — are frightened of mask-wearing trick-or-treaters and creepy-crawly decorations.

In our October issue, we explore the reasons why Halloween can be anxiety-provoking for some kids and share expert advice on how you can help ease their fears. One suggestion comes from Dr. Ami Patel, a pediatrician

at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital: read Halloween-themed books together. We also have a list of children's books to help young ones feel more comfortable with costumes and other disguises.

Speaking of books, a new title we're loving is “Kalamata's Kitchen” about the magical food adventures of a young girl and her imaginary alligator sidekick. The illustrator, Jo Kosmides Edwards, is a mom from Arlington, and she's this month's Parent You Should Know. Turn to page 22 to learn about her artistic journey and how she nurtures her own creativity while raising two boys.

Also in this issue: family-friendly pizza places around the DMV, books about bullying from the DC Public Library and the benefits of prescription medication for children with ADHD.

Enjoy the cooler weather, and happy Halloween! ■

PJ Feinstein



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{TOP 10}

Top 10 October Activities for Families

BY ELEANOR LINAFELT



1

OPENS OCT. 1

CRITICAL DISTANCE

The Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History's new augmented-reality experience immerses visitors in a holographic orca pod to teach them about the daily obstacles this endangered species faces. *Free. si.edu*



3

OCT. 9 & 23

SATURDAY MORNING LIVE! AT THE NATIONAL

The National Theatre is launching a series of Saturday morning performances streaming online for kids. All of the programs share the same theme: "Creating Tomorrow Together." The first two episodes of the premiere series of shows, "Life Now" by Imagine U, stream in October. *Free. nationaltheatre.org*

OCT. 10

CLASSICS DECLASSIFIED

Pianist Jeffrey Siegel performs works by Beethoven, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Debussy and more and shares the stories behind them during this family-friendly performance at the Hylton Performing Arts Center. *\$29-\$48, half-price tickets for students through grade 12. hylton.calendar.gmu.edu*



4

2



OCT. 2-31

HALLOWEEN EYE SPY TRAINS

Montgomery Parks is bringing back its miniature trains at Cabin John Regional Park and Wheaton Regional Park for Halloween. Families will be able to ride the trains on Saturdays and Sundays through October. *\$2.50, free for under age 2. montgomeryparks.org*



5

OCT. 10

CIDER MAKING

Learn how to use an old-fashioned cider press and make your own apple cider during this all-ages event at Colvin Run Mill. *\$60 per family. fairfaxcounty.gov*

OCT. 16

**'THE MAGIC OF
BILL BLAGG
LIVE!'**

Illusionist Bill Blagg makes objects disappear, teleports across the theater, levitates in mid-air and more in his astonishing interactive show for the whole family.

\$15 for adults; \$10 for children. cfa.calendar.gmu.edu



OCT. 17

JAKE BLOUNT

Washington, D.C.-native Jake Blount entertains with blues, bluegrass and spirituals on the banjo and fiddle in this performance at the Kennedy Center's Family Theater. *\$20. kennedy-center.org*



OCT. 22

PUMPKIN CARVING

Prepare for Halloween with pumpkin carving at Potomac Overlook Regional Park. Participants ages 4 and up will receive a pumpkin, tools and paint. *\$10. novaparks.com*



OCT. 30

DIA DE LOS MUERTOS VIRTUAL FAMILY CELEBRATION

Ballet Folklórico Mi Herencia Mexicana and the Smithsonian American Art Museum are hosting a virtual celebration for Día de los Muertos with Mexican folk dance performances and history lessons. *Free. si.edu*



OCT. 31

GOLD OVER AMERICA TOUR STARRING SIMONE BILES

Packed with star-studded performances from champion gymnasts, including the GOAT herself, this special event comes to the Capital One Arena at the end of the month. *Tickets starting at \$22.50. goldoveramericatour.com*

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

TETIANA GARKUSHA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS



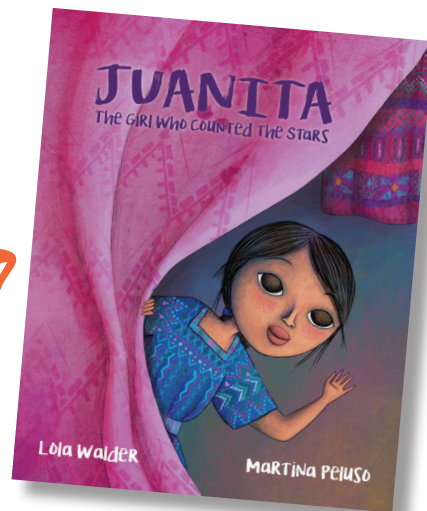
Got2Glow Fairy Finder

Collect more than 100 fairies in three Fairy Finder jars. The more you play, the more fairies you will catch. View your entire collection in your jar and download the Find My Fairy App to see each fairy's unique appearance and learn fun facts about them. \$39.99, ages 5+, wowwee.com



Adora Amazing Girls 18-inch Doll: Cassidy

She enjoys peaceful activities in her Arizona desert home and likes to stomp with the rhythm of her favorite country songs. \$45.36, ages 6+, amazon.com



'Juanita: The Girl Who Counted the Stars'

Inspired by a true story, author Lola Walder takes readers on a journey through the protagonist's imagination — along with traditions, cultures and people of the beautiful country of Guatemala. Explore the importance of family values, traditions and helping others. \$16.95, ages 4-8, amazon.com

Happy Cow Wash

There's lots of activity on the farm, and one little calf is excited for its first time in the wash station with its mother. Use your imagination to help Farmer Martin activate the water pump and wash the happy cows. \$39.99, ages 3-8, schleich-s.com





Make-A-Fort Build Kit

Unpack 18 sturdy cardboard panels, 10 braces, 80 connectors from a handy carrying case. What happens next is totally up to the imagination of each child. How about a maze, puppet theater or igloo? \$77, ages 4+, makeafort.fun



Scribble Scrubbie Ocean Pets Lagoon Playset

Using the washable markers, kids can color and customize their little ocean pets, then use the kid-powered lagoon shower to clean them in style before coloring again. \$19.99, ages 3+, crayola.com



KidKraft Blue's Clues & You! Cooking-Up-Clues Play Kitchen

Discover what Blue wants for a snack. This play kitchen offers four-sided play, with a sink, fridge, snack table, stove and oven sized for a curious preschooler. \$99.99, ages 3+, walmart.com



Rainbocorns Puppycorn Surprise

Unbox the puppy-eared teal reusable egg to reveal plush characters, Scratch 'N' Reveal Hearts, Scratch 'N' Sniff Stickers, Boo-Boocorn Puppies, collectible eggs, Puppycorn Poop and a collectors guide. \$9.99, ages 3+, zuru.com



KidiZoom Smartwatch DX3

Kids will love the dual cameras for pictures, selfies and videos along with one- and two-player games, daily reminders, movement games and more. \$59, ages 4-9, vtechkids.com



Easy as (Pizza) Pie

By Barbara Noe Kennedy

*The D.C.-region's
best kid-friendly pizza
parlors that parents will enjoy, too*

SAY-CHEESE / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS

Pizza is a no-brainer when it comes to kids, but it takes a big heart (and a good set of ear plugs) to bring the family to a sensory-overload pizzeria-fun-center geared specifically toward the younger set — especially when the pizza is sure to disappoint. Luckily, the Washington, D.C. region has some amazing pizza parlors that both kids and parents will love.

&PIZZA

Pizza “with an edge” is the name of the game at this popular pizza joint, with offerings such as the Bad and Bluezy (grilled onion, pepperoni and blue cheese) and the 3Peat (pepperoni, Italian sausage and bacon). Rest assured there are basic kid-friendly options as well. But the reason little ones love this place is because they can watch their pizza go through the oven’s conveyer belt. The flagship location, established in 2012, is on H Street, with 10 other outposts in D.C., 10 in Maryland and 13 in Virginia.
andpizza.com

COMET PING PONG

The kids may not appreciate some of the pies at this hipster Northwest D.C. pizza parlor, which are, admittedly, a

little wacko. There’s the pepperoni-and jalapeño “Hottie” and the clam-packed “Yalie,” for starters. But don’t worry: kids can build their own, with a slew of familiar ingredients. They’ll also be plenty content playing ping-pong — and dreaming about a yummy sundae for dessert. Parents like the fact the ingredients are farmed and harvested in a sustainable manner, including housemade tomato sauce. The backroom is a popular spot for birthday parties.
5037 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20008
202-364-0404
cometpingpong.com

DC PIZZA

You can play it safe at DC Pizza with age-old favorites, or you can get adventurous and try the Bacon Jam pizza (spinach, pepperoni, Italian sausage and chicken drizzled with bacon jam), the BTR (bacon, tomatoes and ranch dressing) and the



Honey Sriracha (bacon, chicken, onions and honey sriracha). If the kids turn up their nose at those, they can choose their own toppings, some of which are rather interesting: wing sauce, pineapple and apples, to name a few.

1103 19th St. NW
Washington DC 20036
571-200-2172
dcpizzaonline.com

MATCHBOX

Its large dining area and playful menu make Matchbox a favorite for birthday parties, family get-togethers and end-of-sports-season celebrations. And what kid would not enjoy the colorable kids' menu with its fun brain games and yummy choices, such as cheese pizza, quesadillas and mini burgers? There's also a "Captain

Healthy to the Rescue" plate full of apples, bananas, celery, peanut butter and the like that no kid in their right mind would order — but their parents might!

Eleven locations in Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia
matchboxrestaurants.com

PIZZERIA ORSO

This buzzy neighborhood eatery produces gourmet brick-oven pies, including the Toscana, with pepperoni, ham, salami and sausage; and the Frutti di Mare, topped with "no shell" clams, shrimp, fingerling potatoes, grana and ricotta. There's also a good selection of pastas, such as gnocchi with sausage and lobster fettuccine, and sandwiches. Kids can order from their own (colorable) menu, featuring cheese pizza, spaghetti and meatballs, grilled chicken salad and more.

400 S. Maple Ave., Falls Church, VA 22046
703-226-3460
pizzeriaorso.com

PIZZERIA PARADISO

This local fave for wood-fired pizzas boasts a large menu of 9- or 12-inch pies, including unexpected flavor combinations like the pepperoni-and-pork-topped Macellaio, the salami-olive-and-hot-pepper-flake Atomica and the Paesana, piled high with spicy garlic pesto, chicken sausage, escarole and broccoli rabe. There's even a supervised children's room, where kids can eat, play and watch movies while parents covertly keep track of them through a one-way mirror.

Locations in Georgetown, Dupont Circle and Spring Valley in Washington, D.C., and Hyattsville, Maryland
eatyourpizza.com

POTOMAC PIZZA

Serving up pies since 1978, Potomac Pizza has firmly established itself as a beloved family restaurant — and a favorite birthday party venue. As far as pizzas go, most kids will love Amanda's Original cheese and tomato pizza, though there are plenty of more daring options, including the Ultimate Potomac, with anchovies, Canadian bacon, peppers, ground beef, mushrooms and Italian sausage. Whew! Ask the kids over dinner if they know the restaurant's founder, Adam Greenberg — aka the "Pizza Man." He gives pizza demonstrations at elementary schools throughout the region, showing kids how to make pizza while teaching them about cleanliness in the kitchen.

Locations in Chevy Chase, College Park, Middle River, Potomac Promenade and Traville Village Center
potomacpizza.com

TAME THE HOR



GIRL: IMAGE/ISTOCK /GETTY IMAGES PLUS; ANIMAL ICONS: THERESATIBBETTS/DIGITALVISION VECTORS
BACKGROUND: PORTAREFORTUNA/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES PLUS

HALLOWEEN HORRORS

Empathy and
communication
can help children
ease their fears

BY GINA GALLUCCI-WHITE

For some children, Halloween is an exciting day to overindulge in candy, take on a new identity and experience spooky decorations transform houses into macabre homes. However, the holiday can be an anxiety-inducing one for others.

Ghosts, spiders, blood, darkness, scary costumes, goblins and clowns are some common fear inducers for children. Animatronic decorations that come to life through motion sensors can also be terribly frightening.

How can parents help tame their children's fears of the things that go bump in the night?

AGE IS A FACTOR

Dr. Eileen Kennedy-Moore, a psychologist and author of "Kid Confidence: Help Your Child Make Friends, Build Resilience, and Develop Real Self-Esteem" (New Harbinger Publications, 2019), notes that children tend to be scared of things that look strange or move suddenly until age 8. Around 9 years old, they begin to understand that death is permanent and personally relevant. Getting hurt and dying may become scary to them.

"Children's fears grow along with their imagination. As they can imagine bad guys and spooky things, that is when they start to become scared of these kinds of things," says Kennedy-Moore.

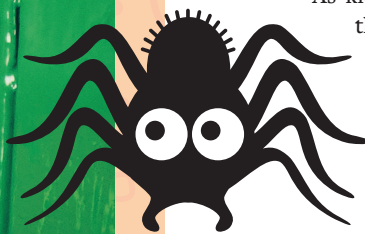
Dr. Amie Bettencourt, a clinical child psychologist at Johns Hopkins Children's Center in Baltimore, says the way kids process scary things depends somewhat on their age, with most fears being learned.

"Basically, fears or scary stimuli activate the fight-or-flight response in all individuals — kids and adults alike," she says. "That is really our immediate reaction to whatever the feared item is, and for young kids, this is their main response."

As kids grow older and their brains develop more, they may still have an initial response to something scary, but they'll also possess the ability to reason it out, she says. "They have more past experiences that they can bring to bear there," she adds. "It doesn't necessarily mean that in that moment they will use that information, but they could."

What's particularly challenging is that younger children don't precisely know the difference between reality and make-believe. "Halloween can really bring that out," Bettencourt says. "Are ghosts real? Are goblins real? Are all those other costumes real, or is that make-believe? We really don't see kids have that capacity to differentiate until around 6 or 7 years old."

Kennedy-Moore notes that even though we can imagine something, it doesn't make it real or likely. "I say that every day with clients—even adult ones," she says. To help one client who was afraid of anyone in a costume, she asked that person to





KEEP CALM AND COMMUNICATE

According to Bettencourt, one of the best ways parents can help kids overcome fears is by calmly validating their feelings and correcting misinformation. “A lot of times kids are scared because they have really built up the thing in their mind,” she says.

Kennedy-Moore adds that parents should talk to their kids about how they are in charge of their children’s safety and would not put them in a dangerous situation.

When a child has anxiety over Halloween, parents may act unknowingly to intensify the fear. For example, trying to protect the child from everything related to the holiday. “Sometimes avoiding something you fear will only strengthen or emphasize that fear,” says Dr. Ami Patel, pediatrician at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C. “While I don’t think children should be pushed into something overwhelming, it’s ideal to prepare them and have them participate in some way throughout the month and holiday.” Many fall-related activities, such as farm visits to pick pumpkins and explore corn mazes, have Halloween themes.

On the other hand, some parents can be overly dismissive of a child’s fear, mocking them or deliberately scaring them. “That is not kind, and it is not helpful,” Kennedy-Moore says. “When we are talking about building up their tolerance, we are not talking about surprising them with the worst possible thing. It is baby steps

toward whatever it is they are scared of so that they can learn for themselves: ‘I am strong enough to handle this.’”

Bettencourt wants parents to remember that kids aren’t getting anxious on purpose or to ruin things. “We really want to avoid shaming them for feeling upset or getting angry with them for feeling upset or being like, ‘Don’t worry about it.’ All of these reactions only make the child feel badly about themselves, and they probably discourage the child from talking with or sharing with their parent what they are worried about.”

APPROACH HALLOWEEN POSITIVELY

Parents can help build excitement around Halloween by planning nonthreatening ways to celebrate. Patel suggests normalizing the Halloween experience by reading themed books (see ideas on the next page), carving silly jack-o’-lanterns and decorating your home

Trick-or-treating is still encouraged, but parents may want to make adjustments, such as going out in daylight. Let the child practice wearing their costume around the house all month, and if their costume comes with a mask, make sure their vision is not limited. Inviting a friend to come along is a good way to focus on the fun aspects of trick-or-treating, and if your child sees someone in a scary costume, be empathetic while also pointing out details such as their wig or makeup as a way to humanize the costumed person.

Ultimately, parents need to remember that every child is unique. “Comparisons are not helpful: ‘Well, your cousin likes this.’ OK, good for the cousin,” Kennedy-Moore says. “We deal with the kid in front of us, and if this particular child at this particular moment is scared, then we gently help them move forward from that.” ■

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Washington FAMILY

5 HELPFUL HALLOWEEN BOOKS FOR KIDS

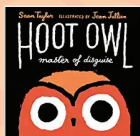
TEACH YOUR KIDS ABOUT OUTSIDE APPEARANCES, DISGUISES AND COSTUMES WITH THE FOLLOWING HALLOWEEN-THEMED TALES.



"Go Away, Big Green Monster!"

by Ed Emberley

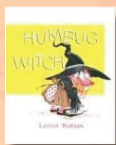
This classic interactive book has been helping children come to terms with their bedtime fears for more than 25 years. The storyline supports the idea that our imagination can make up things to scare us, but we have the power to eliminate these fears. As your child encounters each part of the big green monster, he or she can shout "go away" to each part.



"Hoot Owl: Master of Disguise"

by Sean Taylor; illustrated by Jean Jullien

In this book, an owl on the hunt for food dresses up in different disguises to fool its prey. Parents can use the book to teach little ones about how animals, objects or people may look like one thing on the outside—an owl dressed up like a carrot or a sheep—but inside they haven't changed form.



"Humbug Witch"

written and illustrated by Lorna Balian

The story starts by introducing readers to all parts of a witch (her warty nose and her tall, pointed hat), but it goes on to point out all the things this witch can't do. What's a witch who can't make potions or fly on a broom? When is a witch not a witch? At the end, readers find out that the witch is only a little girl wearing a witch costume.

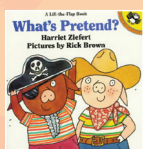


"The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything"

by Linda D. Williams;

illustrated by Megan Lloyd

This story recounts the tale of a little old woman who heads into the woods and returns home to find different articles of clothing. She finds shoes that go "clomp, clomp," gloves, a hat and a "very big, very scary" pumpkin head. As the woman discovers each piece, she tells each one that she isn't afraid of them. The storyline emphasizes facing your fears and taking control of your emotions.



"What's Pretend?"

by Harriet Ziefert

Children can learn about what's real vs. pretend in this clever Halloween tale. The story uses simple words and images, with flaps that readers can flip up to find out what's real or not.

—Michael Vyskocil

ONGOING REGISTRATION

2021-2022

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PRIVATE SCHOOL

learning models

By Eleanor Linafelt

IF YOU ARE THINKING about enrolling your child in a private school, you may be overwhelmed by all of the options — not only the sheer number of schools to choose from, but also several different learning models and educational philosophies across the country that these schools employ.

Three of the most popular are Waldorf, Reggio Emilia and Montessori.

Though distinct, these types of schools, all founded in the early 20th century, are similar in that they offer creative, individualized and child-driven approaches to education.

Yet their philosophies have notable differences in terms of how the classrooms are structured and what the curricula prioritize.

It's important that you find the right fit for your child, but according to the experts and teachers we spoke with, one thing is true for Waldorf, Reggio Emilia and Montessori models: Any type of student has the potential to thrive in them.

WALDORF

"Head, heart and hands"

Founded by scientist and thinker Rudolf Steiner, Waldorf education "aims to meet children where they're at by an approach to education that makes sure that we are always including the head, heart and hands," says Ona Wetherall, the lead teacher and head of the early childhood program at Kimberton Waldorf School in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, and the parent of three Waldorf students.

Waldorf teachers foster not only their students' cognitive development, but also their physical and social-emotional development. "All of those things need to be cared for and educated together," Wetherall says. "That's what makes the whole human organism be the very best that it can be."

"A feast for the senses"

One way Waldorf education supports the "whole" child is through sensory engagement.

"We feel that even from the very beginning, children learn with their whole bodies and with all of their senses," Wetherall says. "The early childhood classroom is such a feast for the senses in the way that things are made with natural materials, and we

make all our food from scratch."

In adhering to that philosophy, Waldorf classrooms don't contain plastic or artificial learning materials. "Our crayons are beeswax crayons," Wetherall says. "Our watercolor paints are natural pigment paints that don't have any additives in them."

Creative thinking

Students in Waldorf schools learn from hands-on experiences rather than from textbooks. In fact, Waldorf students often create their own textbooks.

"At the end of the year my children come home with multiple books that they've made themselves with the material they've learned," Wetherall says. "It's a unique aspect of our education." It's one of the many ways Waldorf education promotes original thinking.

"We're trying to foster the imagination so when kids get older they can be creative free thinkers when it comes to doing things like math and problem solving," Wetherall says. "As a parent, I appreciate that because we need people to be able to think outside the box and approach situations with flexibility."

GEORGIJEVIC / E+



WALDORF

MONTESSORI

REGGIO
EMILIA

REGGIO EMILIA

Curiosity

Founded in Reggio Emilia, Italy, following World War II, Reggio Emilia schools center on the innate curiosity of children.

“Children are naturally inquisitive and curious,” says Alice Wetzel, the early years coordinator at the Reggio-inspired Roland Park Country School in Baltimore, Maryland. “Our classrooms take that natural curiosity and work alongside it rather than being teacher-directed.”

Reggio teachers intently observe their classes to see what they are collectively drawn to learning about, then plan their curriculum around the students’ interests.

“I had a class that was really interested in the Chinese New Year, so they ended up putting on a dragon parade,” Wetzel says.

For their parade, Wetzel’s students recorded music, created invitations and made a huge dragon.

“We fold in our writing work and our music work and all of the different areas into something that they already show that they’re interested in,” she says.

Co-teaching

Reggio classes have a high teacher-to-student ratio.

“We have 15 children and two teachers,” Wetzel says of the classes at her school. “The teaching is a little different from a traditional preschool, in that it is co-teaching — a collaboration between the teachers and a collaboration between the teachers and the students.”

“Loose parts”

Reggio Emilia schools use materials that adhere to the “loose parts theory,” which sees toys and manipulatives as open-ended.

“A block might start out as a block, but maybe a child is using it as a cell phone or something else,” Wetzel explains.

One of the tenets of Reggio education is that “the environment is the third teacher.” Reggio teachers put materials out in their classrooms to see what the students are drawn to as a way to foster their curiosity and allow the children to lead the lessons.

“With younger children, we might see that they’re interested in enclosing things or pouring things or hiding things,” Wetzel says. “Then we build on that interest.”

MONTESSORI

Individuality

Named after its founder Maria Montessori, an Italian educator, physician and scientist,



Montessori education is focused on the individual.

“Much of our work is based on observing children and their unique nature and creating learning environments that support that unique nature,” says Gina Lofquist, senior director of education and strategic initiatives at the American Montessori Society.

Montessori teachers extensively observe each child to understand how they work, both independently and as part of a group.

“While the focus is on the individual, it’s also looking at how someone is in community and how they can support a community of friends and learning,” Lofquist says.

Larger class sizes

One way Montessori schools support independence is through having relatively larger classes.

“If there are a lot of adults in the environment, then children might have a tendency to become more dependent on the adults,” Lofquist says. “It’s about this group of children coming together and supporting each other in their learning.”

“Hundreds of teachers”

Unlike the open-ended learning materials in Reggio Emilia classrooms, Montessori schools have didactic, specially designed materials

to promote learning in a variety of specific curricular areas.

“There are hundreds of teachers in a Montessori environment,” Lofquist says. “Between the children teaching each other and the materials teaching children, there are lots of learning opportunities.”

Preparing for adulthood

Montessori education aims to prepare students and build skills for later in life.

“What a child is really doing is constructing themselves to be an adult,” Lofquist says. “We try to create an environment that allows for a healthy construction of the adult who is to be.”

According to Lofquist, the lifelong skills that Montessori education instills include being “able to hear different perspectives, create with other people and vocalize ideas.”

With their creative, student-centered philosophies, any child has the potential to thrive in Waldorf, Reggio Emilia and Montessori schools. But each model is unique, and if you’re already having a difficult time narrowing down the vast array of choices to send your child to private school, it might be helpful to take a deep dive into them all and see which you like best. Once you figure that out, see which private schools employ your preferred educational model. Voilà, it’s not all that daunting anymore, is it? ■

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Jo Kosmides Edwards

Illustrating Imaginary Worlds

INTERVIEW BY PJ FEINSTEIN

In the children's picture book "Kalamata's Kitchen" (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2021), a nervous Kalamata finds the courage to start a new school after food-filled imaginary adventure with her alligator pal, Al Dente. The magical story, written by Sarah Thomas, comes to life with colorful, expressive illustrations by Arlington artist Jo Kosmides Edwards.

When she's not illustrating books — Edwards also contributed the cover art for "Wolfpack" by Abby Wambach and Glennon Doyle's "Love Warrior" — or painting murals around the D.C. area, Edwards is hanging out at home with her husband, Brock, and sons Jude, 10, and Oliver, 9.

Washington Family caught up with the "Doodling Dynamo" to learn more about "Kalamata's Kitchen" and how she juggles her kids and her craft.

How did you become a children's book illustrator?

Becoming a children's book illustrator was a bit of luck. I had always wanted to make a children's book. Derek Wallace and Sarah Thomas had heard of me through a mutual friend, and invited me to participate in their contest to come up with a character for "Kalamata's Kitchen." It seemed like a very cool project, so I entered. I won! While we started by self-publishing several books, we then published with Random House Children's Books, and the rest is history!

What has been your favorite part about illustrating these books? The most challenging?

My favorite part about illustrating the books was working with the Kalamata team and having the opportunity and freedom to create a character that inspires children and helps them develop a sense of wonder. The hardest part was the very first spread because that sets up the vibe of the whole project. Also, since my focus was often in portraiture, backgrounds were a new challenge for me. Once those environments were established, then the rest started flowing.

What's the hardest part about juggling motherhood and your career? What's something that makes it easier to balance both?

I'm sure a lot of parents say this, but the hardest part about it is usually the guilt. The little voice that says "You're not doing enough with your children this week, they will suffer." Then it says "You're not honing your craft as much as you should be, it will suffer." I think to balance everything, I wake up super early each day and pump out a couple of hours of work before the kids wake up. That way when they are up, I can fully focus on them for a bit before they go off to school. Also, my kids love to make things, so if I set them up with art supplies, they often will sort of zone out making something while I do the same.

How do you find time to nurture your own creativity?

Early rising definitely helps, and I am very, very lucky that I have a husband who is incredibly supportive of my career. Since I don't have unlimited alone time, when we finish eating dinner and migrate to the couch afterward, I will pick up an art book or a sketchbook or look up some art online and show my family. I am also constantly listening to art books and podcasts while I work or when driving to activities.

Any tips for parents raising young aspiring artists?

Nurture their interests and passions. Encourage them to watch YouTube videos, get them some classes, check out art books and magazines at the library, or have them shadow an artist for a day. Host a family art night where you have hot cocoa and paint a flower that's sitting on the kitchen table. Nothing will teach them better than doing, especially doing it every single day. Know that both the time they spend creating art brings them joy and your support makes them more confident, brave and motivated. ■



Family Faves

VACATION SPOT *Lewes, Delaware, with family friends.*

AT-HOME ACTIVITY *Playing with our dog, Rusty*

LOCAL ACTIVITY *Riding our bikes on the W&OD trail*

LOCAL RESTAURANT *Athena Pallas in Crystal City*

ATTENTION,

At first, I was skeptical. Could prescribed medication really help children diagnosed with ADHD? I became convinced the answer is yes after several years of working as a counselor. I witnessed children dramatically improve their functioning in school and social situations after taking medication.

The case of John* is an excellent example. After three years of taking Adderall, he requested to discontinue using his medication at the start of fifth grade because he thought it no longer necessary. Often when kids are doing well they think they don't need medication anymore. It is similar to when you take Tylenol for a headache: When you feel better, you don't take it. Kids assume the same for their ADHD medication.

The first month without Adderall, John thought he was doing fine, but his mid-term progress report said otherwise. He was receiving a D in math and Cs in his other subjects. His parents wanted him to go back on the medication to see if there would be an improvement.

After taking Adderall again for a week, John's mother checked in with his teachers, who reported a dramatic improvement in both the quality of his schoolwork and his ability to pay attention during class. "He is a totally different kid. He stopped fidgeting, and he was able to focus for extended periods of time. His responses to the questions were thoughtful and correct," they said.

John continued to take his medication for the remainder of the school year and received an A in math class. He received As and Bs in his other classes, which resulted in receiving honor roll. He proudly displayed his certificate in his room.

I worked with many children who experienced similar positive effects of taking medication to help their ADHD.

AD
please,

Three Benefits of Prescribed ADHD Medications for Children

BY CHERYL MAGUIRE

IMPROVED GRADES IN SCHOOL

Most schools require sitting still and paying attention for six hours, which is exactly what students with ADHD struggle with. The National Resource on ADHD states that prescribed medication can help attention span, impulsivity and focus, especially in structured environments. All of these improved behaviors can lead to better grades in school.

Additionally, a study conducted at the National Institute of Mental Health found students who took medication for ADHD did better in math and reading compared to students with ADHD who did not take medication.

HISPANOLISTIC / E+

IMPROVED SOCIAL SKILLS

Children with ADHD have difficulty making friends because they may not pay attention to social cues. Their impulsive behaviors can also be annoying or hurtful to their peers. Sometimes their impulsivity can lead to aggression.

One child I worked with thought other kids were making fun of him. When I investigated this situation I found the

children actually wanted to be friends with him. He was misreading the other children's social cues, causing him to feel both angry and left out.

According to an NIMH-sponsored study, children who took ADHD medication showed more improved social skills and peer relations than children in the non-medicated comparison group after 14 months.

IMPROVED SELF-ESTEEM

Often children with ADHD have poor self-esteem due to the difficulties they experience in school and social situations. By taking

medication, a child can improve both their social skills and school performance, which would improve their self-esteem. As in the case with John, he proudly displayed his honor roll status in his room.

Research studies have also examined how ADHD medication can be beneficial in sports settings. A study done at the University of Kentucky found children who took medication for ADHD performed better during baseball games.

However, medication isn't a magic pill. I like to use the analogy that medication is like a shovel. A person can dig a hole with their hands, but if they use a shovel it will be easier. But the shovel is not going to magically dig the hole itself; the person still needs to do the work. Medication can be a tool that helps make it easier for children with ADHD to focus and be less impulsive, but they still must put in the effort to complete their schoolwork.

Medication can also have side effects and may not be effective for everyone. There are other ways to treat ADHD, such as counseling, behavioral management and alternative treatments like acupuncture. Often a combination of counseling and medication can be most effective. Ultimately, the child and parents must make an informed decision about which method or methods will work best for them. ■

Cheryl Maguire has a master's in counseling psychology. Her writing has been published in The New York Times, National Geographic, Parents Magazine, AARP and many other publications. You can find her on Twitter at @CherylMaguire05.

**name has been changed for privacy*



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vices year-round. Encore is delighted to provide an accessibility matinee performance for select productions. These matinee performances provide accommodations for children and families with special needs. Accommodations include ASL interpretation and assisted listening devices as well as Braille and large print programs to allow the performance to be accessible to all audiences. An exclusive backstage tour will be provided for children to make meaningful connections with the story and to experience theatre in a new way. Interested patrons needing these accommodations must e-mail info@encorestage.org in advance. Dates for our accessibility matinee performances will be available online on our website.

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info@littleleaves.org

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To download our directory visit our website @
www.mansef.org

P.O. Box 6815 Baltimore, MD 21285
Phone 410-938-4413 Fax 410-938-5130

Spooked by Sweets?

Here's how to make Halloween healthier without cutting out the candy completely.

BY CHRISTINE JU, MS, RDN, LD

It's inevitable if you're a parent: Costco-sized bags of candy sitting in your house well before Halloween, taunting your kids every time they pass by. A fun-size Snickers here, some Swedish fish there ... What's the harm? We want our kids to have magical childhoods, and holiday traditions, including eating Halloween candy, are a big part of that.

However, we also want to teach them healthy habits. Luckily, most dietitian nutritionists will tell you there isn't real harm in a piece of candy here and there. But how much is too much? What's the right balance? And how can we help our kids enjoy Halloween to the fullest without overdoing it on sweets?

If you've ever asked yourself these questions, you're not alone. My colleagues and I get these questions from parents all the time. Here are strategies that have worked for some of our clients and their families:

Buy candy as late as possible.

When we buy Halloween candy early, the chances of our kids snacking increases. And when the snacking becomes an everyday occurrence, it can quickly become a habit that sticks well after Halloween. However, if it's not in the house, it's not available to your family. So do yourself a favor and wait to buy your Halloween candy until the day before or morning of.

Make access to candy more difficult.

When you do bring it home, keep the candy somewhere that makes access more difficult. The trunk of your car, the garage or the guest room are great places for safekeeping. And make it a point not to open the bags until trick-or-treating begins!

Buy non-candy treats.

Glow bracelets, small Halloween-themed toys, super balls and card games are great items to distribute instead of candy. I like to give out low-sugar juice boxes and small bottles of water.



All that running around makes for thirsty kids (and parents!), so a hydrating option along the trick-or-treating route is a nice alternative. The first year I did it my kids were embarrassed to be "that" house, but after seeing how thrilled kids were to receive something to drink, they quickly changed their minds.

Pick candy with other nutrients.

All candy is loaded with sugar, but some offer other nutrients as well. If they're consuming the calories, they may as well get a little protein and fiber, too! Candy with nuts, such as Peanut M&Ms and Snickers, are better choices than strictly sugar options like candy corn or jelly beans. And dark chocolate is healthier than milk chocolate.

Eat before you treat.

On Halloween, make sure your kids have a healthy meal before heading out for trick-or-treating. The more real food they eat to fill their bellies, the less candy they may eat later on. At the very least, a good meal will fuel the evening.

Give it away.

When my kids were young, I introduced the idea of the Switch Witch, who came to

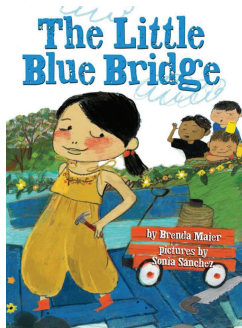
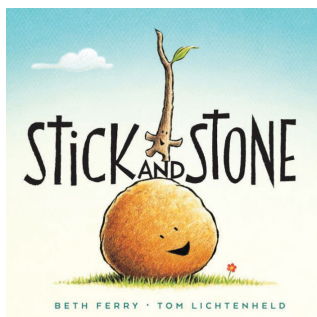
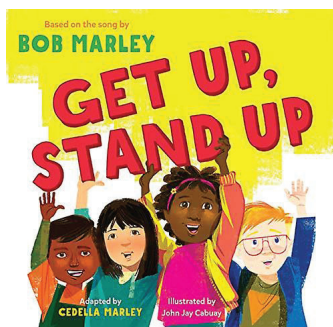
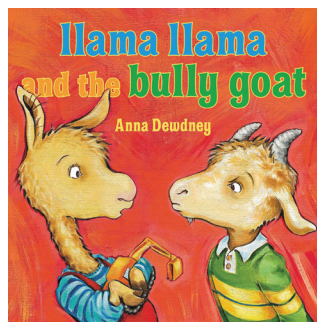
the house while they slept, swapped their Halloween candy for a small gift and then donated the candy to the troops. Now that they're a bit older, they know there isn't a Switch Witch, and they're even proud of their contribution to our Nov. 1 candy donation. Also, it's okay to let your kids keep some of their favorites — 10 pieces or so — that they can eat over the next handful of days.

Enjoy the holiday.

Perhaps the most important thing to remember is to enjoy Halloween. Don't worry too much if your kids have more than their share of candy — it happens! The last thing you want to do is associate shame or other negative feelings with this super fun holiday. So, let them enjoy that piece (or two) of candy and make some lasting memories! ■

Happy Halloween!

Christine Ju is a registered dietitian nutritionist and co-founder of Good Food Nutrition Group in Washington, DC. Her work includes nutrition counseling for disordered eating, weight management and pediatric nutrition. Ju also teaches nutrition and health promotion at American University as an adjunct professor.



20 Books About Bullying

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, so we asked our friends at DCPL for inspiring reads about standing up to bullies.

COMPILED BY DC PUBLIC LIBRARY CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LIBRARIANS
ARYSSA DAMRON, ERIKA KERR, TAMMY MCKINNEY, EBONI NJOKU AND CRAIG RANALLO

PICTURE BOOKS

'Chrysanthemum'

By Kevin Henkes

Chrysanthemum loves her name, until she starts going to school and the other children make fun of it.

'Llama Llama and the Bully Goat'

By Anna Dewdney

Following their teacher's lead, Llama Llama speaks to Gilroy Goat and tells him he should not act like a bully on the playground.

'Get Up, Stand Up'

Adapted by Cedella Marley, illustrated by John Jay Cabuay

In this adaptation of Bob Marley's popular song, children are encouraged to resist bullying and stand up for their rights.

'Stick and Stone'

By Beth Ferry, illustrated by Tom Lichtenheld

Stick and Stone are both lonely until Pinecone's teasing causes one to stick up for the other, and a solid friendship is formed.

'The Little Blue Bridge'

By Brenda Maier

Ruby learns how to work around a bully and build better bridges in this adaptation of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff."

'Weird!: A Story About Dealing with Bullying in Schools' (The Weird! Series)

By Erin Frankel

When Luisa becomes the target of a school bully, she changes everything about herself to avoid being bullied.

DEVELOPING READERS BOOKS

'Zoom! Boom! Bully!'

By Jon Sciescka

The trucks can't build something big if Big Rig keeps knocking it down. Can they learn to stand up to him and make him stop?

'Pedro: The Big Stink'

By Fran Manushkin

When the class bully decides a funny smell must be coming from the new kid, Pedro steps up to defend his friend — and to find the true source of the smell.

MIDDLE GRADE BOOKS

'Clash'

By Kayla Miller

A new girl in school spells trouble for Olive's happy friend group, as Natasha seemingly goes out of her way to make Olive feel left out.

'Save Me a Seat'

By Sarah Weeks

Joe and Ravi come from different backgrounds but find common ground in standing up to the school bully.

'Real Friends'

By Shannon Hale

In this graphic memoir, Shannon and Adrienne's friendship is put to the test when "The Group" starts encouraging girls to put each other down to rise to the top.

'Genesis Begins Again'

By Alicia D. Williams

Often mocked for her family and her skin, Genesis must learn to like herself if she's going to make positive changes in her life.

'Maybe He Just Likes You'

By Barbara Dee

Mila learns to stand up for herself and against boys who get away with bullying as “flirting” in this middle grade novel with a karate kick.

'One Kid's Trash'

By Jamie Sumner

Hugo's penchant for decoding trash helps him fit in at his new school, despite being small for his age, but being cool isn't everything he dreamed of.

'Starfish'

By Lisa Fipps

Ellie is tired of being bullied about her weight by everyone — including her own family — and decides to work to become her most authentic self with the help of her dad, her therapist and a new friend.

'Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet'

By Zanib Mian

Omar uses his imagination and goofy humor to overcome challenges, like a new school and a bully who teases him for being Muslim.

'Farah Rocks Fifth Grade'

By Susan Muaddi Darraj

Farah is working hard to get into a magnet program but worries she won't be there to protect her younger brother, who is being bullied by a classmate for being Muslim. Can she achieve her goals and keep her brother safe at the same time?

YOUNG ADULT BOOKS

'Patina'

By Jason Reynolds

Patty is like lightning on the track. But can she outrun all her problems, like the kids who taunt her about her home situation, or will she have to face them head on with the help of her friends?

'Just Jaimie'

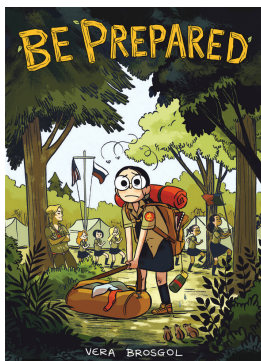
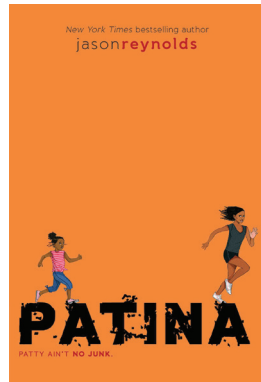
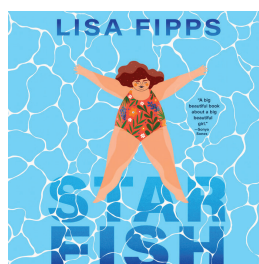
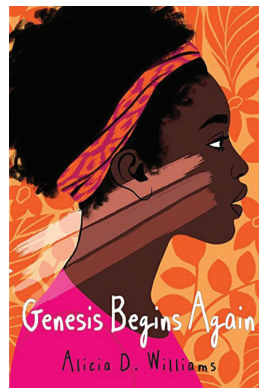
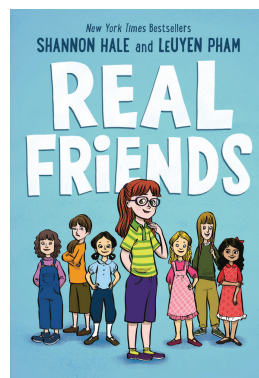
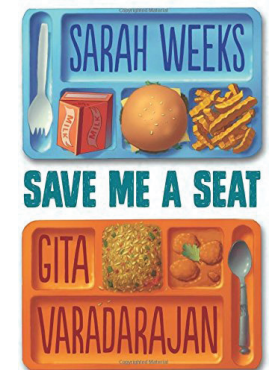
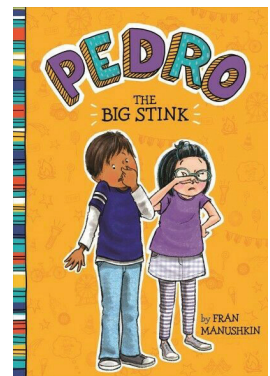
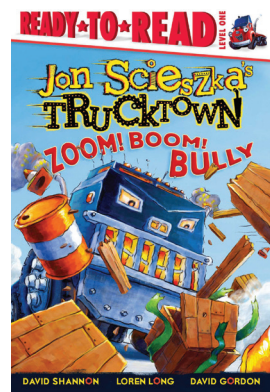
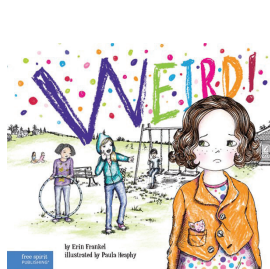
By Terri Libenson

It's the last day of seventh grade, and Jaimie can tell her friends are making fun of her. But surely her best friend Maya won't stand for it? Meanwhile, Maya has to decide if getting in with the popular kids is worth hurting her best friend.

'Be Prepared'

By Vera Brosgol

Vera is sure going to camp is her way to finally fit in with the other girls, but soon she has to deal with drama, mean older kids and outhouses straight out of her nightmares! ■



TGIF

Thank Goodness It's Fall!

BY JACQUELINE RENFROW

A pumpkin spice latte. That's the first thing that comes to mind when someone says fall. I picture myself at 20 years old, walking across the quad of my college campus, enjoying the smell in the air that can only be described as crisp. The thought of fall makes me long to go apple picking, and then to bake something warm and gooey that sends cinnamon wafting through the house.

There is something that excites me about fall more than any other time of year. I don't know if it's because I spent 12 years in Los Angeles, where winter is preceded by summer and then fire season, or that I've just been beaten down by a decade of oppressively hot summers in Maryland. While I'm never in a rush for the cold and darkness of winter, I always look forward to the hopeful feeling that accompanies autumn. We all go our separate ways for the summer, but then we come back together — at work, in school, in our communities. An opportunity to start fresh.

After what we've all been through in the past year and a half, however, it's hard to feel hopeful in this moment. At this point, I'm starting to wonder if life will ever look the way it did before COVID-19. So many questions fly through my head: Will we return to the customary American greeting of shaking hands? Will French society go back to its signature two-kiss greeting? Will our children ever go into a public place without a mask again?

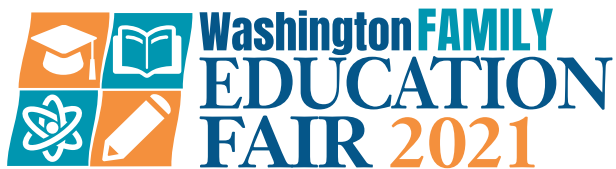
To take my mind off the madness surrounding the increased threat of the delta variant (not to mention the deepening destruction of global warming), I focus on fall. Through my senses, I am reminded that there are still so many small pleasures I can still enjoy this year — and for many years to come. ■



- The toll of the school bell
- The crunch of dried leaves beneath my feet
- The coziness of warm boots and a soft sweater
- The crack of a bat making contact with a baseball
- The smell of smoke coming out of chimneys
- The contrast of reds, yellows and oranges against a blue sky
- The squeal of my children putting on costumes for Halloween

- The joy on kids' faces when I drop candy into trick-or-treat bags
- The faint music of the marching band from a not-so-distant high school football game
- The squish of pumpkin between my fingers as I carve a jack-o'-lantern
- The honks from geese flying south
- The thrill of scary stories and haunted houses

And, of course, the smell and taste of a pumpkin spiced latte. ■



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