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## FAMILY TIMES™

Home .....	6
Special Needs .....	7
Grandparents .....	8
Family Matters .....	11
Dads .....	12
Health .....	14
Education .....	19
Food .....	21
Camp Guide .....	22
Pet Pages .....	34
Toddlers .....	35
Activities .....	36
Celebrations .....	41



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**Monmouth County's ASK THE DOCTOR**  
**The Greater Princeton Area ASK THE DOCTOR**

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# The Science of Hands on Learning

By Pam Teel

"Science class has come a long way since I was in elementary school," one of the mothers of Ms. Topinka's students stated. "I just remember reading a chapter, hearing the teacher's monotone voice discussing the chapter, taking a test, and having a tough time staying awake in class all year."

I guess we all experienced those kinds of teachers in our days; after all they weren't there to entertain us, but to teach us knowledge. Today there is a different kind of science being taught, hands on science, where you are not just reading about the topic, you become a part of it; doing your own investigative research and compiling your own personal data. And even beyond that, being able to apply your own problem solving solutions to the mix.



Anna, Gianna, and Charlie

Such is the case in Ms. Topinka's classroom. Ms. Topinka is the STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, math) lab teacher at the Millstone Elementary School where she teaches grades 2-5. She is also the Science Friday Educator and collaborator and the advisor for the Community Problem Solvers Club along with her co-advisor, teacher, Jennifer Modula. The Community Problem Solvers Club is part of the Future Problem Solving International Program.

Science Friday is a weekly call-in talk show that broadcasts every Friday on public radio stations. The focus of each program is news and information on nature, science, and technology. An avid fan of the radio show, Ms. Topinka heard about a new initiative idea the show hosts spoke about; different ways to foster collaboration among STEM educators. After submitting an application along with hundreds of others, she was chosen, along with five other educators, to learn how to share new ways to teach science and technology, not just with each other, but also with their prospective students. Educators participated in formal trainings over several months and began discussing their curriculum and ideas. One thing that made Ms. Topinka the perfect candidate was that she was already introducing media into her classroom curriculum.

There are currently 19 children in the Problem Solvers Club, which range from third through fifth grade. After brainstorming a variety of problems facing Millstone Township, the students decided on an invasive species of plants that the fifth graders were studying. After learning that this plant has also been spreading in and around Millstone Township, the children did online research at Environmental and Park Service websites. They also did an interview using Skype with Dr. Louise Wootton, Chair of Biology at Georgian Court University in Lakewood, and an expert on invasive species. They did another Skype interview with Ms. Elaine Ferrier, who is a Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative in Michigan. The invasive species that they studied was a plant called Phragmites australis (also known as European Common Reed).

A parent in Ms. Topinka's class put their project on facebook, inspiring Millstone Township resident and Boy Scout leader, Nick DellaRosa, to come into their classroom for three meetings to teach the students how to take their online survey data and map

the Phragmites locations as color-coded polygons on a Google map using satellite and street images. They also reached out to a local landscaper to find out what equipment works best to cut down the plants.

On January 9th, the students did a presentation in front of the Millstone Townships Environmental Commission explaining what they learned about the plant in front of an impressed commission and a very proud teacher.

It was interesting interviewing a few of the students in the club and learning a few interesting facts about the invasive plant. Fourth graders, Anna DePinho, Ethan Bailey, and Thomas Maltese answered the following questions for the interview.

How big do these plants grow? They can grow up to eight to fourteen feet long.

Do they multiply by seed or root? They multiply by rhizomes and seeds.

Do they like wet or dry areas? You see them mostly in wet and swampy areas.

Are these plants a fire hazard? Yes, they can catch on fire and spread from one to the other.

Student, Charlie Duffy learned that these reeds can destroy whole lakes and that everything could be gone in a matter of years. He especially loved learning about how to make maps and using GIS technology.

The students also did an experiment introducing the plant to goats to see if they would like eating the plant and they did enjoy them. The club has also gotten valuable help from Galina Gordon, a former student of Ms. Topinka, who was in her original Future Problem Solvers group in the Middle School. She's now in high school and volunteers her time every week to work with the club.

The students will be giving presentations about their research to local scout groups and spreading the words to people who use the woods in Millstone and the Perrineville Lake area. They are also anticipating a guest speaker coming soon to their classroom from the Monmouth County Park System to speak with them about how the parks manage invasive plants, Phragmites in particular.

The club calls themselves the Phearless Phragmites Phighters and sometime this February they will be submitting their work to the Future Problem Solvers State Organization in hopes of being invited to compete at the NJ State Bowl in March.

To date, this has been Ms. Topinka's favorite project. She is very proud of all of the efforts put forth by her students. The children have spoken to and have met many new people throughout the course of the project and they have learned many new and interesting things. Most rewarding to Ms. Topinka is seeing the enthusiasm in her students' faces as they learn new things and that the children see for themselves that they can make a big difference in their community.



Jai, Ryan, Mahi, and Tia

The children look forward to continuing working with the Township Environmental Committee and the Monmouth County Park System on coming up with solutions to keep the invasive plant under control in their township.

# Teen Bedrooms

Jordan Tinitigan

Here are some cool and trendy ways to make your teen's bedroom express their awesome personality:

**For the Future Rockstar** – Paint the walls a cool and darker color like red, grey, or even dark blue. Hang some old vinyl records on the walls along with some of their favorite band's posters and cool light up signs. This gives the room an edgier feel, while keeping it polished and uncrowded.

**For the Coachella Enthusiasts** – Keep the walls light, maybe a light gray or light purple! Buy a cool tapestry online and pin it behind or next to their bed. Next, get a sheer and some fairy lights and hang them from the ceiling to create a glow canopy around their bed. Finally, decorate the shelves with cool books, lava lamps, and even record players!

**For the Simplistic Teen** – Keep the walls a neutral color. Replace (or spray paint) their furniture to be all one color, and decorate it with books, succulent plants, and crystals. For their clothes, do something unconventional, like a clothing rack instead of a dresser!

For Anyone who isn't sure how they want their room to look – Paint the walls your favorite color, or at least accent with it. Cover them with as many posters and pictures as you want, ultimately making it YOUR space. Everything moves so fast when you're young, so why not let those memories reflect on your bedroom walls?



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# Carbon Monoxide



It's called the silent killer because the odorless, colorless and toxic gas can literally take your life before you even are aware it's in your home.

Even at lower levels, carbon monoxide poses a serious threat to your family and is one you need to work hard to eliminate within your home. That's because poisoning can set in when enough inhalation of carbon monoxide occurs.

At lower levels of exposure, carbon monoxide also can cause mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. Symptoms can include headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea and fatigue.

## How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Exposure

For the most part, carbon monoxide exposure can be prevented or lessened through the use of common sense. It also is critical to have a few carbon monoxide detectors in your home to alert you if levels have become dangerous

Never use a generator inside a home or other closed off spaces such as a garage, crawlspace or shed, as deadly levels of carbon monoxide can quickly build up within these areas.

Carbon monoxide also can leak from unvented kerosene and gas space heaters, which many families use as extra heating sources during the cold winter months. Watch for excessive back-drafting from furnaces, gas water heaters, wood stoves and fireplaces, as well.

## EPA Tips

The following tips from the Environmental Protection Agency will help create quality indoor air that is free of carbon monoxide:

- Keep gas appliances properly adjusted
- Consider purchasing a vented space heater when replacing an unvented one
- Use proper fuel in kerosene space heaters
- Install and use an exhaust fan vented to outdoors over gas stoves
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean and tune up central heating systems
- Do not idle your vehicle inside the garage



# Siblings of Special Needs Kids Need Support Too

By Stefanie Maglio

Special needs children need extra care and attention from their families in order to help them through their daily lives. However, many people don't realize that siblings of special needs children may need a little extra care or attention too. When a child is special needs, the parents have no other choice but to dedicate most of their time and attention to that child simply because he or she needs it. The siblings won't have as much attention in many cases, and they often have mixed feelings about the situation. Siblings of special needs children often worry about their brother or sister and the possibility of losing them. In other cases, they may be embarrassed of their brother or sister and be resentful that they cannot do certain things because of their sibling. They may act out in order to receive attention, but it's important for parents to remember to care and give attention to this behavior in order to prevent more serious situations such as self-harm or abuse. While these negative situations can occur, parents can take the initiative to allow themselves as well as their non-special needs children to develop good qualities such as patience, kindness, supportiveness, compassion, helpfulness, empathy, dependability, loyalty, and much more. It is important to know that having both special needs and non-special needs children can be turned into a positive atmosphere that will help shape their children into strong, kind citizens.

# Mobile Tour Lets People Know What It Feels Like to Have Autism Is Launched in the UK.

The mobile tour is a unique simulator and asks users to carry out simple tasks while being completely overwhelmed by light and sound. Participants wear special headphones, glasses and gloves which make it impossible to concentrate as they struggle to filter out the senses around them. Experts say this helps to create a similar environment to that of sufferers of the condition.

The unique simulator asks users to carry out simple tasks while being completely overwhelmed by light and sound. The agency running the experience is Training 2 Care in the UK and hopes to launch world wide to have people get a better understanding of Autism.

It is hoped the 'Autism Reality Experience,' which will tour up and down the country will be used by schools, retailers and prisons.

This will allow them to get a better perspective of the symptoms that tend to go unnoticed to the untrained eye.

Chelsey Cookson, from Training 2 Care, the agency running the experience, said: "Lots of people have family members with autism, including myself, and this could help a lot of them."

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# Things to Bring when Traveling with Kids

By Jordan Tinitigan

Traveling with kids is tough. They generally require more attention and caring for. So, not only are you packing for yourself, but you're also packing for the child that is joining you on the trip. Although you've probably got the basics down, there are still more essentials worth considering.

**Snacks:** Whether your traveling by plane or car, chances are there is a point in time where your child is hungry. If there's no food available, they might complain or even cry. This can be a distraction, especially if your reading a map or waiting for a train stop.

**Entertainment:** Books, Magazines, Tablets, or virtually anything that will keep your child occupied during travel time will call for a more peaceful trip.

**An Extra Pair of Clothes in YOUR Suitcase:** This is just in case something bad were to happen to their luggage, or if something happens to their clothes while traveling. (i.e. falling in mud, ripping them, etc.)

Finally, Don't Forget to pack something from home that will keep them calm: A lot of kids, especially younger ones, may have a hard time being away from their own house for a period of time. This is extremely important if it's their first time traveling. Take a pillow, toy, or something small that they can go to if they feel homesick.

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## 10 Things You Never Knew About the Month of February

By Stefanie Maglio

Most people probably think of Valentine's Day or Groundhog Day when they hear someone say February. They may even think about a beautiful spring around the corner, as they get ready to say goodbye to a long winter. However, here are some facts you most likely didn't know about the month of February:

February was named after a purification ritual called Februa. This was almost like an early form of spring cleaning for the Romans.

February is one of the most common misspelled words in the English language.

One year, a press release from the White House spelt February as "Februry."

Next year, 2018, there will be no full moon during the month of February.

February is Hot Breakfast month in the USA.

February is also National Pet Dental Health month in the USA.

The birth flower for the month of February is the violet or iris.

The Shakespeare play "Much Ado about Nothing" is the only one to mention February.

No one truly knows why the month of February was specifically chosen to be the shortest month of the year.

On February 1st in 1851, Evaporated milk was invented by Gail Borden.

## Valentine's Day Traditions

Jordan Tinitigan

Valentine's Day is designated to the person you love the most in your life, but who do you love more than your family? Instead of spending money for you and your husband/wife, why not make Valentine's Day a family day? Make it a tradition to exchange cheap or home made gifts between you and your family members. Give your kids a little valentine with a cute (and cheap) gift like a teddy bear or a box of chocolates, and have them draw you a picture or DIY their own card. Then, maybe you could go and do something fun for all of you. Whether your a family of movie- goers, or the adventurous type, spend the extra date night money on something fun like laser tag or indoor trampolines. However, if the day of love falls in the middle of the week, keep the fun at home! Have your own movie night or even a family board night with ice cream sundaes and LOTS of love!



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## Getting Green from Gold and Silver a.k.a. Treasure for Your Trash

*By Susan Heckler*

**Have space...will fill it. We all do it. We organize it and shove it from place to place, without realizing the potential value in it.**

I realized that not too long ago when helping my 83 year old mother downsize. My parents had been the inheritors of unwanted and unneeded treasures from cousins near and far. Their basement and attic were the family dumping grounds for items that were highly regarded generations ago but have little use in our microwave to table, dining out lives.

I am talking about Aunt Sadie's silver flatware, which was an incomplete service for 8 (thank you garbage disposal), mixed with Aunt Francis's hideous service for 6 ¾. Then there is Nanny's silver tea service, the odds and ends trays and bowls you have polished your whole life but never really liked or had room for. No one entertains like they did in the Titanic era.

Enough! We went through her home and anything we didn't love or have room for was put on the dining room table. She must have had 20 pounds of excess sterling silver bogging down her life. My sister didn't want it, I don't want it, and Mom doesn't want it. What do you do with valuable items no one wants?

I have seen ads for stores that will buy unwanted silver and jewelry but my mother was embarrassed walking through a parking lot with shopping bags, like a pauper going in to a pawn shop. I had recently met this man, Lew Zimkind, who has a business which will do the same but he works in the privacy of your own home.

Lew came to my mother's condo in her adult community. He explained From Gold to Green has an advantage in that he has no brick and mortar store to pay rent and overhead so he can offer you a better price than the competition. We had him come to price the unwanted silver serving pieces but he explained he also has over 45 years of experience in the jewelry industry so he can tell trash from treasure and a diamond from a want-to-be.

He very patiently went over each piece and explained the value in terms we understood. My mother then went through her jewelry that she loved 50 years ago and hasn't worn since. Those 1950's rings that could choke a horse were mighty heavy as were those heavy gold rope chains from the Travolta Era. She had about a dozen single earrings.

All in all it was quite a windfall for Mom, who like many, live on a fixed income, has prescriptions to pay for and a cat to support. The whole experience was pleasant, stress free, and no one else's business. Mom got a healthy amount of money without feeling embarrassed and has a little more mad money to enjoy her life.

If you want to go FROM GOLD 2 GREEN, contact Lew by phone 732-598-6908 or email him at [fromgold2green@gmail.com](mailto:fromgold2green@gmail.com). Tell him I say, "Hi and thanks!"

# A SAFE TRAFFIC STOP

By John Bazzurro

As a result of social media, the news and police "reality" shows, we have all seen a routine traffic stop by a police officer escalate to a point where either the officer or an individual is fatally injured. In order to help prevent such tragic results, I am writing this article to provide information to citizens in an effort to avoid such an outcome.

Because I represent a number of law enforcement officers, I often times see things from their point of view as well as from the view of an average citizen. The bottom line is that a law enforcement officer who is effectuating a traffic stop is genuinely concerned for the safety of the driver and occupants of the vehicle as well as his or her own safety. Typically, if various simple protocols are followed by both the law enforcement officer as well as the citizen, a safe outcome is more than likely.

First and foremost, when you are being pulled over, you should immediately acknowledge the fact that you are aware that you are being pulled over by placing on your turn signal. Thereafter, you should attempt to pull onto a portion of the side of the road that fully removes both your vehicle and the police vehicle from the traveled portion of the roadway (i.e.-shoulder).

After both you and the police vehicle are safely off of the roadway, you should open your driver's side window and place both of your hands upon the steering wheel so that the officer can visually observe both of your hands as he or she is approaching you. Often times, people make the mistake of reaching across their vehicle into their glove compartment or into their pockets for purposes of getting out their license, registration and insurance card as the officer is approaching their vehicle. Although law enforcement officers are highly trained in this regard, depending on the circumstances, they could potentially believe that you or the occupants of your vehicle are attempting to reach for a weapon or hide contraband. Obviously, such actions could potentially escalate an otherwise innocuous situation.

After the officer approaches your vehicle and requests your documentation, you should verbally advise the officer as to where in your vehicle the documentation is located and advise the officer that you are reaching for it. This will allow the officer to anticipate your moves inside the vehicle so they are not surprised. Additionally, you should immediately respond to any of the officer's requests. Failure to do so could be a signal to the officer that you are attempting to hide something or that the officer's safety may be in jeopardy.

Importantly, when engaging in a conversation with the officer, you should be courteous and friendly regardless of whether or not you believe you committed a traffic offense. Of course, any aggressive or abusive language could cause to escalate the situation. From the officer's perspective, he is only doing his job. Any arguments or positions you may have with respect to the situation are more properly raised in Municipal Court. From a lawyer's perspective, it is generally much easier to have the summons dismissed outright or plea to a favorable deal when a client is courteous and respectful to the officer at the time the ticket is issued. On numerous occasions, I have seen law enforcement officers take notes when an individual is uncooperative, rude or abusive and then refuse to "work with" the prosecutor or the lawyer at the time a plea deal is sought.

Basically, all of the above boils down to common courtesy and common sense. If you follow the officer's instructions, are respectful and do not engage in any actions which the officer may construe as jeopardizing his or her safety, there will be no issues concerning the traffic stop and you may receive the benefit of the doubt from the officer when it comes time to appear in traffic court. On the other hand, if you are disrespectful, rude, abusive, and aggressive, chances are that the situation will escalate to the point where you may receive additional charges and may even be subject to arrest.

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## Best New Apps for Dads

*By Stefanie Maglio*

Everyone is different, but many dads out there aren't that tech savvy. There are apps out there that could benefit them or be of some entertainment to them, and they aren't even aware. Here are some of the top apps out there for dads to definitely download:

-Red laser allows him to scan barcodes to find the best prices and promotion offers from thousands of online and local retailers

-HomeTeam organizes a child's busy sports schedule and keeps track of team rosters, phone numbers, and addresses.

-Withings Health Mate is an app that is great for any dad who is looking to lose a few pounds, get into better shape, and monitor their blood pressure. This app can even lead to better sleep. The app also allows him to share his health history with a doctor.

-FanFinders is an app that allows dads to find sports bars near them dad are watching their favorite sports team.

-Car Minder Plus is an app that allows dad to keep track of auto maintenance needs amongst the family.

-ESPN Scorecenter allows dads to keep up with, and track the scores of their teams for all sports.

-Find my iPhone is an app that is not only just for dads. This app is great for anyone who happens to misplace their phone frequently.

## Teach Kids to Love Others

*By Jordan Tinitigan*

Many may wonder how to help their kids be more compassionate. Whether it be towards their friends or relatives, some kids don't know how to love. Here are three ways to help guide them along that path.

Teach them about forgiveness and unconditional love:

Whenever you are having a hard time with someone else in their life, show them that forgiveness is crucial when it comes to the people you love.

Do not gossip around them: Gossip represents pettiness and conflict. Bringing these ideas around your child may confuse them.

Show them what it's like to be a friend: Allow all of your friendships to be supportive and helpful. This will set an amazing example for your child, hopefully helping them go toward the same route.



# What They Don't Tell You About Having Twins

By Jordan Tinitigan

**Surprise!** You are having twins. While this may be shocking or even scary, it is actually a gift. The chance of having twins is not as likely; so many people do not know what it is like to have them. So, there are many things you may never have heard about when it came to having twins. For starters, everyone will love the fact that you have two identical babies. Again, this occurrence is less likely than normal childbirth, so everyone will be swooning over your two identical children. Next, there will come a time where you have to choose between them. Whether it be the school play and science fair or soccer and dance, you can not be in two places at once and will often be forced to choose. Also, they will fight. At one point in their lives, they will butt heads, like most siblings do. However, since they're virtually the same age to the minute, there is more of a struggle. Finally, you have to get double the food, double the clothes, and double of everything else, and all at the same time. When it comes to having two children with different ages, you could use hand-me-downs, or even have time to save money, but not with twins.

I know what you're thinking, how is this a gift? This sounds like a lot of hard work, and that's because it is. However, you will still get the joys of double weddings, double graduations, and double birthday parties. You will get to see a piece of yourself in two amazing human beings, and if all else fails, they'll always have a best friend that's just like them.



## Millstone Middle School Students to Present Cinderella

By Pam Teel

Cinderella, a Rodgers and Hammerstein production, will be presented by the Millstone Township School's Eagle Productions on March 3rd and 4th at 7:30 pm and a special Matinee on March 5th at 2:00 pm. (Pre-Ball Festivities begin at 1:00 pm) at the Millstone Performing Arts Center. Save the date, it's a production that you don't want to miss. All are welcome!

Everyone knows the classic story of a common girl and her glass slipper. Every little girl has dreamed of meeting her Prince at the Royal Ball; add the music of Rodgers and Hammerstein to the mix and the results are truly magical.

Director, Lisa Cappuzzo, has always loved the story of Cinderella for its positive message, that dreams really can come true. According to Ms. Cappuzzo, "The musical allows our young actors to explore a more sophisticated style of performance, as they take on the elegant role of attendees at a Royal Ball." Cappuzzo boasts that all attendees at the Royal Ball will be dressed elegantly in an array of sweeping ball gowns, and will dance a proper waltz.

The cast consists of 40 middle school students (grades 6-8), including Emma Bogusz in the title role of Cinderella and Zak Kheder as the Prince. Emma remembers looking up to her sister as she performed in the Wizard of Oz and wanting so much to follow in her footsteps. She remembers the first time she stepped out on stage. She had a big smile on her face and realized that this was her passion. Emma will have her chance to shine as Cinderella in the production.

Zak was inspired to take the stage in the 5th grade by his friend Jacob Normand. He fell instantly in love with theatre, especially the musicals. He loves when the actors suddenly break out into song and dance. Zak is having fun with the choreography and learning all the dances.

Other lead actors include Claudia Pelicone (Godmother), Jacob Normand (King), Angela Spadaccini (Queen), Colette Wisniewski (Stepmother), Emma Morris (Joy), Alexandria Miller (Portia), Demetrios Pasis (Herald), Corrine Mendelsohn (Chef), and Brianna San Phillips (Steward).

The students began with auditions in early December and have been rehearsing ever since. In addition to the cast, the production is led by stage managers, Sarah Rainford, Kira Ventrella, Giuseppe Scibilia, Braedan Kenna, Isabella Castalucci and Dance Captain, Kelly Lew. "This production would not be as successful without these students to keep us organized backstage, stated Ms. Cappuzzo, who teaches theatre electives including Acting, Directing and Musical Theatre at the Middle School.

Ms. Cappuzzo is also supported by Assistant Director, Vincent D'Aniello, (Spanish Teacher), Musical Director, Heather Philhower, (Music Teacher), Scene Designer, Frank Iglesias (Art Teacher), and Choreographers' Jo-Ann Figurelli, who is Ms. Cappuzzo's mom, and Rachel Lew, a Junior at Stephen's Institute for Technology. Cappuzzo considers herself very fortunate to be surrounded by such dedicated, creative people. She also relies on a slew of parent volunteers who are more than happy to help her with whatever else she needs for the production.

Don't miss Eagle Productions performance of Cinderella. Tickets can be purchased in advance at noon on February 24th at [www.millstoneperformingarts.com](http://www.millstoneperformingarts.com). \$8.00 for students & seniors and \$9.00 for adults or at the door - \$10.00.

Don't miss the special Pre-Ball Festivities at 1:00 pm before the Sunday Matinee- this includes games and more and is presented by the MMS National Junior Honor Society.)

Lots of Luck Casts and Crew!!!!!!!



Emma Bogusz as Cinderella and Zak Kheder as the Prince rehearsing their scenes



# AAP's New Sleep Recommendations Say Rooming-In is Best

*Submitted by the American Academy of Pediatrics*

Infants should sleep in the same bedroom as their parents – but on a separate surface, such as a crib or bassinet, and never on a couch, armchair or soft surface – to decrease the risks of sleep-related deaths, according to a new policy statement released by the American Academy of Pediatrics Oct. 24.

“SIDS and Other Sleep-Related Infant Deaths: Updated 2016 Recommendations for a Safe Infant Sleeping Environment,” draws on new research and serves as the first update to Academy policy since 2011.

Recommendations call for infants to share their parents’ bedroom for at least the first six months and, optimally, for the first year of life, based on the latest evidence.

The report includes new evidence that supports skin-to-skin care for newborn infants, addresses the use of bedside and in-bed sleepers and adds to recommendations on how to create a safe sleep environment.

“We know that parents may be overwhelmed with a new baby in the home, and we want to provide them with clear and simple guidance on how and where to put their infant to sleep,” says Rachel Moon, MD, FAAP, lead author of the report. “Parents should never place the baby on a sofa, couch or cushioned chair, either alone or sleeping with another person. We know that these surfaces are extremely hazardous.”

Approximately 3,500 infants die annually in the U.S. from sleep-related deaths, including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), ill-defined deaths and accidental suffocation and strangulation. The number of infant deaths initially decreased in the 1990s after a national safe sleep campaign, but has plateaued in recent years.

## AAP recommendations on creating a safe sleep environment include:

- Place the baby on his or her back on a firm sleep surface such as a crib or bassinet with a tight-fitting sheet.
- Avoid use of soft bedding, including crib bumpers, blankets, pillows and soft toys. The crib should be bare.
- Share a bedroom with parents, but not the same sleeping surface, preferably until the baby turns 1 but at least for the first six months. Room-sharing decreases the risk of SIDS by as much as 50 percent.
- Avoid baby’s exposure to smoke, alcohol and illicit drugs.
- Skin-to-skin care is recommended, regardless of feeding or delivery method, immediately following birth for at least an hour as soon as the mother is medically stable and awake, according to the report.
- Breastfeeding is also recommended as adding protection against SIDS. After feeding, the AAP encourages parents to move the baby to his or her separate sleeping space, preferably a crib or bassinet in the parents’ bedroom.

“If you are feeding your baby and think that there’s even the slightest possibility that you may fall asleep, feed your baby on your bed, rather than a sofa or cushioned chair,” says Lori Feldman-Winter, MD, FAAP, member of the Task Force on SIDS and co-author of the report.

“If you do fall asleep, as soon as you wake up be sure to move the baby to his or her own bed,” she says. “There should be no pillows, sheets, blankets or other items that could obstruct the infant’s breathing or cause overheating.”

While infants are at heightened risk for SIDS between the ages 1 month and 4 months, new evidence shows that soft bedding continues to pose hazards to babies who are 4 months and older.

## Other recommendations include:

- Offer a pacifier at nap time and bedtime.
- Do not use home monitors or commercial devices, including wedges or positioners, marketed to reduce the risk of SIDS.
- Infants should receive all recommended vaccinations.

Supervised, awake tummy time is recommended daily to facilitate development.

“We know that we can keep a baby safer without spending a lot of money on home monitoring gadgets but through simple precautionary measures,” says Moon.



# Postpartum Mental Health: The Silent Darkness

By Michele Inzelbuch, LCSW, LCADC

**P**ostpartum depression (PPD) is a disease where many women suffer in silence. Often it is something not spoken about, is rarely accepted, and sadly goes untreated in many new mothers. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), there were almost four million live births in the United States in 2015. Another two million women had miscarriages and/or stillbirths. These women are highly susceptible to postpartum depression due to their bodies experiencing the same hormonal and chemical changes as a woman who had a live birth, but with the added emotional distress of the loss of their baby.

A self-report to the CDC in 2015 showed an average of 15% of women who had live births in the U.S. suffered from some form of postpartum mental health concerns. When you include women who had miscarriages or stillbirths, the number is about 900,000 women that reported their symptoms. This makes one question how many women are out there that do not report.

Only 15% of these women receive help. Why? Out of 900,000 women, 850,000 of these do not receive any form of treatment, according to Postpartum Progress, a national organization for the awareness and advocacy of postpartum health. In many areas of the country, there is still a stigma around mental health and some women hear, "Women have babies every day; get over it." Others live in areas where services are not accessible. Other obstacles are that some women lack family support and the stressors in returning to work shortly after a pregnancy without local family to assist. According to Postpartum Progress, even more women lack community support and have the stress of needing to return to work in six weeks. Postpartum mental health is the number one complication of pregnancy and birth.

## What is PPD?

PPD is more than the "baby blues" and is a result of a sudden decrease of estrogen and progesterone that greatly increases in the body when a woman becomes pregnant. Many women need time to adjust to the life changes that come with becoming a mother or having another child. Women who suffer from PPD many have a prolonged hormonal imbalance and do not adjust to the life changes as quickly as those with the "baby blues." PPD is not just depression. It also includes anxiety, OCD, and the rarest form, psychosis.

So how can you identify a loved one with PPD? These women may be crying more often than usual, show increased anger, become withdrawn, have feelings of being numb or disconnected from their baby, be unable to be away from their baby, worry about their baby getting hurt, or experience thoughts of harm to self or baby. Don't be mistaken. Mothers have extreme levels of guilt and shame about all of these feelings and thoughts. Many women are

unable to care for themselves. Some women may go for a longer than normal period of time without showering, changing their clothes, and eating. Getting out of bed becomes difficult and normal daily activities can cause a level of anxiety-driven fear.

## Risk Factors

Each woman may have her own risk factors. This can include stress, low to nominal – if any – social support, difficulty getting pregnant, difficult high-risk pregnancy, traumatic birth (including change in birth plan or complications during birth), loss of baby, having multiple births (twins or triplets), a baby having medical complications, or a history of mental health issues. This is all above and beyond the hormonal changes that a woman's body is already going through. Women who have a history of mental health or PPD are at a higher risk of developing PPD. Having awareness and seeking treatment while still pregnant may be able to decrease the severity or recovery time.

## Treatment

Due to PPD being a hormonal and chemical imbalance, medications may be needed. But finding a psychiatrist willing to prescribe medication for a disorder thought to fall under the obstetric/gynecologist's treatment umbrella can make it difficult to receive appropriate treatment. Many OB/GYNs will refer women to a psychiatrist for treatment, causing a cycle of referrals that may cause a woman to feel lost and delay her start of treatment. Many psychiatrists misinform women as to what medications they can take while they continue to breastfeed. Some women may feel they need to make a decision between taking medications or nursing their baby, thus causing another stress on these already overwhelmed moms. Breastfeeding is important and may

help some individuals improve PPD symptoms and promote a bond with the baby.

"In conjunction with medication management, peer support and talk therapy function to change internalized stigma and defeating self-talk," explained Jasmine Banks, program coordinator of Climb Out of the Darkness, a branch of Postpartum Progress. "Peer support and talk therapy are tools in a toolbox, meant to create sustainable change by equipping mothers with new ways of coping and more positive ways of seeing ourselves in light of mental illness."

Talk therapy allows the woman to freely discuss her thoughts and feelings without judgement or fear of hospitalization. Support groups allow women to know they are not alone. Women who attend these groups often create a bond with each other and, many being at different places in their healing, help each other see light at the end of the tunnel.

Monmouth Medical Center created the Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Program, a program that offers an array of services for women with PPD, including support groups, individual counseling services, and medication management. These three services, in combination or separate, are the key to survival of this disease. The program was founded in 2015, though the first support group was held in 2011. According to program director Lisa Tremayne, the program has served over 500 women since 2015 and currently has 170 pregnant or new moms in the program, averaging 30 new moms a month.

If you or someone you know has concerns regarding PPD or is showing symptoms, do not ignore them. You are not alone and there is help out there for you. Please reach out to the Central Jersey Family Health Consortium at (732) 937-5437 or the Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorder Program at Monmouth Medical Center at (732) 923-5573.

## Michele D. Inzelbuch LCSW, LCADC

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# Apples Can be Difficult To Digest

Applesauce may be good for an ulcerative colitis diet, according to the University of Minnesota Medical Center. However, while apples are rich in vitamins and minerals like potassium, their high fiber content can make them difficult to digest, especially during flare-ups from many diseases like Crohn's & Colitis. Go for unsweetened applesauce, or make your own by peeling and cooking apples (remember to remove the seeds). Flavor it with your own mix of spices — just be sure to skip the sugar.



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By Jill Garaffa

## How to Out-Smart Your Brain to Achieve Health

Dear Jill,

I know what I need to do intellectually, but I can't seem to get myself to do it. For example, I know that ordering pizza is an unhealthy choice; yet, I order it anyway in lieu of cooking a healthy meal. I know it's good to exercise; yet, I lay on the couch and can't seem to move or I over schedule myself so I don't have the time or energy to exercise. Am I crazy?

Signed, Good Intentions

Dear Good Intentions,

You're definitely not crazy. In fact, you are far from it: your brain is in top working order if this is your experience. Let me explain....

First, a quick brain anatomy lesson: Inside your brain, you actually have three separate brains, not just one: your cerebellum & brain stem are in charge of keeping you alive: breathing, heartbeat and anything out of your conscious control. Your neocortex is your logical, or conscious brain—you do all your thinking, reasoning and creative thought here. Your conscious brain is what makes New Year's resolutions and promises to make healthy choices. It has great intentions. The limbic system, which is your emotional, or unconscious brain, is where the good intentions get stuck. The unconscious brain runs purely on survival instincts. Very simply: it moves us toward pleasure and away from pain. It moves us toward safety and away from danger. If your limbic system senses danger or discomfort, it will propel you in the opposite direction.

If you are making sudden, drastic changes to your diet or exercise regime (which is what most people do around January 1st), you might only get a few days into your routine before your limbic system detects a serious threat to your survival. Suddenly, your string of positive, healthy choices comes to a screeching halt and you find yourself back on the couch or sitting with a bag of potato chips asking yourself, "how did I do this again?"

The way to over-ride the emotional brain from taking over is to make very small changes. Like, really, really small changes—so small that your unconscious brain does not detect a threat. How do you know if your changes are small enough? You have consistency. If you become inconsistent, then, chances are you are taking on too big of a change and you need to bring it down a notch or two.

Some questions for exploration & discovery: Ask yourself: What is the smallest change I can make to my eating that I am willing to make right now? What is the smallest action I can take right now to get my body to move more? What is one thing I can do to take care of myself today? What is something I can do today that will be fun & enjoyable to me?

Change is not easy. A life coach can support you with moving from where you are now to where you want to be. As a life coach, I am trained to support you through the internal emotional & psychological change that must come first before you can make lasting physical change.

Wishing you peace, clarity and power, Jill

*Jill Garaffa, OTR/L, PCC, ELI-MP is a Licensed Occupational Therapist and Professional Certified Life Coach providing Health & Wellness Coaching for individuals and organizations. For more information, please visit [www.seedsofchangeoaching.com](http://www.seedsofchangeoaching.com) or call 732-859-6962.*

If you have a life situation where you feel stuck or stalled, and would like coaching, please email [jill@seedsofchangeoaching.com](mailto:jill@seedsofchangeoaching.com) or visit [www.seedsofchangeoaching.com](http://www.seedsofchangeoaching.com) and click "contact us" to be featured in a future column.

Dr. Steven Linker, OD



## QUESTION:

**My eyes have been very dry and itchy, is it because I turned my heat on or can I have a problem?**

## ANSWER:

Winter has arrived, and with it comes the dryer air due to cold weather and household heating. About 5 million Americans experience symptoms of dry eye, it is common for those over 50. That is not to say you should not be concerned. What some people experience on a temporary basis can become a longer term problem...Chronic Dry Eye Disease a.k.a. Chronic Dry Eye Syndrome, Dry Eye Syndrome and Keratoconjunctivitis Sicca is something to be concerned with when symptoms do not improve or worsen.

CDE can be caused by advanced age, contact lens wear, certain medications (Antihistamines, Antidepressants and Estrogens), eye diseases, other medical conditions (Autoimmune diseases, Thyroid disease, Diabetes), reduced tear production due to inflammation, or environmental factors. Without enough tears, the film protecting the eye can break down, creating dry spots on the surface of the eye.

They symptoms vary from person to person but can include any or all to different degrees:

- Dryness/itching
- Burning/stinging
- Watery eyes
- Sensitivity to light
- A gritty or sandy sensation
- Feeling like something is in your eye
- Blurry vision or difficulty seeing at night
- Problems wearing contact lenses

You may find the problem affects you when driving at night, reading, watching television, working on the computer or wearing your contact lenses. While you are only experiencing discomfort, be aware that it may damage the front surface of the eye, increase the risk of eye infection, and affect your vision.

The first step in getting help is a visit to your Optometrist to determine your eye health and vision. I invite you to visit my office for an exam to discuss your eye care health and the same for your family. We take most medical insurances and have a wonderful selection of frames should you need glasses. A visit to us may be your first line of ocular defense!

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## What To Do When Kids Swallow What They Shouldn't

*By Stefanie Maglio*

Babies and toddlers, typically between the ages of six months and two years old, are known for picking up whatever is within their reach and putting it in their mouths. Whether it is a small toy, a magnet, a coin, or battery the danger is all the same. Parents aren't always around to see every little thing that their child is doing. This is why it's important to vacuum regularly and pick things up off the floor that a child may put into their mouth. However, when a child does swallow a foreign object, it is important to remain calm and react as quickly as possible. If the child swallowed a small toy or coin, take them to the emergency room to get an X-ray. Sometimes they can pass through the body under close watch, and other times minor procedures with cameras can help remove the object. Objects such as magnets or batteries can potentially be more harmful as batteries do contain acid. These may require surgery to be removed. However, if your child is choking while attempting to swallow the object, call 911 and attempt to pull it out of the child's throat. If necessary, perform CPR or the Heimlich maneuver. If your child swallows a poisonous liquid such as dish detergent, then immediately call poison control for further instructions. If you do not know the number for poison control in your area, call 911 and they will be able to help as well. Remember, it is easier to make the extra effort to prevent these emergencies from happening, rather than to suffer the consequences afterwards.

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# Helping Your Daughter Cope With Cliques

**Y**our 10-year-old daughter comes home crying because the girls she's been friends with are suddenly leaving her out and spreading rumors about her. She's confused because it seemed to happen out of the blue. She doesn't know what she did wrong and is nervous about returning to school, unsure if she has any friends. You're unsure how to help her — you've heard a lot about kids being snubbed or teased at school, but you didn't think it could happen to your outgoing, fun kid.

Given how common cliques are throughout middle and high school, at some point your child is likely to face the prospect of being in one or being excluded from them. There's little you can do to shield kids from cliques, but plenty you can do to help them maintain confidence and self-respect while negotiating cliques and understanding what true friendship is all about.

## When Cliques Cause Problems

For most kids, the pre-teen and teen years are a time to figure out how they want to fit in and how they want to stand out. It's natural for kids to occasionally feel insecure; long to be accepted; and hang out with the kids who seem more attractive, cool, or popular.

But cliques can cause long-lasting trouble when:

- Kids behave in a way they feel conflicted about or know is wrong in order to please a leader and stay in the group
- A group becomes an antisocial clique or a gang that has unhealthy rules, such as weight loss or bullying others based on looks, disabilities, race, or ethnicity a child is rejected by a group and feels ostracized and alone

## How Parents Can Help

As kids navigate friendships and cliques, there's plenty parents can do to offer support. If your child seems upset, or suddenly spends time alone when usually very social, ask about it.

## Here are some tips:

Talk about your own experiences. Share your own experiences of school — cliques have been around for a long time!

Help put rejection in perspective. Remind your child of times he or she has been angry with parents, friends, or siblings — and how quickly things can change.

Shed some light on social dynamics. Acknowledge that people are often judged by the way a person looks, acts, or dresses, but that often people act mean and put others down because they lack self-confidence and try to cover it up by maintaining control.

Find stories they can relate to. Many books, TV shows, and movies portray outsiders triumphing in the face of rejection and send strong messages about the importance of being true to your own nature and the value of being a good friend, even in the face of difficult social situations. For school-age kids, books like *Blubber* by Judy Blume illustrate how quickly cliques can change. Older kids and teens might relate to movies such as *Mean Girls*, *Angus*, *The Breakfast Club*, and *Clueless*.

Foster out-of-school friendships. Get kids involved in extracurricular activities (if they aren't already) — art class, sports, martial arts, horse riding, language study — any activity that gives them an opportunity to create another social group and learn new skills.

If your child is part of a clique and one of the kids is teasing or rejecting others, it's important to address that right away. With popular TV shows from talent contests to reality series

glorifying rude behavior, it's an uphill battle for families to promote kindness, respect, and compassion.

Discuss the role of power and control in friendships and try to get to the heart of why your child feels compelled to be in that position. Discuss who is in and who is out, and what happens when kids are out (are they ignored, shunned, bullied?). Challenge kids to think and talk about whether they're proud of the way they act in school.

Ask teachers, guidance counselors, or other school officials for their perspective on what is going on in and out of class. They might be able to tell you about any programs the school has to address cliques and help kids with differences get along.

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## Healthy Recipe

# Chickpea Crust Pizza

It's hard to keep kids healthy when all they want to eat are chicken nuggets and French fries. So instead of giving them "adult food," why not use a healthier alternative to some key ingredients in their favorite foods. Here is the Chickpea Crust Pizza recipe.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 jar of tomato sauce
- 2/3 cup of chickpea flower
- 2 tsp of garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp of salt
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 1 cup grated provolone cheese



### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. Whisk together chickpea flower, garlic powder, salt, and 2/3 cup of water in a bowl.
3. In a non-stick pan, heat olive oil on medium heat.
4. Pour the mixture into the pan and cook until edges are brown.
5. Flip the crust over and cook for another 3 minutes.
6. Put tomato sauce, cheese and any toppings you please on top of your pizza.
7. Bake until the cheese is melted.

## Lemon-Pepper Fettuccine

### INGREDIENTS

- 12 ounces fettuccine
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1 1/4 cups heavy cream
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1 to 2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest
- 1/3 cup grated parmesan cheese
- Freshly ground pepper



### DIRECTIONS

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil, put in the pasta. Let cook until al dente.

Set the pasta aside.

To make the sauce: Start by melting the butter over medium heat and add the shallot. Stir occasionally until lightly golden brown, about 3 minutes. In a separate bowl, whisk together the egg, cream, and lemon zest, then add this and the cheese to the pan. Reduce the heat to low, and let thicken for 2 minutes. Add pepper, and then the pasta into the sauce.

# Is Your Child Ready For Camp?

Answering these questions will help you determine when your child is ready for camp.

What is your child's age? Children under age 7 may not adjust easily to being away from home. Consider the day camp experience to prepare them for future overnight camp.

How did your child become interested in camp? Does your child talk about camp and camp activities on a sustained basis? How much persuasion is necessary from you?

Has your child had positive overnight experiences away from home? Visiting relatives or friends? Were these separations easy or difficult?

What does your child expect to do at camp? Learning about the camp experience ahead of time allows you to create positive expectations.

Are you able to share consistent and positive messages about camp? Your confidence in a positive experience will be contagious.



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## Att: Working parents! Save more than \$2,000 on your taxes by sending your kids to a camp!

Working parents can save more than \$2,000 on their taxes just by enrolling their kids in summer day camp, not to mention some other tax benefits of the season.

That can go a long way toward reducing the rising cost of day camp, which is about \$314 a week, on average, according to the American Camp Association. And it's much more at some for-profit camps.

Thanks to the Child and Dependent Care Credit, you may receive a credit when you file your return for up to 35 percent of \$3,000 in child care and camp costs for one child or \$6,000 for two or more children, depending on your income. That translates to as much as \$1,050 for one child and \$2,100 for two or more children if they are under the age of 13.

The same goes for music camps, athletic camps, mini camps or day-care programs over the summer if you are single and working, or if both parents are working. However, if there is a spouse at home to care for the children, the credit won't apply.

***"These credits were developed for people so they can go to work."***

*-Lisa Greene-Lewis, CPA and tax expert at TurboTax*

Overnight camps, despite being a rite of passage for some, also do not qualify for the credit, since they're not considered day care, Greene-Lewis said.

In order to reap the tax benefits come April, payments for camp must be made to an institution or person, and you must include their address and federal tax identification number on your tax return. If the cost of transportation to and from camp is included in the camp's fees, then that counts, too.

If your employer offers a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, you can also deposit up to \$5,000 to cover some or all camp expenses tax free. The only catch is that the money has to be used in the year it is deposited and anything left over would be forfeited, similar to a Flexible Spending Account for health.

Those driving to and from their summer volunteer position at a charity or nonprofit or running a car pool for a youth group — as long as it's registered as a 501(c)(3) organization — can deduct the mileage at the federal charitable rate of 14 cents per mile.

And for those who plan to see the sites this season, many not-for-profit city youth centers, zoos, aquariums, children's play places, family activity centers and museums offer seasonal or annual memberships that could be tax deductible, regardless of whether the parents are working.

In that case, it could count as a charitable donation at the end of the year as long as you keep the receipt.

# Everything You Need To Know About Technology Camps

By Joely Phenes

## What are technology camps?

Summer camps have been around forever. But have you ever heard of a technology camp? In this digital day and age, technology camps were created to give tech-savvy kids the summer of their dreams!

The first ever technology camp, National Computer Camps, was created in the late 1970s by Michael Zabinski. Since then, technology camps have popped up all across the country, and all over the globe.

Technology camps center around computers and video games, and they offer tons of technologically based activities. Some of the most popular activities at these camps are...

- Designing video games, webpages, and applications
- Robotics
- Graphic design
- 3D animation
- Film

## Are there any technology camps in my area?

iD Tech Camps are America's number one technology camps, and can be found in 150 locations across the country. This coming summer, they will be held at a variety of local New Jersey colleges: Fairleigh Dickinson University (Madison, NJ), Ramapo College (Mahwah, NJ), Rider University (Lawrenceville, NJ), Kean University (Union, NJ), Princeton University (Princeton, NJ), and Monmouth University (Long Branch, NJ)

These camps focus on enhancing your child's STEM skills. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. These skills will be useful not only in the classroom but all throughout life.

iD Tech Camps are for children ages 7-17, offer overnight or day sessions, and are available to all genders.

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Saturday	March 25	9:30a-12:30p
Saturday	April 22	9:30a-12:30p
Saturday	May 20	9:30a-12:30p
Tuesday	June 6	5:30p-7:00p

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## Special Camps for Special Kids in NJ

By Stefanie Maglio

If your child has special needs, it can be difficult to get through simple daily tasks without complications. Making sure that all of their needs are met is the main priority, and sometimes entertainment and leisure activities become less important. However, it's important to keep their spirits up. Some fun activities in a safe environment for their needs will benefit their mental health, behavior, and outlook on life in general. Consider taking your child to one of these special camps:

- ARC For program and summer camp information, visit the ARC website for New Jersey
- ARC of Essex County Camp Hope 973-535-1181 x1292. 7-week summer day camp in East Hanover
- ARC of Hunterdon County 908-730-7827
- ARC of Middlesex County 732-821-1199
- ARC of Morris County 973-765-9661
- ARC of Somerset County Camp Jotoni 908-725-8544. 9-week day camp in Warren; 6-week overnight camp provides summer recreational services for children and adults with developmental disabilities.
- ARC of Union County Camp Star 908-232-0248. Summer program for ages 3-21 with special needs and their siblings
- NJ NBN Autism Program Summer Camp 5 Carnegie Plaza, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003 856-874-1616.

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# Wondering What Your Child Needs To Bring To Day Camp?

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- Change of clean clothes
- Hair Brush or comb
- Lunch and/or healthy snack
- Plastic bag to take home wet clothes and wet towel
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Water bottle to refill at camp
- 2 Towels

Make sure your child's backpack is not too heavy and a style they pick out themselves if their camp does not provide one.



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## For Your Creative Kid: Benefits Of Arts & Music Summer Camp

By Joely Phenes

Going to camp is a great way for a child to spend their summer. It allows them to stay active, make new friends, and try out many different activities and games. Specialized arts and music camps can be very beneficial experiences for children who are especially skilled in these areas or who just want to explore their passions.

Experience with the arts has often been linked with academic success. For example, the reading of dramatic plays improves a child's reading skills, especially when introduced at a young age. Research also shows that children with this type of experience do better on standardized tests such as the SATs.

Because art is a form of expression, it helps to develop children's communication skills. It also helps them work better in groups, as many of the projects are collaborative.

Art is a therapeutic form of self-expression. It allows you to express yourself, use your imagination, have fun, and feel accomplished. Unfortunately, school can be quite demanding and many children do not get to take the time to focus on artistic endeavors. Arts and music summer camps give children that time.

Arts and music camps are not for every child. Some children simply do not take an interest in the arts—and that's okay. But for children who love to write, paint, play the piano, and act, arts and music summer camp is the perfect way to spend the summer!



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Mini Day, 3 Days 9am-1pm (T.W.TH) Pre-K - 1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	\$1,950	\$1,875	\$1,725	\$1,600	\$1,500
Full Day, 5 Days 8 <sup>th</sup> - 10 <sup>th</sup> Grades	\$4,500	\$4,350	\$4,050	\$3,800	\$3,600

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# Identity Theft Is Not Just About Your Credit Card

By Jackie Berman

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) an estimated 17.6 million persons, or about 7 percent of U.S. residents age 16 or older, were victims of at least one incident of identity theft in 2014. These statistics were similar to those in 2012 and it's only going up.

Identity theft is the attempted or successful misuse of an existing account, such as a debit or credit card account, the misuse of personal information to open a new account or the misuse of personal information for other fraudulent purposes, such as obtaining government benefits or providing false information to police during a crime or traffic stop. It can be your drivers license, social security number, medical ID, criminal, financial and the newest synthetic.

Most identity theft victims discovered the incident when a financial institution contacted them about suspicious activity (45 %) or when they noticed fraudulent charges on an account (18 %). The majority of identity theft victims did not know how the offender obtained their information, and 9 in 10 identity theft victims did not know anything about the offender.

Half of identity theft victims had related out-of pocket losses, with 10% experiencing losses of \$1200 or more. It takes time to clear up ID Theft.

Identity theft goes beyond stealing and using someone's credit card number. In some cases, criminals use the person's identity to obtain a driver's license and other documents and to commit fraud using the stolen identity. In some cases they will steal your social security and bank routing number and receive your tax return. So many people are affected daily for company data breaches. Before you can blink an eye, your information has been sold to the black market 300 times.

There is only so much you can do to personally protect your identity, but remember SHREDDING IS YOUR FRIEND.

For more info and details on what you need to do, please call Jackie Berman/Legal Shield Independent Associate at 732 610 1567 or visit [www.legalshield.com/hub/jacklynberman](http://www.legalshield.com/hub/jacklynberman)



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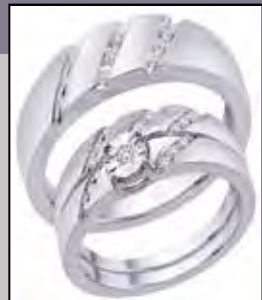


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# East Windsor Clean Communities Committee

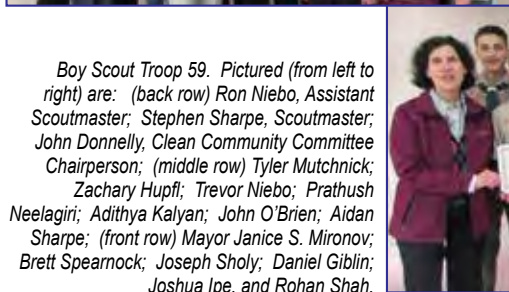
East Windsor Clean Communities Committee Celebrated 2016 Adopt-A-Spot Wrap-Up Held to Recognize and Thank Participants. Under this program, participating groups "adopt" a public property and keep it clean during the year. A placard is erected on the site indicating that it has been "adopted by" with the name of the group. The groups are expected to perform clean-up 3 times a month from April 1 through November 1. Adopt-A-Spot is a great program in not only ensuring public areas of our community are well-maintained, but also has been a wonderful educational tool for teaching young people social responsibility and community pride. To participate, interested groups should send a letter to East Windsor Clean Communities Committee, ATTN: Mayor Janice S. Mironov, 16 Lanning Boulevard, East Windsor, NJ 08520. Congratulations to the 2016 Adopt-A-Spot participants: Beth El Synagogue; Boy Scout Troop 59; Boy Scout Troop 5700; Brownie Troop 72702; Cub Scout Pack 53; Daisy Troop 72350; Girl Scout Troop 70105; Girl Scout Troops 70342, 71905 and 70228; East Windsor Police Athletic League, and the Casciano Family!



Girl Scout Troops 70342, 71905 and 70228. Pictured (from left to right) are: (back row) Nastasia Gayle; Liz Wainwright; Mayor Janice S. Mironov; John Donnelly, Clean Community Committee Chairperson; Megan Bertrand; Vera Crabtree; (middle row) Mallory Bertrand; Camilla Saboga; Angelina Benitez; Valentina Silva; Emma Baskin; Kayla Horana; Adriana Cepeda (front row) Alyssa Horana; Eliana Winters; Lily Ipe, and Aania Abdullah.



Girl Scout Troop 70105. Pictured (from left to right) are: (back row) Olivia Harkins; Chloe Harkins; Brooke Vagrin; Susan Vagrin; Lizzie DiGioia; Jen DiGioia, Troop Leader; Lily Puskar; Kayley Totka; John Donnelly, Clean Community Committee Chairperson; Jessica Meidhof; (front row) Isabella Benitez; Danielle Cruz; Mayor Janice S. Mironov; Jenna Mao, and Emily Hamnett.



Boy Scout Troop 59. Pictured (from left to right) are: (back row) Ron Niebo, Assistant Scoutmaster; Stephen Sharpe, Scoutmaster; John Donnelly, Clean Community Committee Chairperson; (middle row) Tyler Mutchnick; Zachary Hupfl; Trevor Niebo; Prathush Neelagiri; Adithya Kalyan; John O'Brien; Aidan Sharpe; (front row) Mayor Janice S. Mironov; Brett Spearnock; Joseph Sholy; Daniel Giblin; Joshua Ipe, and Rohan Shah.



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## Must-See Family Movies this February

By Stefanie Maglio



Since Valentine's Day takes place during the month of February, there's nothing better to watch on a Friday night than a good, old romantic comedy. Some of the best romance movies to watch this month that you can enjoy with a loved one or the whole family include:

- 50 First Dates (2004)
- This Means War (2012)
- (500) Days of Summer (2009)
- Shrek (2001)
- Titanic (1997)

Not only does Valentine's Day take place this month, but so does Groundhog Day. The main character, Bill Murray, relives the same day (Groundhog Day) over and over until he changes for the better and finds true happiness. This movie has a bit of romance, comedy, and action, which makes it perfect for the whole family.

Lastly, here are some new movies to check out in theaters this month:

**The Space Between Us** (February 3rd): The first human to be born on Mars develops an online friendship with a girl from Colorado. When he finally visits Earth, he enjoys all that the planet has to offer but soon realizes his organs cannot handle Earth's atmosphere. Watch the movie to see how the journey ends.

**My Name is Emily** (February 17th): A teenage girl runs away from her foster home with her boyfriend to embark on a journey to find her birth father; a brilliant writer who has been institutionalized.

# Calling all Parents!!!

By Susan Heckler

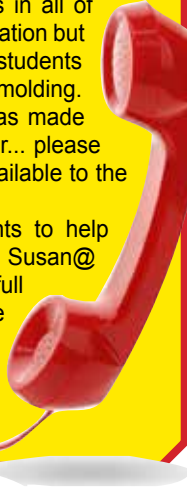
By now, we have all established that Central New Jersey is an amazing place to call home and raise a family. We live on fertile ground for farming, lush landscapes and the growth of our children and future leaders.

Our school districts are putting forth an amazing effort to give your children the best education and school experience. They have opened a world of opportunities to the students.

The dilemma is niding out about all of the great news and programs available throughout all of the schools in all of the districts. We are in touch with school administration but would like to hear from the parents of the great students the schools are privileged to be educating and molding. If you have or know of a special student who has made an impact to the community or awarded an honor... please share with me! If you hear of a great program available to the students, spread the word through us.

I welcome contact from parents and students to help keep our readers informed. Please email me at [Susan@guntherpublications.com](mailto:Susan@guntherpublications.com) with your news and full contact information. Sometimes it takes a village to inform a village.

Thanks and I look forward to hearing from you!



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## Cheeses to Avoid While Pregnant

By Jordan Tinitigan

Pregnancy is hard, especially when you have to give up some of your most-loved foods. What makes matters worse is when that food is found in many delicious dishes, such as cheese. It is said that it is unsafe to eat soft cheeses such as brie, feta, and Mexican style cheeses while pregnant because they may contain listeria. Listeria is an infectious bacteria that is found in some cheeses that contain unpasteurized milk. When you get a listeria infection, you can get symptoms of fever, muscle pain, backache, and headache. If caught during pregnancy it can lead to premature labor, miscarriage, infection of the newborn, or even stillbirth. Instead of taking that risk, try to avoid those foods during your pregnancy!



## Just For Parents: Teach Your Kids All About Money With An Allowance

The first lessons for kids about money come from their parents. You can start your kids off right by setting a good example

in how you manage your own money. Next, take advantage of every opportunity to instill great money-smart habits. Here's how to teach your children about money:

### Allowances

Under the age of 10: Make allowances dependent on your child completing age-appropriate chores. This is the first lesson in work for pay. A five-year-old can be in charge of putting toys away. A 10-year-old can handle kitchen or

garbage chores. Create a formal schedule for the allowance, such as every Saturday. It's your child's introduction to pay day.

Age 10-15: Shift some of a child's spending from your wallet to theirs. For example, rather than hand over \$10 or \$20 when your son is heading out to the movies, raise his allowance a bit and put him in charge of managing his entertainment money. Or if your kids are gaming enthusiasts, introduce cost sharing: set your spending limit on games, and make

it clear they have to cover costs beyond that.

Age 15-18: Stretch the allowance payout period to two weeks, and then by the time they are 17, make one monthly payment. Teach your teenagers about budgeting, and help them work out a plan for making their money last the entire month - good training for when they leave home for college.

### Savings

Age 12 and younger: Set an expectation that 50% of any money gifts your child receives will be put in a savings account. Make it clear that the money is 100% theirs, but encourage them to tuck it away for a savings goal. And that requires you sitting down and agreeing on a worthy savings goal, such as helping with future college costs.

Age 13 and older: Consider matching savings contributions for teens. For every dollar of allowance or job earnings they save, you will contribute 50 cents or a dollar. It's a great motivational tactic. Budgeting

Age 12-15: As your children enter their teens, consider giving them half of their allowance in cash and the other half as a

spending limit on a debit card. This way they will learn how to budget their money even when they aren't paying cash. If they don't spend the debit card allowance, together you can use Online Banking to transfer their unused allowance into their own savings account.

Age 15-18: Teach your older teenagers to monitor their bank accounts so they know how to limit banking fees. Show them how following a budget can help them spend within their means and avoid overdraft fees.

If your child wants more money to spend beyond their basic allowance, let them earn it. Babysitting, dog walking, and helping elderly neighbors with household chores are a few examples of appropriate jobs for young teens.

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Nala

**CONGRATULATIONS!**



# MAKING THE GRADE: Product Reviews for Toddlers

By Stefanie Maglio

**P**arents always want the best for their children, especially when they're young. That's why it's important to be a smart shopper when it comes to purchasing food, clothing, toys, or other products they may make life easier for you and your toddler. Here are some of the top products to considering purchasing for your little one:

A faucet extender can make hand-washing much easier, faster, and more efficient. Children can now reach the sink on their own. The Aqueduck Single Handle Faucet is a two-piece system that brings the water flow closer to the front of the sink for the child to reach and control with ease. The product is \$24.95.

Shoes with soft soles are best for toddlers since they are learning to take their first steps. They should have as much support and comfort as possible. Stores such as Babies R Us or even websites online will have a variety to choose from.

The classic sippy cup is a must-have. Your child is no longer drinking from a bottle, but is not quite capable of drinking from a normal cup on their own yet. Sippy cups help prevent spills and make the lives of parents and their children a whole lot easier. Spill-proof and break-proof cups are available for purchase almost anywhere (Target, Walmart, Shoprite, etc.)

Gerber training pants (\$15.99) are washable big kid underwear. Not only will this make potty training easier, but also your child will be excited to wear these.

Bedside rails can be found at Babies R Us and are a very smart investment. These rails make the transition from the crib a whole lot easier, especially if your child tends to move around a lot and fidget in their sleep. Both you and your child can sleep more peacefully knowing they won't fall out of bed.

Potty training seat will help your child use the real toilet comfortably without falling in. Many kinds are out there that will attach to your existing toilet seat for quick and easy use.

A stepping stool is also a must-have when it comes to toddlers. This can make morning and before-bed routines in the bathroom much easier for your child.



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## Rock On:

# Fizzy Fun Science Experiment

### YOU WILL NEED:

- Vinegar
- Small chunk of limestone rock
- Glass
- Several different rock types

### HERE'S HOW:

Pour a half cup of vinegar into a glass. Add a small chunk of limestone rock. (Find limestone outside using a rock identification book or buy a piece at a hobby shop). Watch closely. After a few minutes the rock will start to fizz. Now try the same test with other rocks and minerals. You may not see any bubbles.

### WHY?

Vinegar, an acid, dissolves bits of a material called calcium carbonate in the limestone. This releases carbon dioxide, a gas that rises to the surface as a stream of bubbles. Rocks that don't contain calcium carbonate won't fizz.



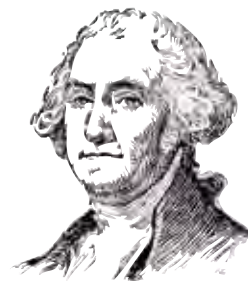
**Monday, February 20th is Presidents' Day,** officially **Washington's Birthday**. In the United States, it is a federal holiday observed on the third Monday of February in honor of George Washington (born on February 22), the first President of the United States. The holiday is popularly recognized as also honoring Abraham Lincoln (born on February 12), and sometimes all the U.S. presidents.

## PRESIDENTIALLY PUZZLING

*Unscramble the words below that remind us of the U.S. Presidents.*



1. eoniecit \_\_\_\_\_
2. nohingawst \_\_\_\_\_
3. nllconi \_\_\_\_\_
4. maaierc \_\_\_\_\_
5. oozerh \_\_\_\_\_
6. mnrtau \_\_\_\_\_



**Answers:** 1. Election 2. Washington 3. Lincoln 4. America 5. Hoover 6. Truman

# Winter Craft

Jordan Tinitigan

**With temperatures at an all time low,  
your children may be at a loss of fun activities to do.  
So, why not try a winter-themed craft?  
Here is a simple snowman craft idea with easy-to-find supplies!**

## What you need:

- 1 toilet paper roll
- 2 colored Pom Pom balls
- 1 small piece of pipe cleaner
- 1 ribbon
- 2 buttons
- White paint
- Black and Orange markers
- Glue



- Step one:** Cover the toilet paper roll entirely with white paint and set it to dry
- Step two:** While that is drying, glue the pipe cleaner to the two Pom Poms to make tiny earmuffs
- Step three:** Glue the buttons and earmuffs to the appropriate places on the snowman.
- Step four:** Tie and glue the ribbon around the snowman's neck, making a scarf.
- Step five:** Draw the eyes, mouth, and carrot nose with the markers, and there you have it, a toilet paper tube snowman!

## 20 Family Fun Activities

By Jordan Tinitigan

Since swimming and hiking are no longer options, due to the cold weather, we are all looking for something to do! With the temperatures below freezing we are all running to somewhere warm, but are still at a loss for fun activities. Here are 20 great activities to try this winter...

- Paint by Step at Pinot's Palette
- Ceramics at Color Me Mine
- Laser Tagging at iPlay America
- Seeing the fairy lights at Six Flags
- See the Curious George Exhibit at the Liberty Science Center
- Go to a Story Telling night at your local library
- Go see beautiful sea creatures at the Camden Aquarium
- Get educational at the New Jersey State Museum
- Watch awesome shows at Count Basie Theater
- Jump around at Skyzone or Air Trampoline
- Take a Mommy and Me Yoga Class at your local YMCA
- Go back in time at Medieval Times
- Play and learn about pinball at the Silverball Museum
- Enjoy fun arcade games at YESTERcades
- See some larger-than-life sculptures at Grounds for Sculpture
- Go into a room full of Bounce houses at Bounce U
- Mini Golf in the dark at Monster Mini Golf
- Ice Skate at your local Skating Rink
- Go bowling at a local bowling alley
- DIY some winter related crafts

## Italian Language Lesson

La Famiglia = The Family

Mom = mamma

Mother = madre

Dad = papà

Father = padre

Brother = fratello

Sister = sorella

Son = figlio

Daughter = figlia

Grandmother= nonna

Grandfather=nonno

Grandson/Granddaughter=nipote

Great grandfather = bisnonno

Great grandmother = bisnonna

Uncle = zio

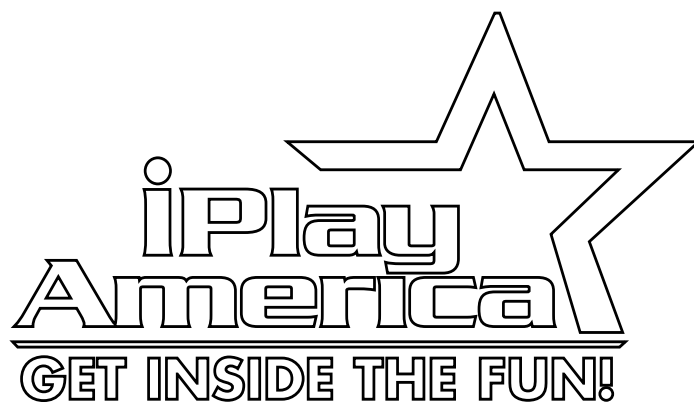
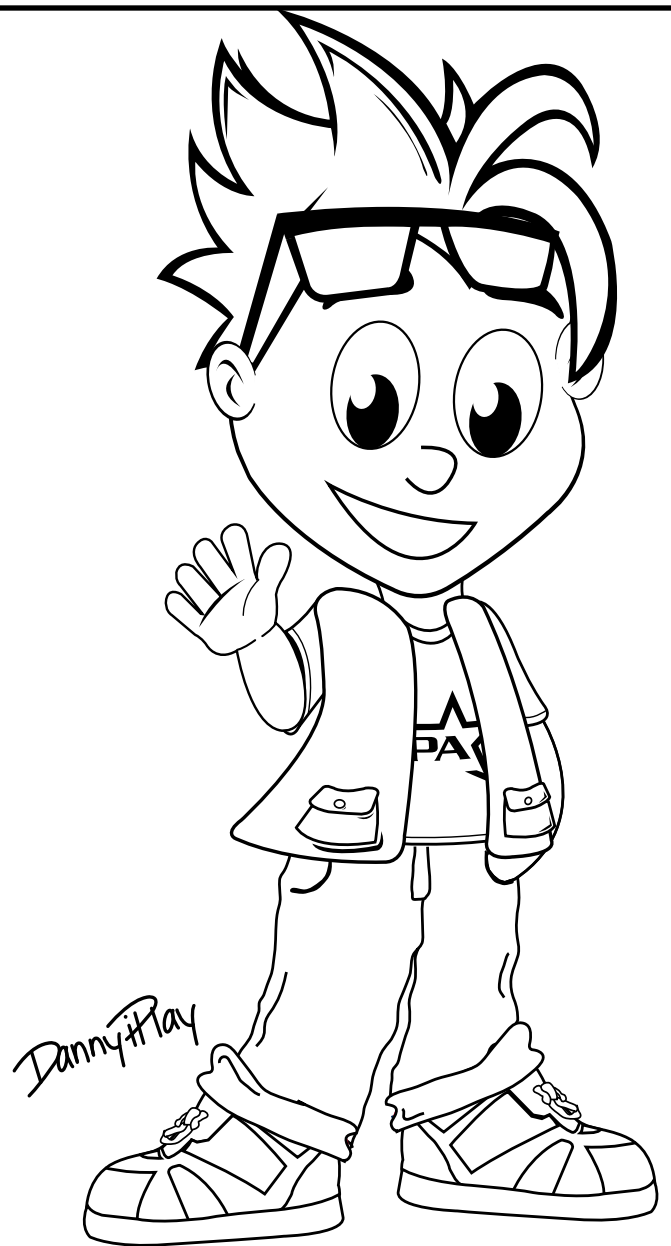
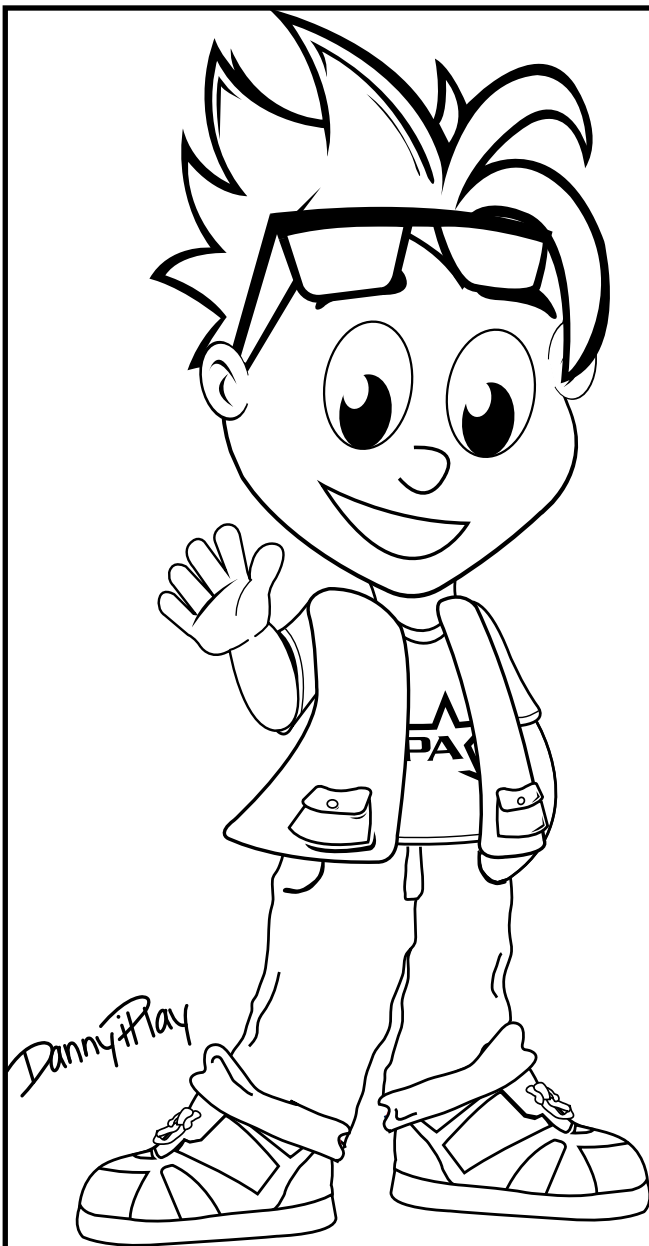
Aunt = zia

Cousin = cugino (masculine)/

cugina (feminine)







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Please mail or drop off submissions to iPlay America at 110 Schanck Road, Freehold NJ 07728 C/O: Promotions



# School Days

All the words below have something to do with school. Unscramble each word and write the word on the line.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



1. USB
2. MYG
3. KESD
4. AMHT
5. AESDRG
6. CCKKABAP
7. OOMHWERK
8. LBYRRAI
9. NBAD
10. UHLNC

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
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The iParty Junior package is designed for younger children and includes a game of Lazer Frenzy, a game of Mini Bowling, rides on the Happy Swing, Mini Carousel, Jump Around, Dizzy Dragons, and a chance at Bob's Fishing Hole; plus a \$5 game card for each guest.

The Cosmic Battle Party is ideal for the child who loves laser tag! This party includes two missions of Lazer Frenzy, four epic Laser Tag missions, and one 4D Theater show; plus, a \$5 game card for each guest.

The best-value party package designed for older children is the iParty Plus which includes one Cosmic Battle Laser Tag session, access to Freedom Rider Spinning Coaster, Kite Flyer, Skyscraper, 4D Theater, Spin Zone, Jump Around, Dizzy Dragons, and Happy Swing; plus a \$5 game card for each guest.

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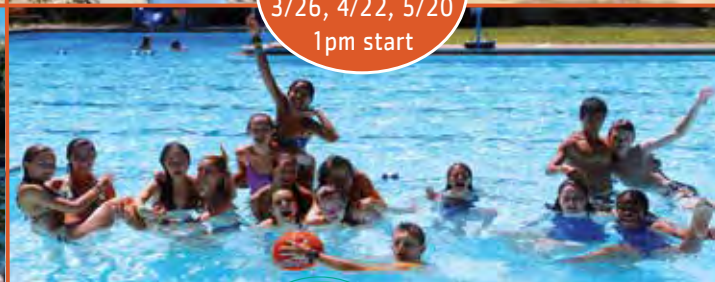
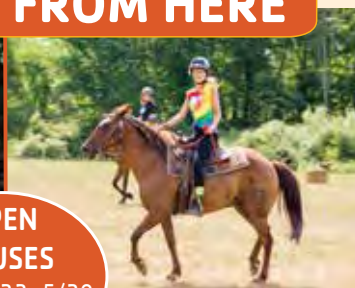
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