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-KRISTIN A.H.

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February 2023

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REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS



EDITOR
JESS ARCHER



LEARNING CURVE
ALISON BOGLE



LIFELINES
BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD



FAMILY MATTERS
DR. BETTY RICHARDSON



SMART SCREEN
DR. BENJAMIN KRAMER



FILM REVIEW
JACK KYSER

PUBLISHER
Kaye Kemper Lowak

EDITOR
Jess Archer: editor2003@austinfamily.com

COPY EDITOR
Barb Matijevich

ADVISING EDITORS
Dr. Betty Richardson, Barb Matijevich

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
Jess Archer

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Jess Archer, Dorothy Bennett, Alison Bogle, Dr. Benjamin Kramer, Jack Kyser, Sarah Lyons, Dr. Betty Richardson, Brenda Schoolfield

MEDIA RELATIONS
Alison Bogle

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Layout and Ads: Susie Forbes

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Jordan Ashley Photography

ADVERTISING SALES
Kaye Kemper Lowak: kaye2003@austinfamily.com

BUSINESS MANAGER
Greg Lowak

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EDITOR'S NOTE

JESS ARCHER

Archer is a writer, a mom of two kids and wife. She is the author of the memoir, Finding Home with the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Billy Graham.

I remember the day we brought my newborn daughter (baby number two) home from the hospital. My three-year-old son looked right at her, scrunched up his nose in distaste and said, "Let's put her in the dumpster." Obviously, he didn't know what he was saying, but my son's sentiment was clear—adding a new sibling to the family can feel like an intrusion for kids.

So in the spirit of Valentine's Day, our February issue pays special attention to helping siblings develop loving dynamics. Dr. Betty Richardson offers some sage advice for shepherding kids through the arrival of a new sibling. And our media reviewer, Dorothy Bennett, details two new children's books all about unique sibling relationships.

For our feature article this month, Sarah Lyons marks out the timeline of what expectant parents can look forward to from their appointments with their obstetrician. Whether you're a first-time parent or a pro, it's good to review your medical plan for that critical nine months of gestation.

For school-age parents, don't forget to read our education guide this month. As Austin continues to grow, so do the schooling options in our city.

I'm pleased to say that my son's distaste for having a sibling has mostly dissipated. My two kids vacillate quite normally between rivals- and playmates- punctuated by small moments of kindness and love toward each other. Here's to hoping you and your family can continue to extend love and care for each other this Valentine's Day.

It's time to start enjoying life!

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February Fun Facts

- February is one of the most commonly misspelled words in the English language.
- February is the only month where it's possible to not have a full moon.
- Over 250 million roses are grown each year for Valentine's Day

Fact sources: www.safnow.org and www.funfacts.com



Shout-Out to a Good Kid!

Last month, Aiden Evander was caught doing a good deed. During the winter break, he went to work one day with his mom at the Austin Police Department Lake Patrol marina. Aiden noticed that the patrol boats needed washing, so he went to work scrubbing the boats all by himself. Way to lend a helping hand, Aiden!

Know a good kid doing a good deed in Austin? Let us know at editor2003@austinfamily.com



Aiden Evander lends a helping hand to APD.

Young Author

Nine year old, Miraya Joshi of Round Rock can attest that it's never too early to start a literary career. On January 1st, Miraya published her first chapter book, entitled "The Battle of Torra." The book is about a young group of girls who explore the ocean, make new friends, survive on the planet of Torra and try to save their friend from sinister forces.

Miraya fell in love with storytelling at an early age. She wrote several short stories about friendship and adventure. She has frequently participated in various literary events, including state-level representation. As a young author, Miraya is committed to inspiring everyone to follow their passion and overcome hurdles.

Miraya's book is available for purchase at www.amazon.com



But the Cat has brought friends,
Thing One and Thing Two
who makes messes and problems,
and oh, what to do?
Mischief and mayhem and laughter
galore,
Bring the kids – they'll clamor for
more.

The ZACH production of "The Cat in the Hat" will feature an adult and student cast and is set for a limited four week engagement from February 24-April 23, 2023. Based on the book by Dr. Seuss, the play was originally produced by the National Theatre of Great Britain.

Directed by Liz Fisher.

Tickets are available online at www.zachtheatre.org

ZACH Theatre Announces, "Dr. Seuss's The Cat in the Hat" Production

Everyone's favorite cat comes to mischievous life in ZACH Theatre's production of the Dr. Seuss classic.

Sally and her brother are stuck at home in the rain
When a Cat comes knocking at the windowpane!

Project HOPE

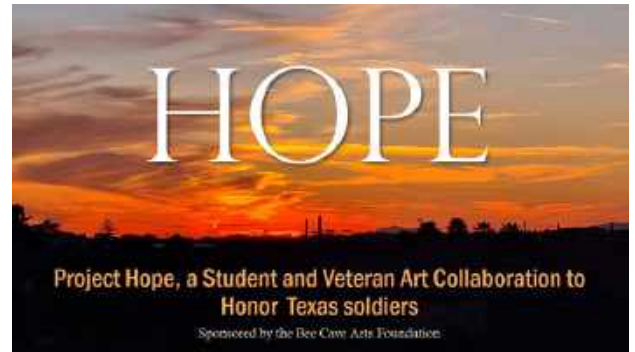
The Project HOPE art exhibition takes place throughout the month of March in the Bee Cave Arts Foundation (BCAF) gallery.

The exhibition is an international artwork collaboration with the city of Paestum, Italy. The project honors soldiers in Texas' 36th Infantry Division and allies who fought to liberate Paestum and southern Italy from the Nazi regime during World War II.

Artwork from both students and military veterans focuses on hope, peace, freedom, brotherhood, democracy, tolerance and inclusion. The project helps educate students and reinforce the important role the Texas military played in securing liberties and good will between Texas and southern Italy.

From the Bee Cave exhibit entries, renowned Italian artist Franco Palmentieri will select one piece of artwork by a student and one by a military veteran to represent America in Italy. The first place winners' art will be exhibited in Paestum this summer and will be permanently integrated into a 30-foot memorial sculpture designed by Palmentieri.

The deadline for art submissions for the Project HOPE exhibition and competition is February 27. Texas veterans and K-12 young artists can find qualifications to enter the competition on the BCAF website at www.beehivearts.foundation.



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QR Scan to see "the funnest thing in the history of funnest things!"

Pregnant? What To Expect At The Doctor



SARAH LYONS

Sarah Lyons is a busy mom of six kids, including triplets. She enjoys reading, writing, cooking and spending time outside with her family.

You've received a positive pregnancy test, and it's time to prepare for the new baby's arrival. Expecting a baby is an incredibly exciting time. Over the next nine months you will arrange the nursery, buy a car seat, pick out baby clothes and purchase baby gear and gadgets. But the most important way you will prepare for your baby is through excellent prenatal care. You may be wondering what to expect at your doctor's appointments and what the timeline looks like. While every pregnancy is different and there are always exceptions, here is a quick breakdown of what Mayo Clinic says you can expect for the obstetric timeline of an average pregnancy.

Your first appointment (6-10 weeks)

After you receive a positive pregnancy test, contact your doctor to schedule your first visit. They will typically see you between six and ten weeks gestation. You can expect to go over your health history, risk factors and discuss any diet and lifestyle changes needed during pregnancy. Your doctor will also ask for a list of your current medications and may make adjustments. Be sure to include information on your mental and emotional history. They will also check your weight, blood pressure

and take a urine sample. The doctor will calculate your due date and go over the schedule of future prenatal appointments. They may do an early ultrasound to check on the baby's development, do a pelvic exam with or without a pap smear and order blood work to screen for medical conditions and check hemoglobin. This is a great time to address your questions and concerns regarding pregnancy, delivery and your health as well as the baby's.

First trimester appointments (10-14 weeks)

After your initial visit, the appointments should become shorter in length, and you can expect to visit your doctor about every four weeks unless your pregnancy is determined to be at higher risk. At your second appointment the doctor should be able to hear the baby's heartbeat via doppler (usually around 8-10 weeks). Each visit your doctor will check your weight, blood pressure and take a urine sample. You will have an opportunity to ask questions and voice any concerns.

Second trimester appointments (14-26 weeks)

During the second trimester, women

often experience less nausea, more energy and begin to feel more comfortable with their changing bodies. You will continue to visit the doctor every four weeks during this time and can expect a similar experience as previous visits. Your doctor will continue to check your vitals each visit, monitor fetal growth and movement and track fetal growth. During the second trimester you will have the opportunity for additional testing including blood work, fetal testing and the option to test for genetic abnormalities. You may also have an anatomy scan done via ultrasound to check on the development of your baby's vital organs, and you will be given the opportunity to find out the sex of your new baby. Your doctor will also begin to discuss delivery expectations and create a birth plan. This is also a great time to take birthing classes, tour the birthing center and take care of the pre-registration paperwork.

Third trimester appointments (26-40 weeks)

During the last trimester you can expect to visit the doctor more often. The typical schedule is every two to four weeks for 24 to 36 weeks gestation and every week

from 36 weeks gestation until delivery. In addition to tracking your weight, blood pressure, and fetal development and growth, your doctor will also ask you if you are experiencing any labor symptoms and will let you know what to look for as delivery approaches. You will likely be checked for B Strep, gestational diabetes and the baby's position will be monitored before delivery. You can expect to have pelvic exams to check for signs of labor in the later part of your third trimester. This is a great time to pack your hospital bag and get last minute preparations in order before the baby's arrival.

Every pregnancy is different, and many factors will determine the timeline your doctor will set for prenatal visits. Check with your doctor and follow their guidelines for the best care for you and your baby.

Tips for finding the right OB/GYN

- Check your insurance - as you begin your search, find providers that are in your insurance network.
- Ask friends and relatives for recommendations. This can be a great place to start when you are looking for a new doctor.
- Do you have a preference when it comes to your doctor's gender?
- Location is important when choosing a doctor.
- Research the hospital or birthing center where you would like to deliver your baby and confirm that the doctor you are choosing delivers there.
- Decide if you will have a doctor, a midwife, or both.

- If you have specific preferences with your birth plan, confirm that the doctor will accommodate your wishes.
- Are you high risk? If yes, find out if there is a doctor that specializes in high-risk pregnancy.
- Set up a consultation appointment and ask questions,

do you feel you are compatible with the doctor?

- Is it a large practice? How likely is it that your doctor will deliver the baby? This is always a good question to ask so you know what to expect when labor begins.

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PARENTS: THE LATEST INFORMATION ABOUT INFANT SLEEP

LIFELINES

BRENDA SCHOOLFIELD

Brenda Schoolfield is a medical writer and editor who lives in Austin. Sugar, her cocker spaniel and sometimes a rescue foster dog or two keep her company while she writes.

NEW PARENTS: THE WRONG ADVICE ABOUT INFANT SLEEP COULD BE DEADLY

Even after the successful “Back to Sleep” campaign decades ago, about 3,500 babies still die each year from sleep-related deaths in the United States. To help reduce these infant deaths, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated their policy recommendations and new laws have been passed banning hazardous infant sleep-related products.

Although most people have heard about safe sleep principles for infants, many ignore expert recommendations. Instead, they rely on advice from family and friends as well as postings on social media. Greater education on safe sleep practices that are scientifically based will help save lives. Share the latest safe sleep information below with everyone involved in your baby’s care.

AVOID SOFT SURFACES AND INCLINED SLEEPERS

You probably already know that the

sleep surface for babies should be flat and firm. But did you know that inclined sleepers and bumper pads are dangerous? Under the Safe Sleep for Babies Act of 2021 it is “unlawful to manufacture, sell, or distribute crib bumpers or inclined sleepers for infants.” When a baby sleeps on an incline of more than 10 degrees, the chin can fall down to the chest and restrict the airway. The baby may also roll out of the device and get trapped under it. About 73 deaths and over 1,000 incidents related to infant inclined sleep products have been reported to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). AAP cautions that when your baby falls asleep in a sitting device, such as a swing, stroller, or carrier, move him or her to an approved flat surface as soon as you can.

Soft sleep surfaces pose a danger to babies. Bumper pads can interfere with breathing if the baby’s face gets too close. In the past, parents used bumper pads to keep the baby’s head

from getting wedged between crib slats. This is no longer a worry because manufacturers build crib slats closer together.

UNDERSTAND THE RISKS OF BED OR SURFACE SHARING

The AAP “does not support bed-sharing under any circumstances.” The AAP policy statement reports that the risks of sleep-related deaths compared to baseline are more than 10 times higher if bedsharing:

- With someone impaired by fatigue, alcohol, illegal drugs or sedating medicines
- With a current smoker or if the mother smoked during pregnancy
- On a soft surface like a sofa, armchair or mattress

TAKE THESE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR BABY

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, here are some other things that you can do to help keep your baby safe during sleep:

- **Place your baby on the back to sleep.** This is the safest position, even if the child spits up. Never prop a baby on their side with a rolled-up blanket or place the baby face down.
- **Provide supervised tummy time.** Work up to 15 to 30 minutes every day by the time the baby is seven weeks old.
- **Breastfeed your baby.** Babies who are breastfed or who receive breast milk have a lower risk of sleep-related death. The longer you breastfeed, the greater the risk reduction.
- **Put the baby to sleep in the parents' room.** For at least the first six months, the baby should sleep on their own separate, approved surface that is placed close to the parents' bed. This has been shown to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome by as much as 50%.
- **Offer a pacifier for naps and bedtime.** Once breastfeeding is established, offer a pacifier for sleep times. This has been shown to have a protective effect. You don't need to put the pacifier back in the baby's mouth if it falls out during sleep. Also, don't put a pacifier on a string around the baby's neck or attach it to a stuffed toy.
- **Keep the baby away from smoke.** The baby's environment should be smoke free. Don't smoke or allow anyone else to smoke around your baby.
- **Don't dress the baby too warmly.** Consider the temperature when you dress the baby. A general rule is no more than one layer more than an adult would wear to feel comfortable. Don't put a hat on your baby indoors. Watch for signs of overheating like sweating.
- **Don't use home cardiorespiratory monitors.** They have not been proven to reduce sleep-related deaths and may make parents complacent about following safe sleep practices.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Inclined sleepers, positioners and bumper pads are dangerous for babies and have been banned under new CPSC regulations. However, these may still be available at garage sales, thrift stores and online marketplaces. Relatives or friends may hand these products down without being aware of the danger. Go to www.saferproducts.gov to check the safety of used infant sleep-related equipment.

For more information on cribs and infant products go to www.cpsc.gov/SafeSleep.

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Play-Based Learning for Toddlers



As parents, we sometimes over-complicate things when it comes to activities with our kids, especially for infants and toddlers. In the name of "learning" and "education," we often forget that some of the most basic things can be the most instructive...and the most fun. Turns out experts have come up with a name for it: play-based learning. With a little creativity you can turn everyday tasks and playtime into opportunities for learning and development.

Engage Your Senses: One way to make the most of your time together is to incorporate a variety of sensory experiences into your activities. For example, you can create a "sensory bin" filled with items like rice, beans, or pasta, and let your child explore the textures and sounds with their hands and feet.

See It, Say It: Another way to make playtime more educational is to incorporate language and literacy activities. You can read books together, sing songs, and play with word and letter blocks. These activities can help to develop your child's listening and speaking skills, as well as their vocabulary.

Get Crafty: Art and craft activities build new neuropathways in your child's brain. Finger painting, for example, can be a great way to help develop their fine motor skills, while also encouraging creativity and self-expression. You can also create simple crafts using items you have around the house, such as cardboard boxes or paper towel rolls, which can help to develop your child's problem-solving and spatial awareness skills. As many of us have recently learned during the holidays, your child's favorite new toy might just be the giant box their gift came in.

Get Physical: Physical activity produces a variety of mental and emotional benefits in addition to the obvious physical ones. For example, you can take your child for a walk, have a dance party, or play "Follow the Leader." These activities can help to improve your child's gross motor skills, balance, and coordination. One easy favorite is batting a balloon with a ping pong paddle, developing both agility and eye-hand coordination.

Get Down to Their Level: Finally, it is important to get on the floor and play with your child. Seeing you on their level, eye-to-eye, enables your child to make a stronger emotional attachment. Rolling around on the floor or grass with your child can provide some of your best parenting memories.

By incorporating a variety of sensory experiences, language and literacy activities, art and craft activities, physical activity and playtime, you can help your child to develop a wide range of skills and have fun together at the same time.



Photos courtesy of the YMCA

Adjusting to a New Sibling

FAMILY MATTERS

DR. BETTY RICHARDSON

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

Q How do you deal with a child who doesn't want a baby brother or sister? Nate, our current and only child, is four years old. When we told Nate that we're having a baby, he said, "I hate the baby. I don't want one." We've told Nate what a good big brother he will be and how important that is. What else can we do?

A Nate is not alone in his reaction. An only child is used to having all the parents' attention. It can be hard for a child to think of sharing all that love. Here are some suggestions for how you might help Nate adjust to having a new baby brother or sister.

1. Ask family and friends to bring a small gift for Nate if they are bringing one for the baby. It could be an inexpensive book to read or an activity to do. It could be a small toy. They can wrap it as a present just like the baby's gift is wrapped. This suggests there are benefits from having a new baby. It also helps cement Nate's position as important in the family.
2. Ask for the help of family and friends to explain to Nate what a good big brother he will be. This reinforces what you have already told him.
3. Try not to deviate from Nate's schedule before and after the baby arrives. This includes such things as meal times, bedtime stories and tuck in time. If Grandma is going to handle this after the baby comes, then also have her do some of these routines with Nate before the baby comes. You could post Nate's schedule on a bulletin board, a poster on his door or on the refrigerator. If you must deviate, ask Nate for his help.
4. Let Nate help with the baby in tasks that are appropriate for him such as getting and bringing things you need. Give Nate a lot of positive reinforcement for any help he gives you with the baby.
5. Ask Nate's advice. Do you think the baby would like to wear the yellow outfit or the blue one?
6. Schedule special alone time for Nate with both parents.
7. Read books to Nate about being a big brother. There are lots of books

to choose from such as: "I am a Big Brother" or "I am a Big Sister" by Caroline Jayne Church. Other books include, "You're the Biggest" by Lucy Tapper and "Big Brothers are the Best" by Fran Manushkin.

Children have various reactions to a new sibling. Some children cope by ignoring the baby. Some older brothers or sisters regress and do things like want a bottle. It usually works well to just wait for the behavior to change while giving your first-born some grace and some special attention.



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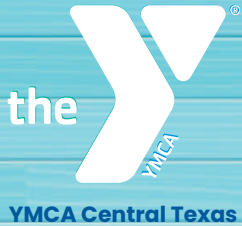
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CAMP EAGLE	6-18	www.campeagle.org	830-928-7288	Rocksprings, TX
CAMP HEART O' THE HILLS FOR GIRLS	6-16	www.hohcamp.com	830-238-4650	Hunt, TX
CAMP STEWART FOR BOYS	6-16	www.campstewart.com	830-238-4670	Hunt, TX
IRON HORSE MOTOCROSS	8-13	www.ironhorsecountry.com	512-917-5733	Bertram, TX
SUGAR & SPICE RANCH CAMP	5 & up	www.texas-horse-camps.com	830-460-8487	Bandera, TX
YMCA CAMP TWIN LAKES	6-16	www.ymcactx.org	512-250-9622	Cedar Park, TX

Arts

ART CAMPS OF CORDOVAN	5-16	www.cordovanartschool.com	512-275-4040	CP, NW SW
BADGERDOG CREATIVE WRITING CAMPS	9-18	www.austinlibrary.org/creative-writing-camps	512-542-0076	C
BEE CAVES ART FOUNDATION YOUNG ARTISTS	5-12	www.beecavesartfoundation.org	512-731-5868	BC
DANCE DISCOVERY	3-18	www.dancediscovery.com	512-419-7611	C, RR
IMAGINE ARTS ACADEMY OF AUSTIN	4-12	www.imagineartsacademy.com	512-892-1143	Multiple
KIDSACTING SUMMER CAMPS	4-18	www.kidsactingstudio.com	512-836-5437	18 Locations
SCHOOL OF ROCK MUSIC CAMP	6-18	www.schoolofrock.com	512-246-7625	RR, N, SW
SYNERGY DANCE	2 & up	www.synergydance.com	512-327-4130	WL
UT RADIO-TELEVISION-FILM MEDIA CAMPS	6-18	www.rtf.utexas.edu/camps	512-471-6617	UT Campus

Sports

CAMP DOUBLECREEK	4-14	www.campdoublecreek.com	512-255-3661	PF
CAMP ROUND ROCK	4-14	www.ymcactx.org	512-246-9622	RR
CAMP SWITCH WILLO	6-13	www.switchwillo.com	512-920-0554	N
CLUB Z	5-12	www.zsclubhouse.com	512-219-0700	NW, S, SW
JUMP! GYMNASTICS	3-10	www.jump-austin.com	512-705-9659	S, C
IRON HORSE MOTOCROSS	8-13	www.ironhorsecountry.com	512-917-5733	Bertram, TX
ROCK ABOUT CLIMBING	9-18	www.rock-about.com	512-415-0804	Various climbing locations
SPICEWOOD COUNTRY CAMP	3 ½-10 ½	www.spicewoodcountry.com	512-346-2992	NW
YMCA AUSTIN	4-14	www.austinyxca.org	512-322-9622	Multiple
YMCA CENTRAL TEXAS	4-14	www.ymcactx.org	512-250-9622	RR, CP, G, H

Academic

CLUB SCIKIDZ	4-15	www.clubscikidz.com	229-444-3231	C
COUNTRY HOME LEARNING CENTER	5-13	www.countryhomelearningcenter.com	512-288-8220	N
ESTEAM LEARNING LABS	K-18	www.esteemlearninglabs.com	512-740-3024	RR
FANTASTIC MAGIC CAMP	5-12	www.magiccamp.com	512-850-4677	C
IDEA LAB	5-13	www.austin.idealabkids.com	512-710-9654	C
MAD SCIENCE	4-12	www.austin.madscience.org	512-892-1143	Multiple locations
STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS	5-11	www.stepsstoneschool.com	512-459-0258	17 locations

Technology

ESTEAM LEARNING LABS	K-18	www.esteemlearninglabs.com	512-740-3024	RR
IDEA LAB	5-13	www.austin.idealabkids.com	512-710-9654	C

LOCATIONS

N, C, S, E, W, NW, SW, EC
for Austin locations

BC for Bee Caves

CP for Cedar Park

G for Georgetown

PF for Pflugerville

RR for Round Rock

WL for Westlake

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SMART SCREEN TIME

DR. BENJAMIN KRAMER

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



Story Viewing and Story Telling

Years ago, I read an academic study about kids and how they told stories about their lives. Frequently, their stories would borrow from

movies or shows they had seen and sometimes, their stories appeared to be direct copies of those programs. The temptation at this point may be to say, "Media is replacing kids' imaginations!" but the researcher went a bit deeper. In looking very closely at the language the kids used, she could see moments where they had inserted themselves into these stories or had brought the characters into their own worlds. The kids' stories were therefore a blend of their own lives with stories and characters that mattered to them.

I imagine that the elders of ancient civilizations saw young children mixing up important cultural tales and reacted differently. Some were likely thrilled that their kids were embracing the mythological heroes and making them familiar, perhaps even innovating on the old tales; others probably expressed concern that the sacred nature of the stories were being altered by youth and

that important messages would be lost. We're following a similar path as the ancients – our stories may be coming to kids via different media, but kids-being-kids will always shape something new out of them. As adults, we should foster and applaud their creative works. Just as the researcher did, we should pay attention to their voices – what are they telling us about their worlds and about themselves? How can we honor their contributions to our society?

From now until the end of March, youth in kindergarten through fifth grade who are in the Austin PBS viewing area are encouraged to submit their illustrated stories to the Austin PBS Writers Contest. All entries get published as e-books on our platform. It's a great way for us to shine our spotlight on young creators and to celebrate the stories they tell us. Go to www.austinpbs.org/writers for details and to submit.

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The Role of a Middle School Counselor

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.

Middle school is a time of great change for kids as they leave behind a relatively sheltered fifth grade experience for larger classes, less time with a primary teacher and more homework. Stir in hormones and bodies that seem to change shape overnight and you have a recipe for stressed out, overwhelmed kids!

Enter the middle school counselor. These professionals carry out the incredibly important role of offering support – not only to students, but also to parents, teachers and administrators. A counselor’s goal is to give students the greatest chance at growth and success during these

challenging years. Middle school counselors hold master’s degrees in counseling and have completed all required state certifications for school counseling. In addition, they participate in regular professional development related to their field.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Despite the title, middle school counselors do not provide long-term therapy at school. Their goal is to identify and respond to a students’ mental health needs and then to support students and their families in connecting with outside counseling resources.

They will, however, support students with shorter-term counseling needs and are trained to provide guidance on a number of issues that a middle schooler might grapple with, such as academic pressure, divorce/family changes, grief, stress management, peer relationships and crisis management.

Middle school counselors often organize group counseling sessions

for students who are dealing with similar issues, such as social skills development. Students in the group, will meet weekly or every other week and, depending upon the group’s needs, they will meet throughout the year. In the group setting, the counselor can meet many students’ needs at the same time. Given that kids this age place a high priority on the opinions of their peers, the group setting can be even more effective than one-on-one counseling.

In addition, middle school counselors help new students adjust by facilitating school tours, new student lunch groups, and small counseling groups and by checking in with new students to provide academic and emotional support.

Although middle school counselors are concerned with students’ emotional health and well-being, that is not the only hat they wear. They are also involved in academic counseling and can help students choose classes based on their abilities, interests and achievement levels. If a student is struggling in a class or needs to make

a change during the first days of the semester, the counselor can help with that.

SUPPORTING TEACHERS

At various points in the school year, middle school counselors rotate through classrooms to teach whole-class guidance lessons. In this way, they can ensure that all students are exposed to certain topics, whether they visit the counselor's office or not. By doing so, counselors are also able to place emphasis on topics that would be of most value to that campus or even to a particular grade. Common classroom guidance lessons cover topics such as bullying and prevention, appropriate use of social media, mental health and wellness, drug abuse and suicide prevention and high school preparation.

Counselors will also work with teachers to identify students' academic and social/emotional needs and to coordinate intervention support when necessary. They also participate in classroom observations and can assist with classroom management and student behavioral concerns. Middle school counselors are able to facilitate student/teacher communication and are available for student advocacy.

ACCESSING THE COUNSELOR

The process by which to see the counselor varies by school. Your child might be assigned a counselor at the start of the school year and, if this is the case, that counselor might continue with your child as they transition to seventh and eighth grade. At other schools, a counselor is not assigned, and students are the ones to initiate a relationship. In either case, students are usually told at the start of the school year how they can access the counselor.

If your student has not been told how to contact the counselor, the school's website, someone in the front office or their homeroom teacher can provide that information. Parents are welcome to reach out to the counselor directly. The school office can share contact information, or you can typically find it through the school's online directory.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the value of school counseling programs and their positive impact

on students' academic and social/emotional development. You can read more about these studies through The American School Counselor Association at www.schoolcounselor.org/effectiveness.

Middle school is a challenging time for both students and their families, but you are not alone in the journey. By

establishing a relationship with your child's middle school counselor, you will be able to navigate any bumps in the road and your child will have the best chance of growth and success during this time of change.



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CHALLENGER
SCHOOL

February 2023 calendar

Go to austinfamily.com for expanded listings.

Check our calendar online which is updated daily. Any family-friendly events can be posted at austinfamily.com and will be made live once approved. Certain restrictions apply.

Wed 1

Little Sprouts. 10 - 11 a.m. Bring your little ones to the gardens for our weekly Little Sprouts preschool program tailored for children ages three to five years. Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. www.wildflower.org.

Tween Book Club. 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. Book Club for Tweens ages 8 -12. Attendees will receive a copy of the book to keep. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Thu 2

GROUND HOG DAY

Homeschool Teens. 2 - 3 p.m. The Homeschool Teen group meets once a week to socialize, play games, make crafts and learn new skills. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Lego Mania. 4 p.m. Fun playing with LEGOs, kids' favorite toy bricks. For all ages. www.cityofkyle.com.

Storytime & Craft. 5 - 5:30 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

Cinderella. 7:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. This enchanting Tony® nominated musical fairytale will put a spell on audiences of all ages. ZACH Theatre, 202 South Lamar Blvd. \$25 - \$95. www.zachtheatre.org.

Fri 3

Library After Dark (Teens). 6 - 7:30 p.m. Ages 10-18 only. Join us in the library after closing for fun games and activities. Parental permission required. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

Friday Movie Night at Waterloo Southpark Meadows. 6 - 9 p.m. Join us for Friday movie nights at Waterloo Southpark Meadows. Waterloo Ice House, 9600 S IH 35. www.lostinaustin.org.

Sat 4

Art in the Park. 10 a.m. - 12 p.m. The City of Kyle Parks & Recreation will host Art in the Park at the gazebo or Krug Activity Center. www.cityofkyle.com.

Storytime & Craft. 10:30 - 11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

Read to Therapy Dogs. 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Read to Princess Buttercup Dump Truck or Bentley, our reading therapy dogs from Divine Canines on the 1st and 3rd Saturdays. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

Black History Kick Off Block Party.

2 - 6 p.m. We are kicking off Black History

Month at the Carver with our first ever Solar Saturday! Solar Saturdays are a new bi-monthly program at the George Washington Carver Museum, 1165 Angelina St. www.austintexas.gov.

February Family Campout

2 p.m. - 10 a.m. Join us for a cool night under the stars camping at YMCA Camp Moody! We provide the tents, meals and s'mores around the campfire. YMCA Camp Moody, 1220 Old San Antonio Rd. www.austinyymca.org.

Saturday Movie Night at Waterloo

EscarPMENT. 6 - 9 p.m. Join us for family movie night every Saturday at Waterloo Escarpment! Waterloo Ice House, 9600 Escarpment. www.lostinaustin.org.

Mon 6

Family Night. 6 - 6:45 p.m. Come for a fun-filled family night at the library. We will schedule different activities such as crafts, special guests and more. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

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Tue 7

Kids Club. 3:30 – 4 p.m. Join us for an engaging crafting, reading, building or exploring afternoon. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

LEGO Lab. 4:15 – 5 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

Teen Cosplay Club. 6 – 7 p.m. Teen Cosplay Club for ages 12-18 meets at the library once a month. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Wed 8

Rocket League Tournament (All Ages). 6 – 8 p.m. Test your mettle against the greatest competitors rocket propelled car soccer has ever seen! Pflugerville Recreation Center, 400 Immanuel Rd. www.parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

Thu 9

CONTINUED: Homeschool Teens see Thu 2; Storytime & Craft see Thu 2.

Fri 10

Parents' Night Out at Southwest Y. 6 – 9 p.m. Have a great evening out while the kids have a blast. Southwest Family YMCA, www.austinyymca.org.

Friday Movie Night at Waterloo Southpark Meadows. 6 – 9 p.m. Waterloo Ice House, 9600 S IH 35. www.lostinaustin.org.

Sat 11

Austin Humane Society's 16th Annual Puppy Bowl. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. The Austin Humane Society's beloved Puppy Bowl is back and better than ever in 2023. Austin

Humane Society, 124 W Anderson Ln. FREE. www.austinhumanesociety.org.

Parents' Night Out at Springs Family YMCA. 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. Have a great evening out while the kids have a blast. Springs Family YMCA, www.austinyymca.org.

Sweetheart Valentine's Dance 2023.

6:30 – 11 p.m. It is time again for the annual Texas Military Forces Historical Foundation WWII themed Sweetheart Dinner Dance. Texas Military Forces Museum, 2200 West 35th St. www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org.

CONTINUED: Storytime & Craft, see Sat 4; Saturday Movie Night at Waterloo Escarpment, see Sat 4.

Sun 12

Family Day. 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Join us for a fun-filled day in the garden with a scavenger hunt designed by Children's Research Center. Sculpture searches and more. UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum, 605 Azie Morton Rd. FREE. www.umlauptsculpture.app.neoncrm.com.

Mon 13

CONTINUED: Family Night, see Mon 6.

Tue 14

VALENTINE'S DAY

Kids Club. 3:30 – 4 p.m. Join us for an engaging crafting, reading, building or exploring afternoon. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

MakerGirl for everyone, not just girls! (Virtual). 6 – 7:30 p.m. MakerGirl is a free program for everyone, not just girls.

Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Duo da Capo Harp and Oboe Series

6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Duo da Capo Harp and Oboe Series. Valentine's Day performance on harp and oboe duets of classical music on the theme of Love. Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. www.nchmuseum.org.

CONTINUED: LEGO Lab, see Tue 7.

Wed 15

CONTINUED: Little Sprouts, see Wed 1; Tween graphic Novel Book Club see Wed 1.

Thu 16

CONTINUED: Homeschool Teens see Thu 2; Storytime & Craft see Thu 2.

Fri 17


Sat 18

Central Texas Teen & Kid Comic Con. 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. presented by Round Rock ISD Library Services. FREE Round Rock High School, 201 Deepwood Dr, Round Rock. www.eventbrite.com.

Pippi Longstocking. 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. shows. Pippi Longstocking is a scrappy 9-year-old little girl who asks a lot of questions and always puts bullies in their place. \$20 adults, \$15 seniors and 3-12, under 2 yrs FREE. 207 W. 18th St. www.scottishritetheater.org

Read to a Therapy Dog. 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Read to Princess Buttercup Dump Truck or Bently, our reading therapy dogs from Divine Canines. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

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Hooves and Read. 1 – 2 p.m. Kids can practice their reading skills with miniature therapy horses. Recommended for Grades K – 2. Space is limited. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Black History Month: Children's Author Event. 2 – 4 p.m. Join in the fun as we celebrate Black History Month and children's literacy with crafts, activities and readings from children's authors. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Daughter Dance. 5 – 7:30 p.m. Join us for a night of bowties and tiaras as you connect with your daughter(s) and make lasting memories. Pflugerville Lions Club, 500 N Railroad Ave. www.parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Storytime & Craft, see Sat 4.

Sun 19

CONTINUE: Pippi Longstocking, see Sat 18.

Mon 20

Tue 21

Kids Club. 3:30 – 4 p.m. Join us for an engaging crafting, reading, building or exploring afternoon. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: LEGO Lab, see Tue 7.

Wed 22

Tween Scene. 4:30 – 5:15 p.m. Monthly craft or activity for tweens ages 8-12. Registration is not required. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Mario Party (All Ages). 6 – 8 p.m. Compete against each other to see who will be crowned the next Mario party champion. Play on our giant projector screen in the Rec Center Game Room. Pflugerville Recreation Center, 400 Immanuel Rd. www.parks.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Little Sprouts, see Wed 1.

Thu 23

Black History Month Live Reading/Mini Buzz. 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Celebrate Black History Month with a live reading and mini book buzz presentation with staff picks. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Homeschool Teens see Thu 2; Storytime & Craft see Thu 2.

Fri 24

Peque y Yo. 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Peque y yo is a special time designed for parents to interact with their children, with the support of an early childhood educator. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Stuffed Animal Sleepover Drop Off. 3 – 5:30 p.m. Children ages 2-8 are invited to drop off a stuffed animal at the library for a sleepover. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

Dr Seuss's The Cat in The Hat. 7 p.m. Everyone's favorite cat comes to mischievous life in ZACH Theatre's production of the Dr. Seuss classic. The Kleberg at ZACH, 1421 W Riverside Dr. \$16 – \$38. www.tickets.zachtheatre.org.

Sat 25

CONTINUED: Storytime & Craft, see Sat 4; Dr Seuss's The Cat in The Hat, see Fri 24; Pippi Longstocking, see Sat 18.

Sun 26

CONTINUED: Dr Seuss's The Cat in The Hat, see Fri 24; Pippi Longstocking, see Sat 18.

Mon 27

CONTINUED: Family Night, see Mon 6.

Tue 28

Kids Club. 3:30 – 4 p.m. Join us for an engaging crafting, reading, building or exploring afternoon. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger St. www.library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: LEGO Lab, see Tue 7.

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Hug It Out! Two New Books on Sibling Relationships

DOROTHY BENNETT

Dorothy Bennett is a writer and artist in Austin, TX where she runs a creative agency with her husband.

This Valentine's Day, let's look at two stories about the most crucial (and potentially contentious) relationship in your child's life - the one they have with their siblings.



For those welcoming a new infant into the family, Jessika von Innerebner's "That's My Sweater!" takes the concept of sharing down to a child's eye-level - quite literally, the parental figure is shown as slightly-too-tall for the page as the story focuses on the sibling interactions. With humorous asides and great textures, the illustrations pop in contrasting colors, while Innerebner's comic-book style speech bubbles keep the story feeling action-packed. As the middle child realizes that her hotly contested favorite sweater was originally a hand-me-down from her big brother, she stretches her sharing muscles to let the new sibling wear it. It's a perfect example of accepting big emotions, while still moving towards a loving resolution.



In Michelle Edwards and April Harrison's "Me and The Boss," an older pair of siblings are figuring out their relationship dynamic. The older sister, aka 'The Boss', is both strict and inclusive with her younger brother. With collage-like illustrations that feel quilted together, the siblings attend a sewing lesson at the local library where the younger brother struggles to keep up. After much effort, he conquers the new skill

and then sets about mending his and his sister's belongings. The siblings don't fight; they don't reconcile. Instead, and more importantly, they demonstrate the steady rhythms of supporting someone close to you. It is a heart-touching read that I highly recommend for siblings with different personalities.

Let me know what your children think of the books! Drop me a line @dorothy.megan and tag @atx_family on your book updates.



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