

February 2021

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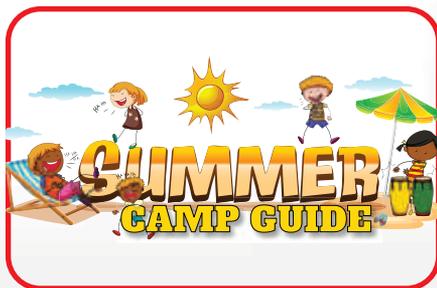
*The Secret to Better  
Parent-Teen Bonding*

## GOTTA WEAR SHADES

*Cooler Places To Celebrate  
Valentine's Day in Austin*

## ALLOWANCE

*A Penny Earned or  
All in a Day's Work?*



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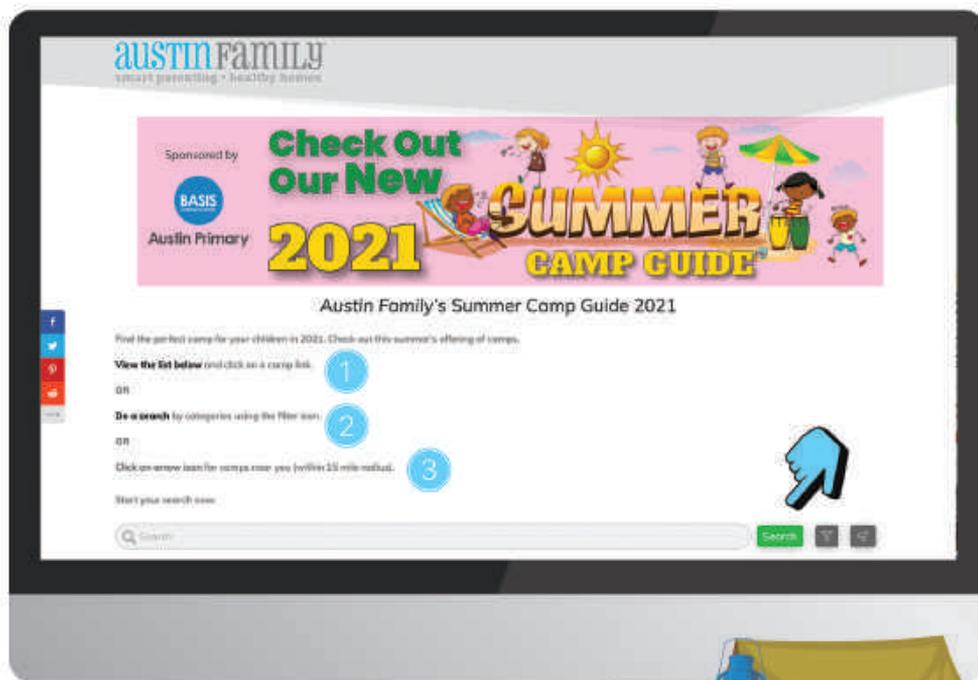
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# February 2021 CONTENTS

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## COLUMNS

- 10]** **The Learning Curve.** Allowance: A Penny Earned or All in a Day's Work?
- 12]** **Lifelines.** Is Your Toddler at Increased Risk for Tooth Decay?
- 22]** **Family Matters.** Making It Through the Terrible Twos
- 24]** **Just for Grins.** Team Dishwasher

## calendar

Find our February calendar online at [austinfamily.com](http://austinfamily.com) for the latest in-person and virtual events.

## In every issue

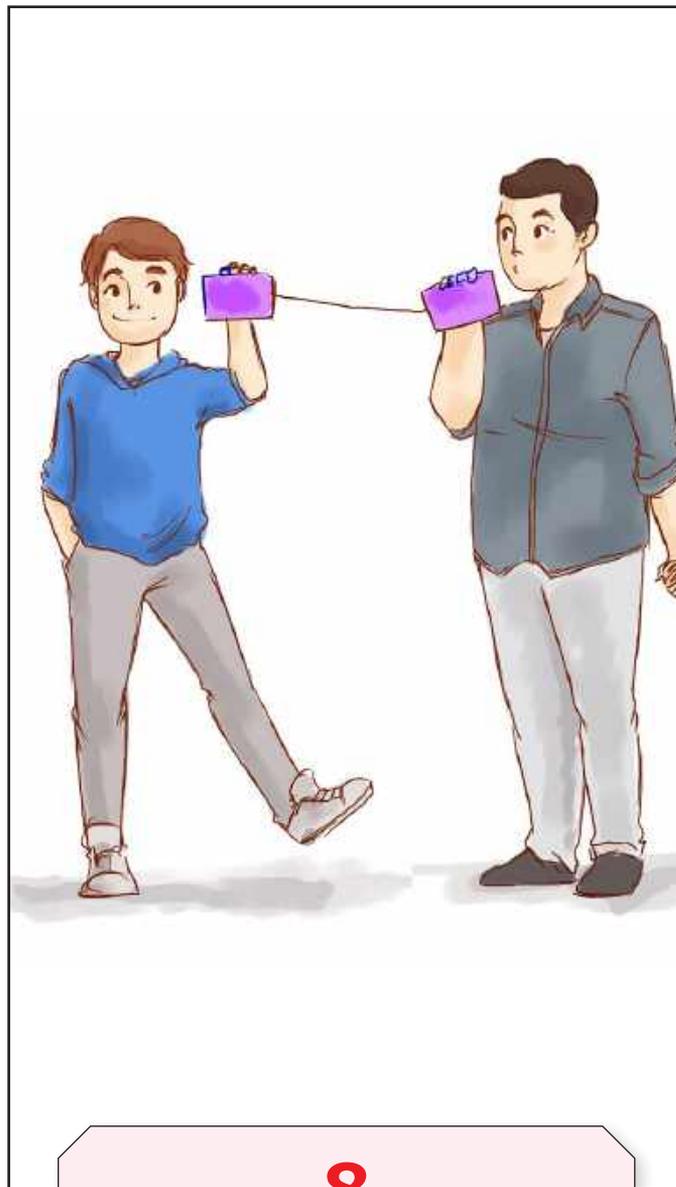
- 4]** **Play It Safe.** Recalls on Consumer Products
- 5]** **Around Austin.** News and Notes
- 25]** **Family Bucket List.** Valentine's Day Adventures

## extras

- 14]** **Camp Guide**

## en español

- 23]** **Asuntos Familiares.** Los Terribles Dos Años y Las Etapas del Desarrollo



**8**  
**Teen Talk: The Secret to  
Better Parent-Teen Bonding**



**FILM REVIEW** By Jack Kyser  
**Soul**

Read online at: [www.austinfamily.com/films](http://www.austinfamily.com/films)



Nine-year-old Sofia just learned to snow ski. What she loves even more is her rescue dog, Murphy! Cover photo by Jordan Ashley Photography.



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## EDITOR'S NOTE

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

*Lucksinger is a mom of two and author of the guidebook and app Exploring Austin with Kids.*

February is a month of inconsistencies and inconstancy. It is the most misspelled month of the year, and the least steady in number of days. February sits in winter, but in Texas especially, it contains sunny days that hint heavily of spring. It is a month of varied celebrations: Valentine's Day and Presidents Day, Fat Tuesday and Lent, Black History Month.

In its spirit, our February issue also runs the gamut, from babies to toddlers and two-year-olds to teens. We tackle the unique set of challenges that

come with each stage. How do you keep your sanity as a parent of a tiny person whose favorite word is "NO!" and who often says it loud, with force, or throws tantrums for added emphasis? How do you teach your children responsibility as they take on chores and begin to grow up? What do you do when your teens exert their independence? How do you grant them space while keeping lines of communication open?

We provide expert advice and parental insight. But really, the glue that binds, the foundation that holds, the thing that keeps us from bending to the breaking point ... is love.

That's what we celebrate in February!

XOXO

Annette



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# Play it product recalls **SAFE**

## Government Recalls Rompers, Toy Trumpets and Inclined Sleeper Accessories



Target is recalling about 299,000 **rompers** because the snaps can break or detach and pose a choking, laceration or pinching hazard to children. This recall includes the following Cloud Island rompers and sets: Waterfront Baby Boutique Romper, Little Peanut and True Navy Rompers, Little Wildflower and Joyful Mint Rompers, Oh Honeybee and Pink Rompers, and Floral Fields and Mint Rompers. Item numbers for the specific rompers being recalled can be found at [cpsc.gov](http://cpsc.gov) and compared with the number printed on the inside tag of the romper. Affected units were sold at Target stores nationwide and online at [target.com](http://target.com), [googleexpress.com](http://googleexpress.com) and [shipt.com](http://shipt.com) from July 2019 through October 2020 for about \$10. Consumers may return them to any Target Store for a full refund.



Juratoys is recalling about 2,500 **toy trumpets** due to small plastic pieces inside the toy potentially becoming dislodged and posing a choking hazard. The Confetti Trumpet was sold separately and also as part of the Janod Confetti Music "Live" Musical Set with the SKU number J07626

(located on the packaging and on the backside of the set's ukulele). The toy trumpets were sold at toy stores nationwide and online at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [maisonette.com](http://maisonette.com) from January 2019 to November 2020 for about \$6 or for about \$50 for the set. Consumers should immediately dispose of the recalled trumpet and contact Juratoys US for a refund.



Graco is recalling about 51,000 **inclined sleeper accessories** that were included in four models of play yards. They are being recalled to prevent the risk of suffocation caused when infants roll from their backs onto their stomachs or sides while unrestrained. This recall involves the inclined sleeper accessory sold with the following Graco Pack 'n Play models: Day2Dream Playard with Bedside Sleeper, Nuzzle Nest Playard, Everest Playard and Rock 'n Grow Playard. Affected units were sold for between \$270 and \$350 at Babies R Us, BuyBuyBaby and other stores nationwide as well as online at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [target.com](http://target.com) and various other websites. The play yards were sold from May 2015 through September 2020. Consumers can continue to safely use the play yards but should immediately stop using the reclined sleeper accessory and contact Graco for a refund.

*The US Consumer Products Safety Commission works to protect the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products.*

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# AROUND

# Austin

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## Green School

The City of Austin and Austin Independent School District are celebrating the recent installation of rain-catching features at Reilly Elementary School's campus and Green School Park.

Five rain gardens and 12 cisterns will capture thousands of gallons of rain each year from the school's roofs and parking lots. Catching and slowly releasing stormwater will reduce the erosion and flooding problems on the property and improve the water quality and flow in the nearby creek.

The project won First Place in the National Association of Flood & Stormwater Management Agencies (NAFSMA) Green Infrastructure Awards national competition.



Reilly Elementary School in central Austin won a national competition for its rain capturing system



The Moody Patio will include new landscaping, a lawn and various seating areas as well as two raised platforms to stage live music and other performances. Photo courtesy of Blanton Museum of Art, The University of Texas at Austin.

## Museum News

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation launched a new Art Museum Futures Fund to help mid-sized museums through the turbulent times caused by the pandemic. Austin's **Mexic-Arte Museum** was among the recipients. Funds from the grant will aid with museum exhibitions, the development of an Art Education department and additional visitor programming.

There is a new look coming to the **Blanton Museum of Art** at The University of Texas at Austin. The comprehensive grounds redesign will unify and revitalize the museum campus through architectural and landscape improvements.

The centerpiece of the project is the Moody Patio, a gathering space between the museum's two main buildings that will be framed by 15 petal-shaped structures to create a shade canopy and highlight views of Ellsworth Kelly's "Austin" and the Texas Capitol.

A winding pathway landscaped with native trees and plants will connect all approaches to the museum and offer small garden areas and seating for relaxing and socializing.

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A collaboration of forces provides AISD students and caretakers with meals. Photo courtesy of Easy Tiger.

## Keep Austin Fed

Austin ISD and the Austin Ed Fund, AISD's nonprofit public education foundation, just announced that they have provided one million meals for caregivers since the program began in May.

Following the initial school closures, AISD and Austin Ed Fund pulled together resources with help from the AISD Crisis Support Fund to ensure student meals remained available. Thanks to donations from Austinites, help from the city and partnerships with area restaurants -- including Henbit, Easy Tiger, L'Oca d'Oro, Colleen's Kitchen, Contigo, Rosedale Kitchen and Hillside Pharmacy -- AISD's meal delivery program was extended to caregivers as well.

As families continue to navigate an unpredictable school year amidst COVID 19, support for the preparation of 780,000 more meals for caregivers has been extended through September. These will be distributed alongside student meals at AISD's curbside distribution sites.

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Dell Children's received a \$2 million donation for its new Fetal Center.

## Donation for Fetal Center

Dell Children's Foundation received a \$2 million charitable donation from The Floyd A. and Kathleen C. Cailloux Foundation in Kerrville, Texas. Funds will support a new Fetal Center that will "help provide the specialized high-quality care for at-risk pregnant women and fragile newborns," said Dr. Kenneth Moise Jr., director of the newly developed center in partnership with UT Health Austin.

The Fetal Center will be housed in the new Dell Children's Specialty Pavilion at Dell Children's and is slated to open in April 2021. It will be operated jointly by Dell Children's and UT Health Austin.

The center will provide coordinated multispecialty care for families and babies identified prenatally with a congenital anomaly. It will also include an 11-bed specialized labor and delivery unit, set to open July 2021 at Dell Children's.

## Baby Day

Baby Day, a statewide celebration of babies and toddlers presented by First3Years, announces its third annual event, a week-long celebration to take place online from Feb. 7-13.

The digital event will bring more than 100 partner-led activities centered around early learning child development, including infant yoga, music classes, dancing, curated art, storytime and more. Activities will be available live and on-demand and can be accessed year-round as part of the Baby Day's online library.

Baby Day attracts thousands of families to partner locations across Texas, connecting them to in-person experiences and resources that promote family bonding, emotional connections and early brain development.

Participants will receive a free Baby Day educational package tailored to each age group that contains development tools to help children participate in the event from home.

Registration for Baby Day 2021 is now open at [babyday.us](http://babyday.us). Photo courtesy of First3Years.



## by the numbers



**1976**  
the year Black History Month became nationally recognized  
source: [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)



**43%**  
of parents are spending 3+ hours per day helping their K-5 students with schoolwork  
Source: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)



**9 million**  
people buy their pets a gift on Valentine's Day each year  
source: [theholidayspot.com](http://theholidayspot.com)

## New Film

Robert Rodriguez's latest family flick, "We Can Be Heroes," is now showing on Netflix. In the style of "Spy Kids" and "The Adventures of Sharkboy and Lavagirl," the film follows a group of young heroes who must rise to the challenge when their parent heroes have been taken captive.

Filmed in Austin, Rodriguez's use of the city as backdrop, along with a cameo of Mayor Adler as Mayor Doolittle, adds another element of entertainment for Austin audiences. Rodriguez's daughter and two of his sons contributed to "We Can Be Heroes," making it a family film in more ways than one.



Filmed in Austin, Robert Rodriguez's new family film "We Can Be Heroes" is streaming online.

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I still walk to the bus stop with my ninth grade twins. Before you assume that I'm a helicopter, snowplow, lawnmower or some other type of machinery parent, please let me explain.

When my kids were younger, I admit that I used to go to the bus stop with them out of fear they would get hurt or kidnapped. But as they got older, I realized that I continued to walk to the bus stop to spend time with them. They felt the same way, since they let me know it was okay to keep walking with them.

Recently I reflected on why those five minutes felt different from the rest of the time I see them during the day and recalled a three-day training I attended when I used to be a counselor.

On the first day of the training, the speaker began by asking us, "What's one good thing that happened to you today?"

It was 9 a.m. and I'm not a morning person, so my brain wasn't functioning enough to think of a response. I also thought, "Not much has really happened yet." The class seemed to share my sentiment because only one other hand was raised.

"I drank my coffee," said an eager volunteer.

The group erupted with laughter.

"Thanks for sharing. I'm glad you had a chance to drink coffee. Anyone else?"

No one raised a hand. She moved on to the rest of her presentation and I forgot about her question.

The next day, I sat in the same seat. Again she began by asking, "What's one good thing that happened to you today?"

*Oh, gosh she is asking it again, I thought. Surely, I should be able to think of something this time, especially since she asked it yesterday.* But my mind was blank.

Three hands shot up this time.

"I was on time for the training today."

"I ate a tasty breakfast."

"My kid gave me a hug before I left the house."

That day when I went home, I thought about the question and possible answers. I was determined to participate. When I woke up the next morning, I paid attention to all the positive experiences I had before I arrived at training.

That day when she asked the question, "What's one good thing that happened to you today?" at least fifteen hands were raised, including my own.

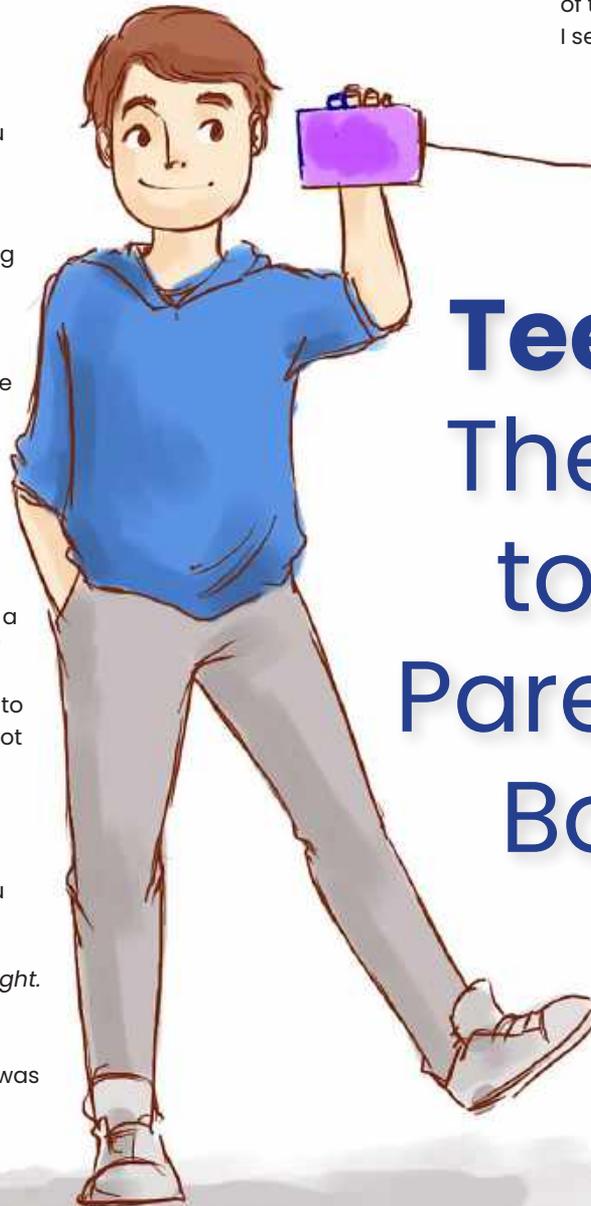
"The sky was filled with beautiful shades of red, orange and yellow. Seeing it made me smile."

The technique worked because the speaker asked the same question at the same time. This routine allowed me to anticipate and prepare to answer the question.

#### **THE POWER OF A ROUTINE**

Walking to the bus stop every morning is a routine that my teens can count on. For some families, it may be the drive to school, or for others, time spent at the dinner table.

They sometimes ask me questions or offer information about their day. And rarely do they have their phones in front of their faces (unlike the rest of the time I see them).



# Teen Talk: The Secret to Better Parent-Teen Bonding

BY CHERYL MAGUIRE

Dr. Laura Markham, a clinical psychologist and author of "Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How To Stop Yelling and Start Connecting," says, "Having a regular routine or ritual that you do with your teen will bring you closer. Parenting a teen is not a set of strategies. It is a relationship."

Most parents of teens worry about the possibility that their kid might use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors. Research shows that when parents have a positive relationship with their teens, the teens are less likely to take risks. Research also shows that when teens feel connected to their family and school, they are less likely to engage in violent behaviors as adults.

Even though it is only five minutes in the morning, the walk to the bus stop is enough time to create a connection.

When they come home from school, they are busy completing homework or talking with their friends. They often have activities or sports after that, so there are some days when we don't eat dinner together. There are some days when our walk to the bus stop is the only uninterrupted time we get, which is why I value it.

"The time we spend together as families should be treasured. It should be spent supporting, guiding and enjoying each other's company," says Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg, a physician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and co-founder of the Center for Parent and Teen Communication. "Too many families waste energy nagging. The bigger goal is to learn to communicate in a way that strengthens your relationships and prepares your teens for healthy relationships with you in the future."

In less than four years my kids might be headed off to college. So, I plan to take as much time as I can with them, even if it is only five minutes a day.

On a recent morning walk to the bus stop, I shared that I had a job interview that day and I was nervous.

"What type of job is the interview for?" my daughter asked.

"A guidance counselor."

"Which school?" my son asked.

"Don't worry, it's not yours."

We all laughed knowing that my son did not want me to be his new guidance counselor.

The bus pulled up beside us and they climbed the stairs. Before finding a seat, my daughter turned around, smiled and shouted, "Good luck, Mom!"

Next year, my kids will be old enough to drive to school and won't need to ride the bus. So, I'm taking Dr. Ginsburg's advice and treasuring the time we have together—even if it is only five minutes.

---

Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and the mother of twins and a daughter.





## THE Learning Curve

ALISON BOGLE

*Bogle is an Austin-based freelance writer and mom of three.*

# Allowance: A Penny Earned or All in a Day's Work?

I've always felt thankful that my husband and I agree on most parenting-related things. Don't get me wrong. We have other differences of opinion for sure, but when it comes to the kids, we're usually on the same page. That is, until our kids became old enough to receive an allowance.

To learn how different families approach the issue, I conducted an informal poll of Austin parents. It turns out we're not the only family struggling to find the "right" way to teach fiscal and family responsibility. What's important is to not give up on the topic altogether. Money is an important teaching tool, not just a reward. Kids need practice to become skilled at saving and spending, and having spending money as a child is an important part of financial literacy practice.

When deciding what's best for your family, you might consider the following questions:

### Pay for Chores?

There are several schools of thought on this. Some families pay for basic chores

such as doing the dishes, helping with the pet or keeping the bedroom and belongings tidy. Carrie Rupprath uses her daughter's allowance to not only get chores done but to teach basic skills. "We have a checklist of requirements that have to be met to earn a weekly allowance. Most are geared to help teach basic responsible behaviors. Once those items become consistent, we change the list to tackle new items."

Other families choose to give an allowance that is not tied to anything, based on the idea that chores are simply a part of contributing and belonging to a family. Jennifer Cathcart shared, "I never had an allowance growing up. Fast forward to being a parent. My husband and I are team "No Allowance" for chores. The chores you do in the house are part of being in our family."

Another approach is a hybrid, whereby basic chores are required and don't earn an allowance, but above-and-beyond tasks can be completed for payment. Kim Fromberg shared, "I always have a list of jobs around the house, like 'clean out the garage' or 'change the lightbulbs,' and

they have a dollar amount associated with them. That way, if my kids want extra money, they know how they can earn it." In the Lucksinger household, Daniel said it was important to encourage "personal responsibility and learning life skills as well as a communal looking out for each other." Chores such as keeping your room clean and doing your own laundry are expected, while activities that benefit the whole family, such as dusting the house or helping with yardwork, come with an added reward.

### How Much?

Allowance amounts vary widely. Some parents use a formula, such as \$1 per year of age per week or month, while others pay a flat amount. Families that pay larger allowances often require children to use their own money for discretionary spending. "Our kids are

“Money is an important teaching tool not just a reward”

given a monthly sum and they are responsible for managing it. We pay for food, basic clothing and shelter. The rest is up to them," said Carissa Milam. Another approach is to provide a situational allowance. Tracey Beadle shared, "When it's time to buy clothes, I give my girls an allowance, and they get to decide what to purchase. If they want more, they find ways to earn the funds. They've learned to sell their old belongings through apps, and they have become great bargain hunters!"

### Save or Spend?

Here is another category with multiple approaches. One option is to allow children full autonomy over saving and spending decisions. Theoretically, children learn through natural consequences what happens when they want a special toy but have spent all their money on small trinkets. They will become intrinsically motivated to forgo the small spending in favor of saving for the big prize.

Other families allow their children a measure of autonomy but serve a mentorship role in the spending and saving process. Melissa Howitt shared, "We discuss potential purchases that they 'want' versus 'need' and take the purchases of 'wants' on a case-by-case basis."

Finally, some families choose to use a formula for saving and spending and may even include a category for giving. "Our kids are taught and required to save and to give a portion away to church or non-profits that they choose," said Carissa.

### How To Pay?

This question brought my favorite poll response. Mary Katherine Stout shared, "Definitely don't do it the way we do! The system is well-intentioned, but I'm bad about paying my kids on time, and they badger me about when I am going to make their 'monthly payment.' On the upside, they may have a future in debt collection because they are relentless nags."

Ultimately, the best system is the one that works for you. If you're great about

having cash on hand and want to pay out on the spot, great! Or it might work best to keep a log of what the kids have earned. Several families that I polled have found great success with a debit card, such as Greenlight, or a savings app, like Current. Your child's account can be tied to yours, making it easy to transfer money to the account, or back to yours.

As you can see, there are many ways to handle allowances. While it can be easy to get overwhelmed, the benefits of teaching your child financial literacy are worth the headache of figuring out your system! Remember, there is no best approach - the one that works for your family is about as close to "right" as you can get.



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**LIFELINES**

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

*Schoolfield is a freelance medical writer based in Austin.*

## Is Your Toddler at Increased Risk for Tooth Decay?

A young child's temperament may help predict future oral health. A recent study in *Pediatric Dentistry* found that toddlers with negative temperaments are more likely to develop tooth decay than their more easygoing counterparts. In the study, toddlers' temperaments were scored using the "Early Childhood Behavior Questionnaire." Researchers scored behavioral characteristics, such as activity level, frustration when interrupted, discomfort in new social situations and trouble focusing on one activity. They looked at whether or not a child liked to be cuddled and could be easily soothed. The study adjusted for several variables, including frequency of sugary drinks and caregiver dental health.

Researchers periodically evaluated these children's teeth over a three-year period. Children who were identified with negative temperaments had significantly more decayed, missing or filled dental surfaces at the end of the study.

Children who are at increased risk for poor dental health benefit from early

interventions. Here are some actions that parents can take:

### **Establish a Dental Home**

As soon as your child's first tooth appears or no later than the first birthday, schedule a visit to the dentist. The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recommends establishing a "dental home." A dental home fosters an ongoing relationship between the child, family and dentist. A dental home guides preventive, acute and comprehensive oral health care.

Children with uncooperative behavior benefit from a pediatric dentist, who is trained in coping with dental fear as well as temperament challenges.

### **Support Good Oral Hygiene Habits**

As soon as the first tooth appears, begin brushing your child's teeth with a soft, small-bristled toothbrush. Discuss the use of fluoride toothpaste for children under 2 years old with your doctor or dentist. The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends using a tiny amount of fluoride toothpaste (about the size of a grain of rice) for

children younger than 3 years old. For children over 3 years old, use a pea-sized amount.

Brush your child's teeth thoroughly twice a day (morning and night) or as directed. Keep doing the brushing until the child is old enough to brush effectively. Supervise children younger than 6 years old. Remind them not to swallow the toothpaste. Coach brushing for two minutes, making sure all teeth surfaces are cleaned. Use oral hygiene apps or playlists to make brushing fun (see sidebar).

Build brushing into the child's morning and bedtime routines. It is helpful to always brush teeth at the same time within a repeated sequence of activities. This helps eliminate arguments about when to brush teeth.

### **Take Steps To Prevent Tooth Decay**

To prevent tooth decay, limit sugary drinks and snacks. Provide water or unsweetened beverages instead of sodas. If you give your child juice, serve it at mealtimes only. If your child carries around a sippy cup during the day, put only water in it. Provide nutritious

snacks, such as vegetables, fruits or yogurt. It is best to eat mostly at meals instead of snacking off and on during the day.

Talk to your child's dentist about fluoride varnish and dental sealants. Fluoride varnish can prevent about 33% of cavities in baby teeth. Dental sealants are applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. They can prevent up to 80% of cavities for years.

### Be a Role Model

Parents and caregivers with poor oral health are more likely to have children with tooth decay. Practicing good dental hygiene yourself encourages your child to do the same. Make comments about the importance of brushing and flossing, such as "I'm going to go brush and floss my teeth now. It keeps me from getting cavities, and I love how clean my teeth feel afterwards."

### Use an App To Make Brushing Fun

Use an oral hygiene app designed for kids to encourage good brushing and flossing habits. The free Tothsavers Brushing Game, developed by the Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives, is a fun option. The game features a fairy tale kingdom whose inhabitants are under a wicked spell that makes their teeth rot. The child has two minutes to brush away the spell for each character. The app prompts brushing for each tooth area, such as bottom, left molars. Brushing twice a day unlocks rewards. After 30 days, your child can battle the evil sorceress who cast the spell.

Search for "brushing teeth game" or "brushing teeth timer" in your iTunes or Google app store for other dental hygiene apps that teach and motivate.

### Teach Your Children About Oral Health

Download and print oral health activity sheets for kids to do at home. The AAPD website offers the following fun, free resources at [bit.ly/3inpy7W](http://bit.ly/3inpy7W):

- Coloring sheets featuring members of the "Little Teeth League," including Brushing Boy, Cavity Clasher and Flying Flosser

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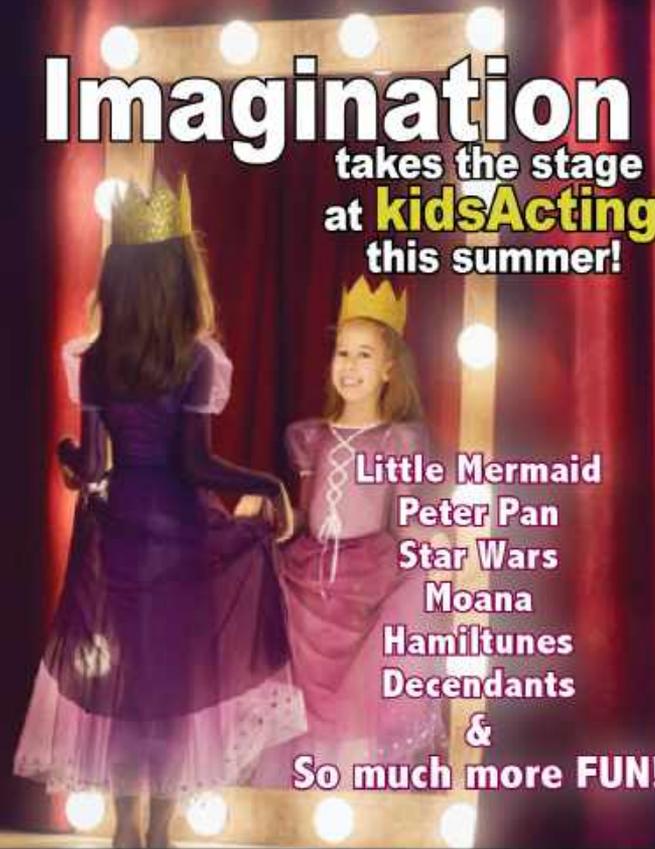
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## FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

*Richardson, PhD, RN, CS, LPC, LMFT, is an Austin-based psychotherapist.*



# Making It Through the Terrible Twos

**Q** Our son Micah is 2 ½ years old. He has become increasingly negative. In fact, his favorite word is “no.” He gets into everything and is constantly on the go. Micah won’t listen to me or his father. If he doesn’t get what he wants, he throws a tantrum. We try to read to him, but it’s difficult as he tears the pages out of the books while we are reading. We seem to have no control over him anymore. Is Micah going through what I’ve heard called “the terrible twos”? Is his behavior (which is driving us crazy) normal? If this is just a stage, what can we do as parents right now until this passes? And what do we have to look forward to in the next stage?

**A** Micah’s behavior is normal for his age and stage of development. He is exerting his independence. Will Micah stay this way? The answer is “No.” What you can expect in Micah’s behavior as a 3-year-old is more use of the words “yes” and “we.” As a 3-year-old, he’ll want to please. He’ll respond to praise. He will especially enjoy his mother and other children. A child at this age is typically happy and his emotions are calmer. You have this wonderful stage of development to look forward to in about six months.

For now, I suggest these books to help during this stage of development: T. Berry Brazelton’s “Touch Points Birth to Three” and “Touchpoints Three to Six,” as well as an older title, “Your-Three-Year-Old Friend or Enemy” by Louise Bates Ames and Frances L. Ilg of the Gesell Institute of Child Development. Bates and Ilg explain how children move from states of disequilibrium to states of equilibrium about every six months, up to the age of five. This means that if you don’t like how your child is behaving at any point, figure out how to get through a few months, knowing the behavior will change and be easier to handle for a while.

As to what you can do right now, I offer these suggestions:

1. Ignore tantrums. Intervene only if your child’s safety is at risk.
2. Use distraction to interrupt and change behavior. For example, you might open a package of cookies and act like you are going to eat them all, or start playing drums on a kitchen pan with a wooden spoon. Call attention to something outside.
3. Take time out for yourself if your child’s behavior is getting to you. Tag team

with your partner or spouse to take turns being with your son.

4. Put some activities on hold, or modify them, until your child reaches a different stage of development and is ready for those activities. For example, if he is tearing books at bedtime, try reading to your child after he’s tucked in tight, keeping his hands occupied with a stuffed animal or toy, or using online read-alouds.

5. Don’t ask your child if he wants to do something, especially in this period when “no” is his favorite word. Instead of asking, give direction: “Let’s wash our hands for dinner now,” or “It’s time to take your bath.”

6. Use humor and imagination. Children this age have gained a little sense of humor and can enjoy the spark that imagination brings to a normal task or activity.

Being together more during this pandemic can be trying as children go through some difficult developmental stages. Try to think outside the box in order to cope and stay in good physical and mental health. Remember, this stage will pass.



## Los Terribles Dos Años y Las Etapas del Desarrollo

**P** nuestro hijo Micah tiene 2 años y medio. Se ha vuelto cada vez más negativo. De hecho, su palabra favorita es “no.” Se mete en todo y está constantemente en movimiento. Micah no me escucha ni a mí ni a su padre. Si no consigue lo que quiere, hace un berrinche. Tratamos de leerle, pero es difícil porque arranca las páginas de los libros mientras leemos. Parece que ya no tenemos control sobre él. ¿Está Micah pasando por lo que he oído algunos padres llamar “los terribles dos años”? ¿Es normal su comportamiento (que nos está volviendo locos)? Si esto es solo una etapa, ¿qué es lo que podemos hacer como padres ahora mismo hasta que esto pase? ¿Y qué tenemos que esperar si su comportamiento cambia?

**R** El comportamiento de Micah es normal para su edad y etapa de desarrollo. Está ejerciendo su independencia. ¿Se quedará Micah de esta manera? La respuesta es “No.” Lo que hay que esperar en el comportamiento de Micah a los 3 años es un mayor uso de las palabras “sí” y “nosotros.” Cuando tenga 3 años, querrá complacer. Responderá a los elogios. Disfrutará especialmente de su madre y otros niños. Un niño de esta edad suele ser feliz y sus emociones son más tranquilas. Espere tener esta maravillosa etapa de desarrollo en unos seis meses.

Estas son algunas sugerencias de cosas útiles que puede hacer para cambiar tanto la entrega excesiva de regalos de los abuelos como el comportamiento de su hijo.

Por ahora, sugiero estos libros para ayudar durante esta etapa: “Touch Points Birth to Three” y “Touchpoints Three to Six” de T. Berry Brazelton, así como un título más antiguo, “Your-Three-Year-Old-Friend or Enemy” por Louise Bates Ames y Frances L. Ilg del Instituto Gesell de Desarrollo Infantil. Bates e Ilg explican cómo los niños pasan de estados de desequilibrio a estados de equilibrio aproximadamente cada seis meses, hasta la edad de 5 años. Esto significa que si no le gusta cómo se está comportando su hijo en algún momento, necesita averiguar cómo superarlo unos meses y luego será más fácil lidiar con el comportamiento durante un tiempo.

En cuanto a lo que puede hacer ahora mismo, le ofrezco estas sugerencias:

1. Ignore los berrinches. Intervenga solo si la seguridad de su hijo está en riesgo.
2. Utilice la distracción para interrumpir y cambiar el comportamiento. Por ejemplo, puede abrir un paquete de galletas y actuar como si se las fuera a comer todas o comience a tocar la



### asuntos Familiares

BETTY RICHARDSON

*Richardson, PhD, RN, CS, LPC, LMFT, es una psicoterapeuta situada en Austin.*

batería en un sartén de cocina con una cuchara de madera. Llame la atención sobre algo afuera.

3. Tómese un tiempo para usted mismo si el comportamiento de su hijo le está afectando. Forme un equipo con su pareja o cónyuge para tomar turnos estando con su hijo.
4. Ponga algunas actividades en espera, o modifíquelas, hasta que su hijo llegue a una etapa diferente de desarrollo y esté listo para esas actividades. Por ejemplo, si está rompiendo libros a la hora de acostarse, intente leerle a su hijo después de que esté bien acurrucado, mantenga las manos ocupadas con un peluche o juguete, o use la lectura en línea para leer en voz alta.
5. No le pregunte a su hijo si quiere hacer algo, especialmente en este período en el que “no” es su palabra favorita. En lugar de preguntar, dé instrucciones: “Vamos a lavarnos las manos para la cena ahora” y “Es hora de tomar tu baño.”
6. Use el humor y la imaginación. Los niños de esta edad han adquirido un poco de sentido del humor y pueden disfrutar de la chispa que la imaginación aporta a una tarea o actividad normal.

Estar más juntos durante esta pandemia puede resultar difícil a medida que los niños atraviesan algunas etapas difíciles de desarrollo. Trate de pensar fuera de la caja para sobrellevar la situación y mantenerse en buena salud física y mental. Recuerde, esta etapa pasará.



## JUST FOR GRINS

CATE BERRY

*Berry is an Austin-based children's book author and mother of two. She also teaches writing workshops for young people at cateberry.com.*



## Team Dishwasher

We are a mostly "individual sport" type of family. Drawing, Spotify-listening, solo excavations into our own imaginations -- that sort of thing. But I do long for moments of us working as a team.

There was the sharing of the remote that one movie night. I don't have to tell you how that ended. When the kids were younger, I pictured us banding together outside: leaf raking, stacking bundles, jumping from pile to pile. But it turned out, not so much. I watched everyone stack and pile remotely, content with their own method.

Then I had a brilliant idea. What could be more bonding than working together in the kitchen? Since there are four large humans roaming the house these days (with my kids, freshly 13 and 14 years old), everyone could up their game in the old "pitch in and help" department. My pal, Bernadette, once announced, "I'm giving every kid in my family a free ticket to my dishwasher loading workshop." Inspired, I announced the same.

It was met -- shockingly -- with silence, followed by swift insertion of AirPods, and a flourish of the cold, hard bedroom door closing with finality.

But, I persisted. We broke into teams. The younger scrubbing off the spaghetti encrusted plates. The elder stacking them in. After some time, I checked in. Only three plates had "fit" into the dishwasher. I pivoted. "Let's try unloading!" The spats erupted. Why does she get all the glasses? I called the silverware! He always gets the easy stuff. She never puts away the heavy stuff.

We are not, shall we say, wired for team life.

I executed a final pivot. Ranking Top Dog of Team Dishwasher, I proclaimed that the younger officially unloads the bottom rack and the elder unloads the top. Shazam!

Now we are united, rejoicing in our "It's Not Fair!" chorus of life -- unanimously, and entirely -- together.

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# NEW

# Valentine's Day Adventures!

BY ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

Welcome to our **NEW** Austin Family Bucket List! Each month, we'll alternate between an activity to do at home and one that gets you out of the house for family fun.

This year, think "outside the box" of chocolates when planning your Valentine's Day! We took our inspiration from messages on candy hearts to come up with some fun "Choose Your Own Adventures." Celebrate the day (or month) with your sweetie, the kids or the whole family!



## *i love you*

Head to South Congress Avenue to take a selfie in front of the iconic "i love you so much" mural at Jo's Coffee or the Heart Wall behind TOMS.

### Choose Your Own Adventure:

- Grab a cup of joe from Jo's Coffee along with breakfast tacos or muffins to picnic at a park. Nearby Little Stacy Park and Ricky Guerrero Park are both great spots.
- Head up South Congress to Big Top Candy Shop to goggle over the candy selection.
- Try the walk-up window at Amy's Ice Creams, the Hey Cupcake! trailer or the newly-opened Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams to get your chocolate fix.



## *you're sweet*

Some local bakeries go all out for this holiday. It can be a treat just to peek

into the glass cases and admire the beautifully-decorated cupcakes, cookies and cakes. Many offer curbside pickup or delivery too. Try one of the calorie-rich and calorie-burning pairings below, so you can have your cake and eat it too!

### Choose Your Own Adventure:

- Visit Quack's 43rd Street Bakery in Hyde Park, then stroll over to play at Shipe Park or the grounds of the Elisabet Ney Museum.
- Check out Lady Quackenbush's Cakery in Mueller where you can party on the patio or head to Lake Park to picnic. On Sunday, wander the farmers market for goodies. You can also picnic at the new Andrews Park, guarded by a giant octopus sculpture!
- Sugar Mama's on South First Street makes beautiful, award-winning cupcakes and treats. Pick up a DIY cookie kit to throw your own Valentine's Day party at home. Or order curbside and burn off those sugar highs at Butler Park (and take a peek at the new Children's Garden, coming soon!).



## *roses are red, violets are blue*

Celebrate the day with flowers! Stop and smell the roses at the Zilker Botanical Garden.

### Choose Your Own Adventure:

- Perfect for choosing your own adventure, the trails here loop through Japanese gardens, along koi

ponds, over bridges, past rose and butterfly gardens and into prehistoric times where you can do a scavenger hunt for dinosaurs!

- Do a photo shoot. Bring hearts and props to make fun Valentine's Day photo cards, or simply take advantage of the gorgeous backdrops for family pictures.



## *hot stuff*

Did you know that the Main Building of St. Edward's University sits atop an extinct volcano? Hike Blunn Creek Trail to see if for yourself! Kids will enjoy walking forested paths, beneath bluffs and along the creek as they watch for trail markers. Follow the signs for the Volcanic Overlook. (Leave the pups at home for this protected nature preserve.)

Want even more ideas for date nights or fun family outings? Go to [austinfamily.com/family-bucket-list](http://austinfamily.com/family-bucket-list).

*Cupcakes by Sugar Mama's Bakery. Mural photos by Melanie Wright Photography.*

Annette Lucksinger is a mom of two who loves Austin adventures. She is also author of the local family guidebook, *Exploring Austin with Kids*.



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