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2021 YOUNG WRITERS CONTEST

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1st Place, 4th and 5th Grader Receives:

- \$75 Gift card, plus plaque
- Winner's plaque presented at his/her school
- Essay published in December issue of Austin Family magazine

1st Runner-up, 4th and 5th Grader Receives:

- Plaque presented at his/her school
- Essay published in December issue of Austin Family magazine

It's FREE to enter! Go to www.austinfamily.com for complete rules.

Judges:



Carmen Oliver

Carmen is author of a picture book series and has a new book release in Fall 2022. She founded the Booking Biz, a boutique-style agency that brings award-winning children's authors and illustrators to schools, libraries and special events.



Bethany Hegedus

Bethany has an award-winning picture book and she is also the Founder and Creative Director of The Writing Barn in Austin and host of The Porchlight podcast, which include writing craft and creativity interviews as well as the popular Courage to Create series.

Contest Rules:

- Essays must be 75 to 300 words
- Contest date: August 14 to October 15, 2021
- Essays must be received by 5 p.m. on October 15
- Writers must be in the fourth or fifth grade
- FOR RULES, visit: www.austinfamily.com

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FILM review

By Jack Kyser

Coda

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**HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT
CONVERSATIONS WITH TEENS
TO REDUCE SUICIDE RISKS**



EDITOR'S NOTE

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

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

This issue focuses on well-being. It takes a look at some of the BIG changes in life — starting school, earning a driver's license, growing up during the transformative teen years, having a baby. These changes are exciting and profound.

But the road is sometimes bumpy.

We can lose that stable foothold and become desperate, worried or lost in the dark. These are times when calling on resources can be crucial; when friends and family stepping in can leave a lasting impact; and when reaching

out for help is needed. It takes courage. However, it can be the step that starts us down a more enriching, supported path.

September is Baby Safety Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. We dedicate an article to each. We also keep in mind that in the darkest of times, light shines the brightest. So, this month our writers shine a light on resources, share tips and offer advice from experts.

As we head into fall, a version of the Loving Kindness Meditation comes to mind.

May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you be safe.
May you live with ease.

Warmly,

Annette

austinfamily®

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Austin

Play it product recalls

Safe

Government Recalls Sleepwear Sets, Loungers and Pajamas



Zoetop Business has issued a recall for over 2,000 children's **sleepwear sets**. The recall applies to two styles of sets that fail to meet the federal flammability standards for children's sleepwear, posing a risk of burn injuries to children. The SKUs associated with the recalled products –

Sknight10190731477 and Sknight10191129405 – are printed on the hangtag inside the garment. These items were sold exclusively at shein.com from August 2019 through January 2021 for \$8. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled garments and contact Shein for a \$10 gift card.



About 155,00 True Living sling **loungers** have been recalled because they can collapse unexpectedly, posing an amputation, laceration and pinching hazard if a finger gets

caught in the metal folding joints. The lounge chairs were sold for about \$20 at Dollar General stores nationwide from January 2019 through September 2019. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled sling loungers, cut the fabric of the chair to render it unusable and contact Dollar General to return the recalled loungers for a full refund.



Tkala Fashion is recalling about 6,000 children's **pajamas** that fail to meet the federal flammability standards for children's sleepwear. This can pose a risk of burn injury. The recall applies to six styles of two-piece, short-sleeve pajama sets: multi-color dinosaur, orange and white dinosaur, black and

white dinosaur, gray shark, green dinosaur and black rocket ship. The sets were sold exclusively at amazon.com from January 2021 through June 2021 for between \$7 and \$15. Consumers should stop using the product immediately. Amazon or Tkala Fashion will contact all known purchasers with information on how to obtain 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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A brief application is required, including a section for a certifying authority. Applications are available in English and in Spanish. If a school has at least one student who qualifies for the program, the school can set up service so that materials are available for qualifying students in the classroom as well as at home.

The Talking Book Program also offers a free Disability Information and Referral Center to provide disability and health-related information on the national, state and local level. The Talking Book Program does not include textbooks but can provide books for required and recreational reading.

For more information, visit texastalkingbooks.org. You can also email tbp.services@tsl.texas.gov with questions or call 512-463-5458.

by the numbers



68%
today's grandparents
consider themselves
"cooler" than their own
grandparents

Source: goodhousekeeping.com



#6
Texas's ranking in
the U.S. for diversity

Source: census.gov



93%
of parents claim their
children help
make family spending
decisions

source: consumerdecisions.org



Join Austin Allies for their monthly book club. This month, the group will be reading *When the Stars Are Scattered*.

Book Club

Join Austin Allies for their monthly Book Club. The group meets every third Saturday at 12:30 p.m. This month, the club will meet up virtually on Saturday, September 18, to talk about Victoria Jamieson and Omar Mohamed's middle grade graphic novel, *When Stars Are Scattered*.

Meghan Goel, BookPeople's children's book buyer and programming director, describes the book: "Everyone in Dadaab is waiting: for family, an end to war or a ticket to America. For Omar, protecting his disabled brother is top priority, but an education could unlock his future (if he's lucky) in this poignant memoir of refugee camp life."

For the time being, the club will continue to gather over Zoom until it is safe to meet in person at BookPeople again. Register at: bit.ly/3CN8u59.

Backpacks Donated

Through large donations and small drives, the leadership and staff at the local credit union TruWest donated backpacks filled with school supplies to Williams Elementary School in Southeast Austin. Additionally, 20 laptops and eight desktop computers were donated from TruWest inventory.

Deborah Christopher, assistant vice president at TruWest Credit Union said, "Williams Elementary is one of the local schools in our backyard and we were happy to be able to provide new backpacks and school supplies for students who need them." These supplies were distributed to students in all grades at the elementary school.

Williams Elementary serves a diverse student body and enrolls approximately 400 students in grades pre-K to fifth grade in the Austin Independent School District.



Staff at Williams Elementary gratefully receive donated backpacks, school supplies and computers for their students. Photo courtesy of TruWest Credit Union.

Young Change Makers

Two Austin-area children will be featured in the new book series, Young Change Makers, written by Stacy C. Bauer and illustrated by Emanuela Ntamack. The series features trailblazing youth from around the world who are taking action to change communities in positive ways.

Local Austinite Kate Gilman Williams teaches kids to advocate for animals through her business, Kids Can Save Animals. She has partnered with Microsoft's Project 15 – designed to accelerate conservation and ecosystem sustainability projects – to inspire kids to take action to keep animals safe from the dangers they face from humanity every day. Eleven years old, she "believe[s] that advocacy has no age limit. And the truth is, it is up to my generation to fix big things."

Magdelene Ryan, also 11 years old, is an entrepreneur who advocates for endangered African species to protect them from natural disasters like wildfires that can have dangerous consequences for their populations. Most recently, she created the logo and helped to raise over \$2,000 for Quarters for Koalas, a koala nonprofit in Australia.



A new book series features two Austin-area kids who are working to make big change in the world.

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St. Jude Walk/Run

September was proclaimed National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month in 2012 to bring awareness to pediatric cancer, which remains the leading cause of death by disease for children under the age of 15. St. Jude, the only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center devoted solely to children, has devised treatments that have helped push the overall childhood cancer survival rate from 20% to more than 80% since the

hospital opened more than 50 years ago.

On September 18, the local community can participate in the St. Jude Walk/Run at the Dell Diamond in Round Rock to support families who have children with cancer. In addition to the scenic 5K route, there will be family-friendly activities and live entertainment.

Supporters can also register for the St. Jude Walk/Run Virtual Event to walk, run and fundraise for the kids of St. Jude. Other ways to contribute include volunteering or donating to participants. All donations will help families focus on the care of their children without the additional worry of costs associated with treatment, travel, housing and food. Check it out at commonsensemedia.org.

Register for the St. Jude Walk/Run by visiting stjude.org/walkaustin.

Must-Do This September

6

Celebrate Labor Day

8

Honor Grandparents' Day

19

Visit a Museum
– indoor or out –
for free on Austin
Museum Day



We're Looking for a Few Good Kids ... To Brag On!

If you know a young person deserving of recognition or a youth group working to positively impact our community, let us hear about it. They just might end up in next month's "Around Austin" section of Austin Family magazine! Send details and a photo to editor2003@austinfamily.com.



Band members from Ann Richards School Marching Stars prepare to head to New York to march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Ann Richards Marching Stars

The Ann Richards Marching Stars, the only all-female competitive marching band in the United States, was selected to perform in last year's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. When the parade was postponed, they were invited to come in 2021.

Stephen Howard, Ann Richards Marching Stars band director, commented that not only is the band "excited to represent the City of Austin and the State of Texas, but we are thrilled to be performing as the first all-female marching band in the 95-year history of the parade."

The Ann Richards School for Young Women Leaders is a public, all-girls college preparation school in the Austin Independent School District that educates young women from a variety of backgrounds.

They have announced a fundraiser for this fall's marching band season to help raise money for private lessons, meals for the band, competition show design and travel to perform in this year's parade. For more information on the band or to donate, visit annrichardsband.org.



WHAT'S IN A GAME?

I have a pretty nice job in that every so often, in the midst of thinking about getting PBS resources to the public, I have to ask myself, "Is it fun?" No matter the educational value, our resources will not gain a following if they don't bring joy.

The "gamification" of learning, or the building of important knowledge and skills into games, does not always translate into fun. Likewise, games that claim they're educational aren't always so, even if they are great fun. Here are some tips to see

whether games have value beyond entertainment.

1. Getting better: If the player improves at game play, can they describe how they are improving, and do those skills translate into other areas of life?

From a very young age, kids can recognize patterns, build on prior knowledge and make new discoveries in the course of game play. Adults can help kids articulate what they are observing and learning, then encourage them to think about strategy on higher levels.

2. Role models: Part of being a kid is trying on the identities of heroes. If kids



are playing games in group settings, they pick up behaviors not only of the game characters but of their fellow gamers. Do you like what you're seeing? If not, you may need to steer your kids to more positive examples.

3. Creative play: Some games allow kids to create in unlimited ways, such as design mode in Minecraft, game design in PBS Kids Scratch Jr. or simple draw/paint programs. Good adventure games offer tons of choice in problem-solving scenarios. The degree to which your choices are constrained in a game (to swipe the fruit, or not?) is usually a pretty good indicator of how cognitively challenging that game is.

Common Sense Media Is a free resource for parents and caregivers. It offers comprehensive reviews of games and other kinds of media for younger audiences. Check it out at commonsensemedia.org.

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

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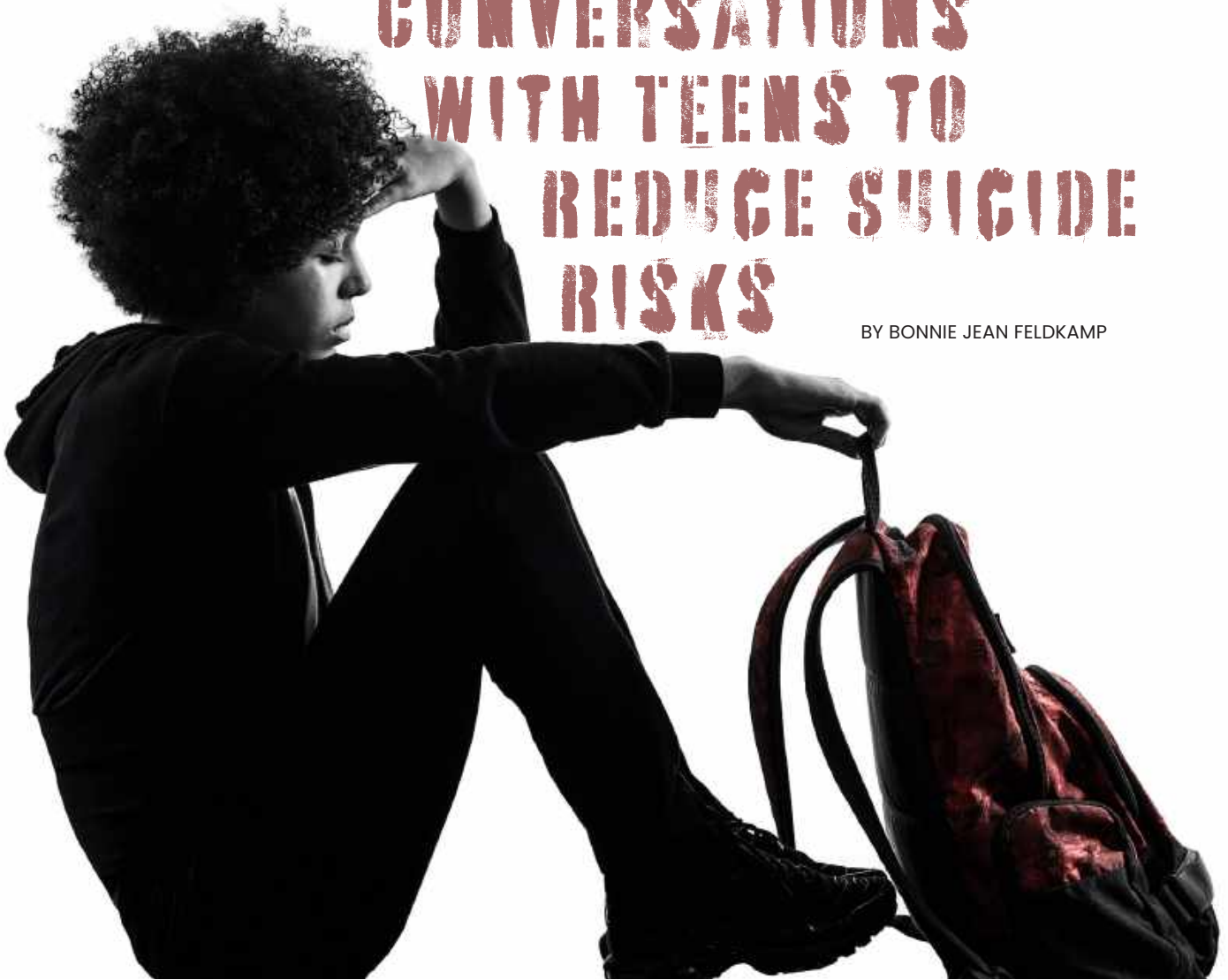
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HOW TO HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH TEENS TO REDUCE SUICIDE RISKS

BY BONNIE JEAN FELDKAMP



I had to hound my teen daughter to take a shower or simply change her clothes. I thought she was acting lazy. But when her therapist admitted her to the hospital for suicide risk, I learned that personal hygiene had been too much to ask. All of her energy went into facing the day. Her change in grooming habits was a major red flag for depression.

Key to lessening the risk of teen suicide is to establish open communication with your child and note behavioral changes. Such actions can become difficult during this time of tremendous growth and

change as your child matures into a young adult. During National Suicide Prevention Month, I offer these suggestions to help begin those difficult conversations.

3 Ways to Reduce the Risk of Death by Suicide:

1. Recognize potential stressors.

There is no suicide season. It happens year-round, and for every child there are different stressors.

- Back-to-school season can be a stress trigger for teens.
- Feelings of stress, confusion, fear and doubt can often influence problem-solving and decision-making skills, and for some, suicide may seem like a legitimate idea.
- School's social and academic expectations can exacerbate anxiety and leave a child feeling overwhelmed. It's a good time for parents to check in.

2. Check in with your teen regularly.

Ideally, parents are not coming out of the blue with questions like, “How was school today? Any thoughts about ending your own life?” That’s a bit jarring.

The goal is to set a routine of checking in with your teen and providing them vocabulary around their emotions along the way. It can be as simple as, “How are you settling in with freshman year?” Or maybe, “Anything about middle school have you feeling a bit lost?” Open the conversation — then keep asking.

Having difficult conversations with your teenager shouldn’t wait until things are in crisis mode. Dr. John Ackerman, a clinical psychologist and suicide prevention coordinator for the Center for Suicide Prevention and Research at Nationwide Children’s Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, says parents should “build up equity [with ongoing conversations] and check when things are good.” A teen needs to know where they can go for help. They may blow you off the first couple of times you ask, saying, “I’m fine, Mom, really.” Or maybe, “Dad, I just have a morbid sense of humor. I’m not suicidal.”

“HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR TEENAGER SHOULDN’T WAIT UNTIL THINGS ARE IN CRISIS MODE.”

But Dr. Ackerman says kids will come to rely on your inquiries, even if they don’t respond. “Having the comfort of regular communication with your child is key. It helps to reduce the burden your teen may feel about any challenges they are having while providing them with a source of hope and support.”

3. Be on the lookout for changes in behavior.

Mom Mandy thought her son was an angsty teen. He hid in his room and wore long sleeves no matter the weather. It wasn’t until later when her son was in therapy that Mandy learned his chosen wardrobe was to conceal his self-inflicted cuts.

The first person to know that something is off is frequently a close friend of your child. Since many teens won’t confide in their parents, The Society for the Prevention of Teen Suicide says parents should be on the lookout for “marked changes in behavior, including withdrawal from friends or changes in social activities; anger or hostility; or changes in sleep or eating habits.”

The identification can be tricky. Extreme, fluctuating emotions are things adults write off as “normal teenage behavior.” While that’s true to an extent, Dr. Ackerman says that a teen’s brain is operating with a higher intensity of emotions and coupled with the worst ability to regulate those emotions.

He explains that parents need to understand that “teens may genuinely believe what’s happening to them at that moment is the worst thing in the world and will never get better.” Their performance in school is often tied to overall success in life, and that’s terrifying. Romantic breakups or the end of friendships can be devastating. Dr. Ackerman encourages parents to “take the perspective of the child and understand that this is their first descent into this emotional valley.”

While parents need to remain connected to their teen even if he pushes them away, not every emotional bump in a teen’s life is a suicide risk. For example, there are many reasons teen boys wear long sleeves besides self-harm. And some kids just hate to stop and take a shower.

But, parents should use these as opportunities to check in with their kids. By doing so, parents not only help their teen, but they also help themselves to remain aware.

Symptoms differ from person to person and can easily be missed. That’s why open communication and paying attention to “the overall pattern” of a teen’s behavior is important.

It’s all part of the puzzle. When in doubt, seek help. Talking to a school counselor or therapist never hurts.

If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255), or contact the Crisis Text Line by texting “HOME” to 741-741.

Bonnie Jean Feldkamp is a wife, mother and award-winning columnist. She is the media director of the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. Find her on social media @WriterBonnie.



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(Virtual Walking Tour)
Corner of Fifth St. and Neches St.
www.brushsquaremuseums.org

Bullock Texas State History Museum
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www.thestoryoftexas.com

City of Austin Art in Public Places
www.austintexas.gov/department/art-public-places

Elisabet Ney Museum
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Flower Hill Urban Homestead Museum
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www.wildflower.org

Landmarks, The Public Art Program at The University of Texas at Austin
www.landmarks.utexas.edu

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10621 Pioneer Farms Dr.
www.pioneerfarms.org

Save Austin's Cemeteries and Oakwood Chapel
www.sachome.org

Texas Capitol Visitors Center
112 E. 11th St.
www.tspb.texas.gov/prop/tcvc/cvc/cvc.html

Texas Medical Association – Robert G. Mickey History of Medicine Gallery
401 W. 14th St.
www.texmed.org/gallery

Texas Memorial Museum
2400 Trinity St.
www.texasmemorialmuseum.org

Texas Military Forces Museum
2200 W. 35th St, Bldg. 6
www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org

Texas State Capitol
1100 Congress Ave.
www.texasstatecapitol.com

Texas State Cemetery
909 Navasota St.
www.cemetery.texas.gov

The Contemporary Austin
700 Congress Ave. and 3809 W. 35th St.
www.thecontemporaryaustin.org

The Williamson Museum
716 S. Austin Ave.
www.williamsonmuseum.org

Umlauf Sculpture Garden + Museum
605 Azie Morton Rd.
www.umlaufsculpture.org

Women & Their Work
1311 E. Cesar Chavez St.
www.womenandtheirwork.org



FAMILY matters

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

Never Shake a Baby

Q My husband Jack and I are young parents. We have a two-month-old baby girl, Misha. Jack and I are under a lot of financial stress. We don't get enough sleep. Misha cries a lot in the evening. Jack told me last night that he wanted to shake Misha to get her to stop. I grabbed her from him. I vaguely recall hearing you are not supposed to shake a baby. Can you please offer advice on ways to get a baby to stop crying? We feel desperate.

A Young mother, you saved your baby from possible death or severe neurological damage by stopping your husband from shaking her. A friend of mine who has worked at Child Protective Services for over 30 years told me that he deals with families in which a baby has died or had neurological damage from shaking. It is referred to as shaken baby syndrome.

Babies have proportionately large heads for their bodies and they have very weak shoulder muscles. So when a baby is shaken, the brain bangs around in the head, which can cause severe damage, including bleeding in the brain, injury to nerve cell branches and retinal

hemorrhage. Shaking may also cause broken bones. The baby can die or have lifelong neurological damage that can result in cerebral palsy, loss of hearing and sight, paralysis and seizures. You also saved your husband from legal charges. The person who has shaken a baby will be charged with assault on a child or with child homicide if the child dies.

When trying to stop the crying, check that she is not hungry and that her diaper is dry. Rethink the time before it started to try to determine the cause of the crying. Perhaps the baby was overstimulated by too many people handling her or disturbed to the point of not getting enough sleep. The baby could have gas pains, or the crying in the evening could be for no reason at all. The Seattle Children's Hospital refers to this situation as PURPLE: P = peak of crying, U = unexpected R = resists soothing, P = pain-like face, L = long lasting, and E = evening. Babies that exhibit signs of PURPLE may cry as much as five hours in the afternoon or evening during their second and third months and slowly stop around their fourth or fifth month.

So for a couple of months, you have to learn ways to deal with the crying. Some experts suggest counting or saying the alphabet. Sometimes it is best to put the

baby in a safe place, such as her crib, and let the baby cry while you go to a room where you can try to compose yourself with deep breathing and call for help. Ask a relative or friend to take over comforting your child. You can also call the Childhelp hotline at 1-800-422-4453 and talk to a counselor. Remind yourself that no baby has died from crying alone. It will eventually stop.

You can also try these actions to soothe your child:

1. Play soft music or sing to the baby.
2. Rock the child gently.
3. Give the baby a warm bath.
4. Run the vacuum.
5. Take her for a ride in the car or stroller.
6. Put your unclothed baby on your bare chest and rub her back.

Please get all the help you need so you and your husband never shake a baby. Find some ways to manage your stress as even babies are affected by parental stress.

Dear readers, if you know someone with a new baby, ask them if you can help so they can get rest. If they say no, send a meal. All new parents become extremely tired without sufficient help.



asuntos familiares

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

Nunca Sacuda a un Bebé

P Mi esposo Jack y yo somos padres jóvenes. Tenemos una niña de dos meses, Misha. Jack y yo estamos bajo mucho estrés financiero y de otro tipo. No dormimos lo suficiente. Misha llora mucho por la noche. Anoche Jack me dijo que quería sacudir a Misha para que dejara de llorar. Yo la aparté de él. Recuerdo vagamente haber oído que no se debe sacudir a un bebé. ¿Puede aconsejarnos sobre cómo conseguir que un bebé deje de llorar?

R Joven madre, usted salvó a su bebé de una posible muerte o daño neurológico severo al evitar que su esposo la sacudiera. Un amigo que ha trabajado en Servicios de Protección Infantil durante más de 30 años trata con familias en las que un bebé murió o sufrió daños neurológicos por sacudirse, lo que se conoce como síndrome del bebé sacudido.

Los bebés tienen cabezas proporcionalmente grandes para sus cuerpos y tienen los músculos de los hombros muy débiles. Por eso, cuando se sacude a un bebé, el cerebro se golpea en la cabeza, lo que puede causar daños graves, como sangrado en el cerebro, lesiones en las ramas de las células nerviosas y hemorragia retiniana. Las sacudidas también pueden provocar

fracturas de huesos. El bebé puede morir o sufrir daños neurológicos de por vida que pueden resultar en parálisis cerebral, pérdida de audición y vista, parálisis y convulsiones. También salvó a su esposo de cargos legales. La persona que sacude a un bebé es acusada de agresión a un niño o de homicidio de un niño si el niño muere.

Cuando quiere que deje de llorar, primero verifique que no tenga hambre y que su pañal esté seco. Intente recordar cuando comenzó para tratar de determinar la causa del llanto. Tal vez el hecho de que demasiadas personas cargaron y lo perturbaron hasta el punto de no dormir lo suficiente sea lo que haya sobre estimulado al bebé. El bebé podría tener dolores por gases, o el llanto por la noche podría ser sin motivo alguno. Los bebés pueden llegar a llorar hasta cinco horas por la tarde o por la noche durante su segundo y tercer mes y dejan de hacerlo lentamente alrededor del cuarto o quinto mes.

Por lo tanto, durante un par de meses, hay que aprender formas de lidiar con el llanto. Algunos expertos sugieren contar o decir el alfabeto. A veces es mejor poner al bebé en un lugar seguro, como su cuna, y dejar que lllore mientras usted se va a una habitación donde puede

intentar calmarse con respiraciones profundas y pedir ayuda. Pídale a un familiar o amigo que se encargue de consolar a su hijo. También puede llamar a la línea directa de Childhelp al 1-800-422-4453 y hablar con un consejero. Recuerde que ningún bebé ha muerto por llorar solo. Al final dejará de hacerlo.

También puede intentar estas acciones para calmar a su hijo:

1. Poner música suave o cántele al bebé.
2. Mecer al niño suavemente.
3. Dele un baño al bebé en agua tibia.
4. Pase la aspiradora.
5. Llévelo a dar un paseo en el coche o en la carriola.
6. Coloque a su bebé desnudo sobre su pecho desnudo y frótele la espalda.

Por favor, busque toda la ayuda que necesite para que usted y su esposo nunca sacudan a al bebé. Encuentre algunas formas de controlar su estrés, ya que incluso los bebés se ven afectados por el estrés de los padres.

Estimados lectores, si conocen a alguien con un nuevo bebé, pregúntele si puede ayudarlo para que pueda descansar. Si dice que no, envíele una comida. Todos los padres primerizos se cansan mucho sin la ayuda suficiente.



Lifelines

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

Schoolfield is a freelance medical writer based in Austin.

Six Tips for Teaching Your Teen To Drive

Motor vehicle crashes are the second leading cause of death for teens. Parents can make a difference in teen driver safety. Here are six tips to help make the experience successful and rewarding.

#1. Prioritize On-the-Road Practice

Inexperience is a major cause of crashes and injuries for teen drivers. Set aside time each week for driving practice sessions. Start with low-risk situations — daylight, good weather and very low traffic areas. As your teen becomes more competent, gradually progress to more challenging driving situations — nighttime, rainy or bad weather and high traffic areas. Go to the National Safety Counsel's website [DriveItHome](http://DriveItHome.com) to sign up for a teen driver safety assignment delivered each week by email.

#2. Facilitate Mental Rehearsal

Help your teen mentally prepare for driving situations before she gets

behind the wheel. As you are driving, anticipate upcoming situations and ask your teen what she would do. Then explain your reasoning as you encounter the situation. For example, "I need to turn left into the grocery store parking lot, so I will wait for a gap in the oncoming traffic. I'm not going to make the turn until I'm sure I have enough time to do it safely. That blue car is traveling fast. I didn't turn in front of it because I wasn't sure there would be enough time. When making driving decisions, prioritize safety first."

"Even though teens won't admit it, they learn from what their parents do. Engage in the same driving habits that you want your teen to have."

One dad in Austin wanted to impress on his son the importance of reading

speed limit signs. When the family took a 3-hour car trip, he asked his teen to read every single speed limit sign out loud. If the teen missed a sign, he would point it out. "Hey son! You missed that 25 MPH sign. You want to be sure you don't miss one. The last speed limit sign was 45 MPH. That's too fast for the tight curves up ahead."

#3. Engage in Constructive Feedback

Teaching a teen to drive can be stressful. All beginning drivers make mistakes. Anticipate mistakes and think about how you will handle them. Make your comments about the action, not the driver. You may be tempted to say, "What are you doing? Are you trying to get us all killed!" Instead, focus on the situation: "It would have been better if you had waited for more room before you merged into traffic as opposed to pulling in front of that 18-wheeler with only a few feet to spare. The driver had to slam on his brakes. A heavy truck

like that can't slow down as quickly as a car, so we were very lucky this time." After the driving practice session is over, debrief the situation with your teen. Ask him to talk about his reasons for the decision. Then talk about how to improve decision-making next time. Give liberal positive feedback for good decisions and thoughtful discussions.

#4. Be a Role Model

Even though teens won't admit it, they learn from what their parents do. Engage in the same driving habits that you want your teen to have. In the past week, have you modeled any of the following bad behaviors:

- Talked on your cell phone or texted while driving
- Exceeded the speed limit because you were late or in a hurry
- Failed to maintain adequate distance behind a vehicle because they weren't going fast enough to suit you
- Blasted through a traffic light that had "just" turned red when you could have safely stopped
- Had just a "few" drinks and then driven home?

#5. Warn Against Distracted Driving

It is easy for a teen to become distracted. Cell phone use is a common and dangerous distraction. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reports that texting while driving increases the risk of a vehicle crash by 23 times. But cell phones aren't the only culprit. Activities that cause your teen to take her eyes off the road include eating while driving, pressing buttons to change music, applying makeup or looking for something. Taking the focus off the road for even a few seconds can have dangerous consequences. Educate your teen about the risk of distracted driving. Discuss alternatives, such as pulling into a parking lot to text or finishing a snack before hitting the road.

#6. Set Rules

Help create successful driving experiences by creating rules for your teen based on age and driving experience. Start with the "5 to Drive" from the NHTSA:

- No cell phones while driving
- No extra passengers
- No speeding
- No alcohol
- No riding or driving without a seat belt.



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Easing Students' Anxieties as They Return to the Classroom



THE Learning curve

ALISON BOGLE

Alison Bogle is a writer living in Austin with her husband and three children. A former fourth grade teacher, she now enjoys writing about children and education.

I can vividly recall how I felt as a child as the first day of school approached. It was a unique mix of excitement and trepidation. Somehow, I couldn't wait to go back just as much as I dreaded the actual day.

This year, our children's feelings about school may be even more intense after an unusual year and as so much still seems uncertain. However, there are things we can do to reduce our children's anxiety and to help them get ready for the return to in-person school.

First-timers

If you have a preschooler or kindergartener, help them feel as prepared as possible. When they know what to expect and feel that they are equipped to handle different situations, their anxiety lessens and they will enter school with confidence.

Lunchtime can be an overwhelming experience for little ones. Talk through the lunchroom experience and how much time your child has to eat. Prepare sample lunches and snacks in the lunchbox that your child will use so that he can get comfortable opening and closing any containers or items you might include. Teach your child how to refill her water bottle and how to ask for help when needed.

The restroom is another aspect of school that can be daunting for young children. Role play asking the teacher to use the restroom as well as the behavior that will be expected. Practice buttoning or snapping pants, flushing the toilet and washing hands thoroughly. Accidents happen! Discuss with your child how to handle a potty accident. Stress that it happens to many children and that it is nothing to feel ashamed about.

If possible, visit the school playground on weekends so that your child can familiarize himself with the playground equipment and get excited about the fun he will have there. Finally, role play how to ask others to play. Connecting with another child or two in the first weeks will go a long way towards helping your child to feel successful.

"It's important that we model an attitude of positivity and confidence that they've got this! Because they do."

Elementary-aged

Help your child connect with friends. If possible, offer to bring your child and a friend to play at the school playground. Having fun on campus will shrink the thought of school down to a more manageable, familiar size. You can even walk around the outside of the school, encouraging your child to point out familiar classroom windows.

If your child is particularly nervous, consider carpooling to school at first. Walking in with a friend will help your child feel more confident.

All students

Gradually schedule haircuts, buy school supplies, make sure shoes fit properly and stock the fridge with lunch supplies so the family isn't stressed out by a whirlwind of activity in those first weeks of school.

If your child is a returning student, let her know that she is not behind. Our children have repeatedly received this message from the news, through last year's test results and from concerned parents chatting with each other within earshot. Everyone is in the same boat and teachers are prepared to help get them where they need to be. Repeat this message often until you can tell that it is sinking in. It is very important for your child to have this reassurance.

Adjust bedtime and wake-up times. Many of us shifted to a summer schedule, with kids staying up and sleeping in later. Adjust sleep and wake schedules gradually until they are waking up with enough time to get ready and out the door in time for school without a lot of rushing and the resultant stress. If you have a high schooler, most likely you have moved to a mentorship mode of parenting, so have a conversation in which you encourage an awareness of sleep and its importance to starting school off right.

Ask about fears and make plans. Maybe for your child it is: "What if I forget my homework?" Or it might be: "What if I don't know anyone in my class?" Encourage your child to share his worries and make plans for how he might handle various situations.

Fill the time away from school with fun physical activity. Doing something active and engaging will help release nerves and jitters. Bonus points if you bring a friend along to help your child reconnect with a school pal.

Parents

If you're feeling just as nervous about the school year as your child, know that your feelings are normal. We've been asked to juggle many decisions and unknowns in the last year and a half. When you factor in that these decisions impact those most precious to us, it's no wonder we might be anxious. Our children look to us

when deciding how to think and feel, so it's important that we model an attitude of positivity and confidence that they've got this! Because they do. Our children have proven that they can be incredibly resilient and adaptable. With our support, they'll be off to a good year!



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September 2021

calendar

Please check austinfamily.com for daily updates to the calendar.

Any family-friendly events can be posted at austinfamily.com and will be made live once approved. Certain restrictions apply.

Wed 1

Kid Crafternoon. Kids ages 5 to 8 can work on craft projects that involve different forms of art. 3:30 p.m. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Dr. FREE. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Thu 2

Starry Night at Girlstart. In-person Starry Nights are returning for Fall 2021. Girlstart's STEM Studio and Mini-Planetarium is a unique space for families to explore astronomy. 5 to 7 p.m. Girlstart, 1400 W. Anderson Ln. FREE. girlstart.org.

Fri 3

Kyle Pie in the Sky Hot Air Balloon Festival 2021. Hot air balloons will illuminate the sky on Friday and Saturday evenings and will float over the Kyle sky Saturday and Sunday mornings. Pie festivities will include a Pie Cafe tent, pie-baking contest, pie-eating contests, pie vendors (sweet and savory) and more, all of which celebrates Kyle's designation as the Pie Capital of Texas. Live music, market vendors of all kinds, a kids' play area and other entertainment make this festival weekend complete. 6:30 a.m. Lake Kyle Park, 700 Lehman Rd. \$5, \$10. cityofkyle.com/specialevents.

Alphabuddies Storytime (Zoom). Explore letter sounds and phonics each week in this interactive Zoom program for ages 2-5. Registration required. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Sound and Cinema. Enjoy the movie Clueless (rated PG-13) on the lawn at the Long Center. Doors and food trucks open at 6 p.m. Music starts at 7:30 p.m. Movie at dark (around 8:30 p.m.). Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Dr. FREE. thelongcenter.org.

Friday Fun Nights at Yonders Point. Music and hammock hanging. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Old Settlers Park, 3300 Palm Valley Rd. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

Sat 4

Market in the Park. Spend your Saturday exploring this outdoor market in the park along Buda's historical downtown greenbelt. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Across the street from Summer Moon Cafe. budachambertx.com.

Mermaid Bazaar. A great family day to experience all that Wonder World has to offer, including train rides and cave tours, plus a bi-weekly open-air market that features an eclectic variety of farm, arts and flea market vendors. Grab a bite to eat at Soulful Creations food trailer located onsite. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wonder World Cave & Adventure Park, 1000 Prospect St. FREE. wonderworldpark.com.

Summer Movie Night Series. Bring your blankets, picnics, friends and family to enjoy a movie on our 25-foot movie screen on The Lawn. 8:30 p.m. Arboretum, N. MoPac at Braker. FREE. thearboretum.com.

CONTINUED: Kyle Pie in the Sky Hot Air Balloon Festival 2021, see Fri 3.

Sun 5

CONTINUED: Kyle Pie in the Sky Hot Air Balloon Festival 2021, see Fri 3.

Mon 6

Labor Day; National Read a Book Day

Tue 7

Spanish Circle Time (Zoom). Kids ages 0-4 learn Spanish vocabulary and basic concepts through interactive songs. Register ahead. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Wed 8

Circle Time (Zoom). Kids ages 0-4 learn basic concepts and pre-reading skills through interactive songs. Register ahead. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. wblibrary.org.

Sound and Cinema. Enjoy the movie Dazed and Confused (rated R) on the lawn at the Long Center. Doors and food trucks open at 6 p.m. Music starts at 7:30 p.m. Movie at dark (around 8:30 p.m.). Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Dr. FREE. thelongcenter.org.

Fri 10

CONTINUED: Alphabuddies Storytime (Zoom), see Fri 3.

Sat 11

Rio Vista Central Texas Hunter Jumper Association Horse Show. 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Rio Vista Farm, 1000 Fallwell Ln. FREE. riovistafarm.net.

Fiesta Austin. Fiesta Austin presents Diez y Seis de Septiembre, featuring Johnny Degollado's Tejano and Conjunto Festival. Celebrating over 30 years of music, art and community, the event includes live music, new and traditional food, arts and culture.

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10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Johnny Degollado Pavilion, 2101 Jesse E. Segovia St. \$5 advance, \$8 at door. fiestaaustin.org.

Second Saturdays Are for Families. Build a cuddly companion inspired by squashy-looking sculptures milling around the grounds of Laguna Gloria. You will make your soft sculpture using fabric and all kinds of fun fillings. Reservations required. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Laguna Gloria Art Museum, 3809 W. 35th St. FREE. thecontemporaryaustin.org/event/second-saturdays-are-for-families-diy-stuffies.

Hornet Races. Come for the run and stay for the cooked-on-site tacos. 7:30 to 9 a.m. Tom Green Elementary, 1301 Old Goforth Rd., Buda. \$10. eventvesta.com/events/5874.

Sun 12
National Grandparents' Day

Squeeze Box Market Day. The Kyle Parks and Recreation Department hosts a free music festival that showcases music featuring the squeeze box, also known as the accordion. The event takes place in conjunction with the Kyle Market Days vendors market. 8:30 a.m. to 7 p.m. Gregg-Clarke Park, 1100 W. Center St. FREE. cityofkyle.com.

Tue 14
CONTINUED: Spanish Circle Time (Zoom), see Tue 7.

Wed 15
CONTINUED: Circle Time (Zoom), see Wed 8.

Fri 17
TGIF Movie With Popcorn. Family-friendly classic movie with popcorn. Bring a drink. 1 to 3:30 p.m. Elgin Public Library, 404 N. Main St. FREE. elgintx.com.

Family Campout 2021. You'll pop your tent around the Lakeview Pavilion, eat dinner, have fun, play games, sit around the campfire eating s'mores, watch a movie in the park and then head off to sleep under the stars. Wake up with the sunrise and enjoy breakfast. 3:30 p.m. to 11:00 a.m. the following morning. Old Settlers Park, 3300 Palm Valley Rd., Round Rock. \$10. roundrocktexas.gov/event/family-campout-outdoor-expo-2021.

Beat the Heat Bubble Bash. Soak up the sun and suds at our newest family event. Event highlights include foam zone, water slides, giant bubbles, bubble crafts, photo station and more. 7 to 9:30 p.m. Wolf Ranch, 1015 W. University Ave., Georgetown. wolfranchtowncenter.com/events.

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Do you need to reduce your worry and anxiety?

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AUSTIN FAMILIES 2021 30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY Readers' Poll Favorite

CONTINUED: Alphabuddies Storytime (Zoom), see Fri 3.

Sat 18

Pecan Street Festival. Come to downtown Sixth Street to enjoy food, entertainment and vendor booths. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. Congress Ave. FREE.
pecanstreetfestival.org.

Tones: Sounds of Asian America. A monthly series featuring local Asian American artists from across generations and genres, this show will be the first live show that will be simultaneously livestreamed for viewing at home too. Performances by Seela, Shirley Zhu (fuvk), Peelander-Yellow and Dance with Amit Motwani. Food by Elsie's Egg Rolls at 6 p.m. Music from 7 to 10 p.m. Asian American Resource Center, 8401 Cameron Rd. FREE, but reservations required.
aarcats.eventbrite.com.

CONTINUED: Mermaid Bazaar, see Sat 4.

Sun 19

Wife Appreciation Day

CONTINUED: Pecan Street Festival, see Sat 18.

Tue 21

CONTINUED: Spanish Circle Time (Zoom), see Tue 7.

Wed 22

CONTINUED: Circle Time (Zoom), see Wed 8.

Fri 24

American Indian Heritage Day. The day will feature a range of activities with dancing and drumming performances and interactive experiences for school groups as well as on-demand digital resources to use to celebrate virtually at home or at school. 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Bob Bullock State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE.
thestoryoftexas.org.

Friday Fun Nights at Yonders Point.

Picnic and star gazing party. 6 to 8 p.m. Old Settlers Park, 3300 Palm Valley Rd. FREE.
roundrocktexas.gov.

Music in the Park. Bring lawn chairs, pfurry friends, blankets, picnic baskets, friends and neighbors for a free evening of music, entertainment and relaxation. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Pfluger Park, 515 City Park Rd. FREE.
parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Alphabuddies Storytime (Zoom), see Fri 3.

Sat 25

National Daughters' Day

Fall Reuse Market Days. Join us in our side lot to support the most creative reuse artists the city has to offer. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Austin Creative Reuse, 2005 Wheelless Ln. FREE.
austincreativereuse.org.

Sun 26

CONTINUED: Fall Reuse Market Days, see Sat 25.

Tue 28

Teen Craft Tie-Dye T-Shirts. Join us for some tie-dye fun in the library courtyard. We'll provide a plain white t-shirt, dye and other supplies so you can customize your own shirt. You are welcome to bring other small items. 6 p.m. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. FREE.
library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Spanish Circle Time (Zoom), see Tue 7.

Wed 29

CONTINUED: Circle Time (Zoom) see Wed 8.

Thu 30

Cooking 4 Kids Virtual Gala. Health Start Foundation's second annual Cooking 4 Kids Virtual Gala will include a cooking demonstration, online auction, games and prizes. 7 to 9 p.m. FREE.
healthstartfoundation.org/2021gala.





Back-to-School Safety and Craft

As your kids head back to school, it's a perfect time for safety checks and back-to-school crafts!

SAFETY CHECKS

While there are plenty of guidelines for dealing with COVID, here are a few additional steps to keep your kids from harm at school, at home and at play.

BIKE HELMETS

Since a growing number of children are riding bikes to school, make sure your kids always wear their helmets. All bike helmets manufactured or sold in the U.S. are required to meet federal safety standards. Helmet use can reduce the risk of head injury by up to 85 percent.

BACKPACKS

Textbooks, notebooks, lunch, toys ... how much weight is your child toting back and forth each day? Kids shouldn't carry more than 10 to 15 percent of their weight over their shoulders and on their backs. Help your child sort through everything before packing up and see what can be left home that day. Place heaviest items in first; the closer they are to a child's back, the less strain they'll put on those muscles.

DRAWSTRINGS

Jacket and sweatshirt drawstrings may look trendy, but they can get caught on doorways, elevators and playground equipment. Remove drawstrings on hoods or around the neck of clothing. If drawstrings at the waist or bottom of an article of clothing look a tad long, trim them down to no longer than three inches.

FAMILY BACK-TO-SCHOOL CRAFT

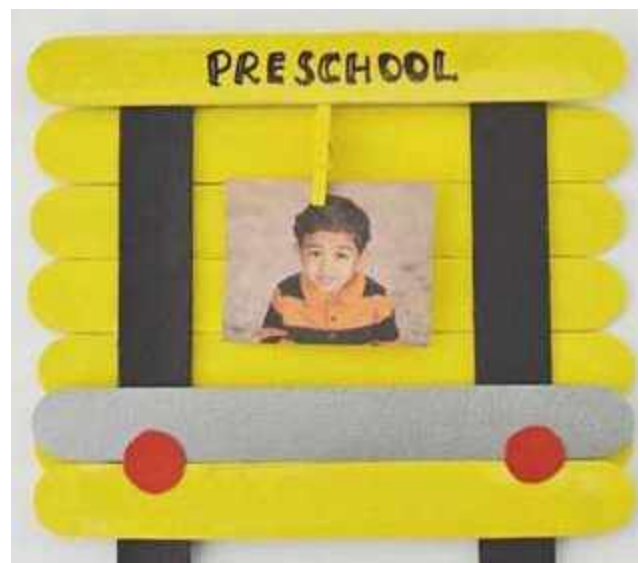
Commemorate your child's first day of school with a special homemade picture frame. It makes a great gift for Grandparents' Day too.

Materials:

- Craft Sticks
- Yellow, white and black paint
- Red buttons or craft jewels
- Permanent marker
- Hot glue gun
- First day of school photo!

Steps:

- 1) Select your favorite back-to-school photo.
- 2) Color your craft sticks with yellow, white and black paint.
- 3) Glue your sticks in the shape of a school bus (see photo).
- 4) Glue on craft jewels.
- 5) Write the school year or a special message.
- 6) Display proudly.



YMCA of Austin Fall Youth Sports is a great way to keep your kids active during the school year. Visit austinyymca.org for details.



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.



Queen of the Babysitters

I was eleven years old and ready for adulthood when I took my first babysitting gig. Bring on the money, solo TV watching and being home alone (with Baby Hector, of course).

"Help yourself to whatever you like!" Mrs. Carmichael said, waving her hand around the kitchen. The Carmichaels were legendary junk food junkies. My family was not. I watched their tail lights exit the driveway. Freedom! I grabbed the phone, stretched the cord, flipped the TV off and on while Baby Hector sat in judgment. I sang him a song until I needed nourishment.

Opening the cupboard there were *three* boxes of Frosted Flakes. Now — Tony the Tiger seduced me every cartoon Saturday morning. I grabbed a bowl. Not big enough. Giants poured smaller bowls of cereal that day. I topped it off with a half carton of milk and dug in. When would I get another chance like this?

I didn't get more than a mouthful when the Carmichaels *pulled back up* (botched reservation)! Panic doesn't really describe my reaction. I popped up, bowl wobbling,

like a criminal without a playbook. I calculated that I had about 30–45 seconds to ditch the evidence. I heard car doors slam as I ran to the kitchen. But how could I explain a sink full of Frosted Flakes? A lie wasn't forming about holding their biggest mixing bowl either. In retrospect, I could have improvised. But thinking clearly in these situations wasn't my jam. Instead I chose the worst possible remedy.

I hid the bowl, with full contents, behind the TV.

How this could solve my problem I'll never know. Did I think they wouldn't find it? Was I counting on removing the evidence when I returned to babysit? Did I imagine the Frosted Flake fairies would handle it? Did I hope to just get out of there without having to explain myself? Reader, this is quite possible.

At any rate, I went from Queen of the Babysitters to Disgraced Cereal Shunter in a matter of 15 minutes.

Clearly, I am personally responsible for the Nanny Cam.



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