

September 2024

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



Cover Photo provided by Master Gohring Tai Chi and Kung Fu, photographed by Amanda Elmore at [www.amandaelmore.com](http://www.amandaelmore.com)



View the magazine online

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We are dedicated to serving the Greater Austin area by providing up-to-date information and ideas that promote smart parenting and healthy homes. We promote our clients' businesses by increasing their customer bases and enhancing their public images.

Austin Family is published monthly by KKKemper, Inc.  
Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 7559, Round Rock, Texas 78683-7559  
Phone Number: 512-733-0038  
On the web at: [www.austinfamily.com](http://www.austinfamily.com)

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## Editor's Note



JESS ARCHER

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

For two years it's been my honor to be the editor of Austin Family, but this September marks the end of my time with the magazine. In my role as editor, I have loved bringing you new content each month, always with the hope that the articles we publish will assist and encourage you in your parenting journey.

It feels apropos that our feature article this month aims to do just that – encourage moms to make connections with other moms in Austin. Parenting can feel lonely. I hope Laura Palmer's article reminds you that there are many ways to make new friendships.

This month we also bring you a fresh look at the martial arts. With so many physical, social and mental

benefits, we hope the piece inspires you to find a martial arts studio for your kids to join.

The school year is just beginning and it's tempting to fill our family calendars with all kinds of activities and commitments. Be sure to read Dr. Betty Richardson's advice for how create balance in your family's schedule.

Austin continues to be a wonderful city for raising kids, and Austin Family magazine continues to be a valuable resource for parents. Keep reading and sharing your wisdom, Austin parents! It's been a joy to serve you.

Austin PBS

# Family Fest

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- The Kindness Campaign's *Magic Mirror*
- *Pepper the ACC Robot*
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The Ready To Learn Initiative

# Austin IN ACTION

GO TO AUSTINFAMILY.COM FOR WEEKLY UPDATES OF AUSTIN IN ACTION NEWS

## Did you Know?

10

The percentage of kids under age of 2 who live with grandparents

Source: [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

Five

founding fathers attended the Boston Latin Public School, est.1635

Source: [www.bls.org](http://www.bls.org)

## Scolionophobia

the extreme fear of school.

Source: [www.clevelandclinic.org](http://www.clevelandclinic.org)



The 2024 Austin winners of the Bank of America Student Leaders program.

### Student Leaders in Austin

Gabriel Melo, Jayla Sumlin, Christine Gibson and Nelly Salas were named as this year's Bank of America Student Leaders in Austin. Celebrating its 20th anniversary year, the Student Leaders program annually connects more than 300 community-minded high school juniors and seniors from nearly 100 communities for employment and skills development. In addition to the eight-week paid internship, the students participated in a national leadership summit in Washington D.C. to see how nonprofits, governments and businesses collaborate to meet local needs and receive financial education throughout the program.

The bank also supports other avenues to youth employment in Austin. Separate from Student Leaders, Bank of America is connecting 78 teens and young adults to paid jobs and internships with the City of Austin Emerging Leaders Program through its Summer Youth Employment Program, a partnership with the Austin Area Urban League for its Financial Center Apprenticeship at local Bank of America offices.



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### AI Stop Sign Cameras to Keep Kids Safe

Stop sign violations account for about 70% of all car crashes with thousands of deaths and injuries each year.

After experiencing a horrifying incident when his wife and children were hit by a distracted driver who failed to stop at a stop sign, Kamran Barelli turned this

painful experience into the motivating force behind Stop For Kids, an innovative solution to enforce stop sign violations using AI-powered cameras.

In 2022, the Village of Saddle Rock in Nassau County, NY became the first municipality in the world to utilize machine learning technology to monitor stop signs.

The Saddle Rock deployment was so successful that the company just announced that they have expanded availability of their patented Road Safety-as-a-Service to the entire country, allowing any camera-friendly state/municipality the ability to improve the standard of traffic safety in their community.

## Supporting Educational Initiatives

Cars for Kids is proud to announce a generous donation of \$850,000 to Texans Can Academies. This contribution is part of Cars for Kids' ongoing efforts to support educational initiatives and community programs that make a real difference in children's lives. Cars for Kids is dedicated to empowering students with the tools and opportunities to achieve their educational goals.

Texans Can Academies, known for its dedication to helping at-risk students earn their high school diplomas, will use this donation to enhance their student services, including counseling, tutoring and career readiness programs. These services are crucial for students facing various obstacles, ensuring they receive the support they need to graduate and succeed in their future endeavors.

"Our mission at Cars for Kids is to make a lasting impact on the lives of children by supporting their educational journeys and overall well-being," said Rudy Oeftering, Board Chair of Cars for Kids. "We are thrilled to partner with Texans Can Academies to provide critical services that will help students overcome challenges and reach their full potential."



## New School Facilities in North Austin

Valor Education, a network of tuition-free K-12 charter schools, celebrated the grand opening of Valor North Austin's campus expansion. Valor North Austin will welcome students to the expanded campus for the start of the 2024-25 semester. The ceremony included remarks from Valor leadership and tours of the building. The Valor North Austin campus offers a comprehensive school program where students are invited to engage deeply in the humanities, math, science, athletics, fine arts and extracurricular activities. The new spaces include:

- A gymnasium featuring basketball and volleyball courts, bleachers, concessions and a stage
- A black box theater for plays and choral performances
- A new library
- A larger playground and new courtyard for outdoor learning
- An open-air gym and weight room complete with free weights and squat racks

With the completion of the expansion, Valor North Austin is equipped to serve 1,200 students for the 2024-25 school year.

For more information about enrollment and the programs offered at Valor North Austin, visit [www.valoreducation.org/valornorthaustin](http://www.valoreducation.org/valornorthaustin).



Valor North Austin expands its facilities.



Michelle Fine, previous winner of the H-E-B Excellence in Education Award. Photo Courtesy The H-E-B Foundation

## Nominate a Favorite Teacher

Nominations for the 2025 H-E-B Excellence in Education Awards are now open to all Texas public school professionals and close on October 7, 2024. Teachers, counselors, principals, early childhood centers, school boards and districts can win cash prizes for their outstanding work.

All state-certified public-school educators currently teaching in Texas are eligible for the awards program, as well as Texas early childhood education centers and schools.

Anyone can nominate their favorite Texas educator at [heblovesteachers.com/nominate/](http://heblovesteachers.com/nominate/). Eligibility is not dependent on proximity to H-E-B store locations. Nomination categories include:

- Teacher
- School Counselor
- Principal
- Early Childhood Facility
- School Board
- School District

Finalists and winners will be selected by a panel of judges composed of educators, administrators and community leaders throughout the state. Ten winners—six teachers, two counselors and two principals—along with an early childhood facility, public school board and two school districts, will be announced at an awards ceremony in May 2025. Each award recipient's school will also receive a matching grant.

# Martial Arts Power

## Lifelines

BART STUMP

*Stump is an educator, historian, writer and adventurer. He writes about topics such as intriguing personalities, interesting locations, historical events and parenting.*

**A**re you looking for a great way for your children to gain strength, increase flexibility, sharpen concentration, acquire self-confidence and make new friends? Consider enrolling them in martial arts.

When asked why children should practice the martial arts, Master Lili Rehak responded, "Confidence. Many children are shy and awkward. When they get involved in martial arts, they learn, perform, go to tournaments, compete and go through the testing process. This all serves to make children much more confident in themselves. If they can accomplish all of the above, there is no limit to what they can do in other aspects of their lives."

The martial arts are primarily Asian forms of self-defense that are sometimes performed as a sport. There are dozens of styles including Aikido, Ju-Jitsu, Judo, Kung Fu, Tae Kwon Do, Tai Chi and Tang Soo Do. These styles originated in China, Japan and Korea. One of the most popular martial arts is karate which originated

on the Japanese island of Okinawa. Karate means "empty hand" because the practitioner primarily uses his or her bare hands and feet and the name has become synonymous with many similar styles of martial arts.

So, how do you get started? First, find a style and martial arts school that interests your family. It is important to find a reputable school, so be sure to check the history of the school, longevity in the community and integrity of the owner. Many schools will allow you to watch a class to see if you're interested and offer introductory classes to try it out. Classes are usually broken down by age groups: younger children, older children, teens and adults.

Typical classes consist of stretching, learning terminology in the native language of the style, studying the history of that particular style and practicing a variety of hand and kick techniques. Different punches, kicks and blocks are incorporated to create various combinations and forms. Advanced forms are very fluid and graceful, taking on the appearance of choreographed dance.

Martial Arts are also good for the brain. Memorizing the combinations and forms gives kids confidence and practice which helps them with schoolwork. Additionally, kids who sometimes have a difficult time making friends, can acquire new friendships with martial arts classmates. As students reach the higher belts they achieve a sense of accomplishment.

One of the more dynamic aspects of martial arts is practice fighting called "sparring." Depending on the style practiced, sparring points are earned for light punches to the torso, controlled kicks to the head and torso or the ability to throw or take your opponent to the ground. It's not about teaching your children to beat someone up, it's about forming strategies and adjusting to changing conditions. Sparring can be compared to playing chess; one needs to know the proper time to attack or retreat and which attack or defense to use for maximum effect. While there is physical contact, sparring is relatively safe with protective pieces including a mouth guard, dipped foam helmet, gloves, boots, a groin cup for males and possibly a padded chest protector.



Another exciting skill that might be practiced in martial arts is breaking. Typically pine boards are broken using a variety of hand and kick techniques. Advanced students might break multiple boards or break pieces of cement or bricks. Breaking is not just about brute force; it's about speed, focus, technique and confidence.

More advanced students might also practice self-defense techniques where they learn to avoid or block attacks and have an effective counterattack. They may also learn to escape grabs and chokeholds and put the attacker on the defensive. Advanced students may learn how to disarm or subdue weapon-wielding opponents.

To demonstrate one's progress, a student must pass periodic tests. Many schools show advancement with progressively darker colored belts ranging from a beginner's white belt up to an advanced student's black belt. Higher-ranked students often help instruct lower-ranked students.

Another way to test one's skills is to compete in tournaments. Competitors are divided by age and ability and depending on the style they practice may compete in forms, weapons, breaking and/or sparring. Top competitors often win medals and trophies. In addition to the actual competition, tournaments are a great way to catch up with or make new friends from other schools.

Regardless of the style of martial arts your children practice, they will gain a better understanding of a different culture and its history. They will also strengthen their bodies and minds, gain confidence, learn new skills, acquire discipline, make new friends and have fun.

But, the martial arts aren't just for the kids. Parents can also enjoy all of the above benefits. The martial arts are a great family activity that you can learn together.

- NUNCHUCKS**  
two-foot-long handles joined by a short chain or cord.
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## Family Matters



DR. BETTY RICHARDSON

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



# Is Your Family Overcommitted?

**Q** My husband and I have three children, ages fifteen, eleven and nine. I'm worried that our kids will get involved in so many school and extracurricular activities that our family will be overcommitted this fall. How can we tell if we've created a lifestyle that is too busy? How can we avoid overscheduling our lives?

**A** Some of the signs of overcommitment in kids are not turning in school work, being fatigued, becoming irritable and not having time to practice their extracurricular activities. Teens are said to have high rates of depression and anxiety when they have too many obligations.

With three children, it would be easy for you and your husband to overschedule your family calendar. Family activities and meals together become infrequent when everyone is too busy. Children need unscheduled time. It's important for developing

their creative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Here are some suggestions for you in your efforts to avoid overcommitment for you and your children:

1. Help children identify the ongoing activities they enjoy most. It's better to succeed at one or two hobbies than struggle at many. Some children can handle only one activity while others can succeed with several.
2. Make a calendar of everyone's commitments, including who is doing the transportation. Include margins of time for family meals or activities throughout the week and weekend. Looking at a calendar of your family events will help you discern what needs to be cut out of your schedule.
3. Try to share transportation with other parents who have kids in the same activities as your children.

4. In addition to ongoing activities, remember to make room for family bonding time. Your children would probably enjoy some quiet hobbies at home. Simply playing a family game from time-to-time can help your family feel grounded.
5. Say "yes" to helping with some school activities (as the school needs parents to be involved) but learn how to say "no." When there are more requests for help than you can reasonably handle, be sure to express your boundaries. You can't say yes to every request.

Thank you for sharing this question with our readers. If, after following the suggestions, you still feel overcommitted, look at your calendar of activities and think about where you could give up or change an activity.

VISITAR [www.austinfamily.com](http://www.austinfamily.com)  
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# 5 Ways to Make Mom Friends in Austin

LAURA PALMER

*Palmer is a freelance writer, mom and wife working on her first children's book. She can be found at [laurathewriter.com](http://laurathewriter.com)*

During the early days of my parenting journey, working from home was a blessing and a curse. I was grateful to continue my career while staying at home with my son, but I missed being able to connect with other adults. Being new to Austin didn't help either, as my proverbial "village" was over 1,000 miles away.

Without local friends to turn to, life felt isolating. So, I made it my mission to seek out other moms and create my own community. It took some time, but here are five ways I learned how to make mom friends in Austin.

## 1. MOMS GROUPS

Many Austin area churches have groups expressly set up for mothers. My church in South Austin has a program called MOMS. Other churches have MOPS or ROMP groups. No matter the acronym, the concept is the same: a gathering place for moms

to connect with other moms and receive some free childcare for a few hours. The beauty of these groups is that you can connect with mothers who are in different stages of their parenting journey, allowing you to commiserate with those in the trenches of the early years and receive support, knowledge and tips from those who have older children. Moms can utilize the childcare on-site or bring their little ones to meetings, alleviating the burden of childcare logistics. And if you aren't a parishioner of that church, don't sweat it. These MOMS groups don't require it.

## 2. FACEBOOK

Recently my family and I moved

to a new neighborhood where we didn't know anyone. After a bit of sleuthing, I found a Facebook page specifically for parents in the neighborhood. While it wasn't an active group, I created a post saying: I would love to meet other parents of similarly aged children so my son could make friends in the neighborhood. I figured that would go over better than "Anyone want to be friends?!" Crickets. Thankfully, I'm not one to take rejection to heart.

A week later, I received messages from a neighbor down the street inviting us to dinner and another message inviting us to the local splash pad from someone a few streets away. Since then, I've gotten to know other moms in the area, been added to the monthly Bunco group and have the inside scoop on the latest events in the neighborhood.



Facebook can still be a very useful tool for moms to find new friends.

### 3. EXCHANGE NUMBERS

Even if your children aren't in school, there is a good chance they attend some type of activity, leading you to see the same parents every week. From library time to swim classes to gymnastics, most activities for little ones involve parent participation or at least oversight. And kiddos are an excellent conversation icebreaker, opening the door to actual adult conversation, however short-lived it may be.

After a few classes, ask to exchange numbers with the parents you connect with most. A simple invitation for a playdate is an easy way to swap numbers with other moms and I've never had anyone say no.

If you're craving community with other moms, there's a high chance that others are too.

### 4. BUY NOTHING GROUPS

Not only are Buy Nothing groups great for receiving free items and finding homes for your no-longer-needed goods, but they are also wonderful platforms for forming friendships.

I found myself regularly giving and receiving clothing for my son from the same few people in our group. It made sense, given that our kids were all around the same age. As our kiddos grew, so did our conversations over Messenger. Soon, we were swapping parenting stories and getting to know each other outside of exchanging hand-me-downs.

Since the physical boundaries of the Buy Nothing groups are generally small, it's easy to connect in "real life" by walking down the street or meeting at the local park.

### 5. JOIN NON-MOM MEETUPS

Yes, children take up a lot of your time, especially when they are babies and toddlers, but if you can have someone watch your

child for a few hours once a month, try attending a "non-mom" meetup.

Find a meetup that aligns with your interests and passions. Sometimes you need a break from parenting talk. I've joined book clubs, writing groups and sports meetups, and I love meeting people with similar interests. If you are a creative person, Austin has a fantastic group called "Creative Ladies Night." It meets once a month at a female-owned business. Drinks, snacks and inspiration for your artistic endeavors are all provided.

Inevitably, every group I've joined includes other mothers, but there isn't the expectation to talk about your children, as there is with groups specifically geared towards parents. Even better, a built-in bond already exists as the group is based on a shared interest, making conversation much easier since you know you have at least one thing in common.

Parenthood can be an overwhelming and sometimes isolating journey. As moms, many of us crave connection.

Take the first step and see what friendships are around the corner.



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## AFTER-SCHOOL ENRICHMENT GUIDE

	LOCATION(S)	PHONE	WEBSITE
<b>AUSTIN LEARNING CENTER</b>	Westlake & Online	512-330-9007	<a href="http://www.austinlearningcenter.com">www.austinlearningcenter.com</a>
<b>ARMSTRONG COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL</b>	Westlake	512-474-2331	<a href="http://www.acmsaustin.org">www.acmsaustin.org</a>
<b>AVERY RANCH DANCE AND MUSIC</b>	North Austin	512-658-2996	<a href="http://www.austin-dance.org/avery-ranch">www.austin-dance.org/avery-ranch</a>
<b>CORDOVAN ART</b>	Round Rock & Georgetown	512-274-4040	<a href="http://www.cordovanartschool.com">www.cordovanartschool.com</a>
	Cedar Park	512-284-9874	
	NW Austin	737-300-1200	
	SW Austin	512- 531-9353	
	Lago Vista	512-963-6575	
	Central Austin	512-419-7611	<a href="http://www.austin-dance.org">www.austin-dance.org</a>
<b>DANCE DISCOVERY</b>	North Austin	512-346-8015	<a href="http://www.daveandbusters.com">www.daveandbusters.com</a>
<b>DAVE &amp; BUSTERS</b>	North Austin		<a href="http://www.forkidssake.org">www.forkidssake.org</a>
<b>FOR KIDS SAKE</b>	North Austin	512-494-6744	<a href="http://www.austin.idealabkids.com">www.austin.idealabkids.com</a>
<b>IDEA LAB</b>	North Austin	512-494-6744	
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<b>JUMP GYMNASTICS</b>	North & South Austin	512-593-6226	<a href="http://www.kidsactingstudio.com">www.kidsactingstudio.com</a>
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<b>KLRU</b>	Virtual PBS Kids Learning		<a href="http://www.austin.madscience.org">www.austin.madscience.org</a>
<b>MAD SCIENCE</b>	Locations throughout Austin and San Antonio	512-892-1143	
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<b>NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHORUS</b>	Cedar Park	512-259-7999	<a href="http://www.nitroswim.com">www.nitroswim.com</a>
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	Kyle	OPENING FALL	
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<b>YMCA AUSTIN</b>	Burnet, Georgetown, Hutto	512-246-9622	
<b>YMCA CENTRAL TEXAS</b>	Leander, Liberty Hill, Round Rock, Waco, Gateway		<a href="http://www.ymcactx.org">www.ymcactx.org</a>

### **FINE ARTS THEATER** Dance, Creative Art, Music, Culinary Arts

<b>ARMSTRONG COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL</b>	Westlake	512-474-2331	<a href="http://www.acmsaustin.org">www.acmsaustin.org</a>
<b>AVERY RANCH DANCE AND MUSIC</b>	North Austin	512-658-2996	<a href="http://www.austin-dance.org/avery-ranch">www.austin-dance.org/avery-ranch</a>
<b>CORDOVAN ART</b>	Round Rock & Georgetown	512-274-4040	<a href="http://www.cordovanartschool.com">www.cordovanartschool.com</a>
	Cedar Park	512-284-9874	
	NW Austin	737-300-1200	
	SW Austin	512- 531-9353	
	Lago Vista	512-963-6575	
	Central Austin	512-419-7611	<a href="http://www.austin-dance.org">www.austin-dance.org</a>
<b>DANCE DISCOVERY</b>	18 Area Locations	512-836-5437	<a href="http://www.kidsactingstudio.com">www.kidsactingstudio.com</a>
<b>KIDSACTING</b>	Austin	646-308-1744	<a href="http://www.nationalchildrenschorus.com">www.nationalchildrenschorus.com</a>
<b>NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHORUS</b>	In Area Schools		<a href="http://www.stickyfingerscooking.com">www.stickyfingerscooking.com</a>
<b>STICKY FINGERS COOKING SCHOOL</b>	Westlake	512-327-4130	<a href="http://www.synergydance.com">www.synergydance.com</a>
<b>SYNERGY DANCE</b>			

## ACADEMIC STEM, Tutoring, Science

<b>AUSTIN LEARNING CENTER</b>	Westlake & Online	512-330-9007	<a href="http://www.austinlearningcenter.com">www.austinlearningcenter.com</a>
<b>IDEA LAB</b>	North Austin	512-494-6744	<a href="http://www.austin.idealabkids.com">www.austin.idealabkids.com</a>
<b>MAD SCIENCE</b>	Locations throughout Austin and San Antonio	512-892-1143	<a href="http://www.austin.madscience.org">www.austin.madscience.org</a>

## SPORTS

	LOCATION(S)	PHONE	WEBSITE
<b>JUMP GYMNASTICS</b>	North & South Austin	512-593-6226	<a href="http://www.jump-austin.com">www.jump-austin.com</a>
<b>MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU</b>	Central Austin	512-879-7553	<a href="http://www.mastergohring.com">www.mastergohring.com</a>
<b>NITRO SWIM</b>	Cedar Park	512-259-7999	<a href="http://www.nitroswim.com">www.nitroswim.com</a>
	Bee Cave	512-861-7946	
	Kyle	OPENING FALL	
<b>PLAYLAND SKATE</b>	North Austin	512-452-1901	<a href="http://www.playlandskatecenter.com">www.playlandskatecenter.com</a>
<b>SWITCH WILLO STABLES</b>	North Austin	512-920-2276	<a href="http://www.switchwillo.com">www.switchwillo.com</a>
<b>WAYA</b>	West Austin	512-473-2528	<a href="http://www.waya.org">www.waya.org</a>
<b>YMCA AUSTIN</b>	5 Austin locations, Bastrop, Buda, Dripping Springs, Kyle	512-322-9662	<a href="http://www.austinyymca.org">www.austinyymca.org</a>
<b>YMCA CENTRAL TEXAS</b>	Burnet, Georgetown, Hutto, Leander, Liberty Hill, Round Rock, Waco, Gateway	512-246-9622	<a href="http://www.ymcactx.org">www.ymcactx.org</a>

## BIRTHDAY PARTIES

<b>CORDOVAN ART</b>	Round Rock & Georgetown	512-274-4040	<a href="http://www.cordovanartschool.com">www.cordovanartschool.com</a>
	Cedar Park	512-284-9874	
	NW Austin	737-300-1200	
	SW Austin	512-531-9353	
	Lago Vista	512-963-6575	
<b>DAVE &amp; BUSTERS</b>	North Austin	512-346-8015	<a href="http://www.daveandbusters.com">www.daveandbusters.com</a>
<b>IDEA LAB</b>	North Austin	512-494-6744	<a href="http://www.austin.idealabkids.com">www.austin.idealabkids.com</a>
<b>JUMP GYMNASTICS</b>	North Austin	512-593-6226	<a href="http://www.jump-austin.com">www.jump-austin.com</a>
	South Austin		
<b>MAD SCIENCE</b>	Locations throughout Austin and San Antonio	512-892-1143	<a href="http://www.austin.madscience.org">www.austin.madscience.org</a>
<b>MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU</b>	Central Austin	512-879-7553	<a href="http://www.mastergohring.com">www.mastergohring.com</a>
<b>PLAYLAND SKATE</b>	North Austin	512-452-1901	<a href="http://www.playlandskatecenter.com">www.playlandskatecenter.com</a>

## RESOURCES Volunteer Opportunities, Resources

<b>FOR KIDS SAKE</b>	North Austin		<a href="http://www.forkidssake.org">www.forkidssake.org</a>
<b>PARTNERS IN PARENTING</b>	North, South, Zoom		<a href="http://www.pipaustin.org">www.pipaustin.org</a>
<b>ROUND ROCK SERVING CENTER</b>	Round Rock	512-244-2431	<a href="http://www.rrasc.org">www.rrasc.org</a>
<b>SAFE</b>	Central Texas		<a href="http://www.safeaustin.org">www.safeaustin.org</a>



# Austin ISD Enrollment: Why the Decline?

## 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.*



Austin ISD is grappling with a decline in student enrollment. According to its 2023-24 School District Demographic Analysis report, the district is projected to enroll 73,495 students for the upcoming 2024-25 school year, a decrease of 212 students over last year. AISD expects this enrollment decline to continue, dropping by nearly 3,000 students in the next five years. Although the trend is expected to slow somewhat, AISD anticipates a continued decline over the published 10-year forecast period, resulting in a projected enrollment of just over 69,000 students for the 2033-34 school year.

What is driving this decline? The pandemic hit AISD particularly hard. During the 2020-21 school year, enrollment declined by 5,815 students, primarily driven by the elementary grades. Early education

and kindergarten enrollment numbers were especially impacted as many parents chose to delay starting school altogether. AISD initially struggled to get its remote learning solution up and running quickly and effectively, leaving many parents and students frustrated and disillusioned. In response, numerous families elected to homeschool, enroll in already existing, robust online school options, or switch to private schools where class sizes were smaller and there was less risk of exposure to COVID-19. Parents were desperate for their children to learn without interruption as the country worried about the long-term implications of learning gaps. Although the district saw many students return the following school year, many families chose to continue with their choice of new school. Currently, AISD's enrollment is being

negatively impacted by the draw of charter schools. Data from the Texas Education Agency, TEA, reveals that over 16,222 former AISD students currently attend a different district or a charter school. Of that number, TEA reported that over 90 percent of students who transferred out of AISD for the 2023-2024 school year did so to attend a charter school. TEA expects this trend to continue, projecting the total number of students transferring out of AISD to increase by an estimated 1,349 in the next five years.

Public charter schools are tuition-free and offer "open enrollment," meaning that any student can apply and be accepted. If the number of students applying to a charter is greater than the number of openings, admission is decided by a lottery process.

This sustained loss of students creates a real financial problem for AISD. Public school districts in Texas are subject to what is known as "recapture" or "Robin Hood." Under recapture, the State of Texas takes local property tax revenues from public school districts deemed to be wealthier and uses them to help balance the state budget. Initially, Robin Hood intended to distribute those funds to less financially advantaged districts for education funding, but this is no longer the primary use of the funds.

AISD is considered a property-rich school district and is therefore required by the state to turn over a portion of its funding to the state. It is projected that an estimated 56.4 percent of all local tax revenue will be subject to recapture for the 2024 fiscal year, equating to over \$940 million submitted in recaptured funds. From fiscal year 2001 to fiscal year 2024, AISD will have been required to turn over almost \$7 billion in recapture monies. These are tax dollars that will never make it to the classroom. Neither will the money be used for staffing positions or building safety improvements.

In Texas, independent school districts and charter schools both receive state funds based on the average daily attendance of their students. However, unlike independent school districts, open-enrollment charter schools do not receive any funding from local tax revenue but they are also not subject to recapture.

As its student enrollment numbers continue to decline, so does the amount of money AISD receives based on average daily student attendance. This decrease in attendance funding is exacerbated by the required recapture payments - based on increasing property values, they continue to climb. This

has put an increasing strain on the operating budget for the district.

Currently, the district is exploring ways to increase enrollment. Proposed solutions include improving middle school performance so that families do not feel the need to transfer elsewhere, the addition of pre-K programs,

efforts to engage families that left the district and creating targeted enrollment campaigns for less populated campuses.



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## 9 Ways to Create Lasting Bonds with Grandparents Through Books

By Scott Sollers

Finding time to bond with your grandchildren can be challenging, especially if you live far away. That's why I've made it a point to make the most of our special time together in the simplest, purest form – through reading.

This National Grandparents Day (Sept. 8) is the perfect time to start a new tradition of reading together. Here are a

few creative ways to get started on your special reading journey!

### Visit Little Free Libraries

Take a walk with your grandchild to visit local Little Free Libraries in your neighborhood.

### Participate in reading reward challenges

Several libraries and businesses provide incentives to children who read. Make this a fun activity with your grandchild by working with them to complete the required reading minutes and enjoy the perks together (pizzas, amusement park trips, etc.)

### Go on a storybook walk

Storybook walks let young readers enjoy a story and the great outdoors, as pages from a children's book are printed and placed in displays along a walkable path at a park, school or neighborhood.

### Get a library card

September also happens to be National Library Card Sign-Up Month, so there's no better time to introduce your grandchild to the nostalgia of libraries. Make a plan to visit the local library together every so often to check out more books.

### Make book-themed crafts

Extend the fun of books beyond the pages and make puppets of your favorite characters, bookmarks inspired by your favorite story or dioramas that showcase a scene from a book.

### Attend author readings and book signings

Many Barnes & Noble stores and other independent bookstores love to host local authors for a read-aloud and book signing.

### Listen to audiobooks

Audiobooks provide a wonderful shared experience to foster the love of learning while on the go!

### Start a grandparent/grandchild book club

Round up some of your friends and their grandchildren and start planning regular meetings to discuss age appropriate books.

### Establish Caribu accounts

Caribu is a video calling app that lets family and friends read together, virtually!

# Austin Then *and* Now

BRITTANY WILLIAMS

*Williams is a writer and Realtor® in Austin where she loves exploring the city's green spaces with her husband, son and daughter.*

## Austin Then and Now: ZACH Theatre

Everyone knows that Austin loves live music, but what about the city's performing arts scene? When it comes to exceptional theater performances, look no further than ZACH Theatre. Over many decades, the institution has transformed into a major regional theater, expanding its facilities and offerings. With many name and location changes over the decades, the ZACH Theatre finally found its permanent home in downtown Austin.

### Then

In 1921, The ZACH Theatre group performed at the Knights of Columbus Hall on East Ninth Street by a group known as the Community Players. Admission was only 50 cents. By 1932, this troupe was called The Austin Little Theater. Later renamed Austin Civic Theater, performances were held at The Playhouse on Guadalupe Street. Sadly, a fire destroyed this location and the players were forced to move again. For a short time, the actors performed in a crumbling venue that had once been a livery stable.

Ultimately named Zachary Scott Theatre Center in 1976 (honoring Austin-born Hollywood star Zachary Scott), the theater made its final move a few years later to its current home located at Riverside Drive and South Lamar.



*Austin-born Hollywood actor, Zachary Scott for whom the ZACH Theatre is named.*

### Now

Finally, in 2011 Zach moved into its permanent, beautiful location on South Lamar Boulevard, right near Ladybird Lake. With 420 seats, the Topfer ZACH Theatre is a state-of-the-art facility designed by well-respected architect, Antoine Predock. The theater's varied programming includes classic and contemporary plays, musicals and original works. In addition to its major productions, the ZACH Theatre offers classes, camps, field trips and workshops for children and adults. Currently celebrating its 82nd season, the ZACH Theatre has something for every audience member. This fall the cast is performing "Beautiful, the Carol King Story." Why not pair two great things about Austin: music and theater? To catch the show and learn more about what ZACH Theatre has to offer, visit their box office webpage at: [zachtheatre.org](http://zachtheatre.org)



*The beautiful ZACH Theatre on South Lamar*

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# September 2024 calendar

Go to [austinfamily.com](http://austinfamily.com) for expanded listings.

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

## Sun 1

**H-E-B Free First Sunday: Texas Wildlife.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Explore Texas wildlife through hands-on activities with local wildlife organizations. Enjoy FREE admission all day. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. FREE. [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com).

**The Wizard of Oz.** 3:30 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 713 Congress Ave. [www.tickets.austintheatre.org](http://www.tickets.austintheatre.org).

**Hideout Kids.** 4 p.m. The Mystery Shop: a spine-tingling improvisational show designed for the whole family, inspired by "Gravity Falls" and "The X-Files." Hideout Theatre, 617 Congress Ave. \$13 - \$20. [www.hideouttheatre.com](http://www.hideouttheatre.com).

**Labor Day Concert.** Join us for a free Labor Day concert with Sammy's Satin Sounds and The Bell Tower. Prete Main Street Plaza, 221 East Main St. [www.roundrocktexas.gov](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov).

## Mon 2

### LABOR DAY

**Science Adventures.** 4 to 4:30 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

## Tue 3

**STEAM Lab 2.0.** 5 to 5:45 p.m. Build LEGO Wedo 2.0 Robotics in an indoor, socially - distanced workshop for ages five and up. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**Big Kid Arts & Crafts.** 5 to 6 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**Art Adventures.** 5 to 6 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**Get Crafty.** 6:15 to 7:45 p.m. Grab your family and bring your friends for Get Crafty, where local artist Rita

Wang will teach us a new, cute craft every month. Howson Branch, 2500 Exposition Blvd. FREE. [www.library.austintexas.gov](http://www.library.austintexas.gov).

**Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas Aviators.** 9:05 p.m. Dell Diamond, 3400 E Palm Valley Blvd. [www.milb.com](http://www.milb.com).

## Wed 4

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas Aviators**, see Tue 3.

## Thu 5

**Math Adventures.** 2 to 2:30 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas Aviators**, see Tue 3.

## Fri 6

**Alphabuddies.** 10:30 to 11 a.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**IF (2024) - Community Cinema.** 7 to 9:30 p.m. Grab chairs and a blanket. Bring family and friends and enjoy this special screening. Community Cinema, 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. [www.mlf.org](http://www.mlf.org)

**Moonlight Movie Night.** 7:30 to 10 p.m. September 6th - "Top Gun: Maverick" Get ready for an epic night of high-flying action under the stars at the Moonlight Movie Night. Yonders Point, 3103 Aten Loop. [www.roundrocktexas.gov](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas**, see Tue 3.

## Sat 7

**The Texas Tribune Festival.** 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. A multi-day celebration of big, bold ideas about politics, public policy and the day's news. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

**Free Day.** 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. On select dates throughout the year, the Garden offers free days where no

admission is charged. Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. FREE. [www.zilkerbotanical.com](http://www.zilkerbotanical.com).

**Pokémon Club.** 9 to 10:30 a.m. Drop in for come-and-go fun with fellow Pokémon fans. Play, trade, chat, draw-you choose. Round Rock Public Library, 200 E. Liberty Ave. [www.roundrocktexas.gov](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov).

**September Art in the Park.** 10 a.m. Join us for the Art in the Park all-ages art program. [www.cityofkyle.com](http://www.cityofkyle.com).

**Read to a Therapy Dog.** 11:30 a.m. to 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](http://www.wblibrary.org).

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**Bat Fest.** 12 p.m. Ann W. Richards Congress Ave. Bridge, 305 S. Congress Ave. \$20 and up. [www.Rd.wayevents.com](http://www.Rd.wayevents.com).

**TLC Meeting.** 2 to 4 p.m. Teen Library Council (ages 10+) For tweens and teens to plan and run library events, create displays and more. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**Grandparents and Friends Tea at the Neill-Cochran House**

**Museum.** 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Enjoy kid-friendly English afternoon tea at one of Austin's oldest residences. Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. [www.nchmuseum.org](http://www.nchmuseum.org).

**中文游园-Chinese Learning**

**Playground @ Westbank.** 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. 中文游园Chinese Learning Playground is a Mandarin Chinese study group for school-age children. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. [www.westbanklibrary.com](http://www.westbanklibrary.com).

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas Aviators**, see Tue 3.

**Sun 8**

**GRANDPARENTS DAY**

**Family Day.** 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Join us for a fun-filled day in the garden with sculpture searches, crafts and FREE admission for visitors of all ages. UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum, 605 Azie Morton Rd. FREE. [www.umlaufsculpture.org](http://www.umlaufsculpture.org).

**Sunday Funday: Sun Catchers.**

11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday Funday Sun Catchers Catch the sun with a fun craft. Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. [www.nchmuseum.org](http://www.nchmuseum.org).

**Grandparents Day Celebration.**

2 to 4 p.m. Grandparents and "grand" friends are very special in children's lives. Here's a day just for them. Baca Center, 301 West Bagdad Ave. [www.roundrocktexas.gov](http://www.roundrocktexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs Las Vegas Aviators**, see Tue 3.

**Mon 9**

**Free Play @ Laura's.** 4 to 6:30 p.m.

Meet up with your friends at the world's best play date. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. [www.westbanklibrary.com](http://www.westbanklibrary.com).

**Tech Warriors.** 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Ages five and up. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

**D&D Open Table.** 5 to 7 p.m. Ages ten and up only. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

CONTINUED: **Science Adventures**, see Mon 2.

**Tue 10**

**Free Days - Blanton Museum of Art.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Blanton Museum of Art is free for all visitors on the 2nd Tuesday of every month. Blanton Museum of Art, 200 E Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. FREE. [www.blantonmuseum.org](http://www.blantonmuseum.org).

**Round Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats.** 7:05 p.m. Dell Diamond, 3400 E Palm Valley Blvd. [www.milb.com](http://www.milb.com).

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CONTINUED: **STEAM Lab 2.0**, see Tue 3; **Big Kids Arts & Crafts**, see Tue 3; **Art Adventures**, see Tue 3.

### Wed 11

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats**, see Tue 11.

### Thu 12

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats**, see Tue 11; **Math Adventures**, see Thu 5.

### Fri 13

**Austin Parks Foundation's Movies in the Park – "Barbie."** 6 to 10 p.m. A series of films in partnership with Rocket Cinema. Mueller Lake Park, 4550 Mueller Blvd. FREE. [www.austinparks.org](http://www.austinparks.org).

**The Garfield Movie (2024) – Community Cinema.** 7 to 9:30 p.m. Grab chairs and a blanket, bring family and friends, and enjoy this special screening. Community Cinema, 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. [www.mlf.org](http://www.mlf.org)

CONTINUED: **Alphabuddies**, see Fri 6; **Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats**, see Tue 11.

### Sat 14

**SAFE Austin Touch a Truck.** 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Touch-A-Truck is a fun-filled event where kids of all ages get the chance to touch, explore and climb on just about any vehicle they can imagine. Touch-A-Truck has them all, from fire trucks and ambulances to backhoes and bulldozers! Q2 Stadium, 10414 Mc Kalla Pl. \$20 [www.give.safeaustin.org/campaign/touch-a-truck-2024/c559103](http://www.give.safeaustin.org/campaign/touch-a-truck-2024/c559103)

**ESB MACC: Viva Mexico 2024.** 4 to 9 p.m. Save the date for Viva Mexico! Pan American Recreation Center, 2100 E 3rd St. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats**, see Tue 11; **中文游园-Chinese Learning Playground @ Westbank**, see Sat 7.

### Sun 15

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express vs. Sacramento River Cats**, see Tue 11.

### Mon 16

**Mad Math.** 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Ages five and up. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

CONTINUED: **Science Adventures**, see Mon 2; **D&D Open Table**, see Mon 9; **Free Play @ Laura's**, see Mon 11.

### Tue 17

**Buda Arts Festival.** 5 to 10 p.m. Plein air painting competitions, busking musicians, film screenings, art demos, artisan markets, artist meetups and kids' activities. Inspired Minds Art Center, 121 Main St. FREE. [www.inspiredminds.art/budartsfestival](http://www.inspiredminds.art/budartsfestival).

CONTINUED: **STEAM Lab 2.0** see Tue 3; **Big Kids Arts & Crafts**, see Tue 3; **Art Adventures**, see Tue 3.

### Wed 18

**Zine Night.** 5:30 to 7 p.m. Learn how to make and craft a zine with the Austin Public Library. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. Gallery. FREE. [www.library.austintexas.gov](http://www.library.austintexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **Buda Arts Festival**, see Tue 17.

### Thu 19

**Get Ready Central Texas Emergency Preparedness Fair.** 3 to 7 p.m. Join the City of Austin Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) department at the third annual Get Ready Central Texas fair. ACC Rio Grande Campus, 1218 West Ave. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

**Board with Books.** 5 to 8 p.m. Explore the Central Library's board game collection at this monthly board game meetup. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. Gallery. FREE. [www.library.austintexas.gov](http://www.library.austintexas.gov).

**Paw Print Storytime & Craft.** 5 to 5:30 p.m. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

CONTINUED: **Math Adventures**, see Thu 5; **Buda Arts Festival**, see Tue 17.

### Fri 20

**Lego Lab.** 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Manchaca Rd. Branch, 5500 Manchaca Rd. FREE. [www.library.austintexas.gov](http://www.library.austintexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **Alphabuddies**, see Fri 6; **Buda Arts Festival**, see Tue 17.

### Sat 21

**Public Tour and Sculpture Garden Storytime.** 12 to 1 p.m. Join our docent for an entertaining tour through the garden. Kids can join our team for Sculpture Garden Storytime. UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum, 605 Azie Morton Rd. \$1 - \$7. [www.umlauptsculpture.org](http://www.umlauptsculpture.org).

**Waco Water Lantern Festival.** 4:30 to 8:30 p.m. The Waco Water Lantern Festival is bringing people together for a celebration of light and community. McLane Stadium, 1001 S Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. \$34.99 and up. [www.tickets.waterlanternfestival.com](http://www.tickets.waterlanternfestival.com).

**Q2 Stadium / Austin FC vs Houston.** 7:30 p.m. 10414 Mc Kalla Pl. [www.austintexas.gov](http://www.austintexas.gov).

CONTINUED: **中文游园-Chinese Learning Playground @ Westbank**, see Sat 7; **TLC Meeting**, see Sat 7; **Buda Arts Festival**, see Tue 17.

### Sun 22

#### MUSEUM DAY

**CASA Superhero Run.** 7:30 to 11 a.m. A longtime CASA tradition, the 15th annual Superhero Run will be held at Circuit of The Americas with a kids' 5K fun run. 9201 Circuit of the Americas Blvd. \$10 - \$50. [www.casasuperherorun.com](http://www.casasuperherorun.com).

**Austin Museum Day at the Bullock.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit the Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com).

**Austin Museum Day.** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Step back in time to when Texas was an untamed frontier. Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms, 10621 Pioneer Farms Dr. [www.pioneerfarms.org](http://www.pioneerfarms.org).

### Mon 23

**Physics Fanatics** 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Ages five and up. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org).

CONTINUED: **Science Adventures**, see Mon 2; **D&D Open Table**, see Mon 9; **Free Play @ Laura's**, see Mon 11.

**Tue 24**

CONTINUED: **STEAM Lab 2.0**, see Tue 3; **Big Kids' Arts & Crafts**, see Tue 3; **Art Adventures**, see Tue 3.

**Thu 26**

CONTINUED: **Math Adventures**, see Thu 5.

**Fri 27**

**American Indian Heritage Day Public Celebration.** 6 to 8 p.m. Join the Bullock Museum and Great Promise for a celebration of the 12th Annual American Indian Heritage Day. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. www.thestoryoftexas.com.

**Friday Fun Nights at Yonders Point.**

Get ready for a slice of fun at our Pizza Party. Kinningham Park, 1000 Southcreek Dr. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Alphabuddies**, see Fri 6.

**Sat 28**

**Special Needs Family Jamboree.**

9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Come join the Round Rock Parks and Recreation

Department and Casey's Circle at the Play for All Park. FREE. Play for All Park, 151 North A.W. Grimes Blvd. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

**Annual Fall Fair at Palm Valley Lutheran Church.**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The community is invited to this free, family event featuring entertainment, a petting zoo, inflatables, children's games, bingo, food, crafts and more. Palm Valley Lutheran Church, 2500 E. Palm Valley Blvd. FREE. www.pvlc.org.

**Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Uhland Fall Fest.**

10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Step into an autumn wonderland at the inaugural Uhland Fall Fest in the picturesque town of Uhland. 39 Dairy Rd. \$0 - \$15. www.uhlandfallfest.com.

**8th Annual Mermaid Capital of Texas Fest - Downtown St. Faire.**

10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mermaid Promenade & Downtown St. Faire, Downtown San Marcos. FREE. www.nbchamber.com/community-events/8th-annual-mermaid-capital-of-texas-fest

**Q2 Stadium / Austin FC vs Salt Lake.**

7:30 p.m. 10414 Mc Kalla Pl. www.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **中文游园-Chinese Learning Playground @ Westbank**, see Sat 7.

**Sun 29**

**Disney Jr. Live on Tour: Let's Play.**

4 p.m. Mickey is getting ready for the biggest playdate ever with all his favorite pals including Minnie and Goofy, the Puppy Dog Pals and more. Bass Concert Hall, 2350 Robert Dedman Dr. \$33.50 and up. www.texasperformingarts.org.

CONTINUED: **Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Uhland Fall Fest**, see Sat 28.

**Mon 30**

**Wacky Science.** 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. Ages five and up. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. www.wblibrary.org.

CONTINUED: **Science Adventures**, see Mon 2; **D&D Open Table**, see Mon 9; **Free Play @ Laura's**, see Mon 11.

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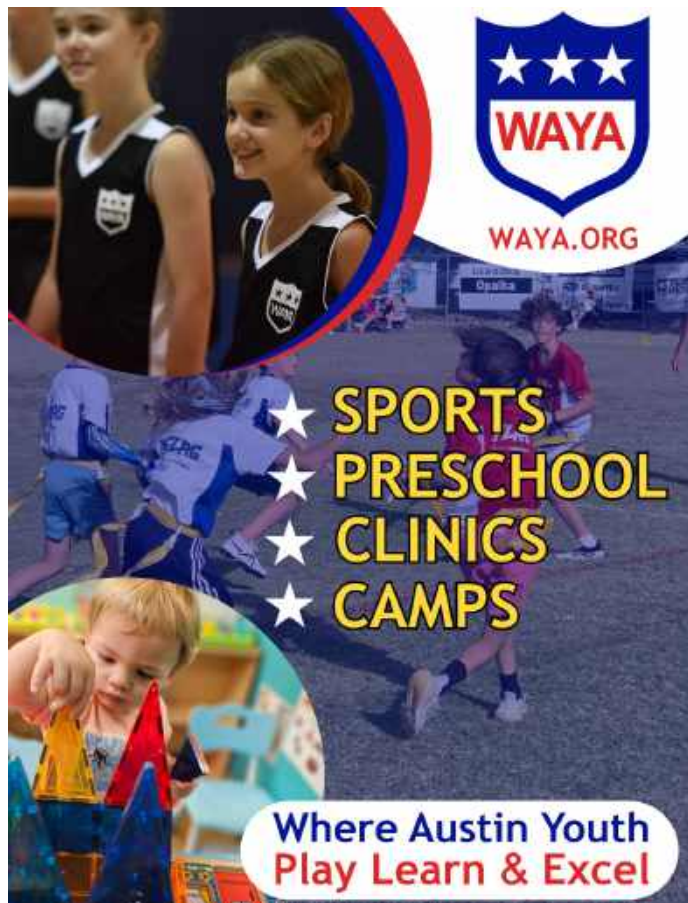


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## Materials you'll need:

- Cardboard
- Scissors
- Hot glue
- Colored paper
- Tissue paper
- Glue
- Safety gloves

### Step one: choose your shape and cut

A piñata can be any shape you want. Choose your shape and cut it out of cardboard. Don't forget to get all sides – front, back and the connecting pieces that create dimension.

### Step two: glue the cardboard pieces together

Use hot glue to glue the cardboard pieces together and turn your cardboard cutouts into a 3d figure. Be safe and protect your hands from the heat by wearing some safety gloves.

### Step three: add a colorful base

Get creative by adding some color. Glue down pieces of colored paper to your cardboard base. You can add as little or as many colors as your heart desires to make your piece come to life.

### Step four: pick your tissue paper and cut

Just like your base, pick out some colorful tissue to add movement and texture to your piñata. Don't be afraid to be bold with your color choices. Cut out as many two-inch strips of tissue paper as you'll need to cover the piñata. Create fringe by making vertical cuts up the strips, leaving the top 1/3 of the strip intact for easy application.

### Step five: glue tissue paper to your piñata

Take your fringed strips of tissue paper and apply the glue to the top 1/3 of the strip. Traditionally, the fringe is applied horizontally, but make this your own and apply it as you wish.

### Step six: hang it, hit it, celebrate!

After your piñata is dry, hang it up for a decoration or fill it with candy or small toys. Take it to a party and hit it with a broomstick until it break open. Have fun!



## Piñatas!

Do you know what makes any celebration a little more joyful? Creating your very own homemade piñata! In Latin America and in the United States piñatas are a fun addition to any birthday party. It's time to celebrate and create your own piñata!

*Thinkery, a nonprofit and Austin's children's museum, brings joy to learning through play-based, steam exploration for all children so they cultivate a lifelong love of learning and thrive. Learn more at [thinkeryaustin.org](http://thinkeryaustin.org).*

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## EVERYONE AROUND YOU TURNS INTO A ROBOT, WHAT NEXT?

4TH AND 5TH GRADE WINNERS  
WILL RECEIVE:

- Party Package to Dave & Buster's for you and 9 friends
- Plaque showing your win presented at your school
- 2 signed books by children's author Carmen Oliver
- Picture and essay published in Austin Family Magazine

RUNNERS UP IN 4TH AND 5TH GRADE  
WILL RECEIVE:

- Plaque showing your win presented at your school
- 2 signed books by children's author Carmen Oliver
- Picture and essay published in Austin Family Magazine



SCAN QR CODE  
TO ENTER

DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 16 AT 5 P.M.

All entries must be submitted online

Rules can be found at [www.austinfamily.com](http://www.austinfamily.com)

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