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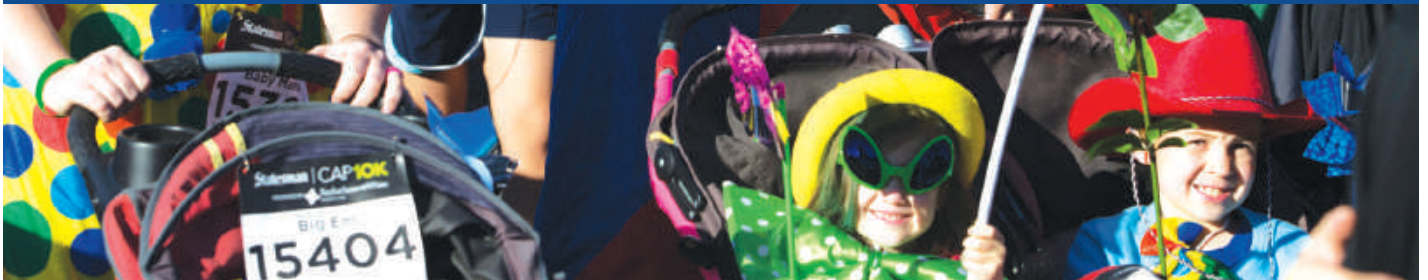


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CONTENTS

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COLUMNS

- 10 Lifelines.** Distress in Young People: What Parents Can Do
- 18 Family Matters.** Love Begets Love
Family Matters can be found in Spanish at austinfamily.com.
- 20 The Learning Curve.** Celebrating 100 Days of School!
- 24 Just for Grins.** Flights of Love

calendar

- 22** Calendar

in every issue

- 4 Play It Safe.** Recalls on Consumer Products
- 5 Smart Screen Time.** Catching up with Arthur
Smart Screen Time can be found in Spanish at austinfamily.com.
- 6 Austin in Action.** News and Notes
- 25 Places To Go & Things To Do.**
Heart-healthy Family Activities

extras

- 12** Camp Guide



8 What Type of Camp Should Your Child Attend?



FILM review

By Jack Kyser

Encanto

Read online at:

www.austinfamily.com/films



Kylee is a 6-year-old who loves to draw and read. She was an excited 2022 AFM cover kid winner. Photo taken by Karen Andrews at Jordan-Ashley Photography in Cedar Park.

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



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EDITOR'S NOTE

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

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

I love camp! In fact, so much so that I work at one each summer. As soon as school is out, my family packs up and hits the road for the hill country. When my kids were small and my husband was the only one working at camp, I would load up them up and drive back to the city so they could attend art camps, Lego camps, stop motion animation camps and nature camps. Not only did it broaden their horizons at a young age, but it kept them busy and me sane.

Benefits appear years later too. When my high schooler now signs up for engineering and computer programming as electives, I see the

influence of those Lego Technic and animation day camps. I've noticed the impact of camp even more with my college freshman. While some of his peers struggle to adjust to having a roommate, my child had experience living in a cabin each summer with 12-15 campers. Camps have taught him how to jump in, try new things and be brave.

Even though it may still seem early, camp registrations are filling up fast. So, sign up now! Our Camp Guide can get you started.

For February, the month of love, we also share ideas for heart-healthy family activities and celebrations of 100 Days of School, as well as tips for enriching your relationship and supporting teen well-being. Spread that love to others; and we hope you'll be on the receiving end as well.

Yours truly,

Annette

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Government Recalls

Bath Seats, Bunk Bed and Youth All-Terrain Vehicles



Karmas Far has issued a recall for about 900 infant **bath seats**. The bath seats fail to meet federal safety requirements for leg openings and stability. In addition, they can tip over while in use, posing a drowning hazard. The bath seats were sold exclusively online at Walmart, Amazon,

Ebay, Wish and Bosonshop from August 2017 through October 2021 for between \$35 and \$75. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled infant bath seats and contact Karmas Far to receive a pre-paid label to return the products for a full refund.



Angel Line is recalling nearly 40,000 **bunk beds** with angled ladders due to entrapment and strangulation hazards to children. The metal hook fastening the ladder to the bunk bed frame can move away from the bed frame when

the ladder is lifted and create a gap. Children can become entrapped in this gap and strangle to death. One death has been reported. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled bunk beds, block children's access to the bed and contact Angel Line for a free repair kit with brackets to reinforce the angled ladders. Consumers should not use the beds until the repair kit has been installed. The beds were available online at Amazon, OJCommerce, Walmart and Wayfair from March 2016 through June 2021 for \$180 to \$330. The recall applies to three models of Angel Line bunk beds. Details can be found at bit.ly/3tgWZR4.



About 1,100 **youth all-terrain vehicles** have been recalled by Polaris. The inner layer of the fuel line of the Outlaw 110 EFI Youth All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) can leak, posing a potential fire hazard. This recall involves certain VINs of Polaris

Model Year 2022 Outlaw 110 EFI Youth ATVs. To see if your vehicle is affected by this recall, visit polaris.com/en-us/off-road-recalls or call 800-765-2747. The youth ATVs were sold at Polaris dealers nationwide from September 2021 through November 2021 for about \$3,600. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled vehicles and contact a Polaris dealer to schedule a free repair, including the installation of a new fuel line.

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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SMART SCREEN TIME

BENJAMIN KRAMER, PHD

Kramer is the director of education for Austin PBS.

25 Years of Arthur

Chances are high that many of you who grew up with “Arthur” are now seeing your children do the same. After over 250 episodes, including many fabulous guest voices and innumerable sassy remarks from D.W., final new episodes air this winter. (In case you were wondering, in Season 19 Arthur moved from third to fourth grade, where he will finish out his television career.)

“Arthur” episodes will remain in circulation for some time to come, which leads to a question I frequently receive: Why do PBS Kids episodes repeat so often? From a financial perspective, animated shows take a long time to make and can be very costly. But there are other practical considerations at work, including an observation you likely have made about your own kids – they enjoy repeat viewings of beloved programs long past the point of adult exhaustion. (Sing with me: “Let it go”)

We know that young kids see characters as very real and valuable participants in their lives, and they take comfort in revisiting familiar stories, whether in book, video or oral form. Sometimes, stories with some complexity can offer new items for kids to notice each time around, but that novelty doesn’t seem to be a requirement. Checking in with a well-known world can simply be enough for the kids. As for the parents, when the story has a positive message, you can take comfort that learning is getting reinforced.

I leave you with a choice D.W. quote:
“That sign won’t stop me because I can’t read.”

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- Sarah F. (6yrs old)

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Austin IN ACTION

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Family Readathon

BookSpring and The Library Foundation are combining forces again to present their annual Family Readathon. Anyone who loves to read and wants to help improve children's literacy is welcome to join in the fun. During February, kids, adults, families and schools can participate in book-themed activities and challenges to win prizes and awards. Proceeds benefit BookSpring and The Library Foundation.

Readathoners can also challenge themselves to read 100, 200, 500 minutes or more during the month of February and ask donors to give a dollar for every minute or book read. All donations help to get great children's books into the hands of kids who need them. You can find out more about the program at familyreadathon.bookspring.org.



Students participate in the Family Readathon, happening now.

Baby Day

The fourth annual Baby Day is happening Feb. 6-12. The weeklong event connects parents and caregivers to early learning resources and experiences to positively impact the lives and futures of children ages zero to three. Texas residents can register at bit.ly/3rfiHCD.

In addition, free tool kits will be sent to childcare providers in underserved communities across the state to help reach the children who need support most. Educational packages containing development tools to help children

participate in the event from home will also be sent to all Texas participants.

Over 110 local organizations will host live and on-demand baby and toddler activities that include music, art, yoga, reading, dance, caregiver classes and more, all designed to support the healthy development of children.

Access to high-quality early childhood education is proven to lead to better long-term outcomes for children overall, such as an increase in educational and socioeconomic level. Baby Day hopes to create opportunities for a brighter future for our tiniest Texans.



Family Day

Join the Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum every second Sunday of the month for Family Days. The day is designed for families to explore and create together – with sculpture searches, art-making activities, performances and local vendors on the grounds.

This month's event will take place on Feb. 13 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Young visitors can participate in crafts, children's yoga, games and independent activities. The event is free and open to the public. Families are asked to continue to practice safe social distancing and to wear masks while at the Umlauf.

Monthly regular storytimes are also held at noon on the third Saturday of each month to introduce young audiences to the sculpture garden. After listening to a storybook, children participate in a

by the numbers



200 million

the number of boxes of Girl Scout cookies typically sold each year
Source: npr.org



1885

year the first President's Day was celebrated
Source: history.com



59%

of teens say they get a hug or kiss from parents almost every day
Source: livingfacts.org

Things To Celebrate

Feb. 1

Chinese New Year

Feb. 14

Valentine's Day

Feb. 21

Presidents Day

Black History Month

Began in February in honor of the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass

related exploration activity in the garden. Storytimes are geared towards ages 7 and under, although all are welcome.



Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum hosts monthly family-friendly events. Photo courtesy of The Umlauf.

PBS Moving

Since 1962, Austin PBS has delivered programs that educate, entertain and inspire viewers in more than 20 counties across the region. To further connect with Central Texas communities, Austin PBS has partnered with Austin Community College (ACC) to create the Austin Media Center, a new office and studio facility located at ACC's Highland Campus. The official move from the UT campus to ACC Highland will take place in 2022.

Both Austin PBS and ACC have a strong community focus. The new 45,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will enable them to extend that reach more broadly to more than 70,000 community college students among 11 campuses. The move will also increase the accessibility and flexibility of Austin PBS as they continue to serve as an important resource for the educational, social and cultural health of Central Texas.



A rendering of the new Austin Media Center, a partnership between PBS and ACC Highland. Photo courtesy of Austin PBS.

School Safety

Using the numerous resources available, the local community can continue to help keep our schools safe by reporting any potential threats. The iWatchTexas program from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) is a resource for reporting suspicious activity in schools

and communities in order to help prevent dangerous attacks. During the 2020-21 school year, there were no school shootings in Texas.

The iWatchTexas program is a partnership between communities and law enforcement that uses citizen-sourced tips on suspicious activity to prevent potential criminal acts. Collected tips can also add to greater overall awareness and increased sharing between schools and law enforcement agencies. All reports are confidential and can be reported via the free mobile app, online at iwatchtx.org or by calling 844-643-2251.

Most recently, the DPS implemented the Active Shooter Alert System to be used in the event of a shooting at or near a school. The alert system notifies people in close proximity to an active shooter situation through cell phones, local broadcast media and electronic highway signs to encourage people to avoid the area or shelter-in-place. Texans are encouraged to utilize available resources and work together with law enforcement to keep our schools safe.



iWATCHTEXAS

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Welcome to the Texas Suspicious Activity Reporting Network iWATCH app, where you can report suspicious activities or behaviors that may indicate ongoing or future criminal or terrorist activity.

This app is not designed to report emergencies. If this is an emergency, please call 911.

The iWatchTexas program engages the community to help improve school safety.



Arthur®

NEW EPISODES

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What Type of Camp Should Your Child Attend?

Finding the best camp is essential for your children's comfort and growth.

When we were kids, life was simpler. Many of us just hung around the house during the summer and played with neighborhood friends or maybe attended a local day camp sponsored by our school or city. Well, nowadays there are camps for everything you can imagine! It can be quite confusing, and even stressful, trying to find the right camp for our kids. Sometimes we even have to choose different camps for each child based on varied interests.

Camps can offer them experiences and tools to go out in the world and discover who they are and what they want to become. A child can only truly grow if given the freedom and chance to gain confidence by exploring new ideas and activities, eventually finding their passion.

If you are struggling to find the right camp for your child this summer, take this fun and easy quiz. You'll be able to discover which type of camp is the best fit for your child.

SANDI SCHWARTZ

Schwartz is an author, journalist and mother of two who specializes in parenting, wellness and environmental topics. Check out her new parenting book, "Finding Ecohappiness: Fun Nature Activities to Help Your Kids Feel Happier and Calmer."



Please only choose one answer.

1. How would you best describe your child?

- A. Artistic
- B. Athletic
- C. Brainy
- D. Adventurous

2. What is your child's favorite subject in school?

- A. Music
- B. Physical education
- C. Math or science
- D. My child likes a variety of classes



3. What is your child's favorite activity after school?

- A. Music lessons
- B. Playing a sport
- C. Robotics or science club
- D. Participating in a bunch of different activities with friends

4. Which type of birthday party would your child likely choose?

- A. Dance party
- B. Indoor soccer or gymnastics
- C. Science museum
- D. Every year it's different

5. What does your child usually do on weekends?

- A. Goes to theater rehearsal
- B. Has a game
- C. Competes in a robotics or math tournament
- D. Mixes it up with bike rides, art projects and shooting hoops

6. What is your child's favorite role in a group project?

- A. Presenter
- B. Collaborator
- C. Researcher
- D. Fills in wherever needed

7. What's your child's favorite rainy day activity?

- A. Listening to music
- B. Running around the house
- C. Playing a video game
- D. Inviting a friend over to hang out

8. Which would be your child's dream vacation?

- A. Seeing Broadway shows in New York City
- B. Touring sports stadiums around the country
- C. Visiting science museums
- D. Doing something different every day including hiking, playing on the beach or going to amusement parks

9. What would your child hope to achieve at summer camp?

- A. Starring in a musical
- B. Being team captain
- C. Creating an app
- D. Trying new things

10. Which career appeals to your child most?

- A. Movie star
- B. Coach
- C. Engineer
- D. No clue

Tally up your answers and match the letter you mostly chose to the type of camp below.

A. Creative/Performing Arts Camps

Specialty art and musical theater camps focus specifically on the arts. Some may offer a variety of art forms to choose from, such as pottery, woodworking, writing, painting and photography. Others focus solely on one type of art, such as sewing camp or band camp. Musical theater camps are quite popular and typically showcase a production after a few weeks of rehearsals. Art camps come in all lengths and locations. You can sign your child up for a one-week-long art camp at your local recreational center or find multi-week overnight art camps where they can truly hone their craft.

B. Sports Camps

Sports camps usually consist of only one sport that a child plays throughout the day. The main goal is for participants to improve their skills by focusing extensively on a sport they love. Depending on where you live, you can find all types of sports camps like tennis, golf, soccer, baseball, lacrosse or gymnastics. It is also a way for your child to try a new sport or something only offered during the summer, such as surfing and sailing.

C. Science/Tech Camps

If your child loves to code, build and tinker, then a tech camp may be the right fit. These types of camps make learning about science and technology fun and exciting for kids. They also provide an opportunity for kids to dive deeper into a subject they love, such as working on a science experiment, designing a website or programming a robot. You can find science and tech camps through local schools, colleges and museums.

D. Traditional Camps

Traditional camps are what you think of when you envision summer camp – canoeing, hiking, archery, relay races, swim lessons and crafts. They can be considered “jack-of-all-trades” camps because they offer all types of activities for children to try. If your child enjoys exploring and experiencing new things and has not yet found one specific activity that they are passionate about, then a traditional camp is a wonderful choice. They are very common and can be found all over. Some are day camps, while others are overnight experiences where your kids can also learn more independence skills. Overnight camps also offer a more rustic, outdoorsy experience with campouts, cabins, campfires and activities on the lake.



What To Do if Your Child Faces Mental Health Distress



LIFELINES

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

Schoolfield is a freelance medical writer based in Austin.

Are you concerned about your teen's mental health? If you are, you are not alone. The CDC found that mental health in high school students is getting worse. More than 1 in 3 students couldn't participate in regular activities due to feelings of sadness or hopelessness. This was an increase of 40% compared to a 2009 survey. Mental health challenges can negatively impact school performance and physical health.

To address this growing public health issue, the U.S. Surgeon General recently released "Protecting Youth Mental Health," an advisory for people and institutions that shape the day-to-day lives of young people. A young person's mental health is impacted not only by family members and caregivers but by educators, healthcare providers, media organizations, technology companies, communities, employers, government

1 in 3 students can't participate in regular activities due to feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

institutions and others. Everyone must do their part to support the mental health of young people. The Advisory explains that there isn't a magic solution that can fix this problem overnight. It will take an "all-of-society effort, including policy, institutional, and individual changes in how we view and prioritize mental health."

Here are some recommendations for parents and caregivers adapted from the Advisory:

Model self-care. Model good physical and mental self-care. Encourage family members to follow your lead. Self-care begins with the basics. Eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep and make time for daily physical exercise. Take breaks when needed. Cope with stress in positive ways and talk about it. Get help if you need it. Stay connected with family and friends. Establish screen-free times for the entire family.

Invest time in a strong parent-child relationship. Make the relationship with your child a priority. Spend time in activities you both enjoy. Give praise for accomplishments both large and small. Encourage your child to talk about what

is on his mind and how he is feeling. Be a good listener. Listen more than you talk. Show love and acceptance. Work to keep communication open and flowing.

Connect children with other adults who can serve as mentors. Strong, safe, stable relationships with supportive adults help children develop resilience. Teachers, coaches, guidance counselors, clergy and community leaders often take a mentor role.

Encourage healthy social relationships with peers. Provide opportunities for your child to build social relationships with other children. Invite neighborhood families to an activity. Schedule play dates for younger children. Explore extracurricular activities that involve other young people, such as afterschool programs, sports or clubs. Talk to your child about how to handle peer pressure and bullying. Explain how to set boundaries and the importance of letting others know what you need.

Be strategic when you must talk about stressful topics. The American Psychological Association suggests that when you need to talk about dangers, violence or tragedies, you think about

what you want to say beforehand. Find a quiet time and place so that you can have a conversation without interruptions. Start off by asking your child what she knows or has heard about the topic. Then listen carefully. Tell the truth. Talk about feelings. End by reassuring your child that you love her and will do everything you can to keep her safe.

Talk to children about unhealthy behaviors. Have conversations early about the risks of alcohol and drug use. Young people who have mental health challenges often engage in unhealthy behaviors as a way to cope. Discuss healthy ways to manage stress and model them yourself.

Schedule regular checkups with your child's healthcare provider. Your child's doctor can suggest actions to prevent disease as well as identify any potential health problems that need to be addressed. A provider that knows your child can be a valuable resource if he develops mental health distress.

Look for warning signs of distress and get help when needed. Signs of mental distress vary from person to person. Some signs are excessive worry, anger, irritability, negative thoughts and trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. Watch for changes in appearance, school performance or eating patterns. If you think your child is in distress, offer your support and get help. See sidebar "Where To Find Help for Your Child."

Protect your child from access to means of self-harm. Suicide rates among young people in the United States increased by 57% between 2007 and 2018. Take a few minutes to inspect your home. Dispose of expired medicines. Keep current medicines in a locked cabinet. If you have firearms in your home, make sure they are stored safely – unloaded and locked up. If your child is at increased risk of self-harm, talk to your mental health professional about additional steps to take. Talking openly with your child about any suicidal thoughts will not plant that seed in his mind. Instead, it allows you to get him the help he needs.

Be a mental health advocate in your community. Talk openly about the importance of mental health to your friends, family and neighbors. Support mental health awareness programs in schools and local organizations. See the Advisory for more ways to help.

Where To Find Help for Your Child

Start the process of getting help sooner rather than later. Talk to your child's healthcare provider or school counselor. Your insurance company can refer you to mental health professionals in your area.

Call the National Helpline at 1-800-662-HELP (4357).

This free service offers information and referrals to local mental health treatment services, support groups and community organizations.

Read "Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory 2021," available online at bit.ly/3AdGEhu



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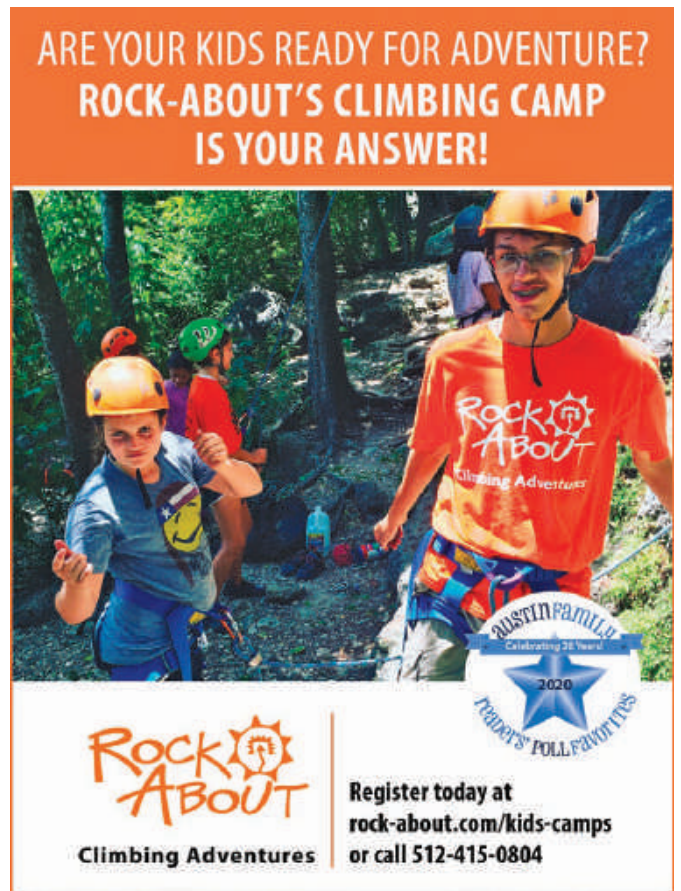
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FAMILY MATTERS

BETTY RICHARDSON

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

Q *My husband and I lead separate lives together. We live in the same house; however, he is usually in his home office while I am taking care of the house and the children. Our kids don't see us hugging, touching or having conversations together. I wonder, "Does my husband love me?" and "Do I love my husband?" I seem to recall that before we married, and in our early marriage, we were "in love." Was this attraction lost as we aged and had so many chores with three young children to raise?*

I wonder how our relationship will affect our children's choice of mates and their view of what a marriage needs to be. I also wonder why my husband is so distant. Could you give me some suggestions on what I can do to try to get my husband to show some loving behavior? I want him to let the children know he loves and respects me as a woman, wife and mother.

A **Relationships can be difficult.** When both people are positive, happy people, relationships are easier. But more often than not, one person can be negative, show signs of depression or display traits of various personality disorders, such as narcissism or borderline personality. These conditions can be difficult to live with.

There are other reasons for difficult relationships. People may withdraw in a marriage as a means of protection from a mate's criticism. Sometimes having a difficult childhood causes people not to trust those they are closest to. They have trouble believing that they will be treated kindly. Even without a difficult childhood, most men don't respond well to repeated criticism.

Before I offer some suggestions to help your husband behave more lovingly, let me share a bit of advice that will help you the most. The most successful way to change your husband's behavior is to change your behavior toward him.

Here are some other suggestions to try to elicit more loving behavior from your mate: Ask yourself if you ever criticize your husband or whether you choose your words carefully so that they are seen as kindly.

Give your husband thanks for things he does that you like. Perhaps he pays the bills and keeps track of your household budget. If you appreciate this, tell him so.

Ask for a hug. You can tell him that research has shown that we all benefit

from eight hugs a day. Perhaps you start with a request for two hugs and slowly up the ante.

Leave him love notes. Your kids could make Dad some cards and you can tuck your card in with them. Sometimes surprise him with just your card on his pillow that tells him, "I love you."

Try different activities until you find one that you both like. Doing things together, especially trying new activities, can lead to bonding as a couple. Remind him of things he used to do that you liked. For example, you might tell him, "Before we were married, you used to reach for my hand when we walked. I enjoyed those walks. Can we try them again?"

Invite couples who exhibit loving behaviors to share a meal or a coffee. It may be best not to point out their behaviors, but let your husband see it.

You could suggest marital therapy, but don't be surprised if he resists. Most of the time, before suggesting therapy, it's good to first try lots of changes in your behavior in an effort to shape his.

Regarding your concern for your children, they will see not only the relationship of their parents but also the widely varied ones of their friends' parents. Your behaviors will affect them, but they are not clones of their parents. The actions that you take to improve your marriage will also teach them that they can work at relationships to try to better them.

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THE Learning curve

ALISON BOGLE

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. You can also catch her talking about articles from Austin Family magazine each Thursday morning on FOX 7 Austin.

This month, school districts in Austin and the surrounding areas will be marking the 100th day of the school year. It's a big milestone for children, marking 100 days of learning important new concepts, classroom rules and guidelines, as well as making friends and growing socially and emotionally. The actual 100th day varies from district to district, depending on the start date and any school holidays or teacher in-service days when students did not attend school. Typically celebrated most by kindergarteners, even older grades may join in on the fun of honoring 100 days of learning.

The goal of marking the 100th day is to help students recognize and take pride in all that they have learned. Teachers, being the wonderfully resourceful beings that they are, will also use the celebration to incorporate even more learning across all disciplines – math, reading, writing, science, social studies, movement, art and music. Below are some activities shared by various local classrooms. If you are a homeschooling or virtual-schooling family, you can incorporate some of these activities into your plans. Even if your child attends school in person, you might want to try some at home – they're so fun and your children will delight in your participation and celebration of their accomplishments!

Math

In kindergarten, children learn to count by ones and to skip count by 10s. A common 100th Day activity asks children to bring a collection of 100 items to

share with their classmates in a show-and-tell format. You may need to help your child choose an appropriate item that can easily be carried to school in a container or clear bag. For my son, 100 Lego bricks was an easy choice. My daughter wanted to bring something more "exciting," so she went with 100 M&Ms. It doesn't get much more exciting than candy for a kindergartener! Other easy choices include paperclips, dry pasta, crayons, Cheerios, cotton balls, stickers, pennies and puzzle pieces.

Another fun activity is to create a necklace out of colored, circle-shaped cereal like Fruit Loops. As children string the cereal on a piece of yarn, they not only practice counting to 100 as they select the cereal, but they can also work on sorting and patterning. As they make groups of 10 of various colors, they can string those colors in a pattern of their choice.

My children's teacher led an activity that was a major hit with the class. Students start with a blank hundreds chart, which is a bingo-like board with squares numbered 1-100. They count aloud while placing a small snack, such as a cheese cracker, piece of popcorn, pretzel or marshmallow over each number as they count. When they reach a group of 10, they switch to a different snack choice to reinforce the idea that 10 is a building block of 100. When the chart and counting are complete, it's time to snack! You can find a free printable hundreds chart online.

Language Arts

One of the cutest activities I've seen involved students drawing a picture of what they will look like at 100 and then writing about what they will do when they are that age. There are also many wonderful books to read aloud about this special day. Cuddle up and try one of these: *"Planet Kindergarten: 100 Days in Orbit"* by Sue Ganz-Schmitt
"The 100th Day of School" by Matt Mitter
"100 Days of Cool" by Stuart J. Murphy
"Miss Kindergarten Celebrates the 100th Day of School" by Joseph Slate
"Emily's First 100 Days of School" by Rosemary Wells

Science & Social Studies

There are many related science and social studies activities to continue the fun throughout the day. For example, one challenge has children break into smaller groups where they are provided with 100 paper or plastic cups. If you're doing this activity at home, the group can include siblings or parents. The task is to use all of the cups to build a structure that won't fall down. Besides visualizing 100 items, this activity introduces students to concepts of architecture and engineering, not to mention the cooperation and communication it requires!

Also, using yarn, children can measure and cut 100 inches. They can then use their "rulers" to measure objects and identify those that are at least 100 inches.

Finally, with the teacher's help, students can research important events that happened 100 years ago and discuss how life was different or similar at that time. Finding out the historical cost of common things is always an interesting one for kids.

Specials Areas

P.E. or movement is an easy way to celebrate the 100th day. Students complete 10 sets of 10 various activities such as jumping jacks, situps and toe touches to complete 100 exercises! In art, students can make pictures containing 100 items by using dot markers to form the image or by free drawing. One cute idea provides them with an outline of a gumball machine. Then using dot markers, stickers, crayons or colored pencils, they fill in 100 different colored gumballs.

There are some wonderful songs about the 100th day of school to be found online as well. Grab an instrument to play and sing along.

One hundred days of school, especially for young kindergarteners, is a real milestone. Cheer your children on and acknowledge this special accomplishment – it will mean a lot to them and add a boost to your child's sense of pride!

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February 2022

Go to austinfamily.com for expanded listings.

calendar

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

Tue 1, Black History Month

Kindergarten Tour. If you are considering a private Christian education for kindergarten, come explore our campus and see what Redeemer has to offer. 9-10 a.m. Redeemer Lutheran School, 1500 W. Anderson Lane. FREE. redeemerschool.net.

All Ages Storytime. Meet for storytime in the courtyard between the Carver Library and the George Washington Carver Museum. 1:30 p.m. Carver Branch, 1161 Angelina St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Lego Lab. Build Lego WeDo 2.0 robots in an indoor, socially distanced workshop for ages 5 and older. Registration required. 3:15-4 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. FREE. wblibrary.org.

Readers Theater Storytime at Oak Hill. Join us to read a great story together and then put on a play dramatizing that story. 4-4:30 p.m. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Road. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Umlauf After Dark: Lunar New Year. This February, Umlauf After Dark celebrates the Lunar New Year with crafts and traditional lion dancers. 6-8 p.m. Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum, 605 Azie Morton Road. FREE for Umlauf Members. \$12 for general public. umlauf.org.

Wed 2, Groundhog Day

Storytime. Bring your little ones to the Family Garden for nature-themed storytimes geared especially for ages 5 and younger. A new seasonal, age-appropriate story is featured each week. 10-10:30 a.m. Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. \$12 and under. wildflower.org.

Outdoor All Ages Storytime. Join us for stories, songs and fun in the library's outdoor amphitheater. Program will be cancelled if there is rain or if the temperature falls below 55 degrees. Bring a blanket to sit on. 2-2:30 p.m. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. Fifth St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Afternoon Outdoor Storytime. Join us under the tree between the Windsor Park Library and Trinity Church every Wednesday for a fun, all ages storytime with Mr. Gabriel. Storytimes will be cancelled if it's raining or under 55 degrees. 3:30 p.m. Windsor Park Branch,

5833 Westminster Drive. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Thu 3

Toddler Storytime. Meet for stories and songs for toddlers in the library's large meeting room. 10:30-11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. FREE. wblibrary.org.

Bilingual Storytime. Bilingual storytime at Buda Public Library offers toddlers, preschoolers and their families an opportunity to enjoy stories, songs and rhymes in both Spanish and English. 1-1:45 p.m. Buda Library, 405 E. Loop St., Buda. FREE. budalibrary.org.

Kids 5-8 Club: Decorated Blackboards.

Families with children 5 to 8 may register to participate in a decorated blackboard craft activity. 3:30-4 p.m. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. FREE. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Bestie Bash. Grab your best buds and join us in celebrating friendship. We'll make valentines, friendship bracelets and more while you hang with your favorite sidekick. 4-6 p.m. Wolf Ranch, between Kohl's and Ross Dress for Less, Georgetown. FREE. wolfbranchtowncenter.com.

Story & Play. Stories and songs, followed by social playtime with blocks and educational toys. Storytimes and circle times will be meeting outdoors on the library porch. 5-5:30 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2.

Sat 5

ArtSmart: Echoes of Africa Storytime. Enjoy African stories, drumming with interactive rhythm clapping, dance movement, music and crafts. This outdoor event may be cancelled if it gets below 55 degrees. 10:30-11:30 a.m. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

Outdoor Storytime. Join us for songs, stories and rhymes in the park. For ages 5 and under, although all ages are welcome. In case of rain or temperatures below 55 degrees, storytime will be cancelled. 11-11:30 a.m. Northwest Recreation Center, 2913 Northland Drive. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

The Cat in the Hat. Everyone's favorite cat comes to mischievous life in Zach Theatre's production of the Dr. Seuss classic. 2 p.m. Zach Theatre, 202 S. Lamar Blvd. \$17-\$39. tickets.zachtheatre.org.

Makers' Lab Open Hours. The purpose of the Buda Public Library's Makers' Lab is to provide a community workspace where library users can come to create, explore, collaborate and innovate. 3-5 p.m. Buda Library, 405 E. Loop St., Buda. FREE. budalibrary.org.

Sun 6

Baby Day 2022. The only statewide celebration of the first three years of life, this weeklong event is filled with resources and activities for ages 3 and under. FREE. babyday.us.

H-E-B Free First Sunday. Enjoy free exhibition admission. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

2022 Lunar New Year Festival. Join us for the first annual Lunar New Year Festival in East Austin. This family-friendly event features over 15 vendors of Asian descent, a lion dance performance, kid-friendly crafts and more. Noon to 4 p.m. The Paper + Craft Pantry, 1023 Springdale Road. FREE. bit.ly/33a31sl.

CONTINUED: The Cat in the Hat, see Sat 5.

Mon 7

Toddler Storytime. Meet for stories and songs for toddlers in the library's large meeting room. 11-11:30 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. FREE. wblibrary.org.

Monday Mix-Up (ages 12-18). Join the Buda Public Library for weekly programs that provide enrichment for teens. 4:30-5:30 p.m. Buda Library, 405 E. Loop St., Buda. FREE. budalibrary.org.

CONTINUED: Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Tue 8

Myths and Unsolved Mysteries of the Texas Revolution. Connect with the Bullock Museum over videoconference during this live presentation. 10-11 a.m. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thestoryoftexas.com.

CONTINUED: Kindergarten Tour, see Tue 1; Lego Lab, see Tue 1; Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Wed 9

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2; Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Thu 10

Art in Cahoots. Further strengthen the one-on-one bond between caregiver and child, while interacting with others. For

children ages 2½ to 5 and their caregivers. 10 a.m. Dougherty Arts Center, 1110 Barton Springs Road. bit.ly/3fDeFP1.

Little Texans: Inspire. Celebrate Black history with stories and activities that incorporate movement, play and tactile learning into engaging experiences for children ages 2-5 and their caregivers. 10:30-11:15 a.m. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. \$13 and under. thetoryoftexas.com.

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2; Toddler Storytime, see Thu 3; Bilingual Storytime, see Thu 3; Kids 5-8 Club, see Thu 3; Story & Play, see Thu 3; Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Fri 11

CONTINUED: Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Sat 12

Story & Play. Stories and songs, followed by social playtime with blocks and educational toys. Storytimes and circle times will be meeting on the library porch outdoors. 10:30-11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Austin Humane Society's 15th Annual Puppy Bowl. Are you ready for some football? The Austin Humane Society's beloved Puppy Bowl is back and better than ever in 2022. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Austin Humane Society, 124 W. Anderson Lane. FREE. austinhumanesociety.org.

CONTINUED: Cat in the Hat, see Sat 5; Makers' Lab Open Hours, see Sat 5; Baby Day 2022, see Sun 6.

Sun 13

Sunday Funday: Simple Machines. Join us as we appreciate 19th century engineering and learn the amazing power of simple machines. Bring a lunch. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. FREE. nchmuseum.org.

The Rock and Roll Playhouse. The Rock and Roll Playhouse will play Beatles classics for all ages at Antone's. Limited seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. Doors at 11 a.m. Show at noon. Antone's, 305 E. 5th St. \$12-\$15. antonesnightclub.com.

Mon 14, Valentine's Day

StoryWalk. Stroll and read a book that lines the trail behind Lakeway City Hall. Parking available at Lakeway Activity Center, 105 Cross Creek, Lakeway. FREE. lakeway-tx.gov.

CONTINUED: Toddler Storytime, see Mon 7; Monday Mix-Up (ages 12-18), see Mon 7.

Tue 15

Teens 13-18 only. Feeling lonely, stressed, anxious, or just want to talk to someone? Join us at a teen support circle, a non-judgmental space where you can get support from other teens and caring library staff. 6 p.m. Central Library Teen Center, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Kindergarten Tour, see Tue 1; Lego Lab, see Tue 1.

Wed 16

Homeschool Day. Enjoy a free day full of discovery and learning at the Bullock Museum reserved specifically for homeschool families. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. thetoryoftexas.com.

Tween Scene. Monthly craft or activity for tweens ages 8-12. February's craft is a DIY beaded snowman pin. Registration required. 4:30 to 5:15 p.m. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. FREE. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Thu 17

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2; Toddler Storytime, see Thu 3; Bilingual Storytime, see Thu 3; Kids 5-8 Club, see Thu 3; Story & Play, see Thu 3.

Sat 19

CONTINUED: Cat in the Hat, see Sat 5; Makers' Lab Open Hours, see Sat 5; Story & Play, see Sat 12.

Sun 20

CONTINUED: Cat in the Hat, see Sat 5.

Tue 22

CONTINUED: Lego Lab, see Tue 1.

Wed 23

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2.

Thu 24

Kids 5-8 Club: Rice-filled Sock Bunny. Families with children ages 5 to 8 may register to participate in activity. 3:30-4 p.m. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. FREE. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Storytime, see Wed 2; Bilingual Storytime, see Thu 3; Toddler Storytime, see Thu 3; Story & Play, see Thu 3.

Sat 26

CONTINUED: Makers' Lab Open Hours, see Sat 5; Story & Play, see Sat 12.

Sun 27

CONTINUED: Cat in the Hat, see Sat 5.

Mon 28

CONTINUED: Monday Mix-Up (ages 12-18) see Mon 7; Toddler Storytime, see Mon 7.



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Flights of Love



It seems I'm now someone who reads publications like "Birds & Blooms."

I was given free subscriptions to several magazines of my choice last year. The only one I wanted was the bird one. The "bloom" part sounded nice, too. But as my friend Jane likes to say, "I realized it was either gardening or kids. Not enough nurturing in me for both." Let's all raise a glass to constrained nurturing.

Upon arrival, the photos left me breathless. Northern cardinals popped off the page so blood-red I swooned. Chubby yellow orioles perched, windblown and perfect, New York fashion shoot-worthy. Sweet little finches nuzzled into nests like porcelain still lifes. The coup de grâce was an outstretched robin, as if Michelangelo had just set the cast. I yelped at their sheer everything.

"Look!" I screamed to my family. "Look at these birds!"

"They're birds," was the overwhelming response.

Nevertheless, I persisted. "Look at these birds (repetition being my main tactic). Don't they move you? So gorgeous and small and capable and photogenic. Read their descriptions!" I shoved my evidence in their faces. "Huh."

"Amazing, right?" feeling I was gaining traction. "Don't you wish you were that free? Half as beautiful? One tenth as self-sufficient?" I finished with the big gun. "And could fly?"

Fact. No one cared about the birds. Then again no one cared about the birds — but me! What a joy to discover something you love that no one else (at least in your living room) loves! Suddenly I understood my son's love for playing Terraria. And my daughter's obsession with cuffed jeans. I didn't give a fig about Terraria or cuffed jeans! But I loved that

squatty, little, red cardinal.

If you don't have a valentine this year, or someone who loves you and all your things, I offer this: Who gives a fig? Love it (and yourself) anyway. Strut out onto your perch. Lean into your perfect, windblown feathers.

Love with your whole, squatty soul.



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.

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Heart-healthy Family Activities

Welcome to "Places To Go and Things To Do!" Each month, we alternate between fun, new places to go and family-friendly things to do at home. For Valentine's month, the Austin YMCA offers some heart-healthy activities to try together.

February is Heart Month, which is a perfect opportunity to expand our hearts in a variety of ways. From expressions of love to heart-pounding exercise or excitement, you can find plenty of options to make great family memories.

We often think of Valentine's Day on Feb. 14, but this month provides an opportunity to show your love for all those around you. Take a few minutes as a family to write "**Love Letters**" to tell your mom, dad, son or daughter just how much you appreciate all the ways they enrich your life. Think of all those little things we never get around to saying, then put them down on paper. It doesn't have to be perfect. It's the effort that counts.

You can also give your heart a jolt by **doing something that scares you**. Really! Get your heart racing by trying something new or even a little intimidating. Reserve a karaoke booth and have a family sing-along. Go check

out the biggest, baddest amusement park rides. Go rock climbing, ziplining, roller-skating or skiing. Push you and your family out of your comfort zone just a little and experience a thrill that you may never forget.

Many families make an effort to go for a hike or bike ride, but this February take the opportunity to **go the extra mile**. For example, instead of a walk around the neighborhood, venture out to that local three-mile trail and commit to doing the whole thing together. Or get on your bikes and explore the Violet Crown trail. Be sure to bring plenty of water and energy snacks to keep you going. It may take a little longer, but the rewards will be worth it.

There's no better way to **build lasting memories** than to build them...literally! Maybe the kids would like a small playhouse or treehouse in the backyard. How about a small deck where the family can gather on pleasant evenings?



If you're looking for something really simple, a planter box is a great starter project that will incorporate gardening into the mix. These types of projects are opportunities for everyone to be actively engaged with designing, planning, purchasing and building. The only limit is your imagination. But once complete, you'll have a great year-round space to make memories that stand the test of time.

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