

May 2021

FREE

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## MAKER KIDS!

*Maker-Minded:  
Raising DIY Kids*

## SWIM SEASON

*Water Safety  
Begins on Dry Land*



## MOM GUILT?

*Practice Compassion  
and Self-Kindness*

## COVID SLIDE

*Use This Summer To  
Close Learning Gaps*



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May 2021

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**Maker-Minded:  
Raising DIY Kids**



**FILM review** By Jack Kyser  
**The Mitchells Vs. the Machines**  
Read online at: [www.austinfamily.com/films](http://www.austinfamily.com/films)



Cover Kid Winner Drew is a sweet-spirited 4-year-old who loves dinosaurs! Chef attire provided by Toybrary Austin. Cover photo by Jordan Ashley Photography.



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Catch Austin Family magazine live on "Good Day Austin" every Thursday morning.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

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

This month, we celebrate mothers and makers!

Before I became a mom, I envisioned packing up the car with baby, camera, pen and pad, as I hit the road to explore. I imagined stopping to plop my baby down beside me so I could take photographs of gorgeous landscapes – and write.

Right. When I did become a mother, you might say I was a bit . . . surprised.

A few years later, on a trip to the hill country, my two kids and I rolled with the dips and hills on Park Road 4. They screamed and giggled with delight as our stomachs dropped and rose. Around the next curve, I pointed out Longhorn Caverns State Park, a castle and the green valley that stretched below.

On the front seat beside me, along with snacks, lunchboxes and water bottles strewn everywhere, was my backpack filled with a camera, notebooks, pens and lists of things to do and places to go. It hit me then. I hadn't been *that* off about motherhood.

This issue exposes some of the bumps in the road and offers advice on navigating the curves life throws. But mostly, it honors generations of moms for the crazy twists and turns that they handle with such grace, humor and love.

Annette

# austinfamily®

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#### PUBLISHER

Kaye Kemper Lowak

#### EDITOR

Annette Lucksinger: editor2003@austinfamily.com

#### COPY EDITOR

Barb Matijevich

#### ADVISING EDITORS

Dr. Betty Kehl Richardson, Barb Matijevich

#### CALENDAR EDITOR

Betty Kemper: calendar2003@austinfamily.com

#### CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Cate Berry, Alison Bogle, Jack Kyser, Janeen Lewis, Dr. Betty Richardson, Brenda Schoolfield

#### MEDIA RELATIONS

Alison Bogle

#### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Layout and Ads: Susie Forbes

#### STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jordan Ashley Photography

#### ADVERTISING SALES

Kaye Kemper Lowak: kaye2003@austinfamily.com

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#### Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 7559, Round Rock, Texas 78683-7559

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**Austin** 

**Donkey Hodie**

**All New Show Premiering Monday, May 3**

Check airtimes at [austinpbs.org/schedule](http://austinpbs.org/schedule)  
Watch anytime at [pbskids.org](http://pbskids.org)  
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# Play it product recalls **SAFE**

## Government Recalls Teethers, Bath Seats and Bath Wraps



Battat is recalling about 61,000 **teethers** because the plastic wings can detach from the body of the teether, posing a choking hazard to young children. The B. toys Light-Up Firefly Frank Teether Glowly Chews

was sold at Target stores nationwide and online at target.com from July 2019 through February 2021 for between \$6 and \$10. Consumers should immediately take the recalled teethers away from young children and return them to any Target store or contact Battat to return by mail for a full refund.



BATTOP is recalling about 5,000 infant **bath seats** that fail to meet the federal safety standard for infant bath seats, including requirements for stability. The foldable infant bath seats can tip over while in use, posing a drowning hazard to babies. These items were sold exclusively at amazon.com from July 2020 through October 2020 for

about \$40. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled infant bath seats and contact BATTOP for instructions on returning the item with free shipping to receive a full refund. Amazon, on behalf of BATTOP, is contacting all known purchasers directly.



Restoration Hardware is recalling about 56,000 **children's bath wraps** because they fail to meet the flammability standards for children's sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries. The affected children's bath wraps were sold at RH Baby & Child Galleries and RH Outlets as well as online

at rh.com and rhbabyandchild.com from April 2014 through November 2020 for \$32-\$39. RH is offering a full refund of the purchase price or a credit to customers who purchased the children's Animal Bath Wrap, Heathered Plush Bath Wrap or Luxe Sherpa Bath Wrap. For details on affected units and the return process, go to [bit.ly/3gkIFka](http://bit.ly/3gkIFka).

*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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- Sarah F. (6yrs old)

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# AROUND

# Austin

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## Contest Winners

Minchae Kim, a fourth grade student at Rutledge Elementary School in Austin, was named the grand prize winner in a statewide art contest. The fourth grader became the first student from Austin to win the grand prize in the history of the program.

The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Take Care of Texas program conducted its sixth-annual K-5 art contest. Students were asked to submit artwork demonstrating how they help keep the air and water clean, conserve water and energy, and reduce waste.

Seoyul Kim, who attends Elsa England Elementary School in Round Rock ISD, won in the second grade category. TCEQ staff selected winners from more than 3,000 entries.



Winning art piece for the Take Care of Texas contest comes from Austin fourth grader Minchae Kim. Photo courtesy of Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

## by the numbers



**72%** of moms with children over 1-year-old work outside the home  
source: [happyworker.com](http://happyworker.com)



**33%** of moms wish for someone to help clean on Mother's Day  
Source: [prnewswire.com](http://prnewswire.com)



**#2** Austin's ranking in best U.S. southern cities for women in STEM  
source: [commercialcafe.com](http://commercialcafe.com)



Frontline workers receive commemorative thank you posters from Girls' School of Austin students.

## Honoring Heroes

The students of the Girls' School of Austin (GSA) expressed their thanks to frontline heroes in the community. Each student in the GSA's lower school created a thank you card honoring the work of those on the frontline during the pandemic.

The project was conceived as a way to reflect on the contributions of those who played an essential role in supporting all of us during the pandemic, such as health care professionals, first responders, teachers, grocery store workers, sanitation workers and others.

The thank you cards were combined into a poster that was presented by students to real-world heroes they encountered. Students took posters to fire stations, hospitals and grocery stores to recognize the sacrifice that others are making to support our city during the pandemic.



Docent Frances reads a storybook and then leads a related exploration activity in the garden.

## Garden Storytimes

Sculpture Garden Storytime is a new family program designed to introduce young audiences to the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum through story. The event is geared towards ages 7 and under, although all are welcome.

Storytimes will be held on the third Saturday of every month at 12 p.m. The next one will take place on May 15. For more details, visit [umlaufsculpture.org/families](http://umlaufsculpture.org/families).



DreamFest will include live music, an artisan market and family-friendly activities.

### Inaugural DreamFest

Dreamland, an entertainment, recreation and arts venue in Dripping Springs, will hold their inaugural DreamFest on Saturday, May 1.

The event is free and open to the public and will feature performances on two stages from Carolyn Wonderland, Del Castillo and Zach Person, among other musical acts. DreamFest will host the Redbud Artisan Market during the event as well, which will showcase the work of over 35 artists.

The venue includes a beer garden, food trucks, pickleball courts and a miniature golf course. Additionally, on the first Saturday of each month, Dreamland hosts Kids Day, where from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. kids can enjoy activities such as balloon art, face painting, henna tattoos and a petting zoo. For more information on the event, visit [dreamlanddstx.com/dreamfest](http://dreamlanddstx.com/dreamfest).



The event will run every Friday through Sunday from April 30 to May 31.

### May Market

The creators of Blue Genie Art Bazaar present the May Market, a new spring art and shopping experience that brings the best of Central Texas artists and their work together under one roof. The new event is a free, family-friendly experience showcasing handmade items. Women artists and women-owned businesses make up the majority of the over 100 exhibitors.

Organizers hope that the market can become another annual arts tradition in the community. The May Market offers one-of-a-kind gifts for spring milestones such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, graduations, anniversaries, weddings and more.

### Maternity Hospital Recognized

Ascension Seton Hays has been named one of the "Best Maternity Hospitals 2021" by Newsweek, in partnership with the Leapfrog Group, the national nonprofit organization that reports on the safety and quality of U.S. health care facilities.

Ascension Seton Hays recently added a new maternity unit to meet growing demands. The hospital offers customized birth plans, spacious birthing rooms, couplet care to keep mother and baby together, and access to Dell Children's specialists and NICU units.

Ascension Seton Hays was recognized for following important protocols to protect moms and babies. They also met standards for excellence in maternity care in areas such as low rates of C-section, episiotomy and early elective deliveries.



Award-winning hospital Ascension Seton Hays continues to expand its maternity services.

## It's time to start enjoying life!

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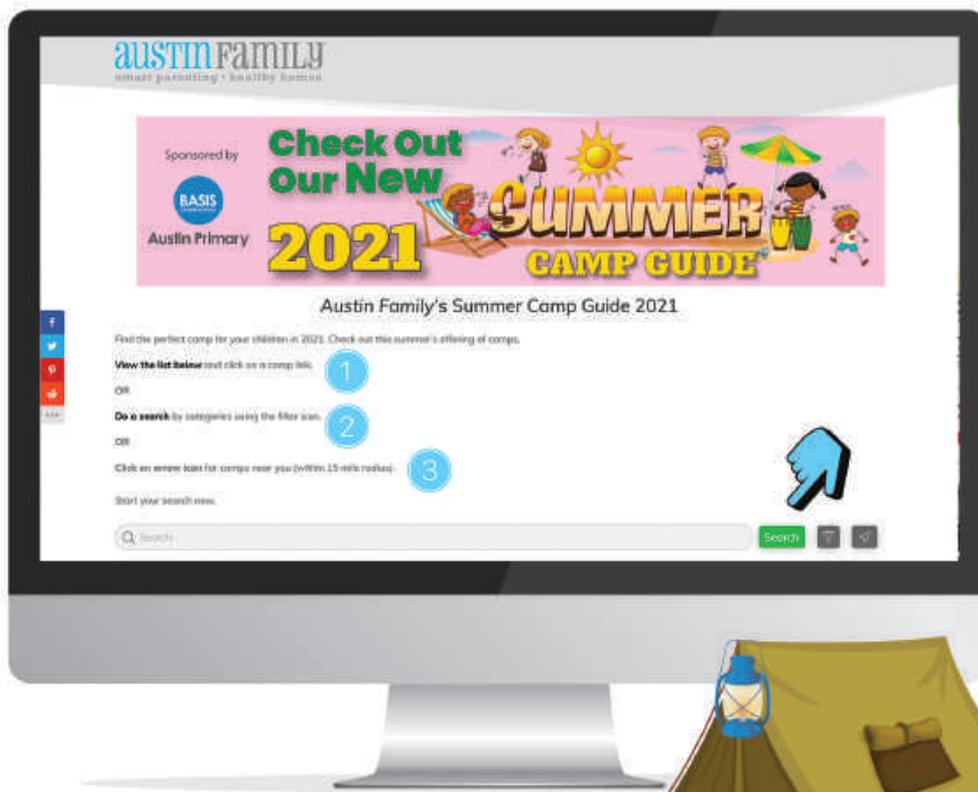
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# ATTENTION PARENTS

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  - WATCH their videos and register online
- NEW camps added weekly and updates as situations change



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Christina with children Nell and Elias, who wrote his mom the sweet note below.



## FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

# Dealing With Mom Guilt

**Q** How can I get rid of nagging guilt for not being the ideal mom? I went back to work after each of my three children was born. I felt guilty about leaving them either with a caregiver or at day care. I still feel guilty about missing milestones like their first steps. Working from home during the last few months due to COVID-19 precautions, I've felt guilty when I've tried to work and one or more of the kids wants attention. I feel like I'm not the perfect mother like some of my friends are. How can I best deal with this guilt?

**A** Possibly all mothers have experienced what we call mom guilt. It is a feeling that you are either not doing enough or that you are not doing the right things for your children. You may worry that your kids will not turn out well because of poor mothering decisions. Some experts point out that a little bit of guilt can be productive at times. For example, maybe you let the kids stay up too late and they don't want to do school work the next day. You listen to the little voice of guilt. After that, you make sure they go to bed at a reasonable time.

Usually, mom guilt doesn't feel good and can prevent you from experiencing a sense of well-being. Here are some

suggestions to lessen this feeling and make positive changes for both you and your kids:

1. Stop comparing yourself to mothers who seem to be perfect. They aren't perfect. You don't need to be perfect either. Bruno Bettelheim, a child psychoanalyst, advised women to try to simply be a "good enough mother."
2. When feeling guilt and perhaps shame, stop and get in touch with what you're feeling and respond with care. Practice deep breathing and relaxation.
3. Draw two columns. Use one column for your negative thoughts. Use the second column to change that thought to a positive one. For example, if you worry you are a bad mother for working and taking time from your kids, change this to see that your kids are learning to value the importance of work and earning a living.
4. Take time to care for yourself. Schedule time on your calendar to do things that will rejuvenate you. You can't take care of others if you don't take care of yourself.
5. Reach out for help from your

significant other, mother, friend, neighbor or babysitter. A break can help you reset and attend to situations with more perspective.

6. Schedule one-on-one time with each of the kids. Time alone with mom makes a child feel loved and special. Scheduling this time may also keep them from feeling the need to demand as much attention on a day-to-day basis.
7. Use positive affirmations. Make a list of good statements about what makes you a good mother and tape it to your mirror. Offer kindness and compassion to yourself.

I'm cheering for you and all our readers who have mom guilt. Maybe you will get a surprise love note from your child like the one Elias sent to his mom:

**"You are the best mom in the world and I know that you don't think you are, but you are a mom so special that people even think you are cool especially me. Elias"**

# MAKER-MINDED:

BY JANEEN LEWIS

**W**hen your electronic gadgets break, does your tween fix them? Do you have a child that builds elaborate housing for pets and dolls out of scraps of craft materials and cardboard boxes? Maybe you're raising entrepreneurial teens with ideas that could make them the next great app creator or "Shark Tank" winner.

If any of this sounds familiar, you may have a maker on your hands. But what exactly does that mean?

## WHAT IS THE MAKER MOVEMENT?

The Maker Movement is a quickly growing culture that embraces the idea that learning is done best through doing. It includes do-it-yourself individuals and groups that create things, and its members are producers more than consumers, says Irm Diorio, executive director of a makerspace. While some makers work in makerspaces, others tinker in their homes and garages. Some maker interests include robotics, electronics, metalworking, woodworking and traditional arts and crafts.

With affordable access to 3D printers and computers, technology is often a part of the Maker Movement, but it doesn't have to be.

"Everyone is a maker," Diorio says, and she encourages others to discover the maker in them. "It's about finding what really inspires you – gardening, baking, sewing, anything that you would build with your hands. It's fun and can be functional, but it doesn't have to be. It's all about letting your creativity take you for a ride."



Young makers study how to take their LEGO building up a notch.

## WHAT DO MAKERSPACES OFFER?

Some makers discover their tribe at makerspaces, where adults and children find the community and supplies they need, including equipment and tools that are hard to store at home. Makerspaces often house equipment like 3D printers, laser cutters, wood lathes, saws, welding equipment and sewing machines. These spaces offer community, encouragement and expertise for those working on projects. Makerspaces are also becoming popular in schools because parents, teachers and administrators see the advantages of including hands-on, creative outlets in the learning process.



Austin Maker Faire attracts makers of all ages.

## HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT A MAKER-MINDED LIFE?

How you help your child flourish at being a DIY kid varies by age. Here are some suggestions that will help guide young makers as they grow.

### Preschool:

- Encourage natural curiosities, inclinations or interests.
- Start coding with and without technology. Find lots of ideas at [code.org](http://code.org).
- Give them the tools of their trade even if they're in junior size. Think miniature tool box with tools, junior sewing machine or real gardening tools small enough to fit their hands.
- Don't be afraid to introduce sophisticated vocabulary. Don't dumb it down.

# RAISING DIY KIDS

## Elementary:

- Give them a work space and fill it with the best tools that you can afford.
- Volunteer to start a makerspace at your child's school.
- Create an invention station where your kids can do STEM challenges. For project ideas that can be built with a few common household supplies, try the design spinner at PBS Kids Design Squad Global Build.
- Participate in a science fair.
- Visit your local Maker Faire.
- Have a STEAM closet or basket at home that allows kids to pull out supplies and invent, build or create.
- Provide a coding robot that can be programmed with a tablet.
- Join a LEGO robotics club.



## Middle and High School:

- Encourage an apprenticeship in a trade or with a family member or friend who is an expert, such as a computer scientist, car or airplane mechanic, fashion designer or seamstress.
- Attend a certified STEM high school.
- Join a robotics club.
- Give them low cost technology like Raspberry Pi or Arduino to experiment and create their own technology products.
- Introduce them to conductive thread so they can make clothes that light up, or show them Makey Makey, an invention kit that can turn items as simple as bananas or staircases into computer touchpads.

## Online Resources for the Maker-Minded Family

**KiwiCo.com:** Delivers art and science projects for kids of all ages for a monthly fee.

**Makeread.org:** Provides support for those interested in integrating maker education into learning environments.

**Makerfaire.com:** Shares information about Maker Faires all over the world, including Maker Faire Austin.

**Makezine.com:** Features project ideas, maker news, links to Maker Faires and support for all things maker.

**Thingiverse.com:** Offers user-created design project files to make with technology such as 3D printers and laser cutters.



## Local Resources for Austin DIY Kids

**Austin Creative Reuse:** Promoting the sustainable practice of reuse, ACR supplies donated crafting supplies of all kinds at reasonable rates for a wide range of creative projects.

**Libraries:** Check with your local school and public library, many of which offer maker supplies and events. Once reopened, visit Austin Central Library's makerspace with 3D printers, sewing machines and crafting space.

**Summer Camps:** Several area camps offer maker-themed day camps that teach skills such as stop motion animation, robotics, baking, STEM activities and film-making. See the Austin Family magazine 2021 Camp Guide for local summer camps that will inspire maker kids.

*Janeen Lewis is a freelance journalist, teacher and mom of two. She is a nationally published writer.*



## LIFELINES

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

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

# Water Safety Begins on Dry Land

Before you head to the beach or lake this summer, take steps to keep your family safe in and around the water.

Drowning is a leading cause of death in toddlers and young children. Teens have the second highest drowning rate of any age group.

Experts recommend layers of protection for water safety. Drowning can't be prevented by a single strategy. Here are some things you need to do while still on dry land:

### Sign Up for Swimming Lessons

Recognize Water Safety month this May by scheduling swimming lessons for family members who are not strong swimmers. Knowing how to swim is a crucial layer of protection. Formal swimming lessons reduce a young child's risk of drowning.

Children should be able to get in and out of the water by themselves, tread water for several minutes, float on their back and swim at least 25 yards. Knowing how to swim is critically

important but recognize that this skill alone does not "drown proof" your child.

Choose a nationally recognized learn-to-swim program with certified instructors. Lifeguards on duty during the lessons should be certified in CPR and first aid. Look for a program that includes water survival skills in addition to swimming techniques. The course should teach children what to do if they fall into the water with their clothes on. Self-rescue is an important water survival skill. Another is what to do if you see a swimmer in distress.

**"Knowing how to swim is critically important but recognize that this skill alone does not 'drown proof' your child."**

### Acquire Proper Life Jackets

Make sure every family member has a life jacket that fits properly. Check a life jacket for approval by the U.S. Coast

Guard. Make sure it fits without being too loose. If a child's life jacket is too big, she can slide out of it if she falls into the water. Don't use blow-up water wings as a life jacket, as they aren't safe.

Children should wear a life jacket at all times around open bodies of water, such as lakes and ponds. Everyone should wear a life jacket when in a boat. The U.S. Coast Guard reports that most boating deaths are caused by drowning. About 9 out of 10 victims were not wearing a life jacket.

Recognize National Water Safety Month this May by scheduling swim lessons for family members. Discuss life jacket use with your family ahead of time. Explain the family rules for life jacket use; make sure everyone knows that wearing one when needed is not up for negotiation. Proper life jacket use is an important layer of protection.

### Designate Water Watchers

Talk to other adults who will be

visiting the beach or lake with your family about designating a "Water Watcher." All children, regardless of their swimming abilities, need careful monitoring in and around the water. Even if a lifeguard is on duty, the child still needs a Water Watcher. Create a schedule to share this responsibility. This will help avoid Water Watcher fatigue. Once onsite, frequently confirm who is on duty. A phrase you don't want to hear is "but I thought you were watching her!"

For beginning swimmers and young children, the Water Watcher should be in the water with the children. Stay at close range, within an arm's length. Someone must be ready to pull a child up from under the water immediately if needed.

For competent swimmers and older children, the Water Watcher can

observe from outside the water. This person must avoid distractions, such as cell phone use, reading or carrying on conversations. The total focus must be on watching swimmers in the water.

When children are around the water but not swimming, someone should watch them carefully to make sure they don't reenter the water. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that almost 70% of children younger than 5 years old weren't supposed to be in the water at the time of drowning.

#### Have a Water Safety Talk With Your Teen

The risk of drowning increases for teens, especially boys. This age group is more likely to make poor decisions when swimming or boating. They often overestimate their swimming ability or take unnecessary risks to impress their peers. Alcohol or drug use is sometimes

a factor. Here are some important talking points:

- Never swim alone. Even when a lifeguard is present, use the buddy system.
- Don't dive or jump into the water unless you know how deep the water is.
- Avoid underwater breath-holding activities and games.
- Know what to do if caught in a rip current. Don't try to fight it. Swim parallel to the shore, then swim back to land at an angle.
- Don't drink or use drugs in and around the water. Alcohol and drug use increase the risk of accidents.
- If you see a swimmer in distress, don't jump in to rescue them. Throw them a life jacket or extend a pole to pull them to safety.

Keep these strategies in mind for a safe swimming season this summer.



## It's time to cast your vote for *Austin Family Magazine's* Annual Readers' Poll Favorites!

If you have a favorite or are a business and want your customers to vote, share your information. A win celebrates the BEST in Austin!

**Vote for your favorites in over 50 different categories.**

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Vote at [www.austinfamily.com](http://www.austinfamily.com)  
between March 1 and May 17 (One ballot per family)



## Museums

### BOB BULLOCK HISTORY MUSEUM

The official history museum of the state of Texas revealed for all ages in exhibits, films and fun through family-centered programs.

**Downtown Austin**

[www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com)

### JORDAN-BACHMANN PIONEER FARMS

This living history museum allows visitors to actually experience life in Central Texas during the 19th century.

**Northeast Austin**

[www.pioneerfarms.org](http://www.pioneerfarms.org)

### MEXIC-ARTE MUSEUM

Enthusiastic children to art connoisseurs will enjoy exhibits of Mexican, Latino and Latin American art and culture.

**Downtown Austin**

[www.mexic-artemuseum.org](http://www.mexic-artemuseum.org)

### NEILL-COCHRAN HOUSE MUSEUM

This display of Greek architecture in the heart of Austin offers history lecture series as well as Funday Sundays.

**UT Austin area**

[www.nchmuseum.org](http://www.nchmuseum.org)

### TEXAS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Texas' first science museum located on UT campus features wildlife, gems, replica skeleton of Quetzalcoatlus northropi, the Texas Pterosaur, outdoor exhibits and more.

**UT Austin**

[www.tmm.utexas.edu](http://www.tmm.utexas.edu)

### TEXAS MILITARY FORCES MUSEUM

This 45,000 square foot museum explores the history of the Lone Star State's militia and volunteer forces with exhibits of tanks, helicopters, realistic environments and much more.

**Northwest Austin**

[www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org](http://www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org)

### UMLAUF SCULPTURE GARDEN & MUSEUM

This sculpture garden is a display of art in a garden setting that holds Free Family Fun Days the second Sunday of each month.

**Downtown Austin**

[www.umlauptsculpture.org](http://www.umlauptsculpture.org)

### WILLIAMSON MUSEUM

The Williamson Museum provides fun for learners of all ages. From the intriguing topics of The Salon at Wildfire to the engaging activities of Hands on History, there is something for everyone.

**Georgetown**

[www.williamsonmuseum.org](http://www.williamsonmuseum.org)

## Sports

### PLAYLAND SKATE CENTER

The finest in skating entertainment with an impressive light show, fog machine and state of the art sound system playing a wide variety of music.

**Northwest Austin**

[www.playlandskatecenter.net](http://www.playlandskatecenter.net)

### ROCK ABOUT CLIMBING ADVENTURE

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Christina con los niños Nell y Elías, quien le escribió a su mamá la nota debajo.



## asuntos familiares

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

# El Sentimiento de Culpabilidad de la Madre

**P**¿Cómo puedo librarme del sentimiento de culpa por no ser la madre ideal? Volví a trabajar después de que nacieron cada uno de mis tres hijos. Me sentí culpable por dejarlos con una niñera o en la guardería. Todavía me siento culpable por perderme de esos momentos importantes como sus primeros pasos. Trabajando desde casa durante los últimos meses debido a las precauciones del COVID, me he sentido culpable cuando he intentado trabajar y uno o varios de los niños quieren atención. Seamos realistas: no soy una madre perfecta como lo son algunas de mis amigas. ¿Otras madres cargan con esta culpa y cuál es la mejor manera de lidiar con ella?

**R**Posiblemente todas las madres tienen lo que llamamos sentimiento de culpabilidad de la madre. Es una sensación de que no está haciendo lo suficiente o que no está haciendo lo correcto para sus hijos. Es posible que le preocupe que sus hijos no terminen siendo buenos debido a sus malas decisiones como madre. Algunos expertos señalan que, a veces, un poco de culpa puede ser productiva. Por ejemplo, tal vez deje que los niños se queden despiertos hasta muy tarde y no quieran hacer el trabajo escolar al día siguiente. Escuche la voz de la culpa. Después de eso, asegúrese de que se vayan a la cama a una hora razonable.

Por lo general, la culpabilidad de la madre no es un sentimiento bueno. Además, cargar con la culpa del pasado no siempre es útil para ser una buena madre en el presente. Aquí hay algunas sugerencias para disminuir este sentimiento y hacer cambios positivos para usted y sus hijos:

1. Deje de compararse con madres que parecen ser madres perfectas. Ellas no son perfectas. Usted tampoco necesita ser perfecta. Bruno Bettelheim, un psicoanalista infantil, aconsejó a las mujeres que trataran de ser simplemente una "madre suficientemente buena."
2. Cuando se sienta culpable y quizás avergonzada, deténgase y póngase en contacto con lo que está sintiendo y responda con bondad. Practique la respiración profunda y la relajación.
3. Dibuje dos columnas. Utilice una columna para sus pensamientos negativos. Utilice la segunda columna para cambiar ese pensamiento por uno positivo. Por ejemplo, si le preocupa ser una mala madre por trabajar y quitarle tiempo a sus hijos, cámbielo para ver que sus hijos están aprendiendo a valorar la importancia del trabajo y de ganarse la vida.
4. Tómese el tiempo para cuidarse a sí misma. Programe tiempo en su calendario

para hacer cosas que la rejuvenezcan. No puede cuidar de los demás si no se cuida a sí mismo.

5. Busque ayuda de su pareja, madre, amiga, vecina o niñera. Un descanso puede ayudarle a restablecer y atender situaciones con más perspectiva.
6. Programe un tiempo a solas con cada uno de los niños. El tiempo a solas con mamá hace que el niño se sienta querido y especial. Programar este tiempo también puede evitar que sientan la necesidad de exigir tanta atención en el día a día.
7. Utilice afirmaciones positivas. Haga una lista de afirmaciones positivas sobre lo que la hace ser una buena madre y péguelas en su espejo. Ofrézcase a sí misma amabilidad y compasión.

La estoy animando a usted y a todas nuestras lectoras que cargan con el sentimiento de culpabilidad de la madre. Tal vez usted recibirá una nota de amor sorpresa de su hijo como la que Elías le envió a su mamá:

**"Eres la mejor mamá del mundo, y sé que no crees que lo eres, pero eres una mamá tan especial que la gente incluso piensa que eres genial, especialmente yo. Elías"**



## THE Learning Curve

ALISON BOGLE

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

# COVID Slide: Use This Summer To Close Learning Gaps

Being a former teacher, I typically get questions at this time of year about how to address the dreaded “summer slide,” the loss of learning that takes place when kids have months off from school during the summer. If a long break makes parents nervous, reflect on an odd spring of 2020, followed by summer break, topped off with a rocky start to the 2020–2021 school year. Stir in some hybrid learning or possible quarantining, then roll that all into summer break 2021. It’s no wonder that parents are increasingly worried about pandemic-related learning loss!

It’s certainly reasonable for parents to be concerned about these educational gaps, which are being referred to as the “COVID slide.” Data released in November 2020 by the Northwest Evaluation Association sought to provide a comprehensive national overview on learning loss related to COVID-19. Based on test scores, reading loss was relatively minimal, while math was the subject most affected. Math scores dropped an average of 5%–10%

when compared with 2019. If that was the loss in math scores in November 2020, imagine what the results would be now.

Before we look at ways to help our children close the gap between expected learning levels and current levels, it’s important to remember that we, as parents, set the tone. If we project anxiety and fear, our kids will pick up on those emotions and their learning will be negatively affected. We can remind ourselves that the entire country is in the same situation and that we can only take it one step at a time.

**Think long-term.** Experts say it will take more than a year of supplemental learning to get to where we might have been pre-pandemic. While “more than a year” can seem intimidating, with a shift in mindset, it can actually be something that brings parents a sense of relief. We don’t have to try to cram all of that lost learning into our children at once. In fact, it will be detrimental to their learning if we try!

**Reach out to your child’s current and last year’s teachers.** They are best placed to know which learning standards didn’t get addressed, or which were not covered as in-depth as they would have been during a typical school year. They can also advise you as to your child’s areas of weakness. The time period just before summer break is a whirlwind for teachers, so please don’t wait until just before school is out. It is unreasonable to expect a teacher to thoughtfully respond in that short of a timeframe.

**Emphasize math.** Math is the one subject where it is most difficult to learn grade-level content when prior material hasn’t been mastered. Because it is cumulative in nature, a knowledge gap in one concept can set a student up for failure in all math concepts that build upon the lacking skill. Other subject areas should be practiced, but the main effort should be put into ensuring that your child has learned all he should know in math for his grade level.

**Capitalize on your child's interests.**

Kids are just like us – we don't like to do work in the evenings or on our days off and neither do they. If we don't make extra practice and supplemental learning fun, then we run the risk of turning our kids off from learning altogether. Do you have a technology-lover? Look into learning games online. A budding chef? Teach math concepts such as measurement, fractions and elapsed time through cooking projects. If your child is doing something she loves, then the learning will come naturally and will be part of the fun.

**“Experts say it will take more than a year of supplemental learning to get to where we might have been pre-pandemic.”**

**Look for a learning camp or after school program.** Extracurricular options abound in Austin. Look for a camp that gets kids having fun and also reinforces skills that your child is missing. Or, choose an after-school program that feels like playtime but has built-in time for learning.

**Explore district resources.** Most school districts offer “summer school” for a portion of the summer. If you think your child would benefit from such a program, talk to your child’s teacher or your campus’s office staff to indicate your interest. Most summer school participants must meet certain criteria, and it is possible that your child will qualify. Indicating your interest can only help.

Consider tutoring. For busy parents, the idea of overseeing extra work or searching for resources can be overwhelming. And, driving to and from after school programs or summer camps during work hours can feel close to impossible. Tutoring can be a great option for busy families as well as for families that like the individualized attention that tutoring

offers. Tutoring ranges in pricing and can get quite expensive, but you might consider hiring an older, responsible student to tutor for a more reasonable price. Your child’s school can also be a good resource as many teachers will tutor in their free time. The office staff may be able to give you a list of teachers to contact.

Parenting during a pandemic has called on parents to put on their superhero capes in multiple ways. Identifying our children’s learning gaps and helping to close them is yet another example. The process may look messy, but deep breaths, baby steps, taking it easy on ourselves and our kids, and reaching out for help will get us all there in the end.



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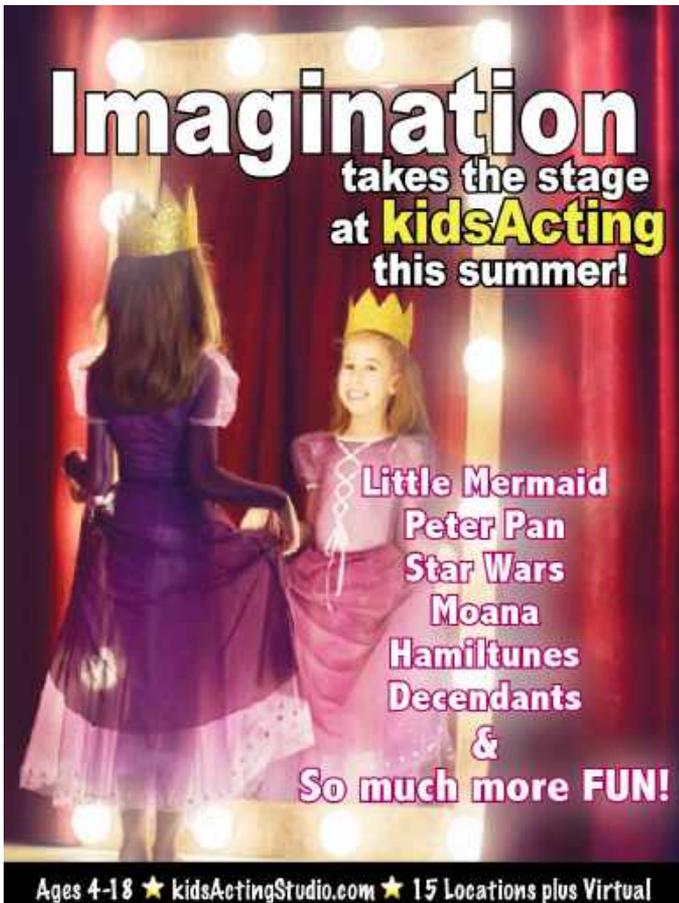
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# STEM Maker Umbrella Challenge



Did you know that May is the rainiest month in Austin? Our STEM maker challenge puts your umbrella making skills to the test with a few common household items.

Just grab a handful of straws, paper plates, sponges, coffee filters, cupcake wrappers, aluminum foil, plastic wrap...plus tape, scissors... you get the idea. You can turn your kitchen table into your very own maker lab.

Success criteria: Your umbrella should keep an action figure dry for at least 10 seconds under dripping water.

Steps:

- 1) First, gather your materials and set up your work space. If you expect a mess, plan accordingly.
- 2) Ask your kids how they think umbrellas were designed. Do they know when they were first invented (1000 B.C.)? What

makes umbrellas successful? If they could design an umbrella, what would they use?

- 3) Spend a few minutes sketching a design. The umbrella does not have to open and close. It just has to block off water!
- 4) Create a challenge: set limits on time, size or the number of materials allowed.
- 5) Once the umbrella is built, test it. Place a doll or action figure under it and slowly pour water over the top. Does the umbrella keep the action figure dry?
- 6) Note any shortcomings in the design and make improvements.
- 7) Test again.
- 8) Finally, as you celebrate success, also discuss any obstacles you faced and how they were overcome.



This summer, at more than 25 area locations, YMCA of Austin Summer Day Camps will provide opportunities for project-based learning and STEM and LEGO challenges. There will also be Makerspace Zones for coding or creating music with Makey Makey equipment and Light and Sound Lab. Find more details at [austinyymca.org/camp](http://austinyymca.org/camp) or by calling 512-236-YMCA.



Like nearly every media company in the world right now, PBS KIDS has seen the numbers of its viewers and gameplayers rise, along with the amount of time people are on screens. We are happy that we can be a haven for families that are looking for safe, trustworthy content, especially at times when parents' attention has to be elsewhere. But our goals go beyond that – every one of our shows and accompanying games has specific educational aims. For example, *Donkey Hodie*, premiering this month, focuses on emotional regulation, persistence, problem solving, resilience and self-control for children ages 3-5. Plus, puppets! Silly, singing puppets!

In this era of screen saturation, we also have concerns, particularly when we sense that screen use has tipped over into the excessive. We have taken the term “screen zombie” from one of our fans to describe the moment when a person blanks out in front of a screen and is no longer responding to the outside world. Though it can and does occur with all humans, young children are especially prone to it. The most telling indicator of a screen zombie is a lack of response when calling that person's name. If that happens in your midst, please shut the screen off, check the time, and either get that person active or send that person to bed! Warning: zombies can be grumpy, though if you make the zombie rule a habit, they'll soon get used to it.

*To read this article in Spanish, visit the Spanish section of [austinfamily.com](http://austinfamily.com).*

Benjamin Kramer, PhD, is the director of education for Austin PBS.



## 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.*



## First Mother's Day

"People should know," the therapist said, "parenting is not gratifying."

I released an awkward "HA!" Did he just say that? Out loud? New mothers really shouldn't hear this. Or any mother, rookie or veteran. The proclamation was irresponsible. (And thrilling.) And rude. (And thrilling.)

I had imagined my first Mother's Day. We'd wake. My husband would take the babe and bring me breakfast in bed on a tray with a single rose. He'd know, without asking, that I'd like French toast and berries. It would be delivered with a card he'd bought the moment our son was born, thinking ahead. We'd snuggle together drunk on serotonin and our son's sweet-smelling scalp. I'd breastfeed and bond, now in The Club. After five years of trying, our son had finally arrived. Beautiful. And large.

And loud.

He screamed for the first five months of his life and I found this particularly

not gratifying. Other things not so gratifying: getting an eye full of pee before coffee, clicking "yes" to Amazon's air-traffic quality control noise canceling headphones, dodging the streamlined diarrhea assault of 2006, surviving the chamber of late-night worry, the great breastfeeding boob rebellion of week two.

It's not that my first Mother's Day was a let-down. It just wasn't gratifying as the pros say. It is tucked away into the soft tissue of my memory. I trot it out every year if I'm feeling nostalgic. Blah blah "get a towel!" blah blah "I need vomit backup" blah blah blah "More incoming— more incoming."

Seeing my husband in the nursery door frame holding red wine at 7:28 a.m.? That I remember. Also, the plate of two shriveled turkey sausages. All for me. That is a Mother's Day memory I'll cherish.

As I move from rookie to veteran mom this fourteenth year, I find many things still not gratifying. But the good news is, age mellows you. And with it, the gratifying luxury of memory loss.



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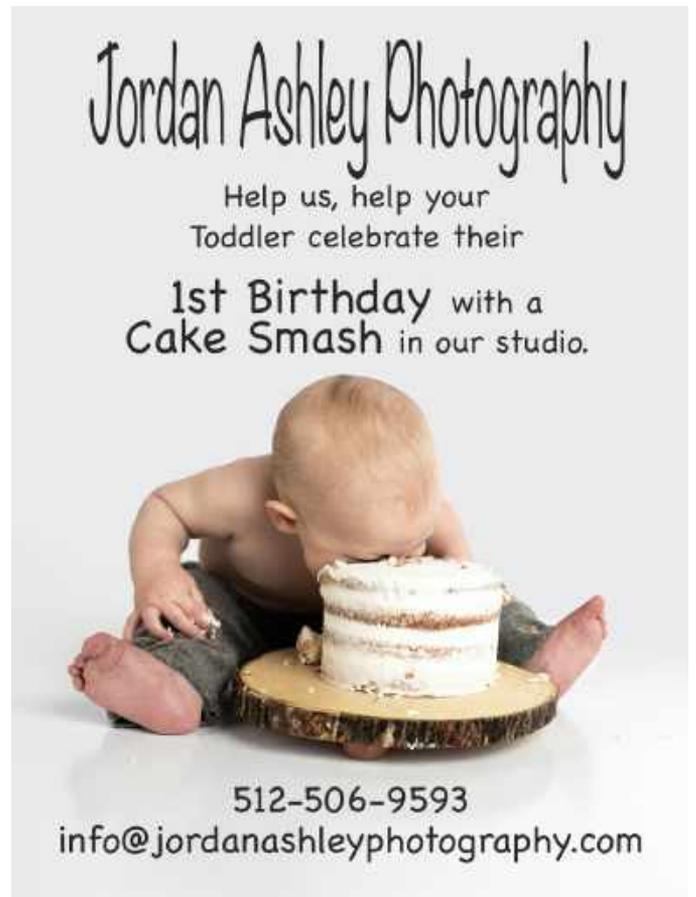
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