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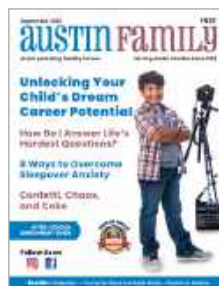
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TUNE IN



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



Keaton, 10, is a cover kid winner. He loves singing, acting, dancing, and has been in 8 musicals. He loves to swim and is captivated by the country of Australia. Photo taken by Jordan Ashley Photography.



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online

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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.

As I celebrate my first year with *Austin Family* magazine, I want to pause and say thank you. It has been an incredible privilege to be part of a publication that uplifts, informs, and reflects the heart of Austin families.

Over the past year, I've had the honor of connecting with parents, educators, and community voices who care deeply about raising strong, compassionate, and curious kids. Like many of you, I'm navigating the joys and challenges of family life — trying to strike the balance between structure and spontaneity, boundaries and flexibility, work and presence.

Austin Family is more than pages and deadlines. It's a shared space — a resource, a guide, and a reminder that we're in this together. My commitment is to keep bringing you content that's thoughtful, practical, inclusive, and real. Whether you're in a season of growth, rest, or rebuilding, we want to support your journey.

Thank you for inviting us into your homes, your routines, and your stories. Here's to another year of learning from one another and building the kind of community where families thrive.

Warmly,

Celeste

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Austin IN ACTION

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September Must Do's

September 1st
Labor Day

Source: www.austintexas.gov

September 7th
Grandparents Day

Source: www.almanac.com

September 21st

Austin Free Museum Day

Source: www.austinmuseums.org



Austin Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month with Culture, History, and Community Events

Hispanic Heritage Month, brings vibrant cultural celebrations, historical reflection and community unity to the heart of Austin from September 15 to October 15.

Established nationally in 1988, Hispanic Heritage Month honors the histories, cultures, and contributions of Americans with roots in Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. In Austin — a city with deep Mexican-American roots and a growing Latino population — the month features events for all ages and backgrounds.

The Mexic-Arte Museum downtown will host special exhibits showcasing Chicano art and Día de los Muertos traditions. Meanwhile, local libraries will offer bilingual story times, film screenings, and genealogy workshops highlighting Hispanic ancestry. Zilker Park and local music venues will echo with Latin rhythms during weekend festivals and concerts, featuring Tejano, salsa, and mariachi bands. Food lovers can explore Latin flavors through taco tours, pupusa tastings, and cooking classes led by local chefs.

City leaders emphasize the importance of inclusion and education. "This month is about recognizing the strength, resilience, and beauty of the Hispanic community," said Council Member Vanessa Fuentes.

Whether you're exploring history, food, or music, Austin invites everyone to celebrate Hispanic heritage with pride, joy, and respect.

It's time to start enjoying life!

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Stepping Stone School Children Raise Thousands for Ronald McDonald House and Kerr County Flood Relief



Children at Stepping Stone School have raised more than \$15,000 for charitable causes through the school's Young Entrepreneurs and Philanthropists™ program. The funds will support Ronald McDonald House Charities and flood relief efforts in Kerr County.

The program, which gives students hands-on experience in running a business, has become a cornerstone of Stepping Stone School's approach to teaching philanthropy. Since its inception, the initiative has donated a combined \$132,000 to organizations including Ronald McDonald House in Austin and College Station, and Scotty's House in College Station.

In 2025, students have raised \$7,740 through product sales, which was matched by Stepping Stone School founder Rhonda Paver, bringing the total to \$15,480. Of that, \$11,610 was presented to Ronald McDonald House of Central Texas by students from the Pflugerville campus, while more than \$3,800 supported families impacted by the devastating Texas Hill Country floods.

Texans Encouraged to Explore ABE Accounts for Individuals with Disabilities

According to National Association of State Treasurers (NAST), more than 195,000 Americans with disabilities have saved a collective \$2.3 billion in Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) accounts, which help cover qualified disability expenses while protecting access to means-tested benefits

“An ABLE account can be a game-changer for Texans with disabilities and their families,” said Comptroller Glenn Hegar. “It’s about having the freedom to plan for the future and meet life’s needs.”

Texans may qualify for a Texas ABLE account if their disability began before age 26 and they meet at least one of these criteria: eligibility for Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance, a diagnosis on the Social Security Administration’s list of Compassionate Allowances Conditions, or a physician’s diagnosis of a qualifying disability.

Beginning in January 2026, eligibility expands to individuals whose disability began before age 46.

Families are encouraged to plan ahead, check eligibility, and consider the advantages of opening an account. For details, call 844-4TX-ABLE or visit www.texasABLE.org.

Austin Free Museum Day

More than 20 museums across the city will open their doors free of charge on Sunday, September 21, for Austin’s annual Free Museum Day, giving families, art lovers, and history buffs a chance to explore the city’s cultural treasures without spending a dime.

Started in 2007 by the Austin Museum Partnership, the event was created to promote access to the arts and celebrate the vibrant museum community in Central Texas. Participating institutions include the Bullock Texas State History Museum, The Contemporary Austin, and the LBJ Presidential Library, among others.

For families, Free Museum Day is a rare opportunity to enjoy hands-on exhibits, interactive programs, and educational tours, all without the usual ticket fees, which can add up quickly for larger groups. Parking and special exhibits may still carry a charge, so visitors are encouraged to check individual museum websites for details.

With something for everyone – from science and history to art, music, and Mexican-American culture – the day offers an affordable way to explore Austin’s diverse identity. Organizers recommend arriving early, as crowds are expected.

Whether you’re a longtime resident or a first-time visitor, Free Museum Day is a budget-friendly, enriching way to experience the best of Austin museums in just one day.



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Unlocking Your Child's Dream Career Potential

GAIL LOUISE COX

Cox is a registered nurse by trade, a passionate teacher and writer, and a proud mom of six.

When I was growing up, I didn't feel like I had many options for my future career. It seemed like there were only two choices: become a teacher or a nurse. In hindsight, I'm grateful I became a nurse. But I also think that limiting view of my possibilities shaped the way I approached my career and, eventually, the way I helped my own children think about their futures.

As a mother of six, I've come to understand the importance of encouraging my kids to dream big and explore all the career possibilities available to them. Like many blended families, mine has a unique dynamic involving stepmothers and stepfathers, which has provided diverse viewpoints and growth opportunities. Through it all, I've learned that the most important thing I can do for my children is show them that the world is full of career opportunities, from college and trade schools to family businesses.

It's our job to empower our kids to dream big and take ownership of their futures. Helping them understand the vast array of career options — whether they pursue a college education, trade school, or take over a family business — can set them up for a life of fulfillment, growth, and success.

Early Goal Setting: The Foundation for a Bright Future

Kids as young as 5 or 6, kids can begin to dream about what they want to be when they grow up. But it's not just about saying "you can be anything," it's about helping them understand that hard work, commitment, and curiosity are essential for success.

I've always told my children that pursuing a career requires effort, but the payoff is worth it. Whether they dream of becoming doctors, film directors, or mechanics, fostering curiosity and exploration is crucial. By engaging in conversations about various careers, art, science, technology, or hands-on work like fixing things, I've helped them see what excites them, laying the groundwork for their future dreams.

Embracing All Career Paths: College, Trade School, and Beyond

One of the biggest mistakes I see parents make is assuming their child must go to

college to be successful. While college is a great option for many careers, it isn't the only path. My own nursing career didn't require a traditional four-year degree. Instead, I went to nursing school and gained clinical experience. Countless successful professionals have taken alternative routes, whether through vocational schools, apprenticeships, or certification programs.

Encourage your child to explore all options. College is ideal for fields like engineering or education, but many careers in the trades — electricians, carpenters, HVAC technicians — offer excellent job security and higher pay with less schooling. The demand for skilled workers is growing, and trade schools can be a fast track to a stable career.

My husband runs a family business. Our children have grown up seeing the value of entrepreneurship and hard work. Some are interested in running their own businesses, which has taught them valuable lessons about responsibility, problem-solving, and leadership. By exposing them to different career paths, they can see that success doesn't depend on following a single route. Whether through trade school, family businesses, or college, they can build fulfilling careers.

Building a Strong Sense of Self-Esteem and Confidence

As children develop their interests, it's vital to nurture their self-esteem. Having dreams and setting goals fosters growth, encourages responsibility, and builds confidence. When my kids get passionate about something — whether it's sports, acting, or computer gaming — I encourage them to think about how those hobbies could one day lead to careers. This helps them see that their passions can shape their futures.

I also remind them that it's okay to change their minds. Encouraging a growth mindset means recognizing that career dreams can evolve. I want my children to understand that it's normal to adapt and embrace new interests as they grow, and that it's empowering to own their decisions.

The Importance of a 'Dream Big' Mindset

The "dream big" mindset is essential in helping kids see the vast opportunities ahead of them. But it's equally important to balance those big dreams with realistic expectations. We need to talk to them about the effort, sacrifices, and commitment required to succeed.

For example, if one of my children dreams of becoming a surgeon, we discuss the years of schooling, dedication, and emotional resilience necessary for such a career. These conversations help them grasp the perseverance required for any ambitious goal.

On the flip side, for kids drawn to creative pursuits like music or art, I emphasize that they can carve out successful careers in those fields too. Thanks to platforms like YouTube and Instagram, artistic careers are more accessible than ever. Dreaming big means showing them that even in the creative world, it's possible to earn a living doing what they love.

Creating Opportunities for Career Exploration

The next step is creating opportunities for career exploration. Exposing children to various careers — whether through internships, volunteering, career fairs, or shadowing professionals — gives them a chance to see what's possible. Even simple actions like talking about your work or letting them help with your job can spark their curiosity.

By making career exploration a part of your child's life, you can give them the tools to visualize their future and understand that with hard work, persistence, and creativity, their dreams are achievable.

Final Thoughts: Encouraging Your Child to Dream Big

When I was younger, I never imagined that I would one day become a nurse. I thought my choices were limited. But looking back, I realize that my journey, with all its twists and turns, has been a powerful lesson for me to share with my kids. Encouraging them to explore their interests, set goals, and dream about

what they want their careers to be is one of the greatest gifts we can give them as parents.

By helping them build self-confidence, embrace possibilities, and commit to their dreams, we set them up for a future full of potential. Whatever their dreams are, whether it's becoming a doctor, working in a trade, or building their own business, the power lies in giving them the freedom to dream and the tools to make those dreams come true.

At the end of the day, the most important thing we can do as parents is to give our children the freedom to dream big and provide them with the tools and support they need to turn those dreams into reality.



Kid Parties: Confetti, Chaos, and Cake

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.



Gone are the days when a children's party meant inviting everyone on the street, playing in the backyard sprinkler, and cutting into a homemade cake to the tune of "Happy Birthday."

These days, parties often have carefully selected themes, impressive decorations, Instagram-worthy food spreads, and curated goody bags. Factor in deciding who to invite, everyone's extracurricular schedules, and how to manage social dynamics, and it's enough to take the joy out of the whole experience.

Luckily, with a little forethought, and this helpful list of questions to consider, you'll be able to navigate the planning process and decide on a party plan that will make both your child, and you, happy.

Who to invite?

One of the first, and often most emotionally charged, questions is: Who should you invite? There's no one-size-fits-all answer, and the best

choice can change as your child grows.

In early elementary school, inviting the entire class ensures that no one feels left out — especially since the party is likely to be a topic of classroom conversation.

Inviting the whole class, or even the majority of the class, may not always be feasible. Budget, space limitations, and your child's preferences may make a smaller gathering more comfortable. A popular compromise for younger children is to provide a school-day treat (check your school's treat guidelines), and then host a smaller, more personal party outside of school. This way, everyone feels included to some degree.

Around third grade, children often begin to separate along gender lines, and your child may want a party that only includes friends of the same gender. This is typical, and if you're inviting all the students of the same

gender, the party is unlikely to cause any upset.

That said, it's also common by third grade for children to form distinct social groups. Your child may not feel comfortable inviting all of the boys or girls. In this case, it's especially important to handle invitations privately and outside of school to avoid accidentally excluding anyone in a public setting.

Where to host?

At school: Many schools now offer an option to host parties immediately after the school day ends. For example, some schools host "PE parties" in the gym — an hour of fun games led by the PE teacher. The birthday child's parents bring cupcakes, and best of all, there's no cleanup. Fees are generally reasonable and support the school and teachers. Hosting at school can also help simplify the guest list.

At home: Home parties allow for more personalization but usually require

more planning — and, unfortunately, more cleanup. Depending on your child's age, plan multiple activities to keep guests engaged. Always have a bad weather backup plan if hosting outside.

At a venue: Choosing a venue, like a trampoline park or craft studio, can save you time on setup and cleanup. However, this option is usually more expensive due to rental fees and food or drink minimums. You'll also need to plan ahead to secure your preferred time slot. Keep in mind that your party will likely share space with others.

What to serve?

If your party is during or near mealtime, you should serve a full meal. Scheduling your party outside of mealtimes can help save on costs, but always provide snacks alongside any sweets. Party games and running around use a lot of energy, and the last thing you want is hangry guests.

Given the rise in food allergies and sensitivities, ask parents about dietary restrictions when they RSVP. Be as accommodating as possible. If a child has multiple restrictions, the family will often offer to bring something safe for them. Clear labeling, especially for self-serve snack tables, is helpful.

Are there special needs?

Some children may have sensory sensitivities, social anxiety, or other needs that affect how they experience a party. If your child has a friend who may need extra support, speak with their parents in advance to learn how best to include and accommodate them.

Also consider your own child's preferences. Would they enjoy structured games, or is free play more their style? Do they like being the center of attention during cake time, or would they prefer something more low-key? Thinking through these factors ahead of time will help make the party a success.

Should parents stay?

Whether parents should stay

depends on the children's age, the party location, and your comfort level. For kids under age 6, it's generally a good idea to have parents stay and help supervise. Extra adults can assist with activities, cake time, and those inevitable meltdowns or squabbles.

As kids get older, drop-off parties become more common and appropriate.

Children's parties can be exhausting — no matter how successful they are. However, they're also a wonderful opportunity to help your child feel seen, known, and cherished, and to model how to create joyful moments with friends.

Happy planning!



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How Do I Answer Life's Hardest Questions?

Lifelines

MICHELLE OVERMAN

Overman is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Austin, TX. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her husband and two young boys.



"Mommy, what happens after you die?"

Some of the most difficult questions you will ever face will come from the mouth of your child. The urge to respond, even when we don't have a clear answer, is something every parent knows well. Engaged parenting requires us to shape and guide our children through tough conversations about challenging topics, concerns, and questions that do not have easy answers.

When a child asks a difficult question, silence or avoidance is not what we should lean into as parents. Yet, what do we say? What can we say? Our innate ability to gather information, identify patterns, and gain insight is what helps us create, innovate, connect, and problem-solve in the most profound ways. When we feel that we understand the "why," we are better at processing and making adjustments necessary to navigate a complicated world. As such, our children's tough questions are valuable and healthy. So, how do we support our children and

guide them through difficult situations we barely comprehend ourselves? We start by demonstrating, through words and actions, the most important messages: how to respond to grief and how to find hope in times of despair.

Trying to wrap our heads around senseless loss and feeling deep empathy are important as we continue to process tragedies, not only for ourselves but for our children. While empathy can be painful, it is a beautiful way to model the gold standard of human relationships. When our oldest son's classmate unexpectedly lost a parent this year, we talked to him about empathy. Like anyone, he was unsure of what to say to his friend or how to respond. We shared with him the essence of what empathy looks like. It is not about what you say, but instead about being present with a friend, sitting with them in their grief, and connecting with them.

If you are like me, you have found it extremely difficult to process the tragic events that occurred in the Hill Country

this summer. I found myself fighting back tears as I huddled in bed with my 8-year-old son, listening to calming music like we do every night. All I could think about was how thankful I felt to be lying there with my son, safe and sound, when I knew there were many parents across Texas who would not have that opportunity ever again. Empathy swelled within me to the point of pain. Since that weekend, I have seen and heard the heartache of many others as they empathize deeply with those who are suffering. While empathy can be an overwhelming emotion, it is an important part of connection and understanding.

Researcher and author Brené Brown describes how "in order to connect with [another person], [we] have to connect with something in [ourselves] that knows that feeling." Allowing ourselves to tap into feelings (even the uncomfortable ones) creates the empathy that ultimately drives connection. Why is this important? In the face of grief, we often feel compelled to say something, particularly something that will ideally

make things better. However, as Brown stated, "rarely does a response make things better... what makes something better is connection."

We can talk to our kids about how to show up for others but helping them comprehend tragedy is daunting. It will forever be a challenge to wrap our heads around loss. We want to make sense of it, but we struggle to fully process its finality. We also struggle with our inability to understand why. How can we "explain" the loss of so many people in our own minds, let alone explain it to our children?

On another night lying in bed, this time with my 4-year-old son, he started asking about my grandfather, who died in 2023. He asked all the classic existential questions. I wrestled with how to discuss the concept of death while walking that tightrope of offering honesty without instilling fear. At that moment, all I could really focus on was hope.

I often think about a scene from the television show Ted Lasso. The head soccer coach, Ted, confronts a common phrase he has heard used relentlessly: "It's the hope that kills you." During a speech to his team, he states that "It's the lack of hope that comes and gets you." While his variation on the phrase was powerful in the context of sports, I would go a step further as I reflect on how we and our children can navigate life.

It's the hope that keeps you going.

We can find hope in familiar places, such as faith and spirituality. We can also find hope in humanity. I have thought repeatedly about Fred Rogers (from Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood,) who recalled seeing scary events in the news as a child. He shared that his mother would tell him, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." In the wake of tragedy, you will see the goodness of humanity shining like a beacon. Witnessing the kindness, love, and empathy shared by strangers can inspire desperately needed hope. We can teach our kids to look for these beacons of hope — the helpers, those who connect with the brokenhearted,

those who empathically grieve with the hurting. It is not through words, but through the actions of helpers that show us how to lead with empathy and instill hope in times of despair.

We do not and will not ever possess all the answers. However, we can find peace in not having all the answers. We do not have to know (and our kids do not have to know) what to say when someone is grieving. We just need to let the wounded

know, through our actions, that they are not alone. We do not have to be able to provide explanations to our children or make sense of tragedies for them. We only need to provide them with hope. We do this by pointing to the guiding lights that help us move forward with love and empathy.

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After-School Activity Guide

AFTER-SCHOOL/ENRICHMENT

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AUSTIN CHAMBER MUSIC	North Austin	512-454-0026	www.austinchambermusic.org/young-artists-academy
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KIDSACTING	18 Area Locations	512-836-5437	www.kidsactingstudio.com
KLRU	Virtual	PBS Kids Learning	www.klr.org/kids
MAD SCIENCE	Austin & San Antonio	512-892-1143	www.austin.madscience.org
MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU	Central Austin	512-879-7553	www.mastergohring.com
NITRO SWIM	Cedar Park Bee Cave Kyle	512-259-7999 512-861-7946 737- 497-3866	www.nitroswim.com
PINS & WHEELS AT PLAYLAND SKATE	North Austin	512-452-1901	www.pinsandwheels.com
SHINE ON PERFORMING ARTS	Cedar Park	512-800-1906	www.shineonperformingarts.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.synergydance.com
TEXAS SCIENCE & NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM	UT Campus	512-471-1604	www.sciencemuseum.utexas.com
WAYA	West Austin	512-473-2528	www.waya.org

FINE ARTS THEATER, DANCE, CREATIVE ART, MUSIC, CULINARY ARTS

ARMSTRONG COMMUNITY MUSIC SCHOOL	Westlake	512-474-2331	www.acmsaustin.org
AUSTIN CHAMBER MUSIC	North Austin	512.454.0026	www.austinchambermusic.org/young-artists-academy
AUSTIN GIRL'S CHOIR	North Austin		www.girlschoir.com
AVERY RANCH DANCE AND MUSIC	North Austin	512-658-2996	www.austin-dance.org/avery-ranch

CORDOVAN ART	Round Rock & Georgetown	512-274-4040	www.cordovanartschool.com
	Cedar Park	512-284-9874	
	NW Austin	737-300-1200	
	SW Austin	512- 531-9353	
	Lago Vista	512-963-6575	
DANCE DISCOVERY	Central Austin	512-419-7611	www.austin-dance.org
HEARTSONG	North Austin	512-371-9506	www.heartsong.com
KIDSACTING	18 Area Locations	512-836-5437	www.kidsactingstudio.com
SHINE ON PERFORMING ARTS	Cedar Park	512-800-1906	www.shineonperformingarts.org
STICKY FINGERS COOKING SCHOOL	In Area Schools		www.stickyfingerscooking.com
SYNERGY DANCE	Westlake	512- 327-4130	www.synergydance.com

SPORTS

DC RIDING	Pflugerville	512-255-3661	www.campdoublecreek.com
DC ADVENTURES	North Austin	512-255-3661	www.campdoublecreek.com
JUMP GYMNASTICS	North Austin	512-593-6226	www.jump-austin.com
	South Austin	512-593-6226 *1	
	Domain	512-593-6226 *3	
	Hutto	512-593-6226 *4	
MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU	Central Austin	512-879-7553	www.mastergohring.com
NITRO SWIM	Cedar Park	512-259-7999	www.nitroswim.com
	Bee Cave	512-861-7946	
	Kyle	737-497-3866	
PINS & WHEELS AT PLAYLAND SKATE	North Austin	512-452-1901	www.pinsandwheels.com
SWITCH WILLO STABLES	North Austin	512-920-2276	www.switchwillo.com
WAYA	West Austin	512-473-2528	www.waya.org

ACADEMIC – STEM, SCIENCE, HISTORY

IDEA LAB	North Austin	512-494-6744	www.austin.idealabkids.com
	Northwest Austin	512- 291-7510	
KLRU	Virtual	PBS Kids Learning	www.klr.org/kids
MAD SCIENCE	Austin & San Antonio	512-892-1143	www.austin.madscience.org
TEXAS SCIENCE & NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM	UT Campus	512-471-1604	www.sciencemuseum.utexas.edu

BIRTHDAY PARTIES

CORDOVAN ART	Round Rock & Georgetown	512-274-4040	www.cordovanartschool.com
	Cedar Park	512-284-9874	
	NW Austin	737-300-1200	
	SW Austin	512- 531-9353	
	Lago Vista	512-963-6575	
DAVE & BUSTERS	North Austin	512-346-8015	www.daveandbusters.com
DC RIDING	Pflugerville	512-255-3661	www.campdoublecreek.com
DC ADVENTURES	North Austin	512-255-3661	www.campdoublecreek.com
IDEA LAB	North Austin	512-494-6744	www.austin.idealabkids.com
JUMP GYMNASTICS	North Austin	512-593-6226	www.jump-austin.com
	South Austin	512-593-6226	
MAD SCIENCE	Austin & San Antonio	512-892-1143	www.austin.madscience.org
MASTER GOHRING TAI CHI AND KUNG FU	Central Austin	512-879-7553	www.mastergohring.com
PINS & WHEELS AT PLAYLAND SKATE	North Austin	512-452-1901	www.pinsandwheels.com

RESOURCES – VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES, PARENTING RESOURCES

HAND TO HOLD	NICU Babies, Parent Support	www.hand-to-hold.org
PARTNERS IN PARENTING	Parenting Support Group	www.pipaustin.org
ROUND ROCK SERVING CENTER	Community Support, food, clothing, furniture, financial	www.www.rrasc.org
SAFE	Shelter, Housing, Abuse, Education	www.safeaustin.org

8 Ways to Overcome Sleepover Anxiety

Family Matters



DR. BETTY RICHARDSON

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



Q Our 9-year-old daughter, Bonnie, has been invited, along with two other friends, to her best friend's sleepover, but she's extremely anxious about being away from home for the first time. She says she wants to go but becomes tearful and panicked as the day gets closer. We want to support her without pushing too hard. How can we help her feel more confident and comfortable?

A Bonnie's reaction is not uncommon. For many children, a first sleepover can feel like a big leap into independence. Even if they're excited, the unfamiliar setting, absence of parents, and nighttime routine changes can trigger anxiety.

Here are eight practical strategies to help ease your daughter into this experience:

1. Normalize her feelings.

Let her know that many kids feel nervous before their first sleepover. Avoid dismissing her anxiety. Instead,

validate it by saying, "It's okay to feel nervous about something new."

2. Start with a 'practice' run.

Arrange a shorter visit, like a playdate that extends into the evening, or a "sleep-under," where she stays until bedtime but comes home to sleep. This builds confidence in small steps.

3. Choose the right setting.

Make sure the sleepover is at a home where your daughter feels safe and knows the family well. Familiarity can reduce stress and help her feel more in control.

4. Discuss the plan.

Go over what will happen at the sleepover, including meals, bedtime routines, and contact info. Knowing what to expect reduces uncertainty, which is a major trigger for anxiety.

5. Pack a comfort item.

Let her bring a favorite stuffed animal, blanket, or even a note from home. These small touches can make a big emotional difference.

6. Give her an exit plan.

Let her know it's okay to change her mind. Reassure her that if she becomes uncomfortable, she can call you, and you'll come get her — no guilt, no shame.

7. Stay calm and positive.

Children often pick up on parents' anxiety. Keep your tone upbeat and confident, showing her, you trust her ability to handle the night away.

8. Praise her efforts, not just success.

Even if she ends up coming home early, acknowledge her bravery for trying. Progress may come in stages, and that's perfectly fine.

Above all, keep the lines of communication open. Anxiety thrives in silence but weakens when spoken about. With your support, patience, and these gradual steps, she'll gain the confidence to enjoy future sleepovers — and you'll both sleep easier, too.

VISITAR www.austinfamily.com
8 maneras de superar la
ansiedad en las pijamadas



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An Interview With Suzanne Daniels, ATX Free Fridge Project



Coffee, Community, and Collective Care

What do collective giving, a coffee house and a community fridge have in common? For Suzanne Daniels, they all reflect one powerful idea: love of humanity. Suzanne believes that we are stronger when we act together. She lives that belief every day at Brentwood Social House, where community isn't just a mission, it's a way of life.

Suzanne followed her dream of opening a café that fostered connection and love. Brentwood Social House opened in 2016 and quickly became a neighborhood sanctuary offering coffee, kindness, and community. But Suzanne's impact doesn't stop at the espresso machine. In 2023, she brought a **Free Fridge and Pantry** to Brentwood Social House as part of the **ATX Free Fridge Project**, providing 24/7 access to food and essentials. "It's really for everyone," she says. "I didn't recognize the need in our community until we had the fridge. The joy is in how much food comes and goes on a daily basis." From parenting to philanthropy to pastries, Suzanne Daniels lives by one guiding truth: connection is everything.

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

I'm a mom to a wonderful 10-year-old who keeps me grounded, curious, and constantly learning. Our little family is rooted in Austin, and I'm grateful every day to live in a city that values creativity, connection, and kindness. I co-own Brentwood Social House, a neighborhood café, which has become an extension of my values and, really, my heart.

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

Honestly, I've drawn inspiration from many women: friends, mentors, and other moms in the community. I think we're all doing the best we can, and I'm especially drawn to those who parent with compassion and authenticity. But my greatest role model is probably my own mother. She parented with strength, gentleness, and an unwavering belief in me. That modeled something powerful.

I've also been deeply influenced by my friend, Myna, who helped me find balance by transforming Tuesday into "Suzday," a weekly reminder to take a day for myself. Myna and I do something every Suzday, and that intentional time has shaped the way I show up as a mom, with more presence, joy, and a sense of self.

AF: What are a few good things about raising kids in Austin? Austin is a special place to raise children. The community is welcoming, progressive, and family-friendly. We have access to nature, arts, and culture, and there's a strong emphasis on creativity and individuality. I love that my child can grow up in a city that values connection and community — and where small businesses and local initiatives like the ATX Free Fridge Project are making a real difference.

AF: What's the best parenting advice you've received?

A friend once told me, "Your presence is the greatest present." That shifted everything for me. It reminded me that being there, really being there, for the little moments matters more than any schedule or perfect plan. It helped me ease up on the pressure to do it all and instead focus on simply showing up with love. Another piece of advice that stuck with me is to pause and reflect on what is affecting or hitting you before you react. Taking that moment to breathe and gain perspective has made me a more thoughtful and patient parent and an overall better person.

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

If I had known then what I know now, I would have worried less about getting everything right during pregnancy. I focused so much on that time, trying to absorb every bit of information I could, that I didn't take time to learn about what comes after — how to raise a child and how to get to know this little person through each phase of life. There are so many layers to parenting, including understanding a child's mind and seeing the world from her perspective. I've learned there is no such thing as a perfect parent. What matters more than perfection is connection, consistency, and presence. It's okay not to have all the answers. Children need love, not flawless parenting.

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

One of the biggest challenges I didn't expect was the mental load. I knew parenting would be physically exhausting, but I underestimated the constant mental juggling involved trying to keep up with everything as a mom and new business owner. Opening a business with a 2-year-old was far more difficult than I imagined. My supportive husband helped me balance work and home life, and I quickly learned the importance of community. I could not do it alone. The people around me made all the difference in the world and empowered my success. It is a lot, and it is okay to acknowledge that and ask for help.

AF: What do you love about being a mom?

I love the hugs from my daughter, Mena. I love the dialogue the two of us share, a language that only we understand. For example, I say, "I love you," and she responds, "Of course you do." Her presence reminds me to break from the rush culture and live in the peace of the present. I love watching my child become her own person. There is so much magic in seeing life unfold through her eyes. Being a mom has made me more empathetic, more patient, and more deeply connected to my community.

28th Annual FREE Austin Museum Day 2025

Sunday, September 21, 2025



This annual event provides opportunities for all to enjoy the museums for free admission all day.

Austin History Center, Austin Public Library
www.austinhistorycenter.org

Austin Museum of Popular Culture
www.southpop.org

Bastrop County Historical Society
www.bastropcountyhistoricalsociety.com

Blanton Museum of Art*
www.blantonmuseum.org

Briscoe Center for American History*
www.briscoecenter.org

Bullock State History Museum
www.thestoryoftexas.com

Capitol Visitors Center
www.tspb.texas.gov/prop/tcvc/cvc/cvc.html

Chateau Bellevue
www.chateauatx.com

Clarksville Community Development Corporation
(Hezekiah Haskell House)
www.clarksvillecdc.org

The Contemporary Austin
www.thecontemporaryaustin.org

DRT Republic of Texas Museum
www.drinfo.org

Elisabet Ney Museum
www.austintexas.gov/department/elisabet-ney-museum

Harry Ransom Center
www.hrc.utexas.edu

Landmarks*
www.landmarks.utexas.edu

Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum*
www.lbjlibrary.org

MathHappens
www.mathhappens.org

Mexic-Arte Museum
www.mexic-artemuseum.org

Millett's Opera House
www.millettoperahouse.com

Museo Benini
www.museobenini.com

Neil-Cochran House Museum
www.nchmuseum.org

Pioneer Farms
www.pioneerfarms.org

Texas Medical Association
www.texmed.org

Texas Science and Natural History Museum*
www.sciencemuseum.utexas.edu

Texas State Capitol
www.texasstatecapitol.com

Texas State Cemetery
www.cemetery.texas.gov

Thinkery
www.thinkeryaustin.org

Umlauf Structure Garden + Museum
www.umlaufulsculpture.org

The Williamson Museum
www.williamsonmuseum.org

Visual Arts Center*
www.utvac.org

Women & Their Work
www.womenandtheirwork.org

*These are located on UT campus.



Give Us Your Best Shot!

2026 Austin Family Magazine Cover Kid Contest

Ages 3 to 16. Accepting entries through November 14, 2025.

Go to www.austinfamily.com for complete rules and to enter. Six winners will be chosen and announced in January 2026.



SCAN QR CODE TO REGISTER

September 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.

Mon 1 – Labor Day

Tue 2

Fall Session Studio Demos – Free Music Together Music Classes. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join Heartsong Music Together demo class. Heartsong Music, 2700 W. Anderson Ln., Ste 320. FREE. www.heartsongmusic.net.

80th Anniversary Commemoration of WWII Victory over Japan Day. 12 p.m. Join the City of Lakeway at the Spirit of Freedom Monument in a solemn and heartfelt tribute as we commemorate the 80th Anniversary of Victory. City of Lakeway, Heritage Center, 963 Lohmans Crossing. www.lakeway-tx.gov/calendar.

Tech Explorers: Vex Robots. 4 to 6 p.m. Get hands-on with technology. Little Walnut Creek Branch, 835 W. Rundberg Ln. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

After-School Dungeons & Dragons Club. 4:30 to 7 p.m. Roll the dice; shape your story. Ready to go on heroic

quests, outsmart monsters, and create unforgettable stories. Windsor Park Branch, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Wed 3

The Wizard of Oz. Buckle up for a reimagined journey over the rainbow. Topher Theater at Zach, 202 S. Lamar Blvd. \$28 and up. www.zachtheater.org.

CONTINUED: **Free Music Together Music Classes**, see Tue 2.

Thu 4

Art for Teens. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Teens and tweens, come get crafty after school. All materials will be provided. Westbank Community Library, 1309 Westbank Dr. www.westbanklibrary.com.

KIDZ BOP LIVE Certified BOP Tour. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. 2025 Tour. ACL Live at The Moody Theater, 310 W. Willie Nelson Blvd. \$46.67 and up. www.axs.com/events.

CONTINUED: **Free Music Together Music Classes**, see Tue 2; **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Fri 5

Preschool Imagination Station: Send Your Stuffie to School. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. A special program for kids getting ready to start preschool or kindergarten. Southeast Branch, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Cybertron Edition: Transformers One & Touch-a-Truck. 5 p.m. Touch-a-Truck begins at 5 and movie starts at 8 p.m. Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy the show. Elizabeth Milburn Park, 1901 Sun Chase. FREE. www.cedarparktexas.gov.

September Movie in the Park-Wonka. 6 p.m. Step into a world of pure imagination at Movies in the Park hosted by the City of Kyle Parks and Recreation Department. Steeplechase Park, 295 Hallie Dr. www.cityofkyle.com

Thunderbolts (2025) – Community Cinema. 7 to 10 p.m. Grab chairs and a blanket, bring family and friends, and enjoy this special screening. Come explore Community First. Community First Village, 9301 Hog Eye Rd., Ste. #950. FREE. www.mlf.com.

9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza at Yonders Point presented by The Texas Fallen Project, Inc. 7:30 to 11 p.m. On September 5th, the Friday before 9/11, The Texas Fallen Project, Inc. Yonders Point, 3103 Aten Loop. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **Free Music Together Music Classes**, see Tue 2; **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Sat 6

Bubble Bash. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Have fun with bubbles through art, mini pools of bubble solution, and boba tea while supplies last. Milwood Branch, 12500 Amherst Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Dog Days of Summer. 12 to 3 p.m. Bring your dog, \$5 per dog, limit 2. Vendors, door prizes, awards, and more. Robin Bledsoe Pool, 601 S. Bagdad Rd. FREE. www.leandertx.gov.

Bat Fest. 3 p.m. Celebrate this batty event as the world's largest urban bat colony (1.5 million Mexican Free-Tailed Bats which take up seasonal residence beneath the Ann Richard's Congress Street Bridge) take to the skies for their nightly flight. Enjoy live music, children's activities, food, and more. \$20-\$100. www.austintexas.org.

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2025

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza, see Thu 5.

Sun 7 – Grandparents Day

Baby Sensory Play Day. 2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Celebrate Grandparents Day at the library. Join us for an hour of hands-on fun for babies. Little Walnut Creek Branch, 835 W. Rundberg Ln. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza, see Thu 5;
Bat Fest, see Sat 6.

Mon 8

CONTINUED: **9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza**, see Thu 5.

Tue 9

CONTINUED: **9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza**, see Thu 5.

Wed 10

Homeschool Social Hour. 1 to 2 p.m. Windsor Park Branch invites all families who homeschool their children to a monthly social featuring games and hands-on activities. Windsor Park Branch, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Little Builders. 2:45 to 3:45 p.m. For our littlest engineers: a variety of blocks, building toys, duplos, and trains. Limited to ages 1-5. Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Teen Zine Club. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Join our teen volunteers for a bi-weekly club for anyone interested in zines book arts, Central Library, 710 W. César Chávez St. Demonstration Area. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza, see Thu 5.

Thu 11 – Patriot Day

9/11 Observance Ceremony. 8 a.m. Join the City of Kyle Parks and Recreation Department for a solemn 9/11 Observance Ceremony at Heroes Memorial Park. Heroes Memorial Park, 1071 Kohlers Xing. www.cityofkyle.com.

Preschool Imagination Station: On the Farm. 10 to 10:45 a.m. Designed for young learners, Imagination Station encourages learning through play. Hampton Branch at Oak Hill, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza, see Thu 5.

Fri 12

Homeschool Social. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join our homeschool community as we come back together for crafts, art, and snacks after our summer break. Pleasant Hill Branch, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Urban Cultural Festival. 3 to 10 p.m. Support local businesses and create economic pathways through art and music. Join us as we blend national talent, local artistry, and multi-generational stories. Moody Amphitheater at Waterloo Park, 1320 Trinity Ave., \$30 and up. www.urbanmusicfest.com.

Family Campout. 4 p.m. The City of Round Rock's Parks and Recreation Department presents the 13th annual Family Campout. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Lilo and Stitch (2025) – Community Cinema + Amplify Credit Union. 7 to 10 p.m. We're excited to partner with Amplify Credit Union for our screening Friday night. Community First. Village, 9301 Hog Eye Rd. FREE. www.eventvesta.com.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
9/11 Memorial at Flag Plaza, see Thu 5.

Sat 13

September Market Days – Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Enjoy those beautiful Texas mornings, stretch your legs, and support local vendors. Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration Mary Kyle Hartson Park, 215 W. Center St. www.cityofkyle.com.

Children's Entrepreneur Market. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. An award-winning program that teaches young people about the power of entrepreneurship and innovation, around Austin. FREE. www.kidsmarkets.com.

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Let's Play Go. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Are you a big fan of board games? The game of Go, also known as Weiqi, I-go, or Baduk, is one of the oldest strategy games in the world. Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Pecan Street Fall Festival. 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Relocated to Hill Country Galleria. There will be vendors, music, food, and fun. Hill Country Galleria, Hwy 620 and Hwy 71, Bee Cave. www.hillcountrygalleria.com.

Tween D&D. 1 to 4 p.m. Do you long for adventure? Join our Dungeon Masters as they lead short campaigns through lands unknown. Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Austin Water Lantern Festival. 5 to 9 p.m. The Austin Water Lantern Festival is bringing people together for a celebration of light and community. Lake Volente Beach, 16107 FM 2769. \$28.99 - \$55.99. www.waterlanternfestival.com.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
Urban Cultural Festival, see Fri 12.

Sun 14

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3;
Pecan Street Fall Festival, see Sat 13.

Mon 15

Baby Sensory Play. 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. Join us for an afternoon of hands-on fun for babies 0-12 months. Building, music, sensory exploration, and play. We have

something for every baby. Windsor Park Branch, 5833 Westminster Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Wed 17

Paint Lab for Kids. 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Drop in for an afternoon of messy art. Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Thu 18

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Fri 19

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Sat 20

¡Celebra! Hispanic Heritage at the Library. 1 to 3 p.m. Join us for an all-ages family celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Cepeda Branch, 651 N. Pleasant Valley Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Sun 21 – Austin Museum Day

Austin Museum Day. 9 a.m. Explore Austin-area museums. The 28th annual Austin Museum Day is a free celebration of art, culture, history, music, nature, and science. www.austinmuseumday.org.

Matthew McConaughey Poems & Prayers: Revival Book Tour with Special Guest. 3:30 p.m. The Poems & Prayers Revival Tour will blend heartfelt dialogue, spoken word performances, music, and unexpected moments of connection. Bass Concert Hall, 2350 Robert Dedman Dr. \$60 - \$120. www.texasperformingarts.org.

CONTINUED: **The Wizard of Oz**, see Wed 3.

Mon 22 – First Day of Fall

Preschool Imagination Station: On the Farm. 10 to 11:30 a.m. Designed for young learners, Imagination Station encourages learning through play. Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Encanto Make and Watch. 1 to 3 p.m. Join us to watch the Disney Movie, Encanto, while making some fun crafts like paper flower headbands and mini pinatas. Cepeda Branch, 651 N. Pleasant Valley Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Wed 24

CONTINUED: **Teen Zine Club**, see Wed 11.

Thu 25

Disney Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas Light Trail. 7:30 to 11 p.m. The most wonderful nightmare you'll ever experience! Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, 4801 La Crosse Ave. www.texasperformingarts.com.

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Fri 26

Homeschool Social: Hispanic Heritage.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join our group of homeschool families as we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month with crafts, snacks, and games. Pleasant Hill Branch, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Preschool Imagination Station.

2 to 3 p.m. Designed for young learners, Imagination Station encourages learning through play. Twin Oaks Branch, 1800 S. Fifth St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Twilight 20th Anniversary Party.

6 to 9 p.m. Sparkly vampires, werewolves, and a teenage girl with no sense of self-preservation, oh my! Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Sat 27

Public Safety Day. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Join Round Rock Police, Fire, and Wilco EMS in the Dell Diamond parking lot for a chance to meet local first responders and see the vehicles and Dell Diamond, 3400 E. Palm Valley Blvd. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Special Needs Family Jamboree. 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Individuals with disabilities and their families are invited to come join the Round Rock Parks and Recreation Department and Casey's Circle at the Play for All Park, 151 N. A.W. Grimes Blvd. www.roundrocktexas.gov.

Touch-A-Truck. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. See and touch fire trucks, bulldozers, ambulances, and police cars. Kids of all ages will enjoy a fun-filled day of activities, Benefitting SAFE. Q2 Stadium, 10414 Mc Kalla Pl. \$20 - \$55. www.safeaustin.org.

Backyard Chickens 101: A Practical Guide to Raising Chickens in Austin.

10:30 to 11:30 a.m. Dreaming of fresh eggs from your own backyard? Pleasant Hill Branch, 211 E. William Cannon Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Science Exploration.

11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Kids can dive into exciting hands-on activities that blend science and technology. Laura Bush Community Library, 9411 Bee Cave Rd. www.westbanklibrary.com.

Hispanic Latino Heritage Month Celebration.

12 to 4 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Latino Heritage Month with special guests. Terrazas Branch, 1105 E. César Chávez St. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Hispanic Latino Heritage Month Concert.

2:30 to 3:30 p.m. Celebrate Hispanic Latino Heritage Month with Mariachi Amor. John Gillum Branch, North Village, 2505 Steck Ave. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Kawaii Cat Party.

6 to 8 p.m. Libraries and cats were made for each other. Yarborough Branch, 2200 Hancock Dr. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

Sun 28

Shine On: Harvest Moon. 1 to 4 p.m. Come enjoy Ao Dai fashion show, drum, dance and music performances, crafts, button making, board games, snacks, and more. Spicewood Springs Branch, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.


H-E-B Free Fourth Sunday.

1 to 5 p.m. Enjoy free admission all day during at the Texas Science & Natural History Museum, 2400 Trinity St. FREE. www.sciencemuseum.utexas.edu.


Choir Performance for Hispanic Latino Heritage Month.

3:30 to 4:30 p.m. Join Mosaica for a moving program of choral music celebrating the beauty and diversity of Hispanic cultures. Menchaca Road Branch, 5500 Menchaca Rd. FREE. www.library.austintexas.gov.

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KIDZONE

Jack-o'-Lantern Reaction



What You Need:

- Adult helper • Aluminum foil • A whole pumpkin
- Baking soda, ¼ cup • Tray • Dish soap • Marker • Food coloring
- Cutting board • Vinegar, 1 cup • Knife
- Measuring cup • Spoon

What You Do:

Step 1: Have your adult helper cut off the top of your pumpkin. Use the spoon to remove all the pulp and seeds.

Step 2: Draw a face on the pumpkin.

Step 3: Have your adult helper use the knife to cut out the face you drew.

Step 4: Place the jack-o'-lantern on a tray. Place a piece of aluminum foil in the center of the jack-o'-lantern to create a wall. This helps keep the foamy reaction near the jack-o'-lantern's mouth.

Step 5: Fill the measuring cup with about ¼ cup of baking soda. Add 6 to 7 drops of food coloring, and 3 drops of dish soap. Mix with the spoon.

Step 6: Place the cup inside the jack-o'-lantern, in front of the aluminum foil wall. Tilt the cup slightly toward the mouth opening.

Step 7: Pour ½ cup of vinegar into the cup. What happens?

Step 8: Add more vinegar to any leftover baking soda to continue the reaction.

What's Going On:

A chemical reaction occurs between the baking soda, which is a base, and the vinegar, which is an acid. This acid-base reaction produces carbon dioxide gas — the same kind of gas we breathe out. The dish soap traps the gas in bubbles. Eventually, the pressure builds, and the bubbles overflow, forcing the foamy mixture out of the cup.

Placing this reaction inside a hollowed-out pumpkin creates a spooky, oozing effect!

Now Try This:

Experiment with different ratios of vinegar, baking soda, and dish soap. Does using more baking soda produce more foam? What happens if you add more soap?

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