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Creating Meaningful Family Memories

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Inside: Calendar • Austin in Action • Kid Zone • Education Guide

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CONTENTS

COLUMNS

- 8 Family Matters.**
Creating Meaningful Family Memories
Check www.austinfamily.com for the Spanish version.
- 10 Learning Curve.**
Parents or Children: Who is Teaching Whom?
- 14 Lifelines.**
6 Awesome Outdoor Adventures
- 18 Mom Minute.**
An Interview with Laura McNabb.
- 24 Kid Zone.**
It's So Much Fun... It's Spooky!

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 4 Austin In Action.**
News and Notes
- 20 Calendar.**
Check www.austinfamily.com for daily updates.

EXTRAS

- 12 Education Guide.**
- 17 Cover Kids Contest.**
- 25 Young Writers Contest.**

TUNE IN



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

FEATURE



6

31 Days of Fun



Faye, a 2024 AFM Cover Kid Winner, loves to bake, go swimming, spend time with friends, and play with her kitties at home. She also enjoys being a Daisy in Girl Scouts.

Photo taken by Jordan Ashley Photography.



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Editor's Note



CELESTE DIANNE WADE

Wade is a writer, public speaker, and a popular health coach in Austin. The eldest of seven kids and an only child, she loves travel adventures with family. She has worked on over eighty films and television shows with the themes of parenting, family, and health.

Hello Austin Family. I'm Celeste Dianne Wade, and I'm so excited to be the editor of *Austin Family* magazine! I wasn't born in Austin but got here as quickly as possible. I've been a big fan of *Austin Family* since a friend recommended that I pick up a copy at a local business to get ideas for things to do around Austin with my family. With a background in television, film, music, and news, I naturally watch a lot of TV. Then on Thursday mornings, I started seeing *Austin Family* featured on FOX 7 News and I was so impressed by the magazine and all it has to offer to native Austinites and new Austinites alike.

Today, I'm honored to join the *Austin Family* magazine team. Thank you to the Publisher, Kaye Kemper Lowak, for the opportunity to be your Editor. Thank you Susie Forbes, the Graphic Designer and Social Media Manager for making us look good in print, online, and social media too.

Thank you to Jess Archer, my predecessor, who did a great job and made this a smooth transition. We all wish her much success in her future endeavors.

And of course, a big thank you to our October writing team, Alison Bogle, Catherine Michalk, and Dr. Betty Richardson, who joined me in creating interesting, informative, and fun articles as we embark on this holiday season.

Austin is an amazing city to raise kids and *Austin Family* magazine will continue to serve you as your go-to resource for smart parenting and healthy homes. Our journey together begins with 31 Days of Fun!

A vibrant pink graphic celebrating Hispanic & Latino Heritage Month. It features colorful flowers, leaves, and a microphone. The text reads "CELEBRATE HISPANIC & LATINO HERITAGE MONTH" in large, bold letters. The Austin PBS logo is in the top right, and the PBS KIDS logo is in the bottom center. Below the graphic are two small images: one showing children in costumes and another showing a family. To the right of the images, it says "Celebrate all month long with *Alma's Way*, *Rosie's Rules*, books, recipes, music and more!". At the bottom, a yellow banner contains the text "PBS.org/Parents/Hispanic-Heritage-Month".

Austin IN ACTION

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

By The Numbers

4 Regions

Texas has 4 blooming regions, so wildflowers bloom year-round.

30,000

Pounds of wildflower seed sown by TxDOT each year.

1932

Year TxDOT started sowing wildflower seeds.

All Sources: www.ftp.txdot.gov



Love Bluebonnets? October is the Optimum Month to Plant.

Want bluebonnets in your yard in the spring? October is the time to plant.

If you are new to Austin or you're a native Austinite, bluebonnets are part of Austin culture and our way of life. In the spring, we love to take our little ones, our fur babies, or selfies of us in the bluebonnets.

People can be seen all around Austin, on the side of the roads in the springtime, dressed up to take the yearly picture in the bluebonnets. Perhaps this is the year you will plant some in your yard.

Things to consider: where you plant, how many seeds to sow, location in your yard you want to plan in spring to be unmowed so that your bluebonnets have the best chance to flourish. Read more on the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center website: www.wildflower.org/learn/how-to/grow-bluebonnets



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Austin Kiddie Limits: 2 Kids Free With Each Adult Paid Admission!

Planning to attend Austin City Limits? Perhaps it would be fun to include your children in the fun. Austin Kiddie Limits has loads of activities for you to do with your children eight and under for no additional charge!

However, this year it will be necessary for them to register for the Tag-Your-Kid program to receive a wristband, which will serve as their ticket for festival entry. Read more about Tag-Your-Kid requirements.

Please note, a child ticket (3-8) will be required for platinum access. This ticket can be purchased once you place a platinum ticket in your cart. Kids two years and younger are free in platinum areas with a ticketed adult. Any kids nine years old and above will need to have a platinum ticket for entry into the platinum areas. Proof of age will be required for entry. Tag-Your-Kid wristbands are not required for children with a platinum kids ticket, but you are welcome to register your child if you wish.

Stepping Stone School Announces Exciting Grand Re-Opening!

Stepping Stone School, a privately owned preschool that provides premier early education and care to central Texas families, announced its grand-reopening at its Cedar Park campus. The campus is located near 183 and Jollyville Road, across from the Lake Creek Shopping Center at 12301 Hymeadow Drive.

Stepping Stone School celebrates this state-of-the-art, newly renovated campus that reflects their progressive Future Strong™ program which is dedicated to the well-being of children and their families. The upgraded learning environments are designed to help children develop independence, coordination, concentration, and a sense of order and peace.



Stepping Stone School uses research-based strategies to foster optimal learning and social development, providing state-of-the-art classroom settings that enhance teacher-child interactions and engaged learning. The Cedar Park campus is now taking fall enrollments and welcomes Austin families to take a tour of the facility. For more information, please visit www.stepsingstoneschool.com/campuses/stepping-stone-school-at-cedar-park.

Camping, Kids and F1

Does your family love camping? Does your family love racing? Austin has one of the premiere events for kids of all ages at Circuit of the Americas (COTA). Families can experience an F1 Sprint as well as performances by Grammy-Award winners Eminem and Sting. Children three years and under receive complimentary grounds passes for general admission access.

COTA now offers camping on site. Did you know that you can camp at the venue and be close to the event.

Fun things to do if you and your kids want to camp:

• PETTING ZOO

Get up close with our adorable animals, enjoy daily from 12:00 PM to 5:00 PM. Perfect for a family-friendly day out in nature!

• MOVIE NIGHT

Kick-off your weekend with the welcome s'mores and outdoor movie night. Enjoy mouthwatering s'mores and popcorn while watching a movie under the night sky.

• ARTS & CRAFTS

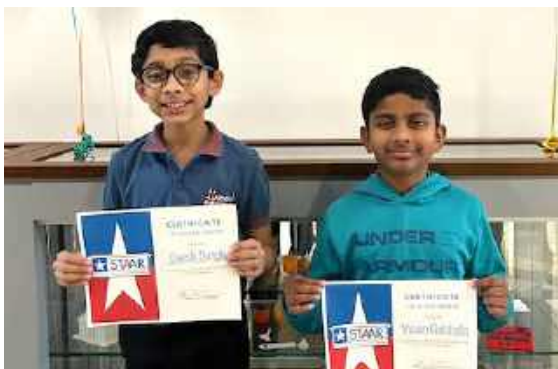
Dive into creative adventures each day with tie-dye, friendship bracelets, and racecar painting from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Whether you're a seasoned artist or just looking to have fun, there's something for everyone.

• NIGHTLY S'MORES

Each evening, gather around the campfire and enjoy hand-roasted s'mores! It's the perfect way to end your day under the stars.



Photo Courtesy Circuit of the Americas.



Harmony Science Academy-Cedar Park Students, Darsh Singh (Left) & Viaan Gubbala (Right) Scored 100% STAAR Math Score.

Two Elementary Students Score 100% on the STAAR Math Test

This summer Harmony Arts Academy Cedar Park students Viaan Gubbala, a current 4th grader, and Darish Singh, a current 5th grader achieved a 100% math score on the STAAR test.

Darsh, whose teacher Joy Anderson said he loves solving problems on the board, explained that math equations fascinate him.

Viaan's teacher, Nicole Miller, said, "Viaan has proven that determination and a love for learning can truly pay off. His enthusiasm for problem-solving and commitment to excellence are inspiring, making him a standout student and a role model for young learners everywhere. Keep an eye on this math whiz—he's just getting started!"

"I am thrilled to recognize Darsh and Viaan for their outstanding achievements on our STEM-focused campus! They have demonstrated exceptional dedication and skill by earning a perfect score, and this remarkable accomplishment is a testament to their hard work, perseverance and passion for learning," said Principal Ayse Tun.

- 8.** Make a vision board for hopes and dreams, using crayons, stickers, or pictures from magazines.
- 9.** Read a book and snuggle. Then if your little one hasn't started reading yet have the child look at the pictures and tell you the story based on the pictures.
- 10.** Write a story and make a book with pictures.
- 11.** Throw a game night. Choose any board game you have at home.
- 12.** Make a card house.
- 13.** Make a time capsule for 2024. Write down memories of things you've done this year and put them in an envelope to open next October.
- 14.** Walk a pet. Don't have a pet? Ask a neighbor if you could walk their dog. A fun way for a family to help a neighbor.
- 15.** Art day. Make a picture to place on the refrigerator or frame it.
- 16.** Draw a picture of your teacher and give it just for fun.
- 17.** Make an easy recipe such as a basic soup.
- 18.** Take a walk in the neighborhood, walk in a different direction, and count the animals you see.
- 19.** Make a fort in the house with blankets and pillows.
- 20.** Try a new food, such as a different flavor of apple.
- 21.** Tell your child three things you love about him. Next have each person share three things they love about each other.
- 22.** Play the best/worst game. Ask your children the best things and the worst things that happened in their day. This is a great way to find out about your child's day on the way home from school.
- 23.** Plan a date night. For a special treat, dress up, have a candlelight at home, go out to eat, or you could make a night of it in your living room, taking pictures, setting the table, pulling out the chair before someone has a seat, etc.
- 24.** Designate a snack night. Use a muffin tin to make it easy. You can line it with foil or cups and put little snacks inside such as fruits, vegetables, or chicken fingers, etc. It's a fun way to teach serving sizes to kids.
- 25.** Draw with sidewalk chalk. Make a picture or hopscotch and play with your little one.
- 26.** Does your child like video games? Play the video game with the child or watch the kids play and cheer them on along the way!
- 27.** Make a paper airplane and fly it.
- 28.** Make a movie with a tablet or smartphone.
- 29.** Play hide and seek in the house.
- 30.** Prepare a picnic for the living room.
- 31.** Throw a dance party. Declare it's party time and play a song on your phone.

Parenting can be fun in the midst of the chaos that can arise. Make memories. Enjoy the holiday season.

Decide what fun things you'd like to keep doing in the months ahead. Ask your kids what other fun things that they can think of that the family can do throughout the year.

Learn what your kids like most, explore new fun ideas your kids may think of, and discover how interaction builds within your family along the way.

Take pictures as you're having fun. Share your pictures on Austin Family's Facebook and Instagram with #31DaysofFun. We can't wait to see the love and fun your family is having during the month. Intentionally nurturing a home of play and fun creates memories that will last a lifetime. You will never regret having fun with your kids. They grow up so fast and change so quickly. Do something fun today!

Family Matters



DR. BETTY RICHARDSON

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



Creating Meaningful Family Memories

Q My husband and I work long hours. We don't spend much time with our kids. We have a twelve-year-old son and a daughter who is eight. The kids complain that we don't attend school activities as often as other parents. To make matters worse, my sister tells me that we are not taking the time to create family memories. What are family memories? Can they be created or do they just happen? Can you give me some examples? Is it possible to work a lot and still find time to make family memories?

A Great questions; you are not alone. Many families struggle to find work and home-life balance and then feel added pressure when it comes to creating lasting family memories.

1. Why are family memories important? Good family memories promote positive emotional health and provide strength in difficult times. Revisiting family memories provides a shared sense of belonging while strengthening relationships between family members.

2. Family memories are created by activities shared over time. These memories become part of the oral history/ tradition of the family that gets told and retold over the years.

3. Keep activities simple and doable so they can be replicated. Examples of activities you can do now that can generate family memories: adding a special note to a lunch sack, volunteering, weekend adventures visiting different playgrounds around town, reading a favorite book, nature walks, scrapbooking, holiday baking, organizing an annual family activity, or even going to a place to eat regularly.

4. Creating family memories can be done on a budget. One busy single mother without money or time, popped a lot of popcorn and held a popcorn fight. My grown daughter and I reminisce about volunteering to teach crafts to the elderly in nursing homes. The key to nurturing family memories is that the activities must be special to your family.

5. Be intentional. Put a calendar on the refrigerator. Add family activities. Listen to your kids and if attending something is important to them, do what you can to make it happen. If attending a school activity is important to your kids, do your best to attend. (In response to your original question, here is a cautionary note: never having a parent attend a school event could be traumatic, requiring therapy in adult life.)

6. Similar to looking at family photos, sharing family memories helps us feel connected to our family and how we are connected to the world.

As you are making family memories, I hope you will share them on the Austin Family Facebook or Instagram pages with the hashtag #AustinFamilyMemories.

VISITAR www.austinfamily.com
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- Sarah F. (6yrs old)

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AustinEnergy.com/CommunityConnections



Parents or Children: Who is Teaching Whom?

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.



I am a mom of three children - boy/girl twin tweens and a 17-year-old-daughter. I struggled with infertility when my husband and I first started trying for children, which left me with even longer to dream about what parenting our firstborn would be like. I pictured holding and feeding our daughter, teaching her that someone was there to care for her and respond to her needs. I envisioned reading to her and teaching her to tie her shoes through patient instruction. She would try different foods, and we would take family trips to teach her about people and places. As she grew, I would teach her about friendships, love, how to drive, and how to navigate launching into the world as an adult.

Never, though, did I imagine just how much my daughter - and all of my children - would teach me. Little did I know that they would turn me inside out, reshape my heart and mind, and permanently alter who I was as a person. I would be put back together

as something entirely different - wiser, stronger, more patient and empathetic, less selfish, infinitely more tired, but, my goodness, so much better for the whole experience of loving them and being the one they call mom, mama love, mommy, or moooooooooooooooooom, depending upon the mood, or the ask.

The number of things that our children can teach us is seemingly endless and includes:

Patience and self-regulation - Whew! There is nothing more trying than some of the situations we find ourselves in as parents! We are forced, however, to remember that the connection with our child is more important than bulldozing our way to what we want. We step away, take deep breaths, or use other methods to center ourselves and continue dealing with the situation.

Time management and organization Ever try to get out the door for school drop off and/or work all while juggling

hair brushing, breakfast making, lost shoe finding, and dog feeding? Don't get me started on mixing in sporty kids and their early practice drop-offs! If so, then you know how our time management and organizational muscles are forced to grow when we become parents.

Sociability - Especially when our children are younger, we are the masters of their social calendars. If we want our babies to learn sociability, we have to make an effort to greet the other moms at library storytime or the checkout workers at the store. To facilitate our children's social skill development, we host and attend playdates and reach out to other families to form connections. Our kids force us to step outside of our comfort zones so that we model being socially engaged with the world around us.

Creativity and flexibility - Make a rigid plan and your child will quickly unmake it for you with a meltdown,

bathroom stop, sprained ankle, or something else you didn't anticipate. As a parent, you have to adjust on the fly — coming up with fun activities when rain cancels your beach day or turning your restaurant napkin into a canvas for tic-tac-toe.

Negotiation - There is no better negotiator than a tween or teen! Intentional parents become savvy at deciding when to remain firm and where there is room for compromise. The end goal is a child who can make his own decisions and knows how to respectfully advocate for himself, so it is worth it to listen and consider our child's point of view.

Self-reflection - One of the most important things we can do as parents is to notice our reactions to what our children say and do. If our reactions are stronger than warranted, there is likely some underlying baggage that we're bringing to the moment. Parenting requires us to identify what is going on and work through it to ensure that our baggage doesn't become our child's future baggage.

Selflessness - There is not a person among us who gets excited about sleeping with a post-nightmare foot in the ribs, cleaning up endless rounds of vomit, or staying up late to make sure that our teen gets home safely, but we do these things and more without question for these young people that we love. As a parent, you learn to give, and give, and then give some more.

Humility - There is nothing like parenting to knock you down a peg or two. You will feel like you fail over and over, even as you try your hardest to get it "right." In truth, the only way to fail is to not keep trying to do your best for your child. Our kids also learn when we model making mistakes, acknowledge them, and move forward to try again.

New interests - My children have helped me discover new music that I like, I've learned how volleyball is scored, and what constitutes anime. If the local trivia night ever featured questions about French bulldogs or tortoises, I would clean up! Our children

teach us so much about the world when we tune in to what interests them.

Parenting turned out to be so much more than I could have possibly imagined. My daydreams of teaching my children life lessons were only part of the story and not even the best part. What has turned out to be the real gift has been to grow and learn along with them, to let them shape me into

someone who can be an even better mother to them than the person I was before. My children have turned out to be my greatest teachers, and I am so grateful for their lessons.



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2024 EDUCATION GUIDE



PRIVATE SCHOOL

	GRADES	LOCATION(S)	PHONE	WEBSITE
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CATHEDRAL SCHOOL OF ST. MARY'S	PreK3-8	DT Austin	512-476-1480	www.smcschoolaustin.org
CHALLENGER SCHOOL	PreK-8	Avery Ranch	512-341-8000	www.challengerschool.com
CHALLENGER SCHOOL	PreSch-K	Pond Springs	512-258-1299	www.challengerschool.com
CHALLENGER SCHOOL	PreSch-K	Round Rock	512-255-8844	www.challengerschool.com
HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK-8	North Austin	512-246-4455	www.holyfamilycs.org
KIRBY HALL SCHOOL	PreK4-8	Central Austin	512-474-1770	www.kirbyhallschool.org
PARAGON PREP	3-8 yrs	North Austin	512-459-5040	www.paragonprep.com
REDEEMER LUTHERAN SCHOOL	15 mos-Grade 8	North Austin	512-451-6478	www.redeemerschool.net
SAN JUAN DIEGO CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	9-12	South Austin	512-804-1935	www.sjdchs.org
SANTA CRUZ CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK-8	Buda	512-312-2137	www.sccstx.org
ST. AUSTIN CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK3-8	DT Austin	512-477-3751	www.staustinschool.org
ST. DOMINIC SAVIO CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL	9-12	North Austin	512-388-8846	www.saviochs.org
ST. GABRIEL'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL + ST. MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY	PreK-8	West Austin	512-327-7755	www.sgs-austin.org
ST. HELEN CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK4-8	Georgetown	512-869-3244	www.shclsions.org
ST. IGNATIUS MARTYR CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK3-8	South Austin	512-442-8547	www.school.st-ignatius.org
ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC SCHOOL	K-8	North Austin	512-614-6622	www.slcsaustin.org
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK3-12	Taylor	512-352-2313	www.stmarystaylor.org
ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL	PreK-8	North Austin	512-451-7105	www.st-theresa.org

KINDERGARTEN/PREK MONTESSORI DAY CARE

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CARPE DIEM	6 wks-12 yrs	Pflugerville	512-572-0400	www.endeavormontessori.com
ENDEAVOR MONTESSORI	Inf-PreK	Leander	512-957-9159	www.carpediemschool.com
EXTEND-A-CARE YMCA FOR KIDS	3-8 yrs	77 area campuses	512-472-9402	www.austinyymca.org/locations/extend-a-care
SNAPDRAGON PRESCHOOL (Must be potty-trained)	3-5 yrs	North Austin	512-593-6226	www.snapdragonpreschool.com
SPICEWOOD COUNTRY SCHOOL	2-5	North Austin	512-346-2992	www.spicewoodcountry.com
STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS	Infant-12 yrs	17 locations throughout Austin area	512-459-0258	www.steppingstoneschool.com
YMCA CENTRAL TEXAS	Infant-12 yrs	6 locations	512-615-5511	www.ymcactx.org

CHARTER SCHOOL

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BASIS CEDAR PARK	K-8 expanding to 12	Cedar Park	737-263-5890	www.enrollbasistx.com/cedarpark
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HOMESCHOOL

STUDIO PREP	3-12	East Austin	512-919-4177	www.studioprep.org
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AFTERSCHOOL/ENRICHMENT

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AUSTIN LEARNING CENTER	Westlake & Online	512-330-9007	www.austinlearningcenter.com
ARMSTRONG COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL	Westlake	512-474-2331	www.acmsaustin.org
AVERY RANCH DANCE AND MUSIC	North Austin	512-658-2996	www.dancediscovery.com
CAMERON PARK ZOO	Waco	254-750-8400	www.cameronparkzoo.com
CORDOVAN ART STUDIO	NW and SW Austin, Round Rock, Leander, Cedar Park	512-275-4040	www.cordovanartschool.com
DANCE DISCOVERY	Central Austin	512-419-7611	www.austin-dance.org
IDEA LAB	North Austin	512-494-6744	www.austin.idealabkids.com
JUMP GYMNASTICS	North & South Austin	512-593-6226	www.jump-austin.com
KIDSACTING	18 Area Locations	512-836-5437	www.kidsactingstudio.com
MAD SCIENCE	Locations throughout Austin and San Antonio	512-892-1143	www.austin.madscience.org
MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU	Central Austin	512-879-7553	www.mastergohring.com
NATIONAL CHILDREN'S CHORUS	Austin	Book audition online	www.nationalchildrenschorus.com/auditions
NITRO SWIM	Cedar Park Bee Cave	512-259-7999 512-861-7946	www.nitroswim.com
PARTNERS IN PARENTING	North, South, Zoom	info@pipaustin.org	www.pipaustin.org
ROCK ABOUT CLIMBING	Various Adventures	512-415-0804	www.rock-about.com
ROUND ROCK SERVING CENTER	Round Rock	512-244-2431	www.rrasc.org
STICKY FINGERS COOKING SCHOOL	In Area Schools		www.stickyfingerscooking.com/
SWITCH WILLO STABLES	North Austin	512-920-2276	www.switchwillo.com
SYNERGY DANCE	Westlake	512-327-4130	www.synergystudio.com
WAYA	West Austin	512-473-2528	www.waya.org
YMCA AUSTIN	5 Austin locations, Bastrop, Buda, Dripping Springs, Kyle	512-730-9622	www.austinyymca.org
YMCA CENTRAL TEXAS	Burnet, Georgetown, Hutto, Leander, Liberty Hill, Round Rock, Waco, Gateway	512-246-9622	www.ymcactx.org

RESOURCES

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FOR KIDS SAKE	Central	512-476-9490	www.for-kids-sake.com
HAND TO HOLD	Zoom, Podcast	855-424-6428	www.handtohold.org
PARTNERS IN PARENTING	North, South, Zoom	info@pipaustin.org	www.pipaustin.org

6 Awesome Outdoor Adventures

Lifelines

CATHERINE MICHALK

Michalk is a native Austinite, writer, and mom of three. You can follow her family's adventures at www.catherinemichalk.com



Photo Credit: Lost Zip Pines

It is finally fall in Austin, the season Austinites can walk outdoors without feeling like they stepped into an oven. Austin has a great outdoor culture and you can find fun things to do all over the city. However, now is a great time of year to do something a little more adventurous with your kids, and perhaps even push them to do something new. Whether you still have toddlers, or your kids are nearly as tall as you are, there is sure to be something on our outdoor adventures list that will get them excited!

1. Visit the Troll

Malin's Fountain, a giant troll sculpture located in Pease Park, is fairly new to Austin, installed last spring. The sculpture, created by Danish artist Thomas Dambo, is made with 80% recycled and found material, which makes it a great spot to start up a conversation with your kids about recycling and conservation. To visit the troll head, go to the park entrance

at Kingsbury and Parkway. From there, walk north through Kingsbury Common, then follow the sign that says "Art in the Park." Malin the troll is seated in a wooded area to the left. While you are at the park make sure you stop by the playground at Kingsbury Common and the treehouse immersive art installation, both located steps from the troll. Parking can be sparse, so check out peasepark.org/parking for suggestions on where to park, or public transportation options.

2. Hike McKinney Falls State Park

McKinney Falls State Park is the only state park inside Austin city limits. Located in Southeast Austin, the park offers hiking, biking, camping, fishing, and swimming — all close enough to home to justify a day trip. The park has several easy hiking trails that are great for families and beginner hikers. If the weather is nice you can even swim at the upper or lower falls. Parking is ample, but you may want to make a reservation if you go on a weekend or during a

holiday week as the park reaches maximum capacity quickly during those times.

3. Visit Sweet Eats Farm

Head up to Georgetown for a taste of fall (even if the temperature isn't quite there yet) at the Sweet Eats Farm Fall Festival. We usually think of Sweet Eats during strawberry picking season, but Sweet Eats offers year-round events and their Fall Festival is one of the best. At the Festival you will find a plethora of fall-themed activities including a corn maze, petting zoo, wagon rides, and pig races. Pick out a pumpkin from the giant pumpkin patch with over 40 varieties of pumpkins. Paint it at the festival, or take it home for carving. If you visit on a Friday or Saturday evening you can even catch a fireworks show. Check out the website for a full list of seasonal shows and activities.

4. Zipline Through The Trees

If your kids are thrill-seekers fall is a great time to take them zip-

lining, and there are several spots around Austin to get your fill. Lake Travis Zipline Adventures, Wimberley Zipline Adventures, and Zip Lost Pines all promise a memorable experience zooming among the trees of Central Texas. Lake Travis Zip Lines and Wimberley Zip Lines are geared toward older kids, with weight and age requirements that exclude small children. Zip Lost Pines, however, offers a “Little Zipper Hour” for kids between the ages of 2-15. This special zipline adventure goes a little slower so it’s perfect for kids who want to participate, but aren’t ready for the full adventure. Be sure to check out all the FAQs before you make a reservation to make sure you and your kids meet all the rider requirements.

5. Play At The All Abilities Playground

Round Rock boasts one of the best playgrounds in the Austin Metro area. Play For All Abilities Park truly lives up to its name, with 140,000 square feet of safe and accessible fun. Kids can explore the sensory sandbox, swing on a variety of accessible swings, and make music with the musical elements. Bring a riding toy for your kids to race around the Nyle Maxwell Race Track before you visit Brushy Creek Village, a miniature city where your kids can let their imaginations run wild. If the weather is still hot your kids can cool down under the misters at “Missy’s Car Wash.” No matter what abilities your kids have or how old they are, they are sure to find something fun to do at the All Abilities Playground!

6. Learn At The Austin Nature and Science Center

The Austin Nature and Science Center is an Austin fixture, established in 1960 and tucked into a corner near Zilker Park. The center offers a variety of outdoor activities including trails, a dino pit where you can dig up dinosaur bones from the sand, and a wildlife exhibit. The animals who live at the center are rescued from various situations and cared for by a team of rehabilitation

experts. You can see reptiles, owls, a bobcat, and more while walking around the trails. The center also has a Trade Counter where kids can bring in things they found in nature, such as bones or fossils, learn about them, and earn points. They use those points to “buy” something

from the center like shark teeth or shells. If you want to visit the Trade Counter make sure you check the website for accurate open hours as these hours differ from the center’s hours.

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MOM Minute

An Interview with Laura McNabb

BY CELESTE DIANNE WADE



Austin is bursting with people doing exciting work, and that includes moms who work hard to raise their kids. Every other month, *Austin Family* features a short interview with an Austin mom doing the extraordinary work of parenting.

Austin, meet Laura McNabb.

AF: Tell our *Austin Family* readers a little bit about yourself.

I'm a native Austinite and a graduate of The University of Texas at Austin. My husband and I struggled with infertility and after our kids were born, we made the difficult financial decision that I would be a stay-at-home mom. It has been so fulfilling to serve at their school and I try to be a go-to person for other moms. I try to be a good listener. I like to help. I like to think I'm fun. I love

baking. In October 2023, our family was shaken when my 5-year-old son said: "Jacqueline broke her head open!" In short, my seven, five, and three-year-old were playing behind the camper when the tailgate opened and fell on her head. This month marks a year of learning a lot: miracles happen, and good things can come from bad things.

AF: What is some of the best parenting advice you've received while going through so much as a family?

As someone who likes to care for others, being a family with a very sick child in the ICU, I learned a lot about parenting. Totally out of my comfort zone, I learned and received advice in a triage way. Quick phrases from acquaintances and advice were delivered through the actions of unexpected people. For instance, when I felt overwhelmed as a parent when others asked if they could help, I learned to accept help and just say "thank you." When your family is in need, you may be surprised how help arrives. As a native Austinite, I was surprised that much of the support we received was from Californians, as a Texan this really surprised me. Don't shield your kids from learning from tragic situations, they will build grit. Reflect with kids about how they were helped amid difficult times and teach them to participate in helping other families in the future. Now when we participate in meal trains, they get it!

AF: Who has been a role model for you as a mom?

The moms at my kids' school. They showed up by just helping. They

didn't ask what they could do, because they knew that I would just say, "It's ok, we've got it," instead they were women of action by picking up the kids from school, making lunches, delivering gift cards, bringing healthy foods like salad to the house, and anticipated my needs by bringing trail mix and pad thai so I could eat something comforting in the hospital.

AF: What's the best thing about your kids at this stage?

Going through a family tragedy, that all three kids experienced, has made them all stronger. The kids have been able to share their thoughts with the school counselors and overcome their guilt from the freak accident that could have taken Jacqueline's life. All three kids are tough and resilient. I also learned that Jacqueline is super strong. Daily, I love seeing the fun things through their eyes and how they talk about things in their own unique ways.

AF: What are a few good things about raising kids in Austin?

So much nature, Wild Basin Preserve Hills feels like a mountain to my kids where they love discovering bugs.

AF: If you had known then what you know now, what would you have worried about less as you entered parenting?

You can do everything right and still have everything can get out of control. Dark and scary places in life can have breadcrumbs of good things.

AF: What do you love these days about being a mom?

You don't need an excuse to do something fun. Make special memories. If there's a squirt gun water fight going on in the house, make it a good thing and join in! Let it go! Kids bring the fun!

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October 2024 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.

Tue 1

National Night Out. 5 to 9 p.m. National Night Out is a national community-building event that enhances the relationship between neighbors and law enforcement while bringing back a safe environment. www.austintexas.gov.

Round Rock National Night Out. 6 to 9 p.m. National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our streets safe. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Wed 2

Round Rock Pumpkin Festival. 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Fall Festival, food, funnel cakes, face painting, free games, thousands of pumpkins, bouncy house, bounce pad, corn pit, photographers, farm animals, Old Settlers Park, 3300 E. Palm Valley Rd. \$10. www.roundrockpumpkinfestival.com.

Music on Main. 7 to 9 p.m. The City of Round Rock Arts and Culture presents its free weekly Music on Main concert series. Prete Plaza, 221 East Main St. FREE.

Thu 3

Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch. 2 to 6 p.m. Unique fall-themed photos, exotic animals, authentic Native American tipi, kids corn pit, Barnyard Twister, kids climbing spider web and more. Indian Springs Ranch, 403 Elm View Way. \$10 - \$17. www.indianspringsranchatx.com.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2.

Fri 4

Texas Pumpkin Fest. 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Join us for another family fun-filled event with new and exciting attractions that embody all things fall and Halloween, wrapped up in one magical VFW Pumpkin Patch, 8760 FM 2243. \$15. www.texaspumpkinfest.com.

Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival. 5 to 9 p.m. Fall Fun for the Entire Family! Sundrop Springs, 953 Hueco Springs Loop Rd. www.sundropsprings.com.

Round Rock Arts Fest. Centennial Plaza, 301 West Bagdad. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch,** see Thu 3.

Sat 5

SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. With over 35 local vendors to shop from, you can find in-season fruits and vegetables, pasture-raised meat, eggs, locally-made pastries, and more. Toney Burger Center, 3200 Jones Rd. FREE. www.sustainablefoodcenter.org.

Sacred Springs Powwow. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Sacred Springs Powwow is a celebration of culture featuring art, music, dance, and food from across Native America. The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment, 211 San Marcos Springs Dr. \$5. www.sspowwow.com.

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

The Leaning Tower of Pisa Comes to Austin. 10:30 to 11 a.m. Take a trip to the piazza in Pisa, Italy, and listen to travel journalist and author Kimberley Lovato read her new picture book: PISA LOVES BELLA: BookPeople, 603 N Lamar Blvd. FREE. www.bookpeople.com.

Bunnacula. 11 a.m. Bunnacula starts off by introducing us to the Monroes, including the boys, Pete and Toby, as they return home from the movies on a dark and stormy night. Austin Scottish Rite Theater, 207 W 18th St. \$20 - \$30. www.scottishritetheater.org.

The Hispanic Heritage Show. 7 p.m. To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, we're featuring a collection of shows related to the Latinx culture. Hideout Theatre, 617 Congress Ave. \$5 - \$15. www.hideouttheatre.com.

Round Rock Arts Fest. 10 a.m. We are coming back to downtown Round Rock! Centennial Plaza, 301 West Bagdad. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch,** see Thu 3; **Texas**

Pumpkin Fest, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival,** see Fri 4.

Sun 6

H-E-B Free First Sunday: Texas Sports. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Experience Texas sports, meet athletes and mascots, and do fun hands-on sports activities. Enjoy FREE exhibition admission all-day. Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 Congress Ave. FREE. www.thestoryoftexas.com.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch,** see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest,** see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival,** see Fri 4; **Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Umland Fall Fest,** see Sat 5; **Bunnacula,** see Sat 5; **Round Rock Arts Fest,** see Sat 5. **Sacred Springs Powwow,** see Sat 5.

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Mon 7

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2.

Tue 8

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.

Wed 9

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Music on Main**, see Wed 2.

Thu 10

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **BINGO: Family Friendly Fun**, see Thu 3.

Fri 11

Tiny Tails to You Halloween Petting Zoo @ Laura's. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It'll be cuteness overload at this Tiny Tails Petting Zoo! Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. www.westbanklibrary.com.

Inside Out 2 (2024) – Community Cinema. 6:30 to 9 p.m. Grab chairs and a blanket, bring family and friends, and enjoy this special screening. Come explore Community First! 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. www.mlf.org.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4.

Sat 12

2024 Kyle Founders' Parade and Market Days. 8 a.m. Come Celebrate the City of Kyle's Birthday at the Kyle Founders' Parade and Market Days. Mary Kyle Hartson Park, 101 S. Main St. www.cityofkyle.com.

Fall Fun Festival. 9 to 11 a.m. This fantastic, family event will surely be exciting for our little toddler and preschool friends! Don't forget to come in costume and bring a canned good. Old Settlers Park, 3300 Palm Valley Rd. FREE. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

LCRA PARKS' TRICKS, TREATS AND TRAILS. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Packed with fall fun and outdoor adventure, LCRA Parks' Tricks, Treats and Trails event is back for its fourth year. McKinney Roughs Nature Park, 1884 SH 71 West. \$20. www.lcra.org/park-event.

Austin Oktoberfest 2024. 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Our family-friendly event offers a lot of kids' activities. And of course, German food and drinks. German Free School, 507 E. 10th St. \$15 - \$20. Children 12 and under are free. www.germantexans.org.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4; **SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley**, see Sat 5; **Bunnicola**, see Sat 5.

Sun 13

Sunday Funday: Bee Hotel. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday Funday Bee Hotels create your own Air Bee 'n Bee! Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. www.nchmuseum.org.

Live Oak UU Fall Festival. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Join us for a fantastic fall festival. Live Oak Unitarian Universalist Church, 3315 El Salido Pkwy. FREE.

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Mon 14

Race Car Work & Play @ Laura's.

10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Do you have a need for speed? Come join us in celebrating all things racing. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. www.westbanklibrary.com.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2.

Wed 16

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Music on Main**, see Wed 2.

Thu 17

Children's Entrepreneur Market 6 to 9 p.m. Children's Entrepreneur Market has launched its fall events in the Austin area! Sign up for a booth and get all the details on our website. Children's Entrepreneur Market Killeen Fall Fest at Killeen Events Center, 3301 S W S Young Dr. FREE. www.childrensentrepreneurmarket.com.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3.

Fri 18

Brew at the Zoo. 6 to 9 p.m. A short drive to sample brews from regional breweries and purchase food from local food trucks each night and tour the zoo. Cameron Park Zoo, 1701 N 4th St. \$35 - \$45. www.cameronparkzoo.com.

Moonlight Movie Night. 7:30 to 10 p.m. Hocus Pocus. Get ready for a spook-tacular night under the stars at the Moonlight Movie Night. Yonder's Point, 3103 Aten Loop. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4.

Sat 19

Georgetown's South Main Arts Festival. 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Georgetown celebrates its third annual South Main Arts Festival located in the new South Main Arts District. 816 S. Main St. FREE. www.visit.georgetown.org.

Fall Celebration @ Westbank.

10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Come celebrate fall in Westbank's backyard, where we'll have adorable baby goats in Halloween costumes from Goat Shenanigans! Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. www.westbanklibrary.com.

Trunk or Treat. 4 to 6 p.m. Join Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department and Seton Medical Center Williamson for our annual Trunk or Treat Halloween event! Seton Medical Center Williamson, 201 Seton Parkway. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4; **SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley**, see Sat 5; **Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Umland Fall Fest**, see Sat 5; **Brew at the Zoo**, see Fri 18.

Sun 20

ASO Halloween Children's Concert. 2 p.m. It's creepy, crawly, and so much fun it's spooky! Long Center, 701 W Riverside Dr. \$15 - \$56. my.austinsymphony.org.

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Mon 21

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2.

Wed 23

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Music on Main**, see Wed 2.

Thu 24

Trick or Treat Trail. 5 to 8 p.m. This FREE and fun-filled family event will get you into the spirit of Halloween, so get dressed up and come on out for candy, games and fun! San Gabriel Park, 445 E. Morrow St. FREE.

www.georgetowntexas.gov.

Elgin Hogeye Festival. 5 to 9 p.m. Pig Puns, Fun Activities, & Events for Everyone! Downtown Elgin, Main St. FREE. www.elgintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3.

Fri 25

The Nightmare Before Christmas (1993) - Community Cinema. 6:30 to 9 p.m. Grab chairs and a blanket, bring family and friends, and enjoy this special screening. Come explore Community First! 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. www.mlf.org.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4; **Elgin Hogeye Festival**, see Thu 24.

Sat 26

Round Rock PopUp Art Show. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Round Rock PopUp Art Shows are a chance to have a fun day of retail

therapy, with the extra feel-good of shopping from and supporting local artists. Prete Plaza, 221 E. Main St. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Community Connections Resource Fair. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Akins High School, 10701 S. 1st St. www.austintexas.gov.

Viva la Vida 2024. 12 to 6 p.m. This year's event features a grand procession, art activities, food, local artists and retail booths, a low-rider exhibition, and live performances. Downtown Austin, Congress Ave. FREE. www.mexic-artemuseum.org.

Trunk or Treat. 2 to 3 p.m. We invite you to participate in our 4th Annual Trunk or Treat. Mama Mary's Farm, 5701 Williamson Rd. \$17 - \$21. www.mamamarysfarm.com.

Round Rock Diwali Festival. 2 to 10 p.m. A celebration of the "Festival of Lights" in Round Rock, the 8th Annual Round Rock Diwali Festival is a free event and open to all. Centennial Plaza, 301 West Bagdad. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4; **SFC Farmers' Market at Sunset Valley**, see Sat 5; **Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Umland Fall Fest**, see Sat 5; **Bunnacula**, see Sat 5; **Elgin Hogeye Festival**, see Thu 24.

Sun 27

Trunk or Treat. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring the kids for Halloween fun. Galleria, Dillard's Parking Lot. FREE. www.beecavetexas.gov.

Sunday Funday: Keychains. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Build a wooden Bead Keychain! Neill-Cochran House Museum, 2310 San Gabriel St. www.nchmuseum.org.

Mini Maker Market. 2 to 5 p.m. This Mini Maker Market is perfect for your tiny entrepreneurs and future business people. The Hive, 10542 Menchaca Road. www.hiveaustin.com.

CONTINUED: Round Rock Pumpkin Festival, see Wed 2; **Indian Springs Ranch Pumpkin Patch**, see Thu 3; **Texas Pumpkin Fest**, see Fri 4; **Sundrop Springs Presents: Fall Festival**, see Fri 4; **Discover Autumn at the Inaugural Umland Fall Fest**, see Sat 5; **Bunnacula**, see Sat 5.

Wed 30

CONTINUED: Music on Main, see Wed 2.

HALLOWEEN

Thu 31

Fall Fun Festival. 9 to 11:30 a.m. Join the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department for our annual Fall Fun Festival! Old Settlers Park, 330 E. Palm Valley Rd. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Halloween Work and Play @ Laura's. 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. On Halloween, families are invited to hang out at Laura's, where we'll have Halloween movies playing, toys out to play with, and fun fall crafts for kids. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. www.westbanklibrary.com.

BINGO: Family Friendly Fun, see Thu 3.



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Halloween is a magical time for kids, filled with costumes, candy, and creative fun. Here are two Halloween-themed craft projects for parents to do with their children, to make the holiday even more special.



Paper Plate Ghosts

Materials Needed:

- White paper plates
- Black construction paper

- Glue
- Scissors
- String or yarn

Instructions:

1. Create the ghost's face: cut out eyes and a mouth from the black construction paper. Glue them onto the paper plate to form the ghost's face.
2. Add the ghost's body: cut strips of white paper or tissue paper and glue them to the bottom of the plate to create a flowing ghostly body.
3. Hang your ghost: punch a hole at the top of the plate and thread a piece of string or yarn through it. Hang your ghost from the ceiling or a tree branch for a spooky decoration.

Handprint Witch

Materials Needed:

- Green construction paper
- Black construction paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Markers or crayons



Instructions:

1. Trace and cut handprints: trace your child's hand on the green construction paper and cut it out. This will be the witch's face.
2. Create the hat: cut out a witch's hat from the black construction paper and glue it to the top of the handprint.
3. Add features: draw a face on the handprint with markers or crayons. You can also add hair using yarn or strips of paper.

The Greater Austin YMCA offers a variety of free family Halloween events at its eight area locations. Find out more at www.AustinYMCA.org.

Photo credit. The Greater Austin YMCA

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- Picture and essay published in Austin Family Magazine

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