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CONTENTS

COLUMNS

- 6 Lifelines.**
Unforgettable Summers Start Here
- 8 Learning Curve.**
Discover the Best School for Your Child
- 14 Family Matters.**
What are Signs of Childhood Depression?
Check www.austinfamily.com for the Spanish version.
- 18 Mom Minute.**
An Interview with Ashley Cameron
- 24 Kid Zone.**
Fourth of July: Fireworks in a Jar

IN EVERY ISSUE

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

EXTRAS

- 12 Summer Fun Family Adventures Guide.**
- 16 Readers' Poll Favorites Winners.**

TUNE IN



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

FEATURE



10 Awesome Austin's 7 Best Hidden Hiking Trails



Natalie, 8, is hardworking in the dance studio and on the basketball court. She's funny, caring, and always up for an adventure. Photo taken by Jordan Ashley Photography.



View the
magazine
online

PUBLISHER
Kaye Kemper Lowak

EDITOR
Celeste Dianne Wade
editor2003@austinfamily.com

COPY EDITOR
Barb Matijevich

ADVISING EDITORS
Dr. Betty Richardson, Barb Matijevich

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER
Susie Forbes

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Alison Bogle, Annette Lucksinger,
Catherine Michalk, Dr. Betty Richardson,
Tracie Seed

MEDIA RELATIONS
Alison Bogle

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Layout and Ads: Susie Forbes

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Jordan Ashley Photography

ADVERTISING SALES
Kaye Kemper Lowak
kaye2003@austinfamily.com

BUSINESS MANAGER
Greg Lowak

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Editor's Note



CELESTE DIANNE WADE

Wade is a writer, public speaker, and a popular health coach in Austin. The eldest of seven children, she loves travel adventures with family.

In my family, July has always been a time for celebration of freedom and birthdays. The United States of America and my brother Alex were both born on the 4th of July. To this day, every Independence Day, my brother believes the entire United States of America is celebrating him, and he is quite the firecracker.

July is also a time of independence from work and school. Each summer we would travel to a national park to hike and explore America the beautiful, just as the song declared. My family has traveled frequently around the world, yet we think that the wonderful, natural beauty of the United States is unmatched.

For generations, my family has loved camping, family camp, and day camp. We cherish the time to unplug from daily life and plug into nature. We treasure fresh air, family interaction, and blazing new trails.

In the spirit of adventure and exploration, the magazine celebrates awesome Austin's best-hidden hiking spots. We encourage you and your family to explore our fair city; it's one of the fairest of them all. World travelers visit Austin for all that it has to offer, yet we have the privilege to call Austin home.

It's common for families to explore the world yet overlook the treasures in their hometown. During a typical day, raising kids can be busy. The days are long, but the years are short, so the saying goes.

This Independence Day month, plan what you will do with your kids this summer. Be intentional to celebrate freedom. Consider the number of summers you will have with your growing kids, and how you will invest your time. Have fun and make memories that will endure for generations.

Celeste

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Austin IN ACTION

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July Things to Do's

July 4th

Fireworks at Auditorium Shores

Source: www.austintexas.gov

July 11th - August 16th

Sunday-Thursday
Zilker Hillside Theatre

Source: www.zilker.org

July 13th

Zilker Botanical Garden
Free Admission

Source: www.zilker.org



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Hunter Harwell, Navy Office of Community Outreach

Round Rock Native Defends America from Under the Sea

Petty Officer 2nd Class Diana Wessman, a native of Round Rock, TX, serves the U.S. Navy assigned to USS Georgia. As a submariner, Wessman is part of a small percentage of Navy personnel continuing a 125-year tradition of service under the sea to help ensure Americans' safety. Wessman graduated from Stony Point High School in 2019. The skills and values needed to succeed in the Navy are similar to those found in Round Rock.

"I learned from my parents to set my own standards, make my own goals and not care what anyone else thinks," Wessman said. Today, Wessman serves as a machinist's mate (nuclear).

"I joined the Navy to travel and for the educational opportunities," Wessman said. The U.S. Navy is celebrating its 250th birthday this year.

According to Navy officials, "America is a maritime nation and for 250 years, America's Navy has sailed the globe in defense of freedom." With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

Wessman has many opportunities to achieve accomplishments during military service. "I am most proud of earning a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for putting out a fire on board the ship while on deployment overseas," Wessman said. She's grateful to others for helping make a Navy career possible. "I want to thank my husband, Machinist's Mate (Nuclear) 1st Class Cagle, for being one of the only people to believe in me throughout this entire process and for always being on my team," Wessman added. "I also want to thank my Junior ROTC instructor, Lt. Cmdr. Sanders, for supporting my decision to join the Navy."

Catch a Free Show at Zilker Summer Musical

A beloved Austin tradition returns this summer as the Zilker Summer Musical lights up the hillside once again. From July 11 to August 16, 2025, the Zilker Hillside Theater will host its annual free outdoor musical, inviting families, friends, and theater lovers of all ages to experience Broadway-style entertainment beneath the Texas sky.

Performances run every Thursday through Sunday, beginning at approximately 8:15 p.m., just as the sun sets and the evening cools. Guests are encouraged to bring blankets, lawn chairs, snacks, and even a picnic dinner to enjoy while watching the show unfold on the open-air stage. Admission is free, though donations are welcome and help support this cherished community event.



The Zilker Summer Musical has been an Austin staple since 1959, known for presenting high-quality productions ranging from Broadway classics to favorites.

The Zilker Hillside Theater is located in Zilker Park, near Barton Springs Pool, and is accessible by foot, bike, or public transit. Early arrival is recommended to secure a good spot on the lawn, especially on weekends when crowds are largest.

Whether you're a longtime fan or a first-time visitor, the Zilker Summer Musical offers a night of music, laughter, and community spirit—under the stars and in the heart of Austin.



**Dive into Summer Fun:
Givens Pool Reopens with New Amenities**

After a two-year renovation, the historic Givens Pool in East Austin has reopened just in time for the summer heat, unveiling a modern aquatic facility that blends new amenities with deep cultural roots. Officially reopened on June 7, 2025, the pool has quickly become a vibrant gathering spot for families, children, and community members seeking relief from the Texas sun.

Originally opened in 1958, Givens Pool holds historical significance as one of Austin's first public pools serving the city's Black community during segregation. It was named in honor of Dr. Everett H. Givens, a World War I veteran, dentist, and pioneering civic leader, who played a vital role in advancing civil rights and improving healthcare access in Austin.

The newly renovated pool features a host of upgrades. Swimmers of all ages can now enjoy dedicated lap lanes, thrilling water slides, a diving area, and a tot pool designed for young children. Shaded seating areas, modern locker rooms, and improved ADA accessibility ensure a comfortable experience for all guests.

The Givens Pool is open daily during the summer.

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Unforgettable Summers Start Here

Lifelines



CATHERINE MICHALK

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



If you think back to your childhood, what do you remember the most about summer? We likely all have memories of swimming at the local pool, riding around the neighborhood on our bikes, and freedom from school and responsibilities. Things have certainly changed since then with the rising cost of living, technology invading every moment, and schedules packed with summer camps and enrichment activities so your kid doesn't fall victim to the "summer slide." But just because times have changed doesn't mean your family can't make wonderful, lasting memories this summer! Here are a few tips your family can implement to ensure your kids make summer memories that will last a lifetime.

Prioritize Family Time

One of the best ways to make family memories is a no-brainer. Be together! Prioritize time spent with your kids this summer, whether you

spend it hanging out around your house, or out on adventures around Austin. Your kids won't remember whether you planned and executed a perfect vacation, they'll only remember they had fun spending time with you. An easy way to accomplish this is to pay attention to the things your kids like to do and join in those things. Do they love video games? Break out a family game like Mario Kart and battle it out on the screen. If you have art lovers, sit with them and color or paint together. Your kids will love the attention and connection they feel when you put aside your to-do list, your email, and your phone to prioritize time with them.

Create A Summer Bucket List

Austin is full of fun things to do, choose a new place to go every day of the summer. How do you narrow it down? Grab your kids and create a summer bucket list! Creating this list together gives kids agency and helps them feel excited about spending the

summer together. Pro tip: just because it is called a bucket list, doesn't mean it has to be a once-in-a-lifetime adventure. When my kids create their summer bucket list every year, their top spots are places like the Central Library and a pool with a diving board.

Set Aside Screen-Free Days

Let's be real, screens are both a blessing and a curse for parents. During the long summer days when the kids are home from school, they have already played with their Lego blocks and completed an art project, and it's too hot to play outside, TV saves the day. But as technology becomes more prevalent and it seems like our kids are becoming addicted to their screens, we need to be proactive and give them a screen-time break. This summer, try to set aside one day a week as a "screen-free day." When your kids don't have screens, to fall back on they will be forced to be creative with their time and energy. What they decide to do may surprise

you! Lasting memories are made when you get those creative juices flowing, not when you sit around watching YouTube and playing video games. Your kids may push back on these days at first, but we promise they will thank you when they look back on their screen-free summer days.

Start A Tradition

Why are family traditions so special? They are one of the best ways to make memories together! They're unique to your family and give your kids something to look forward to every year. It is never too late to start a family tradition, and it doesn't have to be something big or expensive. Perhaps you serve a big pancake breakfast on the first day of summer vacation. Or, you surprise your kids with a water balloon fight one afternoon when they least expect it. Whatever you choose to do as a family, your traditions will make summer special for a lifetime.

Share Your Childhood Memories

What made summer magical for you when you were a child? Did you catch fireflies in your backyard? Did you go out for snow cones with your neighborhood friends? If you're a long-time Austinite, you may remember going for a dip in Barton Springs before attending the Zilker Hillside Theater! These memories are what made your childhood magical, and they can be part of your kid's magical childhood, too. Incorporate some of your favorite games, adventures, and foods from childhood so they can experience the same joy. Don't forget to share stories of your childhood summers while you make new memories.

Plan A Staycation

Traveling in the summertime is expensive and crowded. Traveling with young children can be difficult. They're off their sleep schedule, the whole family is crammed in one hotel room, and you're probably eating out a lot more than normal. While

traveling with your kids is certainly worthwhile, sometimes you need time to relax and connect. Enter the Staycation. Cancel your plans for a few days and take time off of work, as if you were heading out of town, but stay home. All the rules are out the door when you're on a Staycation. Tell your boss and your friends you will be unreachable for a few days and soak

up quality time with your family in the comfort of your own home. Unplug from your devices, break out the board games, order pizza, and hang out in your backyard. Your kids will fondly remember the summer you decided to do things differently.

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Discover the Best School for Your Child

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.



Choosing the best school for your child can be one of the most significant decisions you'll face as a parent. Your child's school years will shape not only his mind but his social and emotional intelligence as well. No pressure! With options including homeschooling, public and private schools, and even specialized programs, the decision-making process can be overwhelming.

When you consider which school option is best for your child, you'll want to take into account a variety of different factors:

YOUR CHILD'S NEEDS

It is important to understand your child's unique learning needs and temperament. You should consider things like his learning style and the strengths and challenges he exhibits - academically, socially, and emotionally. Does he learn best in a structured environment, or does he need flexibility and creativity built into his schedule? An introverted child may do best in a school with smaller class sizes and quieter settings, while a more social child might thrive in a school that stresses collaboration and team-based learning.

ACADEMIC PHILOSOPHY AND CURRICULUM

You will learn that there is a wide

variety of educational philosophies and curriculums. For example, some schools emphasize memorization, stress the value of testing, and focus on core subjects, while other schools take a more experiential, interdisciplinary approach.

You'll want to decide which type of academic philosophy best aligns with your beliefs and with your child's learning style. You should also consider how the school assesses student learning progress, for example, through project-based learning, standardized tests, or work assessments, and how the assessment method might motivate or demotivate your child.

CLASS SIZE AND STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO

Your child's class size and the student-to-teacher ratio can have a significant impact on his learning experience. Smaller class sizes can allow for more individualized attention and better classroom management, which can be important for those children who might need differentiated academics or those who can be easily distracted in large groups. It is important to remember, however, that a smaller class doesn't always mean a better experience. A larger class with multiple teachers can also provide for more individual attention.

SCHOOL CULTURE

A school's culture includes the values and behaviors that make up the daily experience for students at a school. For example, some schools prioritize discipline and order, while others focus more on emotional support and community building. Consider which type of school environment would best support your child's personality.

EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

A well-rounded child supplements his academic experiences with enrichment opportunities outside of the classroom. Explore whether the schools you are considering offer extracurriculars such as music, art, drama, physical activities, clubs, and more. If you find a school that seems like a perfect fit for your child but does not offer activities that align with his interests and passions, you can still support him by signing up for these things outside of school. However, you'll need to consider whether or not your family can handle the additional time and expense.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

The best school in the world won't help your child if it is unaffordable, too far away, or has an inconvenient holiday schedule or impractical school hours. It is important to ensure that any school you are considering will align with your

family's schedule, obligations, and financial abilities.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

The quality of your child's school experience will be dependent upon his teacher so it is important to consider not only the teacher's experience, but also his or her personality, qualifications, and passion for teaching. It is the overall profile of the teacher that is important. In other words, don't overlook a young teacher who may make up for lack of experience with an impressive learning record, empathetic and compassionate personality, and passion for helping his or her students surpass their learning goals.

It is important to examine the leadership of the school as a strong administration can dramatically improve educational outcomes for students. Schools with a leadership team that invests in teacher training, creates a supportive environment for its teachers, and values parental and teacher input will often deliver higher quality instruction and experience better student learning outcomes.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND SUPPORT SERVICES

If your child has special educational needs, physical disabilities, or mental health challenges, the availability of support services becomes a critical factor. Not all schools are equally equipped to meet these needs and, even within the public school system, the quality and extent of services can vary widely. Be sure to ask about how the schools you are considering accommodate different learners and which specific supports would be available to your child. You should also consider the school's approach to inclusivity and whether or not it fosters empathy and respect among its students.

SHOULD YOU CONSIDER HOMESCHOOLING?

For some families, homeschooling offers the best academic fit as it allows for flexibility, personalized learning, and the ability to integrate family values directly into the curriculum. Homeschooling can be helpful for children with medical needs, anxiety disorders, or advanced academic needs that can't be met by a traditional school.

However, homeschooling typically requires a significant time commitment from parents as they are required to

take on curriculum planning, teaching, evaluating, and more. It can also affect the parent-child relationship as it introduces more instances in which you have to direct and correct your child. Parents should strongly consider their capacity and resources before committing to homeschooling. It can be helpful to talk to other parents who are currently homeschooling and/or to join online discussion groups to learn more about what the experience can be like.

HOW TO DECIDE?

After researching and visiting schools, create a pros and cons list based on your priorities. If your child is older, involve him in the decision to gain insight and encourage buy-in. Talk to other families, but remember—you know your child best. Trust your instincts. And don't stress about permanence; if your final choice doesn't meet your expectations, you can make a change next year.



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One thing that sets Austin apart from other cities is the number of ways to get outdoors while being smack dab in the city center. Several hiking trails lie hidden just off the beaten path. Pack snacks, sunscreen, and water bottles, then hit the trails. Another great thing about trekking around Austin is that you can usually find a nearby swimming hole or lake to plunge into and cool off!

Zilker Nature Preserve

A trip to the Austin Nature and Science Center (ANSC) never disappoints, but did you know a series of hiking trails stretches directly behind it? Head through the Birds of Prey exhibit at ANSC for a fun way to access these short, winding trails. During the summertime sun, seek the shadier routes. Young hikers will enjoy looking for water bugs and tadpoles at the end of the Mirror Pond trail. For those with stamina who seek steeper steps, head up Lookout Trail. This walkable, forested terrain leads you out to a surprising view of downtown Austin. Free.

McKinney Falls State Park

A short trek to a nearby state park is a great way to spend a summer day in ATX! For short, shady trails, you can't beat McKinney Falls State Park. Fill up water bottles at the Smith Visitor Center, then hop on the Rock Shelter Trail. Its many side shoots make it easy to extend the hike or turn back when little legs get tired. Keep a lookout for the cypress tree "Old Baldy" that rises 100 feet from the creek bed and

a prehistoric rock overhang that offers a brief respite from the heat. Boardwalks and stone steps lead to forested overlooks keeping this short trail interesting. You'll find restrooms, picnic spots, and playgrounds tucked away along the adjacent, but more exposed Picnic Trail. End the trip with a dip in Onion Creek's swimming hole, and falls. (Check water quality levels at the Ranger Station.) You can find trail maps and entry fees at: www.tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks.

Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve

These quiet trails are part of the Balcones Canyonlands Nature Preserve, home of the endangered Golden-cheeked Warbler. With 2.5 miles of looping trails to choose from, you can practically construct your hike through a variety of terrain, whether flat and shaded or a bit rocky with some incline. A highlight is the waterfall along Bee Creek. Scan or pick up a map at the entrance. The preserve is free to visit on weekdays. On weekends, reservations are required for a fee.

Mayfield Preserve and Nature Trails

Mayfield offers a good variety of options for getting out. Picnic with peacocks and wander the pathways at the Mayfield Cottage past lily pad-filled ponds, stone structures, and beautiful gardens. Or take the trails that span from the parking area. The dirt and limestone paths are well-marked and lead to your choice of bluff, creek, or lake. All are fairly easy and shady. Free.



McKinney Falls



Zilker Botanical Garden

Awesome Austin's Best Hidden Hiking Spots



Turkey Creek Trail

St. Edward's Trail

This trail is great for creek play! Bull Creek flows gently through this area and is often shallow enough to wade and hunt for watery treasures. Pack water buckets and nets for a fun-filled afternoon beneath a canopy of trees.

From the trailhead parking lot, head left for a short walk to the water. Older kids can cross stepping stones to hike up a steep bluff with gorgeous views of the water and fields below. For an easier trek, continue up Creek Trail. You'll find an old dam that divides the water into pools and provides scenic views as well as good turtle and fish spotting. Farther along the trail, a waterfall spills over bluffs into a limestone pool. In the springtime, the Meadows Trail provides a nice flower-filled loop back to the parking lot. On sunny summertime days, it's generally best to stick to the shade and return the way you came. Be sure to top off those water bottles ahead of time as there are no restrooms or water stations on site. Free.

Turkey Creek Trail

This 2.7-mile trail loops from a shaded limestone creek bed up a short stretch to the top of a bluff and then back into the trees to the original trail. Overall, it's a fairly level and shady hike. While its full length might be a bit much for the youngest hikers, turn around at any point for a shorter outing. Or take a left where the trail splits and head to the Fern Wall to listen for the burble of flowing water after a rain.

Take a snack break on a bench or boulder and enjoy being out. (A popular trail among dog walkers, the parking lot fills quickly on weekend mornings.) Free.

For added fun, head a mile farther up the road to Emma Long Metropolitan Park and jump into Lake Austin. A large sandy beach borders the swimming area a great place to picnic, build sandcastles, and refresh.

Zilker Botanical Garden

Though wandering pathways among gardens might not technically be "hiking," it does provide an interactive way to hit the trail. From the parking lot, you can spot the log cabins of Pioneer Village that lead to butterfly gardens and a fairy-themed play area. Or take time to smell the roses as you wind your way through the Rose Garden. At its base, follow dinosaur tracks along the metal fence to Hartmann Garden to search for the dinosaur in the pond, turtles, and fossils. The Japanese Garden at the other end of the park is a favorite for all ages for its stepping stones across koi ponds, waterfalls, and peace hut. Occasional free days are offered throughout the year. Visit this month for free on July 13!



Zilker Nature Preserve

ANNETTE LUCKSINGER

Lucksinger is author of the local guidebook *Exploring Austin with Kids*. She is currently at work on a hybrid memoir that combines graphic novel and essays about her life in Austin, Texas.

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Family Adventures

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What are Signs of Childhood Depression?

Family Matters



DR. BETTY RICHARDSON

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



Q I'm a single mom with two boys. George is 8-years-old. His brother Larry is 10. While Larry seems happy, George has been irritable lately. He used to want to play with friends but recently he seems to have lost interest in everything. The school nurse called me to say that George comes to her office nearly every day with a stomachache or a headache. I'm wondering if George could have depression. What causes depression? Do you think George might have depression? What do you suggest that I do to help George?

A Your son George has multiple symptoms that are common in children with depression. Symptoms include persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, frequent physical complaints, and changes in appetite and/or sleep. Young children may be irritable. Older children may withdraw from friends, feel worthless, and have difficulty concentrating. Older children may think of hurting themselves. While rare, younger children can harm themselves.

It's normal for a child or adolescent to be in a sad or bad mood but if it lasts a week or longer, then it's time to make an appointment with the child's pediatrician or the family doctor. If they believe it is depression, they may feel competent to treat the child or they can refer your child to a mental health professional for psychiatric evaluation and care. Pediatricians are trained to treat depression in all ages of children.

You ask what causes depression. Some children have genes that predispose them to develop depression. Going through stressful things such as loss, trauma, or serious health problems can contribute to depression.

Here are suggestions to use for helping George:

1. Set up the appointment with your child's pediatrician or family doctor
2. Talk with your child about sadness and depression.
3. Take your child to therapy.
4. Be patient and kind.

5. Therapy for children with depression usually includes the use of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

Learn about CBT. Get books to help you and your child. One such book is "The Self-Regulation Workbook for Kids." The author is Jenna Berman, LCSW. Another workbook is "CBT Toolbox for Depressed, Anxious & Suicidal Children and Adolescents" by David M Patt. This book has more than 220 worksheets and therapist tips for managing moods, building positive coping skills, and developing resiliency. There are many books to help you and your child. You can find these books online, in larger bookstores, or check them out from your local library.

I wish you success as you work to help your child deal with the symptoms of what looks like depression. With your help, he can be far more successful in various aspects of his life.

VISITAR www.austinfamily.com
¿Cuáles son los signos de la depresión infantil?

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An Interview With Ashley Cameron



AF: Tell our Austin Family readers about yourself and your family.

I'm a mom of three, founder of Love & Cookies, and someone who's constantly juggling a million things. I started my career as a labor and delivery nurse. After my son Charlie was diagnosed with Kawasaki disease, our world shifted, but baking cookies together brought joy back into our lives—and eventually turned into a full-blown business built on love. Home is loud and beautiful: soccer, baseball, basketball, birthday parties, lake days and movie nights. Our family runs on faith, a sense of humor, and dance parties.

AF: How do you juggle your career with motherhood?

It's a constant dance, and the rhythm changes daily. Some days I crush it; others I'm in survival mode. I'm type A and need to learn to juggle and roll with things. I have a fantastic team at work, and I'm better at asking for help and letting go. I'm fiercely committed to my kids and business, but I try not to let guilt creep in when I can't do everything.

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

It's my greatest honor to be the mom of three magical creatures. Watching them go from babies to young kids into tweens has been fun. They are all so different, yet so much alike, love each other, and make me laugh constantly. I love our conversations, and I'll never get tired of seeing them sneak extra cookies.

AF: What's one of the biggest challenges of parenting you didn't expect?

We are a house with big personalities and feelings. Managing that and being fully present at work and home is hard. I've learned to prioritize both aspects.

AF: What is some of the best parenting advice you've received?

Don't let one rough moment ruin the day. We all have meltdowns. Learn to pick

your battles, stay present, and focus on what matters. Kids won't remember how many nights you had takeout, but they'll remember how loved they felt when getting tucked in at night.

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

I have learned not to sweat the small stuff. My grandma advised me that the days are long, but the years are so short.

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

We are a huge outdoor family and love spending time on the lake. It's one of our greatest joys watching our kids play sports and doing the things they love. Living in the Hill Country is beautiful. You feel like you're in the country but with all the amenities of the city.

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July 2025 calendar

Go to www.austinfamily.com for expanded listings.

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

Tue 1

After-School Dungeons & Dragons Club. 5 to 7 p.m. Roll the dice, go on heroic quests, outsmart monsters, and create unforgettable stories. Windsor Park Branch, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Thu 3

Liberty Fest. 6 to 10 p.m. Celebrate Independence Day with Liberty Fest at Devine Lake Park. Devine Lake Park, 1807 Waterfall Ave. FREE. www.leandertx.gov.

Star-Spangled Fest Independence Eve.

7 p.m. Kick off Star-Spangled Fest with an Independence Eve celebration. Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Dr. \$29 and up; active military FREE. www.starspangledfest.com.

Fri 4

4th of July Celebration. 8:30 a.m. Join us along Lakeway Drive as we celebrate our nation's independence with our 50th anniversary event. Lakeway Activity Center, 105 Cross Creek. www.lakeway-tx.gov.

July 4th Parade and Frontier Days.

8:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. A full day of patriotic festivities including parade, festival, carnival, music, and fireworks. Old Settlers Park, 3300 E. Palm Valley Rd. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Red, White, and Buda.

9 a.m. to 10 p.m. Parade starts downtown at 9 a.m., then festivities in the park, and fireworks at 9:15. Buda Amphitheater, 204 San Antonio St. FREE. www.budaamphitheater.com.

Georgetown Sertoma 4th of July

Celebration and Fireworks. 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. A parade, arts and crafts, games, rides, inflatables, food trucks, music, and fireworks. San Gabriel Park, Lower Park Rd. www.georgetown4th.org.

Kyle Independence Day Fireworks.

4 to 10 p.m. This family-friendly celebration will feature live music 4:30-5:30 p.m. and 6-9 p.m. La Verde Park, 3901 Burnham Rd. FREE. www.cityofkyle.com.

4th of July 2025 Celebration.

4 to 10 p.m. Celebrate with an exciting fireworks display, a thrilling skydiving show, and a variety of activities for all ages. East Manor Development No. 1, 15317 US 290 E. FREE. www.manortx.gov.

Independence Day Festival.

4 to 10 p.m. Enjoy a lineup of live music performances in the Central Plaza. Bring a blanket or lawn chair. Hill Country Galleria, 12700 Hill Country Blvd. FREE. www.hillcountrygalleria.com.

Star-Spangled Fest July 4th Celebration.

5 to 11 p.m. Celebrate the 4th of July in true Austin style at Star-Spangled Fest. Join us at the Long Center and Vic Mathias Shores for a patriotic evening. Long Center, 701 W. Riverside Dr. FREE. www.starspangledfest.com.

Red, White & Blue Weekend.

7:15 p.m. Gates open at 6 p.m. Take the family to a Round Rock Express ball game, themed nights, fireworks, and more. Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd. www.milb.com/round-rock.

Sat 5

CONTINUED: **Red, White & Blue Weekend**, see Fri 4.

Sun 6

CONTINUED: **Red, White & Blue Weekend**, see Fri 4.

Mon 7

Mad Science Presents Fire & Ice. 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Prepare to be amazed as science and magic collide in a breathtaking performance of color, light, and wonder.

Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful

Tales. Chamber music ensemble with engaging art experiences to bring original children's tales to life through music and narration for families of young children (ages 3-10). 16 branch locations of Austin Public Libraries. www.austinsymphony.org.

Tue 8

Pop-Up Activity Ice Ages. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Cool off with family-friendly Ice Age activities, from fossil exploration and story time to artmaking and exploration of the museum's new Texas Science & Natural History Museum, 2400 Trinity St. \$0 - \$10, FREE for members. www.sciencemuseum.utexas.edu.

Round Rock Express.

7:15 p.m. Gates open at 6 p.m. Take the family to a Round Rock Express ball game, themed nights, fireworks, and more. Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd. www.milb.com/round-rock.

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7.



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Wed 9
CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7; **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8.

Thu 10
We're Gonna Need a Bigger Boat. The LBJ Library welcomes K-12 educators and ocean lovers to submerge themselves into the study of ocean exploration. Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, 2313 Red River St. www.lbjlibrary.org.

Fri 11
McDade Watermelon Festival. 8 to 11:59 p.m. Bring entire family for street dance, parade, car show, BBQ cook-off, music, 5K run, and more. Main Street Downtown, between Waco St. and Bastrop St. FREE. www.mcdadetexas.com.

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8; **We're Gonna Need a Bigger Boat**, see Thu, 10.

Sat 12
ArtSmart Let's Draw Jungle Chibi Animals. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Do you love manga art and cute expressive chibis? Cepeda Branch, 651 N. Pleasant Valley Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Mad Science Presents Fire & Ice. 2 to 3 p.m. Prepare to be amazed as science and magic collide in a breathtaking performance of color, light, and wonder. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. Fifth St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8; **McDade Watermelon Festival**, see Fri 11.

Sun 13
Family Day - Splash into Summer. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Cool off with a day of creativity and discovery. UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum, 605 Azie Morton Rd. FREE. www.umlauptsculpture.app. neoncrm.com.

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8.

Mon 14
Mo Willems Party. 2 to 3 p.m. Celebrate all things Mo Willems with crafts, games, and a photobooth. Try to Pin the Nose on Piggie or walk around with a bird on your head. Pleasant Hill Branch, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7.

Wed 16
CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7.

Fri 18
July Movie in the Park - Mufasa. 6 p.m. Embark on a majestic journey under the stars hosted by the City of Kyle, Parks and Recreation Department. La Verde Park, 3901 Burnham. www.cityofkyle.com.

A Minecraft Movie (2025). 8 to 11 p.m. Come explore Community First. Grab chairs and a blanket, bring family and friends, and enjoy a special screening. Community Cinema, 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. www.mlf.org.

Sat 19
Pop Up Play Day Series. 9 to 11 a.m. Splash Bash is popping into your community park. Lake Creek Park, 800 Deerfoot Dr. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Clay Sloths for Tweens with Rita Wang. 2 to 3:30 p.m. Learn clay art techniques to create your own sloth. Supplies provided. Seating is first come, first served. Ages 9-12. University Hills Branch, 4721 Loyola Ln. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7.

Sun 20
Wicked Party. 1 to 3 p.m. Do you love all things *Wicked* (book, movie, and musical)? Ruiz Branch, 1600 Grove Blvd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Mon 21
Preschool Fairytale Ball. 10 to 10:45 a.m. It's time to break out your fancy clothes and costumes, as we make our wishes come true at this very special fairytale-themed story time party! Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Tue 22
ArtSmart Let's Draw Jungle Chibi Animals. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Do you love manga art and cute expressive chibis? Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7; **Pop-Up Activity Ice Ages**, see Tue 8.



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Wed 23

All Ages Storytime with Special Guest Armstrong Community Music School. 10:30 a.m. Join Westbank Library for a demonstration of an early childhood music class with Armstrong Community Music School. Westbank Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. www.westbanklibrary.com.

Mo Willems Party. 1 to 2 p.m. Celebrate all things Mo Willems with crafts, games, and a photobooth! Try to Pin the Nose on Piggie or walk around with a bird on your head. Terrazas Branch, 1105 E. César Chávez St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Thu 24

Baby Fairytale Ball. 12:15 to 12:45 p.m. Break out your fancy clothes and costumes, as we make our wishes come true at this fairytale-themed party. Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Drum One, Drum All. 3 p.m. Come to this exciting educational program full of live music and interactivity, featuring diverse rhythmic traditions from around the world. University of Texas at Austin, 110 Inner Campus Dr. www.austintexas.org.

Disney & Cameron Mackintosh's Mary Poppins. 6 to 8 p.m. Summer Stock Austin's production of Disney & Cameron Mackintosh's Mary Poppins. McCullough

Theatre, 2390 Robert Dedman Dr. www.texasperformingarts.org.

Fri 25

Meet the Opera with Austin Opera & University of Texas. 2 to 3 p.m. Six-week series of interactive workshops with live performances and interactive educational activities for children of all ages. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. Fifth St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Friday Fun Nights at Yonders Point Texas Luau. 7:30 to 10 p.m. Come experience the Round Rock favorite, Texas Luau! Yonders Point, 3103 Aten Loop. FREE. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7.

Sat 26

Groundworks Live Kids Music. 10 to 11 a.m. Great songs, great musicians, sing along, dance along to family-friendly music parents will enjoy. The Hive, 10542 Menchaca Rd. www.hiveaustin.com.

Mon 28

Laser Light Show with Laser Spectacles. 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Have fun watching a dazzling laser light show. Kids will discover how laser lights work. Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Mad Science Presents Fire & Ice.

1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Prepare to be amazed as science and magic collide in a breathtaking performance of color, light, and wonder. Windsor Park Branch, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Laser Light Show with Laser Spectacles.

6 to 7 p.m. Have fun watching a dazzling laser light show. Kids will discover how laser lights work. Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Tue 29

Free Summer Midday Music Series for Kids & Family: Disney's Fantasia 2000. 12 to 1:30 p.m. KMFA's series returns this summer with three free, interactive events. Draylen Mason Music Studio at KMFA, 41 Navasota St. FREE. www.kmfa.org.

CONTINUED: **Pop-Up Activity Ice Ages**, see Tue 8; **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8.

Wed 30

CONTINUED: **Austin Symphony Presents Tuneful Tales**, see Mon 7; **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8.

Thu 31

Clay Sloths for Tweens with Rita Wang. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Learn clay art techniques to create your own sloth. Supplies provided. Seating is first come, first served. Ages 9-12. Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Round Rock Express**, see Tue 8; **Meet the Opera**, see Fri 25.

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Fourth of July: Fireworks in a Jar

Celebrate the Fourth of July with a spark of science and a burst of color! This hands-on STEAM activity is the perfect way to combine creativity with a bit of science. Using simple kitchen supplies, you'll create your mini firework show (no loud noises or late nights required).

Get ready to create and watch vibrant fireworks swirl and dance inside a jar!

Materials Needed:

- A clear glass jar
- Water
- Oil
- Food coloring
- A small bowl

Step 1: Fill your jar with water.

Pour water into your glass jar until it's about $\frac{3}{4}$ full and set it aside for now. This will be the "sky."

Step 2: Prep your fireworks colors.

In a small bowl, add about 4 tablespoons of oil. Then, carefully add 4 drops of food coloring (better if it's different colors). Try to space out the drops so they don't mix just yet.

Step 3: Mix things up.

Use a fork to gently stir the oil and food coloring, but do not overmix. The goal is to break up the food coloring into smaller dots.

Step 4: Pour and wait.

Very slowly pour the oil and food coloring mixture into the jar of water.

Step 5: Watch the fireworks explode!

As the food coloring makes its way through the oil and into the water, it will spread out in colorful bursts, just like fireworks lighting up the night sky!

Thinkery, a nonprofit children's museum, brings joy to learning through play-based, STEAM exploration for children so they cultivate a lifelong love of learning and thrive. Learn more at www.thinkeryaustin.org.



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