

40 YEARS



APRIL 2025

WASHINGTON Parent

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FOR YOUR KIDS

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& BLENDED
FAMILIES**

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WHERE KIDS CAN
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The Treatment and
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TLC

Toddler (18-36 months) Autism Evaluations

AT TLC

THE TREATMENT AND LEARNING CENTERS



TLC offers a specialized autism diagnostic program to help families get answers faster. We understand that many parents face long wait times when seeking evaluations and support for their younger children. Our new program is designed to **connect children to neurodiversity-affirming early intervention services sooner.**

TLC's Testing, Tutoring, and Counseling Department

We provide psychoeducational assessments throughout the lifespan, including psychoeducational evaluations, neuropsychological evaluations, and autism diagnostic evaluations for older children and adults. **This new interdisciplinary collaboration will allow for a more streamlined autism diagnostic assessment of younger children (18-36 months).**

With this earlier identification comes customized recommendations to support each child and improve access to early intervention therapy services.

Comprehensive Autism Assessments at TLC

Includes occupational therapy screenings to assess sensory and motor needs. Plus, our Family Hearing Center provides specialized testing for children with hearing concerns.

Expert Assessments

TLC's interdisciplinary team of Psychologists & Speech-Language Pathologists collaboratively conduct evaluations using the ADOS-2, a gold-standard tool for observing behaviors related to autism. Combined with a child's social history and developmental impact, this assessment helps determine if they meet DSM-5 diagnostic criteria.

- Comprehensive and evidence-based
- Collaborative expert evaluation
- Faster access to early intervention

Signs of Autism May Include:

- Not responding to name.
- Limited eye contact.
- Not speaking as much or in the same way as peers.
- Not initiating play.
- Limited pointing or showing items of interest to others, or difficulty shifting attention to others' interests.
- Repetitive interests or behaviors.
- Difficulty with changes in routine.
- Sensory sensitivities (sound, textures, touch, flavors).

Email: testingtutoringcounseling@ttlc.org
Phone: 301-424-5200 x306
Website: www.ttlc.org

Address:
1390 Piccard Dr, Ste 210
Rockville, MD 20850



APRIL 2025

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Washington Parent



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Mindfulness for Pregnancy

Fresh kicks, bold designs, and unstoppable creativity—DC's young artists bring their sneaker dreams to life!

Blossom Kicks for Kids

PRESENTED BY **eventsDC**

March 21 - April 13

The Bloom Room



Scan QR code to learn more or visit
NationalCherryBlossomFestival.org/BlossomKicks



Students from all eight wards are invited to participate to bring their spring sneaker designs to life. Rooted in the vibrant theme of **"District of Blossoms,"** young designers will transport their original concepts to create custom **iconic Nike Air Force 1 sneakers—provided by DTLR.**

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Hello April!

Yay spring! Daffodils, cherry blossoms, birds chirping – they all bask with us in balmy temperatures and longer daylight, and hope is in the air.

We've got lots of spring fun for you in this issue of Washington Parent. We'll help you find the best outdoor playgrounds, places to go crabbing around the DC area and where to feast on Chesapeake Bay crabs, programs at local public libraries where the kiddos can read with dogs and where to find theaters with sensory-friendly accommodations for your kids who need them to be able to experience all the wonder of live performances!

And of course you're thinking ahead to camp, so we're sharing ways for divorced and blended families to make summer camp smooth, and how to talk to your kids about choosing healthy food at camp this summer.

We haven't forgotten family health. Learn from a pediatrician what you need to know about both Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes in children. And if you're pregnant, we've got solutions to overcome common issues that can get in the way of you getting a good night's sleep, as well as some tips for using mindfulness to stay centered during a very change-loaded time. Mental health is, as always, a foremost concern for parents and Washington Parent covers the many aspects of this year-round. This month a parent educator talks about the challenges families face addressing the defining force of phones in their lives and offers guidance on how to "dial down screen usage and turn up connection."

For Earth Day, April 22, check out our story on how to green your family fitness routine, ditching all the plastic and where to find eco-friendly fitness gear in the DMV. And find out how your kids and teens can help our climate through local volunteer opportunities.

Washington Parent's April issue also features a look at microschoools – what they are and why more parents are choosing them. In addition, thinking a lot about finances is an everyday undertaking for parents, so in our April More for Moms & Dads department a local legal expert on estate planning lays out what you need to do to protect your family's future.

Finally, April is National Humor Month, and there's nothing like a good laugh to promote wellbeing, so check out the What to Read department in this issue to find books for tots to teens that tickle the funny bone!

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READING WITH DOGS:

Kids Can Read with a Furry Friend at DC-Area Public Libraries

By Diana M. Martin

Let your child experience the joy of reading aloud while building their skills during a reading session with a certified therapy dog. Kids may bring their own book or choose one from the library. Although each library has their own program, typically kids are paired with a dog for 15 minutes and parents may help their child read one to two books. The age range is usually from kindergarten to 5th grade.

To prepare your child, [Pages, Pens, and Paws](#) is a website that offers books and activities such as discussion questions and coloring sheets to supplement Animal Assisted Reading Programs. It features *Moxie Makes a Difference*, by Nicole Selby (author), Kira Alexanian (illustrator) and Tonya Cartmell (contributor), about a therapy dog who visits a school. There are also several books that may be available at your library or for purchase such as *Archer the Therapy Dog – A Read Together Book*, by Katie Baron (author) and Emily Beach (illustrator) about a golden retriever who invites your child to join him on his journey as he becomes a therapy dog and makes visits to a library.



BIGSTOCK/YASTREMSKA

UPCOMING READING WITH DOGS PROGRAMS

MARYLAND

Montgomery County Public Libraries

Aspen Hill Library

Saturdays, April 05, 19, and 26: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Brigadier General

Charles E. McGee Library

Saturday, April 12: 2-3 p.m.

Connie Morella Library

Thursdays, April 10 and 24: 4-5 p.m.

Davis Library

Wednesdays, April 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30: 4-5 p.m.

Gaithersburg Library

Mondays, April 7, 14, 21, and 28:
4:45-5:45 p.m.

Germantown Library

Tuesdays, April 1, 8, 15, 22
and 29: 5:15 p.m.-6 p.m.

Practice your reading with Kiwi, a certified therapy dog, who is bilingual and can understand both English and Spanish language.

Kensington Library

Saturdays, April 12 and 19: 10:30-11:30am

Long Branch Library

Saturday, April 19: 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

Potomac Library

Thursday, April 17: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 19: 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Quince Orchard Library

Tuesdays, April 8 and 22: 6-7 p.m.

Rockville Library

Thursday, April 17: 5-6 p.m.

Twinbrook Library

Wednesday, April 2: 4-5 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Alexandria Library

Charles E. Beatley Jr. Central Library

Wednesday, April 2: 5-6 p.m.

Prince William County Public Libraries

Bull Run Library

Wednesday, April 16: 5-6 p.m.

Chinn Park Library

Wednesday, April 9: 4-5 p.m.

Central Children's Area

Wednesday, April 9: 5:30-6:15 p.m.

Dumfries Library

Monday, April 21: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Haymarket Gainesville Library

Saturday, April 5: 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

Fairfax County Public Library

Herndon Fortnightly Library

Mondays, April 7, May 5, June 2: 7:15-7:30 p.m.

Manassas, Independent Hill Library

Mondays, April 14 and 28: 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Woodbridge, Lake Ridge Library

Saturday, April 12: 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Alexandria, Martha

Washington Library

Wednesday, April 2: 3:30-4:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON, DC

Children are welcome to Read with Dogs with PAL ([People Animals Love](#)) at various schools in the DC area.

Local parent Diana M. Martin has been an adjunct professor at Montgomery College and freelance writer for more than 20 years.



BIGSTOCK/FIZKES

BOOKS THAT TICKLE THE FUNNY BONE

Celebrate National Humor Month by reading and laughing! These books will prompt giggles from April 1 (April Fools' Day) to 30.

Games of peek-a-boo, silly rhymes, hyperbole, wordplay and wit: these are a few of the preverbal and language-related ways that youngsters engage in humor as they develop through childhood and adolescence.

In *Kids Who Laugh*, Dr. Louis Franzini explores language-based and other forms of humor. The physical, social and mental benefits are many. Humor can help children to bond with others and make friends. It can enhance resilience, confidence, mood and learning. A good laugh can relieve stress and lower blood pressure. (And all this applies to adults as well.)

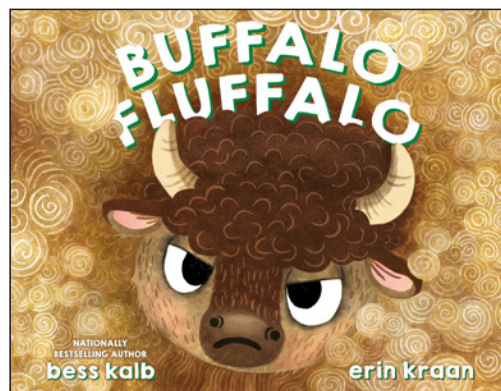
But because humor is often learned behavior, it's important to guide youngsters to recognize when it veers into unkindness. Mocking others and hurtful teasing and pranks are never okay.

For maximum fun, this month you might ask each family member to share their favorite funny children's book. Who knows, this might set off a year-long fest of guffaws and goofy read-alouds!

Tots-age 7

Buffalo Fluffalo

By Bess Kalb
Illustrated by
Erin Kraan
Random House
Studio, 2024,
\$18.99
Rollicking
rhymes
chronicle
the tale of a
proud, puffy
buffalo who



is "ever so snarly and gnarly and tuffalo." He rebuffs overtures of friendship from a ram, prairie dog and crow – only to be humbled by a rainstorm. With flattened fur, the pip-squeak-sized buffalo discovers – thanks to his friends – that he is now happily "hugly and snugly." The hilarious illustrations perfectly complement the book's lively wordplay and cranky refrain (which youngsters will love to chant).

Return of the Underwear Dragon

By Scott Rothman
Illustrated by Pete Oswald
Random House Studio, 2021,
\$17.99

In this entertaining sequel to *Attack of the Underwear Dragon*, Sir Cole tries to teach a dragon to read. Though the frustrated student torches the book, Sir Cole refuses to give up. With the help of a more interesting book and a resourceful friend, the two finally succeed. The dragon's reward? Underwear spiffily decorated with letters of the alphabet. The tale balances humor with heart as the dragon learns the value of persistence and of patient, understanding teachers.



Preteens

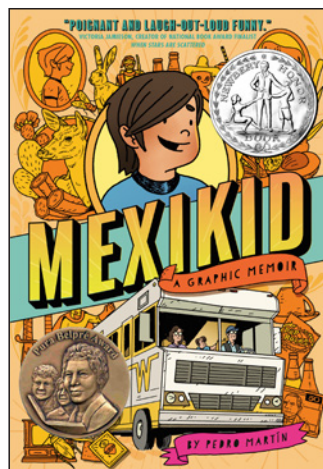
Bibsy Cross and the Creepy-Crawlies

By Liz Garton Scanlon
Illustrated by Dung Ho
Knopf, 2025, \$16.99
This third chapter book in a series about a curious, chatty third grader is as delightful as its predecessors. Acclaimed author Liz Garton Scanlon draws on ordinary school and family life for amusing, relatable complications. Working with classmates on a science project, Bibsy "finds it hard to coexist with the other organisms in her habitat." In keeping with the nature theme, Dung Ho adds pops of Kelly green to her black-and-white spot art.



Mexikid

By Pedro Martín
Dial, 2023, \$14.99
Looking for laughs and adventure? Pile into the family Winnebago with young Pedro and his eight siblings, bound for Mexico. Their mission: to return with their abuelito, who will live with them in California. During a trip of 2,000 miles, they contend with corrupt border guards, raw milk and a toy called the Little Peepee Man. But soon Pedro is trying to capture his grandfather's songs and tales on paper. In doing so, he connects more deeply with his abuelito and with Mexican culture and history. In 2024, this funny, moving graphic memoir won a Newbery Honor and the Pura Belpré Author and Illustrator Awards.



Teens

The Princess and the Grilled Cheese Sandwich

By Deya Muniz
Little, Brown, 2023,
\$17.99
The titular comfort food plays an important role in this graphic novel, included on several 2024 "Best of" lists. And an activist princess named Brie, a disguised count and plot twists galore add unexpected spice. Set in the kingdom of Fromage, this witty fairy tale upends gender tropes to serve up a delectable rom-com.



Mary Quattlebaum lives in Washington, D.C. and is the author of 30 award-winning children's books, most recently *Queen Elizabeth II*, an early reader biography. She teaches in the graduate program in writing for children at Vermont College of Fine Arts, writes frequently for *The Washington Post* and is a popular school and conference speaker.



How to Help Our Climate:

Volunteer Opportunities for Kids in the DC Area

By Liam McCrickard

The climate crisis has caused many parents – and children – to fear for the future. They wonder how best to help protect the climate to make a brighter tomorrow for themselves, their family and people around the world. Climate organizers broadly agree supporting or joining up with an organization that helps push for change at the community or even policy level can make an impact that stretches far beyond your household. This month, Washington Parent profiles a few of these organizations in the DMV where teens, parents or even the whole family can make a difference.

Citizen's Climate Lobby

A global organization, Citizen's Climate Lobby (CCL) has chapters in Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Silver Spring-Takoma Park, DC, Alexandria, Fairfax County, Loudoun County and Prince William County. Chapters meet to discuss and plan local actions, as well as participate in coordinated movements of the organization on a national or global level.

CCL's Youth Action Team is focused on supporting youth volunteers under the age of 18 in their quest to get involved with climate activism in their own community. Though many actions are taken in local chapters, there are also regional and national conferences youth can attend and many coordinated actions take youth volunteers right up the steps of the Capitol. As volunteer Franklin Wu states, "Youth voices are growing, and we know the time for meaningful climate action is now."

Climate Action Heroes

For younger children, the National Children's Museum in DC has created Climate Action Heroes, a set of superheroes fighting to protect our world, heroes that you and your child can embody. By taking the quiz to find out which hero you are, participants can find what hero is right for them, then receive monthly missions from the website to learn more about climate change and discover ways to get involved with being our planet's hero.

Having taken the quiz myself, I discovered that I'm a Mighty

Meteorologist, meaning my current mission is to explore data about our atmosphere as recorded from space to learn how the climate has changed over the years. Other current missions include planning for a no-plastic week, making a model of how trees prevent floods and creating wildflower seed bombs to assist pollinators. All missions stay up on the site, giving a backlog of additional activities for your hero to engage in.

Rock Creek Conservancy

Rock Creek Conservancy provides intergenerational opportunities to protect the entirety of Rock Creek Park and the creek itself through activities like weed wrangling, water quality monitoring and extreme stream cleanup. It also plays host to the Rock Creek Conservation Corps (RC3), a 6-week summer youth-employment opportunity that helps build a connection between high school students and their public lands while also offering them their first job in conservation.

Carla Flores, a member of RC3's founding class in 2015, reflected on her time with the program, where she helped repair erosion damage and remove invasive plants from the park. Flores said, "It's a lot of hard work, but ... at the end of the day we look back at how we started and how we finished. I always feel accomplished in what I got done that day." Even in abstract terms, the program is a boon to the local community, but the personal impact it has on the youths who participate in it help make it truly special.

Sierra Club Climate Leadership Program

The DC chapter of Sierra Club, an environmental advocacy group, offers a program aimed at teens ages 14-18 that provides them with opportunities to explore and develop leadership and mentorship skills through working on local advocacy, community projects and education initiatives. The next application window opens May 2025.

The Sierra Club Potomac Region Outings (SCPRO) is another arm of the club that may be of interest to families hosting activities like hikes, allowing volunteers to enjoy the nature they're fighting to protect. SCPRO also offers valuable practical skills training, such as wilderness survival first-aid courses.

Youth Action Institute

The YAI is a program under the Edlavitch Jewish Community Center* aimed at getting youth ages 11 to 18 involved in issues including climate change. Volunteer opportunities give youth a chance to provide direct assistance to the community while earning student service hours. The YAI's climate action group is entirely teen-driven and run, allowing for youths to make a difference their way and explore ideas to drive forward change that their adult counterparts may have never thought of.

*Youth do not need to be Jewish to participate.

Liam McCrickard holds a B.A. in creative and professional writing from Goucher College. He is assistant editor at Washington Parent. He also works as a freelance designer, writer and editor of tabletop role-playing games.



Happy CAMPERS!

- Outdoors All Day for Ages 4-12
- Weeklong travel adventures for teens (ages 12-16)
- Kayaking - Mountain Biking
Disc Golf - Rafting



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PROGRAMS GUIDE



The Theatre Lab School of the Dramatic Arts

Spend your summer at The Theatre Lab building your acting skills in a high-energy, fun environment with top-level teachers and faculty. The Theatre Lab offers theatre training programs for students from 1st grade to 19 years old. In a collaborative setting, participants grow as artists while forming a supportive creative and ensemble focused community. Visit theatrelab.org for more information. 900 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20001, 202-824-0449.

VIRGINIA

Art Camp at The Art League

Unleash your child's imagination this summer at Art Camp! Kids complete a fun new project daily, including drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture and more. Camps run Monday to Friday and vary curriculum from week to week. Specialty camps, like Drawing Camp or Painting

Camp, focus on immersion in one particular medium. *Alexandria, Va. 22314, 703-683-2323.*

Beginner Fencing Camp

Cardinal Fencing Academy teaches people how to compete in the Olympic sport of fencing which can be applied to competing in life. We do this for our students, their families and the community. We do this through our philosophy of caring, inclusion and competence. *Sterling, Va. 240-424-0749.*

Camp Griffin

Camp Griffin offers a fun-filled, unforgettable summer experience. Dive into 10 weeks of adventures including: STEAM, creative writing, water play, History, French, Spanish, art, sports and more! We provide flexible scheduling by offering early and extended-care options. Sibling and military discounts are available. Experience ~ Explore ~ Create. *3819 Gallows Rd., Annandale, Va. 703-340-7268.*

Camp Horizons

Celebrating over 40 years of creating unforgettable memories, our accredited camp offers an experience for every child's passion! From arts and horseback riding to climbing, swimming and theater. Providing a safe environment to explore their interests, make friendships, build confidence and develop lifelong skills. Plan their next adventure today! *Harrisonburg, Va. 540-896-7600.*



Congressional Camp

With over 80 years of experience, Congressional Camp prides itself on a wide variety of program offerings for campers ages 4 to 14. We are located on a beautiful, 40-acre campus in Falls Church, Virginia at Congressional School. Our diverse programs include day camp, travel camps and specialty camps. *Falls Church, Va. 703-533-0931.*

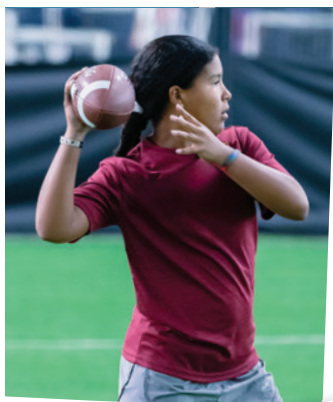
Gym America - Gymnastics & Dance Center

Gym America offers Schools Out, Spring Break and Summer Camps. For summer, options include full day camps, half-day morning or afternoon camps and a half day camp for preschool age children. Full day options include Gymnastics camps, themed Gymnastics and Fun camps, an exciting "American Ninja Warrior" / Tumbling and Tramp Camp, and much more! *Chantilly, Va. 540-300-7453.*

LLE Education Group

Now enrolling for summer camp. Camp Imagination. Our experienced teachers and engaging curriculum offer children the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe, nurturing environment. Learn & grow with us! *4300 Prince William Pkwy., Woodbridge, Va. 703-819-1567.*

CONTINUED...



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CAMPS & SUMMER PR

MedStar Capitals Iceplex Summer Camps

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The St. James Summer Camps

Make 2025 their BEST SUMMER EVER with nonstop fun at our award-winning Adventure, Sports and STEAM camps – voted Best Summer Camp in the DMV! Designed for ages 4-13, we offer full-day, half-day and extended care options with lunch included, plus transportation options to fit your busy schedule. Let the adventure begin! *The St. James*, 6805 Industrial Rd., Springfield, Va. 703-239-6846.

Woodberry Forest Summer Camps

Woodberry Forest summer camps are designed for boys to have fun, grow as young men and get to know Woodberry's incredible campus, students and faculty. Whether it's for the camaraderie, competition and skill building or to grow as a leader and adventurer, it will be the best summer of his

life. *Woodberry Forest School*, 898 *Woodberry Forest Rd.*, *Woodberry Forest, Va.* 540-672-6025.

MARYLAND

Bretton Woods Day and Adventure Camps

Adventure Camp does a different activity each day: ropes course, tubing, kayaking, paddleboarding, canoeing, primitive skills. Day camp: arts and crafts, swim lessons, free swim, giant slip'n slide, archery. Lunch is included with all camps and transportation is available. Tired, happy and to bed early. Safe, fun and educational along the Potomac River. 15700 River Rd, Germantown Md. 20874, 240-848-9138.

Camp Accomplish

We proudly serve campers with and without disabilities and chronic health conditions while

promoting fun, safety, challenge and friendship for everyone. From climbing walls to nature trails to therapeutic riding activities, every child is welcome to explore, learn and grow. 9035 Ironsides Rd., Nanjemoy, Md. 301-870-3226.

Camp Woodend

Day, travel and overnight camps for DC-metro-area families. Camp Woodend is on a 40-acre nature sanctuary in Chevy Chase, Md. Our nature-themed camps provide high-quality environmental science education led by experienced outdoor educators committed to your child having the best possible experience and good old-fashioned camp fun! *Chevy Chase, Md.* 301-652-9188.

DC Fencers Club Summer Fencing Camps

Discover the Olympic sport of fencing at DC Fencers Club summer fencing camps. Fencing



Cardinal Fencing Academy Summer Camps

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summer camp



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WestminsterSchool.com/CampGriffin

(703) 340-7268

3819 Gallows Rd. Annandale, VA 22003

PROGRAMS GUIDE



camp activities include games, footwork, fencing technique and tactics, group lessons, fencing videos, competition, training with nationally ranked fencers and new friendships. 9330 Fraser Ave., Silver Spring, Md. 301-562-1990.

Hammer & Stain Rockville Kids' Art Camp

Join us for an unforgettable summer of creativity at Hammer & Stain Rockville! Kids ages 8-15 will craft personalized art projects, explore new techniques and enjoy a fun, hands-on experience. Limited spots available – secure your spot today! Hammer & Stain Rockville, 107B Gibbs St., Rockville, Md. 301-512-5003.

NatPhil Summer String Institute

Summer String Institute is back with two sessions from July 21st-25th and July 28th-August 1st. String students in grades 4-12 are immersed in comprehensive and

engaging music experiences guided by NatPhil's world-class staff – including private lessons, chamber music, music theory, technique classes and orchestra performance, alongside enriching extramusical opportunities. River Road Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 6301 River Rd., Bethesda, Md. 301-493-9283 ext. 4209.

Oeness-Family School Summer Programs

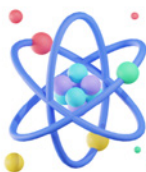
Discover Oeness-Family School's summer programs for ages 2nd-8th grade! Engage in hands-on Montessori learning, exciting field trips, environmental exploration and creative theater. From Little Explorers (ages 2-3) to Peace Weavers (3½-6), Earth Keepers (Grades 1-5) and Summer Theater (Grades 3-8), there's something for every child to learn and thrive! 6701 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, Md. 301-652-7751.

PGParks Summer Day Camps

Offering full- and half-day summer camps featuring sports and swimming, outdoor and nature activities, visual and performing arts, science, arts and crafts and many more fun activities. A lot of their camps offer before and aftercare. Registration for Prince George's County residents opens March 12; March 19 for non-residents. Prince George's County, Md.

Round House Theatre

At Round House, young artists of all ages and backgrounds can experience the joy of creating theater and film. Our programs inspire creativity, exercise imaginations and promote artistic risk-taking in a supportive and fun environment. Bethesda and Silver Spring, Md. 301-585-1225.



Summer Enrichment Academy at UMBC

The Summer Enrichment Academy (SEA) at UMBC offers engaging one-week workshops for middle and high school students. Led by UMBC faculty, industry professionals and graduate students, SEA explores science, engineering, technology, the arts and humanities, providing a stimulating learning experience. Baltimore, Md. 410-455-8607.

Summer Musical Theatre Camp

Watch your child take the stage in a two-week, full day, in-person camp that culminates in a delightful ensemble performance for rising grades 1-6! Your child will experience daily rehearsals in dancing, singing and acting, working toward a final ensemble musical for friends and family. Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd., Glen Echo, Md.

CONTINUED...

National Philharmonic Summer String Institute 2025

Apply today!



Early Bird Discount April 1

Deadline to Apply May 4

Session 1: July 21-25

Session 2: July 28-August 1

More info at <https://nationalphilharmonic.org/SSI/>



SUMMER ADVENTURES

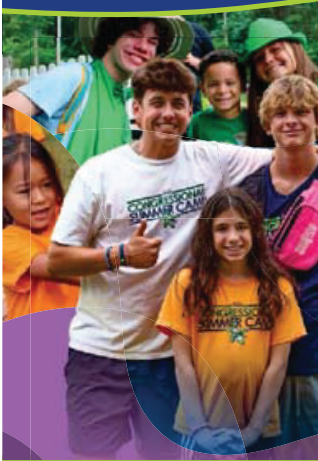
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CAMPS & SUMMER PROGRAMS GUIDE



Summer Musical Theatre Training Program

Provides students in rising grade 7-12 with foundational and expanded understanding of technique in ballet, jazz, music and acting. The program takes place Monday through Friday at Wintergreen Plaza in Rockville – 9 a.m.-4 p.m. daily and includes a trip to see a Washington DC area or Broadway production! *Rockville, Md.*

Summers at Seton

Designed for girls ages 7-18 (ages vary by camp), our dynamic lineup offers something for everyone – from sports to dance to music to entrepreneurship to STEM. Led by expert coaches, teachers and mentors, each camp is thoughtfully designed to inspire growth, build skills and empower girls in a fun and supportive environment. *5715 Emerson St., Bladensburg, Md. 301-864-4532.*

PENNSYLVANIA

Gettysburg College Summer Academic Camps

We offer three different academic camps: Civic Engagement Camp,

Young Civil War Historians Camp, and Camp Psych. Summer camp participants will join our community of passionate achievers, on a campus where history and innovation meet to shape the future and enjoy a glimpse into life as a Gettysburgian. From enriching academic programming to meaningful social connections, the week-long experience is unforgettable! *Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pa. 717-337-6924.*

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BSC Buddy Camp

At Bethesda Soccer Club Buddy Camp, high-level coaches and elite youth soccer players join forces with children with physical and developmental disabilities to improve their soccer skills and to share in the love of the game. *Walter Johnson High School, 6400 Rock Spring Dr., Bethesda, Md. 240-477-2504.*

Camp Forget-Me-Not/ Camp Erin DC

Campers ages 6-17 will enjoy a full day of traditional camp activities, grief focused groups and

workshops to help them explore a variety of ways to express themselves while developing skills. All the activities are specially designed to help campers express themselves and develop bonds with others. Camp Forget-Me-Not/ Camp Erin DC is provided free of charge. Meals and snacks will be provided during the day camp. *4201 Connecticut Ave. NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 202-624-0010.*

Camp Holiday Trails

A camp for children and teens with medical needs and their siblings, aged 6-17. CHT was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1973 and, since that time, has provided over 10,000 kids with medical needs the opportunity to experience a positive camp experience. *400 Holiday Trails Ln., Charlottesville, Va. 434-977-3781.*

Camp Inclusion

Camp Inclusion is a summer day camp for any student with or without a cognitive, social or physical disability. At Camp Inclusion, campers participate in many group games and sports such as soccer, kickball and handball. Campers also participate in art &

crafts activities such as tie-dye and painting, as well as developmentally appropriate board games. Games are age appropriate and adapted for all needs. *Glenwood Middle School, 2690 MD-97, Glenwood, Md. 443-398-8537.*

Camp Ramapo

Based on a 250-acre campus in Rhinebeck, New York, Camp Ramapo is a residential summer camp that serves young people who are affected by social, emotional or learning challenges, including those on the autism spectrum. *Rhinebeck, NY. 845-876-8403.*

Summit Camp DC Weekenders

Weekenders are tons of fun for teens! Plus, Summit offers many opportunities for learning and growth as part of our weekend offerings. Your teen may participate in the following class activities during a weekend experience: Managing Money 101, Travel Safety and Awareness for Teens, Creative Arts Paint and "Sip" Class, Orienteering, Ropes Course or Archery Instruction, Team Building Games, Karaoke and Talent Night and much more! *Md. and DC 570-253-4381.*

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Join the Roadrunners for a summer filled with fun, skill development and new adventures! Summers at Seton offers exciting camps for ages 7-18, including sports, STEM, arts and leadership, designed to inspire growth and creativity in a supportive environment.

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✓ Basketball 7/28-8/1	✓ STEM in Sports 7/7-11
✓ Dance 7/21-25	✓ Taekwondo 6/23-27
✓ DC Horns 6/9-13	✓ Volleyball 7/13-18
✓ Girls Entrepreneurship 6/23-7/3	
✓ Gridiron Flag Football 7/14-18	



For More Information
 Elizabeth Seton High School
www.SetonHS.org
 Click on Summers at Seton

Registration opens on 1/24/25

Gettysburg COLLEGE

2025 Summer Academic Camps



Civic Engagement Camp July 7-12

The Eisenhower Institute's Civic Engagement program is designed for motivated students with a passion for civic engagement within the American political system. Students will face challenging academic questions and real-world situations.



Young Civil War Historians Conference July 13-18

The Young Civil War Historians Conference offers high school students an opportunity to become their own historians. Students will follow in the footsteps of a soldier who fought at Gettysburg through hands-on work with original archival documents. One of the highlights of the camp will be a trip to Washington featuring a visit to the National Archives to explore the official records of Civil War regiments.



Camp Psych July 13-18

Camp Psych provides rising high school Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors a window into how psychological science works.

Cost: \$1395
 Six days/Five nights
 Historic Gettysburg, PA

www.gettysburg.edu/summercamps

Making Summer Camp Smooth for Divorced Families

By Gina Hagler

Summer is a time without the structure of school, homework and sports. For many families, it's also a rather chaotic time, with shifting schedules and multiple activities. For divorced and blended families, the chaos is increased with the need to synchronize multiple family schedules. What can co-parents in divorced and blended families do to make summer camp fun?

Plan Ahead

A review of legal practices in the DC area resulted in five key pieces of advice:

- 1. Plan ahead** – As part of your divorce arrangement, specify who is responsible for camp fees, camp selection, before/aftercare, parent's day activities and scheduled phone calls. Be sure to include play dates and carpool arrangements. Nailing it all down before a problem arises will reduce the likelihood of problems.
- 2. Speak to the camp** – Be sure the camp knows about your custody arrangement and any associated matters such as who is allowed to pick up a child from camp. Let them know if one or more families will be coming for visiting day so the camp can help to make it go smoothly for the child. Ask their protocol for phone calls home – can your child make one to each family rather than one in total? Be as specific as you can so the camp can work with you.
- 3. Brainstorm complications** – What if your child hates the camp? What if your child gets sick? What if one parent is required to make a change to their schedule? Problem-solve solutions before the need arises – then hope the need doesn't arise.
- 4. Share a calendar** – For the purposes of summer and beyond, establish a shared online calendar if all parties agree. This way, everyone can not only see what's going on but also view it at a time that works for them. Have a message generated to all subscribers when an event is added or changed. Use the calendar to make child care related matters transparent.
- 5. Put it in writing** – Have a written record in a shared folder. If all parties agree, it can help to include the plan and a communication log with info on contacts with camp, school,



coaches and other parents in a central, accessible place. The more you can agree upon and put in place before summer begins, the more everyone can expect a smooth experience.

Coordinate

There are things you can do to benefit your child's social and emotional health, too. Melissa Murphy, LCSW-C is founder and clinical director of [Bethesda Therapy](#). In her work, she's found that "the key to summer working well for divorced and blended families is to get really organized a few months ahead, if possible. It's especially important in our area because we're trying to register for camps in January. If you try to fly by the seat of your pants with summer plans, it can really be chaotic."

"For a blended family it gets even more complicated," Murphy says, "because you're juggling a lot of different schedules and sometimes multiple ages and age brackets." There's no doubt this requires additional planning and communication. But, blended or not, co-parents can coordinate with a shared calendar if all parties agree, and communicate via an email or text that creates a record if communication is difficult. "The more effort you put into coordinating this ahead," Murphy continues, "the less pain when summer arrives."

There's another upside to a solid plan, she says. "It may seem contradictory, but once you have the plan in place, both families can be more flexible if plans change or something comes up. This helps the summer be joyful." But don't stop here with your planning, she advises. "When you can, include some downtime, too, to give your kids time to just be at the pool, go on walks, go on hikes, get outside, detach from screens and also detach from constantly having to be somewhere."

It's clear that planning and coordination between co-parents, along with communication with the camp up front, can pave the way for a terrific summer camp experience.

Gina Hagler is a freelance writer and founder of [KidWrite! Language Arts](#).



HOW TO TALK TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT CHOOSING HEALTHY FOOD AT CAMP

By Diana K. Rice

As any parent knows, equipping kids with the life skills they'll need to make good decisions and live independently is among the primary goals of parenting. But we usually think of this as a long-term goal instilled indirectly by our day-to-day actions. So in the hustle of preparing kids for a few weeks away at overnight camp – what to pack, how to stay in touch, what to do if they feel homesick – the realization that your child will need to rely on those good decision-making skills right **now** without you around can come as quite a jolt to many parents.

Of course, campers will still have their counselors to help guide their decisions and keep them safe. But what about that tricky buffet line that kids must navigate for themselves, often piled high with tempting options like chocolate chip pancakes, hot dogs, and chicken tenders? Surely summer camp is a time to

allow your kids to let loose a bit and indulge in the occasional popsicle and s'more, but with a little planning – and a lot of open communication – you can also help your child make healthy food choices away from home.

Start by researching your camp's food options. Many camps post a typical menu on their websites, but if you can't find it there, call the camp and ask for a description of the offerings or sample menu. Then try these strategies:

- **Determine the “always” and “sometimes” foods.** Sit down with your child to talk about the food options you've researched. Start by asking what they're excited about eating and how the experience will be different from eating at home. Overnight camp is a time for children to express their independence, so be careful not to emphasize that your child must follow exactly the



WHERE TO GET SALAD BAR SAVVY IN THE DC AREA

Here are some spots around the DMV to take your kid to teach them to navigate health salad selections before they head to camp:

- ▶ **Chop't** (numerous locations around the DMV)
- ▶ **Chopsmith** (The Wharf – 11 District Sq SW Washington DC and NoMa – 300 M St NE, Washington DC)
- ▶ **Cornerstone Café** (1501 M St., NW, Washington, DC)
- ▶ **Fresh Green** (15475 Annapolis Road Suite 140, Bowie, Md. and 32 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, Md.)
- ▶ **Honeygrow** (numerous locations around the DMV)
- ▶ **Saladworks** (320 Florida Ave. NE Bay 2A, Washington, DC and 15802 Crain Hwy, Brandywine, Md.)
- ▶ **Sweet Green** (numerous locations around the DMV)
- ▶ And Don't Forget Your Local Grocery Store!

same eating pattern your family does at home. If your camper has indicated that they're excited about options that aren't ideal for everyday consumption, work together to determine the "always" foods, such as fruit, vegetables, plain milk and yogurt and baked chicken, as well as the "sometimes" foods: fried foods, desserts and the like. Together, come up with a number of "sometimes" choices that you both feel is reasonable, be it once a day, three times a week, or "anything goes" Fridays.

- **Discuss balanced meals.** Common offerings such as cereal, granola or pancakes can all be healthy breakfast choices, but they don't represent a balanced meal all by themselves. Use a tool such as [MyPlate](#) to discuss all the elements of a healthy meal, especially produce, grains and protein. Then go back to your camp's menu to see what combinations you and your child can come up with. Emphasize that choosing items from multiple food groups at each meal isn't simply because it's "healthy," but rather because it will give your child the energy to engage in all of the fun activities the camp offers throughout the rest of the day.
- **Go for a practice run.** Although camps may offer well-stocked salad bars, children may shy away from this offering if they've never been tasked with preparing their own salad at home or

school. Go on an outing to a local salad bar and put together your own balanced salad plates. Talk about healthy strategies such as including a rainbow of colors and using a light hand with "extras" such as cheese, croutons, dressing and salted items.

In your communication with your child while they're away, ask if they're enjoying the food and whether they've discovered any new favorites. And when your child returns home, keep the camp experience alive by maintaining at least one new food tradition from camp. If the camp your child attended offered cooking classes, be certain to keep that practice up at home, as cooking and dining with kids in the home environment provides a multitude of benefits. No cooking classes at your child's camp? Ask them which foods they most enjoyed from the camp's dining hall, then search for child-friendly recipes to cook together. Now breathe – I'm confident your little eater will do just fine this summer!

Diana K. Rice is a registered dietitian on staff with [The Kids Cook Monday](#), a project of [The Monday Campaigns](#), an ACA Educational Ally. She credits her interest in food and cooking in part to the summers she spent at Camp Brighton Woods in Brookeville, Maryland. Reprinted by permission of the American Camp Association. ©2014, American Camping Association, Inc. The views and opinions expressed by contributors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the American Camp Association or ACA employees.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY CRABBING SPOTS NEAR DC AND WHERE TO FEAST ON Chesapeake Bay Crabs

By Andrew Madigan

Crabbing is a popular hobby around the DMV and an important part of the local culture. You can find several varieties in area waters, and many of them are edible, such as the Atlantic Ghost Crab and Fiddler Crab, but the Atlantic Blue Crab is the most popular, prized for its sweet and tender meat. Lucky for us, the Chesapeake Bay is one of the best places in the world to find them. Crabbing is a great activity for the whole family, whether you're a beginner or an old hand. April is peak season, so start planning your trip now.

Where to Go

POINT LOOKOUT STATE PARK (SCOTLAND, MD.)

Point Lookout sits between the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River. The area is quiet, secluded and restful. There's a lot to do here, including a museum, nature center, lighthouse, boat rentals, hiking and a cruise to Smith Island. If you enjoy bird-watching you might even spot a bald eagle. There's a 700-foot fishing pier and the camp store sells crabbing equipment.

SOLOMONS ISLAND (SOLOMONS, MD.)

This is a family-friendly nook in Calvert County on the Chesapeake Bay where people have been crabbing since colonial times. In town you'll find a marina, seafood restaurants, gift shops, sculpture garden, a boardwalk along the Patuxent and [Annmarié Sculpture Garden & Arts Center](#). The pier is a great spot for crabbing.

WESTMORELAND STATE PARK (MONTROSS, VA.)

Westmoreland is a 1,300-acre historic site on the Potomac. The park is well equipped with a snack bar, camp store, boat ramp, campgrounds, cabins, information center, hiking trails and more. Your kids will enjoy hunting for shark teeth and fossils. This is an ideal spot for late-season crabbing.

FIRST LANDING STATE PARK (VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.)

Situated on Cape Henry, the park has over a mile of beach along the Chesapeake. It's a popular spot for fishing, swimming, cycling, crabbing, boating, camping, educational exhibits, the summer crabbing class and cabin rentals. Weekdays are best, to avoid the crowds.



BIGSTOCK/DAVID TRAN

ENDEAVOR POINT (BENEDICT, MD.)

Benedict is a tiny fishing village in Calvert County. Located on the Patuxent, it's not as crowded as some of the other crabbing spots. Enjoy kayaking, SUP-ing, stargazing, fishing or making a bonfire at night. You can rent a fully equipped cottage, rent hammocks, tiki torches and crabbing equipment. Endeavor Point is very family oriented – they even sell s'mores kits.

CARR'S WHARF (MAYO, MD.)

This is a community park in Anne Arundel County, open from sunup to sundown. It features a 309-foot pier on the Rhode River, where most of the crabbing takes place. Carr's Wharf has a boat launch and it's a great fishing spot. Nearby, there are plenty of beaches.

CHESAPEAKE BAY BRIDGE-TUNNEL (CAPE CHARLES, VA.)

This is probably the most popular crabbing spot in the DMV. The area includes four human-made islands and 17 miles of bridge with a wide variety of locations to crab (Sandy Point Beach and Matapeake State Park are minutes away). You can also head out to deeper waters to find larger crabs.

YORK RIVER STATE PARK (WILLIAMSBURG, VA.)

This lovely, serene park has a lot to offer – hiking trails, picnic areas and plenty of recreational activities. The waters are filled with blue crabs, clams, oysters and Atlantic croakers. The best place to crab is Croaker Landing, an archeological site listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

How To Do It

If you want to find crabs, try the marshy grasses around docks, bridges and piers. During summer, they can be found in shallow areas, but as the weather turns cold they move toward deeper waters.

There are many ways to catch a crab, but a hand line is the easiest. It consists of a rope with a weighted hook. Toss your baited line into the water, about 10 feet out. As soon as the line tightens or moves, you've caught something, so draw it in slowly. Once you see the crab, scoop it up with a net before it gets away.

Traps are another popular method, though if you use a trap in Virginia or Maryland you'll need a license. Consult the [Virginia Marine Resources Commission](#) or the [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) for more details (how many you're allowed to catch, what size they need to be, etc.). Traps can be used at a dock or jetty, but more commonly from a boat. Lower the trap into the water, let it sit at the bottom for 5-10 minutes, and pull it back up with one quick motion to see if you've caught anything.

Trotlines are another option. They're long lines that run along the bottom of the water with snoods (shorter lines with bait) attached at intervals. Using this method, you can catch a number of crabs quickly.

What You'll Need

To buy or rent the equipment, check your local tackle shop or hardware store, or see if there's a camp store at the crabbing site. Aside from a net and a line or trap, you'll want a basket to place the crabs in, tongs to get them out of the net, heavy-duty gloves, and a ruler or gauge to make sure your crabs meet the size requirements. You'll also need bait. Chicken necks, fish heads, chicken legs, hot dogs, turkey – when it comes to dining, crabs aren't too picky.

Over time, you'll figure out what works best. You'll make a few mistakes at first, but eventually you'll get the hang of it. The quickest way to improve is to get tips from more experienced crabbers.

Andrew Madigan grew up in the DC area but has lived in Dubai, Tokyo, Abu Dhabi, Okinawa, South Korea and the U.K. He's worked as a professor, magazine editor, university administrator, fraud investigator and Bill Murray's stand-in. He's a father of two. His most recent novel is the thriller [A Nice, Safe Place](#).

WHERE TO EAT CRABS IN THE DC AREA

Catching crabs can be a lot of fun, but eating them is even better. Try one of these local restaurants to get your fill.

MARYLAND

- **[Bethesda Crab House](#)**, Bethesda, Md.
- **[Clyde's Tower Oaks Lodge](#)**, Chevy Chase, Md.
- **[JC Crab House](#)**, Silver Spring, Md.
- **[The Grilled Oyster Company](#)**, Gaithersburg, Md.

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

- **[Captain Pell's](#)**, Fairfax, Va.
- **[Quarter Deck](#)**, Arlington, Va.

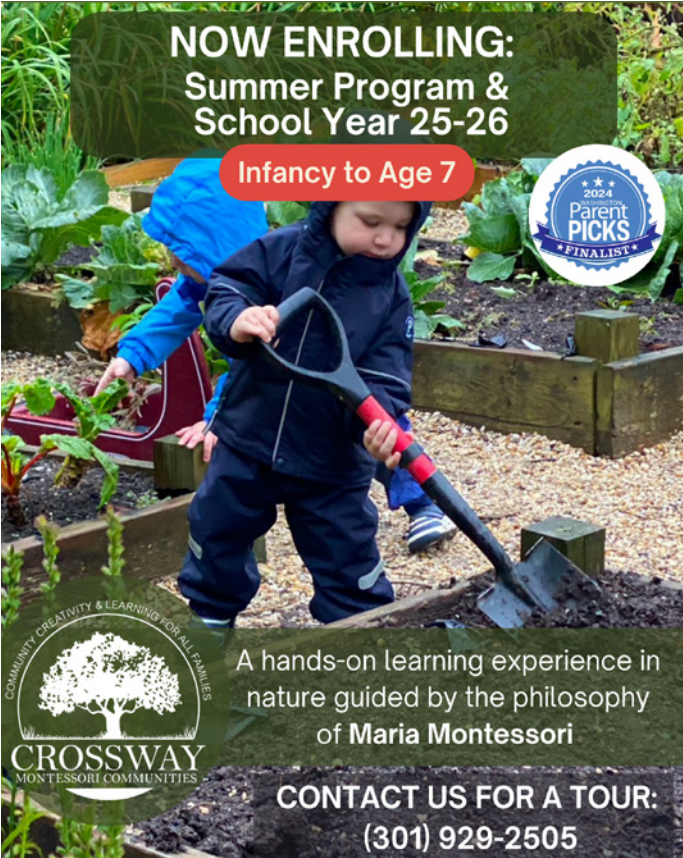
WASHINGTON, DC

- **[Georgetown Seafood](#)**, Washington, DC
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FUN OUTDOOR PLAYGROUNDS IN THE DMV

Where to Find Slides, Swings and Even Pirate Ships

By Liam McCrickard

Anytime is a good time to hit the playground to burn off energy and let little imaginations soar outdoors! Head to these playgrounds in your neighborhood and beyond for four-season fun in the DMV.

WASHINGTON, DC

Anacostia Park Pirate Ship Playground

The Pirate Ship Playground is centered around its titular play structures, inviting children to use their imagination and take the vessel for a ride on the high seas. 1900 Anacostia Dr. SE, Washington, DC

Guy Mason Playground

Part of the Guy Mason Community Center, this playground features a sandbox, a toddler area and a nest-themed slide structure. 3600 Calvert St. NW, Washington, DC

Montrose Park Playground

Located on the grounds of what was once the estate of an early 1800s ropemaker, this fenced-in playground is lined with benches that give parents a secure place to watch the action from. 3052 R St. NW, Washington, DC

Picnic Grove 24 Playground

Part of the largest park inside the DC borders, Rock Creek Park, this playground's activity structures and swings are perfect haven for young children visiting the over 1,750-acre park. Picnic Grove 24, Washington, DC

Shepherd Park Playground

Part of the Shepard Park Community Center and located by the elementary school of the same name, this playground is quite accessible, with smooth surfaces and a safety fence enclosing its area. 7800 14th Street NW, Washington, DC

Woodley Park Playground

Located near the Klinge Valley Trail, the play structure here features a couple of "helms" that turn the playground into a vehicle for adventure. Cortland Pl. and Devonshire Pl. NW, Washington DC

MARYLAND

Cabin John Regional Park

This wooded park features an expansive "Adventure Playground" that kids can enjoy alongside its many other amenities, including a skating rink, horseshoe pits and a miniature train. 7400 Tuckerman Ln, Bethesda, Md.

Cherryvale Regional Park

Among Cherryvale's play structures is a lime green two-person slide, allowing for children to go on joint rides as a team or in a race. 10710 Green Ash Ln., Beltsville, Md.

Damascus Recreational Park

In addition to a tall central play structure that provides a view of the park, descendible by long enclosed slides, Damascus Recreational has an array of sporting fields on which children can run and play. 23723 Kings Valley Rd., Damascus, Md.

Gregerscroft Neighborhood Park

Located within walking distance of Watts Branch Stream, this small playground is a quiet place for kids to play, with smaller children able to enjoy a construction vehicle-themed play structure. 12021 Gregerscroft Rd., Potomac, Md.

CONTINUED...

FUN OUTDOOR PLAYGROUNDS IN THE DMV

Mitchellville South Park

This park features a bench swing, aquatic-themed pavement decoration and a Sway Fun glider that lets kids “rock the boat.” 15540 Peach Walker Dr., Bowie, Md.

Park Berkshire Park

The play structures and decor at Park Berkshire are all themed around a carnival aesthetic, giving an extra bit of wonder to play sessions it hosts. 6101 Surrey Square Ln., District Heights, Md.

Walker Mill Regional Park

Walker Mill is home to the Woodland Wonderland Playground, which features unique play structures with a magical forest theme. 8001 Walker Mill Rd., District Heights, Md.

Waring Station Local Park

A pair of dueling pirate ships serve as the play structures for this playground, making sure it's the scene of many a grand adventure. 12210 Stoney Bottom Rd., Germantown, Md.

Watkins Regional Park

On top of this park's playground and sporting fields, guests can also visit its mini-golf course, miniature train or carousel. 301 Watkins Park Dr., Upper Marlboro, Md.

Wheaton Regional Park

Connected to and including the beautiful Brookside Gardens, Wheaton Regional is one of the most furnished parks in the area with its train, carousel and sporting complexes. Its playground features large diamond-shaped structures of interlocking ropes that allow children to climb them like monkeys, forging their own paths. 2000 Shorefield Rd., Wheaton, Md.

VIRGINIA

Alcova Heights Park

This 13-acre shady park has a picnic shelter, public restrooms and sports fields including a sand volleyball court, making it a wonderful location for a free family day out. 901 South George Mason Dr., Arlington, Va.

Armory Tot Lot

This former site of a National Guard Armory has been a children's playground since the 1950s, and is a fenced area designed with toddlers in mind. 208 South Royal St., Alexandria, Va.

Benjamin Banneker Park

This park has two playgrounds, one for preschoolers and one for school-age children. It also features an obstacle balance course and is home to a boundary marker of the original Washington DC boundary. 1680 N Sycamore St., Arlington, Va.

Chessie's Big Backyard

The playground is fully accessible to all children with padded rubber floor surface and lots of features to crawl through and climb over, ramps wide enough for wheelchair access, slides, swings and other specially designed equipment. Also part of the rec area are a treehouse, a sprayground and a carousel with a Chesapeake Bay animal theme. Plus a 2,160-foot trail designed for children of all abilities with features that appeal to the senses where along the way they'll encounter wildlife figures representing animals indigenous to the Chesapeake Bay region. 6601 Telegraph Rd., Franconia, Va.

Douglas Community Center Playground

An ADA-accessible playground that features custom structures depicting African American history and culture. 407 E. Market Street, Leesburg, Va.

Eugene Simpson Stadium Park

This park was part of a parks improvement plan in the 2010s. Kids will love the unique insectoid play structure. 426 E Monroe Ave., Alexandria, Va.

Pine Grove Playground

Set in Prince William Forest Park, this wooded playground features monkey bars, seesaws, a climbing wall and a unique slide shaped like a bear. 18100 Park Headquarters Rd., Triangle, Va.

Potomac Yard Park

In addition to its interactive fountain for refreshing play in warmer weather, this park's playground has a miniature labyrinth designed for little ones, with walls short enough for parents to keep track of their wandering maze-dwellers. 2501 Potomac Ave., Alexandria, Va.

Short Bridge Park

A small playground on the border of Arlington and Alexandria, this park's proximity to Reagan National Airport makes it perfect for any little plane-spotters with their eyes on the sky. 3920 Potomac Ave., Arlington, Va.

Virginia Highlands Park

A nearly 20-acre park with multiple fields and a sprayground (water playground) to cool off at in summer months. 1600 S Hayes St., Arlington, Va.

Zitkala-Sa Park

A small, ADA-accessible park with a basketball court, multiuse field and rain garden. It is named after a prominent Indigenous activist. 3011 7th St. N, Arlington, Va.

Liam McCrickard holds a B.A. in creative and professional writing from Goucher College. He is assistant editor at Washington Parent. He also works as a freelance designer, writer and editor of tabletop role-playing games.

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SENSORY-FRIENDLY THEATER FOR YOUR KIDS AND FAMILY IN THE DC AREA

By Diana M. Martin

Want to take your child with sensory sensitivities to performances but not sure how they'll do? Or maybe you're taking your child and a friend who requires special accommodations? Washington Parent has created a list of theaters in the DMV that have sensory accommodations to make sure that everyone can enjoy the show.

The DMV area has many options for sensory-friendly productions which may include:

- Reduced sound level for startling or loud sounds
- Lighting adjustments (especially a reduction of strobe lighting)
- The ability for patrons to move and leave their seats
- Designated quiet areas
- Limited crowds and visitors
- Social stories which help explain the event and prepare the child for what to expect
- The use of assistive technology devices for communication during the show

CONTINUED...



SENSORY-FRIENDLY THEATER

MARYLAND

Adventure Theatre

7300 MacArthur Blvd. (Glen Echo Park),
Glen Echo, Md., 301-634-2270

Select performances are slightly adjusted for children with sensory sensitivities and are prescheduled every season. Most performances, however, do provide some accommodations in this area.

The Clarice Center for the Performing Arts

8270 Alumni Drive, Suite 3800, University of Maryland, College Park, Md., 301-405-2787
Sensory-friendly performances are offered for select events. These offerings are designed to create a performing arts experience that is welcoming to people on the autism spectrum or with sensory sensitivities.

Imagination Stage

4908 Auburn Ave., Bethesda, Md.,
301-961-6060

Accommodations start before the show begins with a previsit social story so that kids know what to expect once they arrive. During the show, the sound level and brightness of the stage lights are reduced, staff raise glow sticks before something surprising happens on stage and quiet areas are available for anyone who needs a break.

The Music Center at Strathmore

5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, Md.,
301-581-5100

Sensory-friendly performances are scheduled periodically. Strathmore Kids events offer a welcoming “no-shush” environment and relaxed house rules. “Get Ready for the Show!” resource materials are available on each event page one month prior to the event.

Olney Theatre Center

2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road,
Olney, Md., 301-924-3400

Sensory-friendly performances are scheduled each season for select shows and include many of the adjustments listed at the beginning of this article. Tickets for these performances are at a reduced price and refundable until the show begins.

The Puppet Co.

Glen Echo Park, 7300 MacArthur Blvd.,
Glen Echo, Md., 301-634-5380, box.office@thepuppetco.org

Offers sensory-friendly versions of its Mainstage shows on select dates. The lights are dimmed, the back door of the theater is propped open for easy exit if a break is needed, loud sound effects are toned down and some visual effects are omitted.

VIRGINIA

George Mason University Centre for the Arts

4400 University Drive, Fairfax, Va.,
703-993-1000

Family-friendly performances during the season. Includes free companion pass for

personal care attendants and sensory kits.

Hylton Performing Arts Center

10960 George Mason Circle, Manassas, Va.,
703-993-7700

Has sensory-friendly performances that include a kit with fidget items such as a stress ball, fidget spinner, pop it and pen/notepad that may be taken home.

WASHINGTON, DC

Ford's Theatre

511 10th St., NW, Washington, DC,
202-347-4833

Sensory-friendly performances on select dates and a free sensory-friendly museum program for people who might benefit from an adjusted environment, including those with autism.

The Kennedy Center

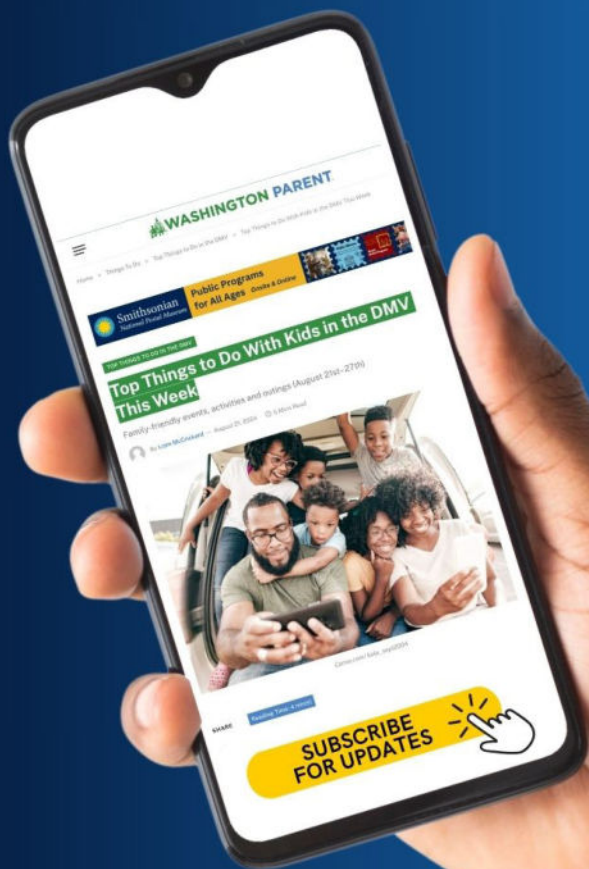
2700 F St. NW, Washington, DC,
800-444-1324 or 202-416-8727

Their website includes resources such as social stories, a virtual tour of the building and maps with designated quiet spaces. During these shows, people may talk and move around, strobe lighting is reduced, lights are kept on and sounds are quieter than a typical performance. Kennedy Center staff are also trained to assist families who need extra support.

Diana M. Martin, MFA, has been an adjunct professor and freelance writer for more than 20 years.

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MICROSCHOOL FAQs:

What Are They and Why More Parents are Choosing Them

By Sandi Schwartz

Deciding the best educational option for your children is more complicated than ever given the numerous choices available, from large public and private schools to homeschooling, and everything in between. But one type of school is becoming more popular today, although it is reminiscent of the one-room schoolhouses of yesterday. Microschools began sprouting up a few years before the pandemic, but they have been surging ever since.

WHAT IS A MICROSCHOOL?

A microschool is a small group of students meeting in an informal space and taking more ownership of their education, says Kelly Smith, founder of [Prenda](#), one of the nation's largest microschool providers. Microschools typically serve no more than 15 students but can be larger. Smith recommends a student-to-teacher ratio of eight to 10 students per adult.

These small schools operate in a variety of untraditional settings, such as homes, libraries, houses of worship, community centers, rented commercial spaces, public outdoor spaces and even backyards. There are in-person, virtual and hybrid options available. The schedules can be flexible, allowing families and educators to design a balanced week, such as every other day in-person or half-days to allow for engagement of activities outside the classroom.

"Microschools can come in many flavors, including Montessori, Forest, Waldorf, Prenda, Acton, etc.," says Smith. "Think of these philosophies as the guiding principles behind the microschool structure and choose the approach that works best for you. While a Montessori school could be a microschool, it doesn't have to be, so make sure to check the numbers before you enroll." They can also look like anything from homeschooling collaboratives meeting at a local library a few days per month to learning pods in private homes to small, full-time private schools that prioritize individualized learning.

WHY MICROSCHOOLS ARE BOOMING

It is estimated that 1.5 million K-12 students (about 3% of all school-age children) attend 95,000 microschools throughout the country, according to the [National Microschooling Center](#). Much of this growth is due to expanding microschool networks like [Prenda](#), [Kaipod](#), [Acton Academies](#) and [Wildflower](#). As more parents crave personalized attention for their children; more control and flexibility over the curriculum and a safe, welcoming environment rooted in community-driven grass-roots philosophy, microschools have become more popular.

"We are seeing an uptick in interest, and I think families and students are really looking for more personalized education," says Robyn Chapel, head of [AEON School in Silicon Valley](#), located in Santa Clara, California. "We see families who are looking for their child ... to be really intellectually stimulated ... and for their children to be seen and understood in a more holistic way." AEON currently has 12 students enrolled in person and 240 students in 46 countries who are part of their global online community.



BIGSTOCK/ PROSTOCK-STUDIO

BENEFITS OF MICROSCHOOLS

Parents choose microschools for a variety of reasons. Some want to see the love of learning rekindled in their child, while others find a microschool that meets a specific need not being met by traditional schools. "The small group format can provide high connection, autonomy and personalization, which leads to kids who love school and make significant learning gains," says Smith.

Here are some of the key benefits of microschools:

- **Flexibility:** Microschools provide flexibility in scheduling, curriculum choices and learning approaches. They focus on student autonomy and independence, which may mean students aren't confined to traditional desks and can move around the classroom more freely. When it comes to scheduling, families often work together to decide what times and days of the week the microschool meets. At AEON, for example, the program is rooted in an online, project-based curriculum with a physical campus for students to work alongside and collaborate with one another, so students have a tremendous amount of flexibility, says Chapel. "We have students travel for days or weeks at a time for competitions, family events or unique academic opportunities and they don't have to worry about missing class."
- **Personalization:** The small environment allows educators to get to know their students and tailor the learning experience to each child, creating customized lesson plans and assignments that challenge them appropriately. This approach allows each student to learn at their own pace and can accommodate those with special needs or specific interests. "Students have about half of their time each day to arrange as they need in order to work on their assignments, meet individually or in small groups with teachers or peers, get feedback on their work or take a brain break or a movement break," explains Chapel.
- **Shared Responsibility:** Microschools typically give parents the opportunity to have a strong voice in what and how their children learn and play, yet the bulk of the instruction is done by the educators. It is a collaborative relationship, as parents have a

supportive role in continuing and deepening learning at home.

- **Connection:** Given the small size, microschools allow for a more intimate environment, which helps build a strong sense of community for both students and parents.
- **Creativity and Innovation:** Microschools tend to innovate rapidly, allowing teachers to try new tools and teaching methods to meet the needs of their student body. Integrating cutting-edge technology is also common at microschools. AEON uses a project-based curriculum that engages students in week-long challenges that are interdisciplinary in nature. "It's a really different approach that puts students at the true center of their learning every day. This builds real-life skills of project management, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, autonomy and resilience," says Chapel.

CONSIDERATIONS

While microschools offer many attractive benefits, there are some drawbacks to consider when evaluating if a microschool is right for your family.

Fit – First, is the microschool format a good fit for your child? Chapel recommends getting your child involved in the school search process to really figure out what they need. "Students should be given opportunities to think about how they learn best and what kinds of learning environments productively challenge them and provide them with appropriate support and structures for their learning needs," she says. "If your child is thriving in their current school environment, that's a wonderful thing. If they are feeling underwhelmed, unfulfilled, or unsatisfied ... it might be worth a look around to see if one of those schools might be a better option for your child."

Accreditation – One of the biggest concerns about microschools is their lack of accreditation. In a [survey](#) of 400 microschools across the country from the National Microschooling Center, only 16% said they were accredited in their state. This lack of oversight can turn off some parents, since the curriculum may not be backed by reputable educational entities, and classes may be taught by uncertified teachers. This could be a problem in the long run if students aren't meeting the necessary outcomes and standards to prepare them for college and career success.

Legal form – Another issue that often comes up is how microschools are legally defined. They can take on a variety of legal forms depending on where you live, so it's important to investigate this before registering. Around a third operate as private schools, while 44% operate as "learning centers" catering to homeschooled students. Keep in mind that if you unenroll your child from their existing traditional public school, charter school, magnet school or private school to switch to a microschool that is legally considered a homeschool, then you are legally responsible for determining curriculum, lesson plans and methods of instruction.

Cost – Finally, be sure to ask about the cost of the microschool you are considering. Some can be completely free to create and design, while others might charge a fee ranging from hundreds of dollars each month to typical private school rates of tens of thousands of dollars per year.

MICROSCHOOLS IN THE DC AREA

Like the idea of a microschool?
Here are some local options.

WASHINGTON, DC

Blue Montessori: For ages 3-6. 202-618-1947.

Mindbloom Preschool & Microschool: For ages 2-12. 202-380-9636.

Mysa School: For grades K-8. 301-915-0955.

Templeton Academy: For grades 6-12. 202-847-0779.

MARYLAND

Oneness Family High School: For grades 9-12. Kensington, Md. 240-383-7655.

Oneness Family Lower School: From age 2-Grade 8. Chevy Chase, Md. 301-652-7751.

Rock Creek Montessori: For ages 18 months-6 years. Silver Spring, Md. 301-942-9561.

VIRGINIA

Cortona Academy: For grades 8-12+. Reston, Va. 703-464-0034.

GW Community School: For grades 8-12. Springfield, Va. 703-978-7208.

River Farm Forest School: For grades K-8. Alexandria, Va. 571-275-1561.

The Sycamore School: For grades 8-12. Arlington, Va. 703-717-5360.

MULTIPLE LOCATIONS

Fuson Academy: For grades 6-12. Locations in Washington, DC, Rockville, Md., Alexandria, Va., Loudon, Va., Reston, Va. and Tysons, Va. See campuses webpage for individual contact information.

— By Washington Parent Staff

HOW TO FIND OR START ONE

While many microschools are independently run, there are also microschool networks with learning groups across multiple states, including Prenda, Acton Academy, Wildflower Montessori Schools, KaiPod Learning, Great Hearts, and The Forest School – Online. Some even provide opportunities to launch a new microschool if there is not one in your area.

Navigating School Choice has a directory of microschools, searchable by state: <https://myschoolchoice.com/types-of-schools/micro-schools>.

Sandi Schwartz is an award-winning author and journalist, and mother of two. She has 25 years of experience writing about parenting, wellness and environmental issues. Her books *Finding EcOHappiness* and *Sky's Search for EcOHappiness* inspire families to build a nature habit to feel happier and calmer. Learn more at ecohappinessproject.com.



THE DOCTOR IS IN



What You Need to Know About Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes in Children

By Dayna Ukwuoma, MD

As a board-certified pediatrician at Kaiser Permanente, I regularly talk to parents who are worried their child might have diabetes. It's a scary diagnosis for sure, but with proper, careful management, children with a diabetes diagnosis live happy, healthy, active lives.

Diabetes in children can manifest in various ways, and it's important to recognize the signs early to manage the condition effectively. Here is information about Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes in children.

Type 1 Diabetes

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition where the body's immune system attacks insulin-producing cells in the pancreas. In patients with Type 1 diabetes, the pancreas loses the ability to make enough insulin to meet the body's needs.

Symptoms of Type 1 diabetes often develop quickly and can include:

- Frequent urination and bedwetting (polyuria). A toilet-trained child may start waking up several times during the night to use the bathroom. An occasional, one-time-a-night wake up to urinate usually isn't cause for concern, but if your toilet-trained child who typically sleeps through the night needs to urinate multiple times a night, consider this a red flag for Type 1 diabetes.
- Increased, frequent thirst (polydipsia). Some children may regularly drink a few bottles of water during the school day, and that is a great way to stay hydrated. But if your child suddenly needs a water bottle every hour or finishes a bottle of water and then wants a second one and then a third one and then a fourth one, reach out to your child's doctor.
- Frequent hunger (polyphagia). If your child is eating significantly more than usual and doesn't feel full after a meal, and has increased urination and/ or increased thirst, a diagnosis of Type 1 diabetes may be considered. Parents may have a difficult time telling the difference between a growth spurt that causes their child to have an increased appetite, and a medical problem. Reach out to your child's doctor with any concerns about increased hunger to ensure an accurate diagnosis.



BIGSTOCK/ CLICK AND PHOTO

Other symptoms of Type 1 diabetes may include unintentional weight loss despite eating more and feeling more tired than usual. Children can be diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at any time, but there are peak periods: We tend to diagnose children in early childhood to age 5, and during puberty.

If your child has symptoms of Type 1 diabetes, reach out to your child's doctor as soon as possible. An early diagnosis is vital to preventing complications. We can usually make a diagnosis by doing a test that measures glucose control over the last three months (HbA1C), a blood glucose test, and/or an antibody blood test.

Parents are rightfully concerned when they learn their child has Type 1 diabetes. They feel as if their child is doomed! I tell parents that when diabetes is under control and well-managed, their children can have happy, active lives. I tell families about

the children I know with a diabetes diagnosis and how well they are doing. I also tell them that working with an endocrinologist is important to develop meal plans, learn how to check glucose levels and learn how to administer insulin. Families should know that everyone is rooting for them!

Type 2 Diabetes

Unfortunately, as the childhood obesity epidemic is widespread in the United States, we are seeing an increase in the number of children diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes. Type 2 diabetes develops in overweight children at the onset of puberty.

People with Type 2 diabetes produce insulin but are unable to use insulin effectively.

Symptoms may not develop as suddenly and as obviously as symptoms in kids with Type 1 diabetes. But as with Type 1 diabetes, children with Type 2 diabetes may have increased thirst, increased urination, increased hunger, and increased fatigue. (Note: these symptoms are rare but possible). They may have changes in the texture of their skin – such as dark discoloration in body folds and creases – and high blood pressure.

Knowing that oftentimes children will have no symptoms of Type 2 diabetes, doctors will regularly screen children. We monitor the child's weight and learn about family history. If we consider your child at high risk, we can check a blood glucose level to see if your child has Type 2 diabetes.

If your child is diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes, your child's care team will focus on encouraging your child to maintain a healthy weight. We will talk about ways to get enough exercise, eat fewer fatty foods and starchy foods and incorporate more whole foods into the diet.

In addition, Metformin is approved for kids with Type 2 diabetes.

I reassure parents that we can prevent complications from Type 2 diabetes by encouraging the child to live a healthy lifestyle. Developing healthy habits early in life is often easier than trying to make big changes as adults.

Your child's doctor is here to help and to listen to all concerns. If you are worried that your child may have diabetes, connect with your child's doctor who will make sure your concerns are addressed appropriately.

Dr. Dayna Ukwuoma is a board-certified pediatrician with the Mid-Atlantic Permanente Medical Group. She sees patients at the Kaiser Permanente South Baltimore County Medical Center.

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Why Am I Wide Awake?

Here's How To Get Better Sleep During Pregnancy

By Kerrie McLoughlin

What pregnant woman doesn't enjoy having her sleep interrupted 12 times a night while she goes to the bathroom, snuffles through a stuffy nose and rubs out a few leg cramps? You may theoretically get eight hours of sleep at night, but the sleep disturbances of pregnancy (a good way to prepare you for caring for a newborn in the middle of the night) can leave you feeling quite groggy the next morning. Below is a problem-solving guide to help you gain some longer stretches of sleep.

Problem: Insomnia.

Solutions: Take a warm bath and do some relaxation exercises before bed. Try to stop worrying about things like what color to paint the nursery or who to invite to the baby shower. White noise from something like a fan may help. If your baby is squirming and kicking, try rocking back and forth in bed or rubbing your belly to get him to sleep. If you can't sleep because you're worried about labor, arm yourself during the day with information from books and the internet (take a pass on any negative stories you may come across). Try listening to meditations and guided imagery for birthing. If insomnia becomes a chronic problem, speak to your doctor about taking something safe to help with sleep.

Problem: Back, hip and leg pain caused by carrying extra weight. Jane H., mom of three, says, "I remember third trimester with my daughter Eden—I was a bloated walrus! My hips hurt so bad, and lying on one side was taking its toll."

Solutions: Pillows galore! Consider purchasing a U-shaped body pillow made just for pregnant women, or just grab pillows from home and place one behind your back, one under your belly and one between your knees. Hanging out on a heating pad for a while before bed does wonders for lower back pain, but never fall asleep on one.

Problem: Leg cramps. (I swear these were designed to prepare you for the pain of labor!)

Solutions: If you feel a leg cramp coming on, keep your toes pointed toward yourself. If you get a cramp anyway, massage the spot until the cramp subsides. Julie D. says, "I had bad leg cramps, and the doctor recommended I take calcium tablets for them."

Problem: Having to get up to go to the bathroom every couple of hours.

Solutions: Try not to drink too much a couple of hours before you go to sleep, limit your caffeine intake and make sure you go to the bathroom before getting into bed. Other than that, unfortunately, there's not too much you can do (unless you want to wear Depends) since your baby has taken up residence on top of your bladder. Jen W. shares, "I was so thankful to finally have my kids and not be pregnant so I wasn't waking hourly to go to the bathroom. I actually enjoyed the 2 a.m. feedings because at least I could sleep for 3 hours at a time!"

Problem: Heartburn. Kyle B. says, "With both my boys, I had horrible heartburn and acid reflux during my third trimester."

Solutions: Keep some Tums on your headboard, in your nightstand or under your pillow. For worse heartburn, ask your doctor if you can use something like Zantac for longer relief. Kyle also shares, "Toward the end of both pregnancies, sleeping propped up on pillows was the only way I could get any rest."

Problem: Hunger and thirst in the middle of the night.

Solutions: Of course, the solution will exacerbate the problem of frequent bathroom trips, but keep a bottle of water by your bed and some snacks like those packaged peanut butter crackers. If you must get up, grab some milk or turkey, both of which contain the sleep-inducing tryptophan.

Problem: Stuffy nose.

Solutions: Check with your doctor first, but sometimes a simple saline nasal spray will work just fine. Also, some doctors may recommend something like Flonase or Chlor-Trimeton for allergies. Over-the-counter nasal sprays are recommended for use for no more than a few days, and only if nothing else does the trick.

So now you know you don't have to wake up feeling like a zombie in the morning just because you're pregnant! When one of these sleep problems strikes, just grab this handy article (better yet, post it by your bed!) for some instant relief. Happy slumbering!

Relaxation Exercises to Try Before Bed

ZZZZZ Deep breathing

ZZZZZ Visualization

ZZZZZ Tensing each body part then relaxing it

ZZZZZ Clearing your mind of all thoughts

ZZZZZ Listening to a relax playlist on Spotify

As always, please consult with your health care provider with any questions or concerns.

Kerrie McLoughlin (TheKerrieShow.com) has experienced her share of sleep disturbances, including drooling, with her five pregnancies.



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How To Raise Resilient Kids in a World of Screens and Constant Anxiety

By Paige Trevor

We've all heard the bad news about [children's mental health](#). Kids are more anxious and depressed than ever before. And we know full well that phones are part of the problem. In the book, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*, Jonathan Haidt shows how we have slowly shifted from a play-based childhood to a phone-based childhood and the impact has been devastating for our kids. Parents are up against a tsunami of forces conspiring to keep kids' noses in phones. In addition to the 24/7 demands of adult work, Haidt says, "There's a second plotline here: the well-intentioned and disastrous shift toward overprotecting children and restricting their autonomy in the real world."

Let's start with some of the unsavory facts of the situation.

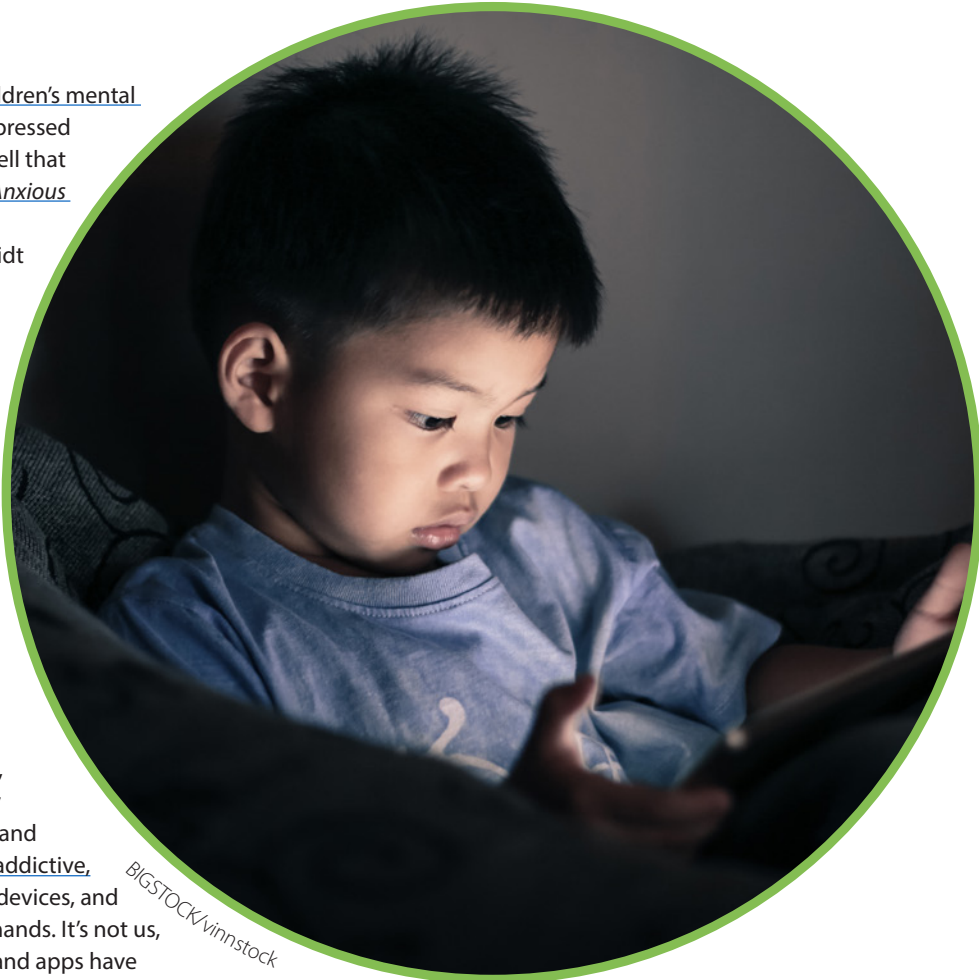
Ubiquitous, Addictive and Rewires the Brain

Screens are everywhere and, as far as we know, they are here to stay. Screens enhance our lives by putting information, communication, connection and entertainment at our fingertips. But they are also [addictive](#), truly. You know how hard it is to get off your own devices, and it's nearly impossible to pry them out of our kids' hands. It's not us, it's not the child; it's the screen itself. Our devices and apps have been designed to be addictive. Haidt describes in his book actual Facebook meetings about how to keep teen girls on their devices longer – not because it's good for them, but because it sells more advertising.

Our kids aren't lazy jerks; they are just responding naturally to a controlled substance, using their devices exactly as they've been designed. As with any addictive substance, use of screens rewires the brain, creating the craving to use them more often and for longer periods just to get the same reward. The brains of our children are being reshaped by these devices.

Influence, Not Control

While there is a lot to be upset about, this article is not about finger-wagging or shaming or scaring you. It is about [addressing the defining force of phones in the lives of today's families](#). I hope to leave you feeling empowered, encouraged and energized to stay positive and focused on what you can do. Parents have less control than we want, but honestly a lot more influence and power than give ourselves credit for. Let's find our influence and power together as we [dial down screen usage and turn up connection](#).



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- **Apologize:** If you've been angry and inconsistent about screen usage – equal parts punitive and permissive – make time for [a sincere apology](#). Children will be more open to discussing limits with you if you "own your part of the equation." Haidt says, "What you do often matters far more than what you say, so watch your own phone habits. Be a good role model who is not giving continuous partial attention to both the phone and the child." It's easy to tell others to get off and stay off their screens. But screens are seductive, and scrolling can feel delicious and relaxing. Be transparent with your kids about your own screen struggles and triumphs.
- **Connect:** Consciously [connect](#) with your child in the real world. Focus on listening to them with an open countenance (no screen in your hand), an open mind (no judging or criticizing) and an open heart (love and admire them just the way they are today). A good relationship is the most effective path to cooperation and change.

Parents are up against a tsunami of forces conspiring to keep kids' noses in phones. In addition to the 24/7 demands of adult work, Haidt says, "There's a second plotline here: the well-intentioned and disastrous shift toward overprotecting children and restricting their autonomy in the real world."

- **Time & Space Zones:** Agree on some structure for your time, space and screens. Work together on creating "[Time & Space Zones](#)" where phones fit into your life. Start with all the things you'd like to do phone-free. For example, no phones at the dining table or at mealtime. No phones in bedrooms. Get an old-fashioned alarm clock for everyone. Ideally, all family members would be screen-free 90 minutes before bed. More realistically, you might want to start with 30 minutes. Don't expect kids to willingly fork over their devices; make it part of your ritual to go around the house and collect them. When I was driving teens, it felt disrespectful to sit next to someone who wasn't conversing. I created the rule that if they wanted to be on their phones, they had to sit in the back, and I got full control of the radio. Haidt suggests a weekly "digital Sabbath" with a full 24 hours screen-free. But, again, it might be more realistic to start with a screen-free Saturday morning or Sunday evening. Screens will sneak into these Time & Space Zones, but it's easier to evict them if they have been declared screen-free.
- **Grace:** Let me reiterate that screens truly are extremely addictive. Expect agreements to be broken and be prepared to come up with ways to take a break from screens together, as a family. Give yourself grace, as [upholding limits can be very challenging](#). Grace will also give you a chance to be curious about the underlying reason a phone might be overused. Consider if your child might be turning to the phone for companionship, comfort, numbing or avoidance and then try to address that problem in the real world.

Shift Your Focus to "Adding In"

Parents can spend a lot of energy getting kids off screens, and it's so frustrating and hard. You meet with so much resistance that you often give up pretty fast. A new twist is to think less about taking away screens than about adding other things. Remember, the goal of parenting is to [raise children who can take care of themselves](#). That means they understand the basics: money, chores, organizing, time management, work ethic, trip planning and much more.

Haidt suggests shifting your focus and energy to "[More \(and Better\) Experience in the Real World](#)." For example:

- **Increase their mobility:** Years ago, I asked a mom with older kids for her one piece of parenting advice. She said, "[Teach them how to use public transportation](#)" and then they can get wherever they want to go." Amazing! Think buses, subways,

bike shares. Also, start training and expecting kids to walk short distances, run errands for the family, walk to school or the bus stop. Remember, we want to make the real world more accessible, bigger and exciting for our kids.

- **Rely more on them at home:** Parents forget how capable children are or can be with a bit of training. For example, 2-year-olds can fill up a pet's food bowl, 4-year-olds can set the table, 8-year-olds can peel carrots and make a salad and 12-year-olds can plan and cook a weekly dinner. It might be messier and noisier, and take longer, but oh the impact that knowing how to do all these things can have on your family and your child. And as a bonus, chores are a source of that feel-good chemical, dopamine!

Scientific studies have demonstrated the [benefits of chores on mental and physical well-being](#). Don't know where to start? Check out the Child Development Institute's [Ultimate List of Chores](#).

- **Get a job or volunteer:** It's amazing the [skills](#) that can be acquired by shoveling a neighbor's walk, starting a dog-walking business or volunteering at the local school fair. Your child might learn important life lessons simply by staffing the bouncy house tent with a peer. When we encourage children to have these experiences, not only are they off their screens but, more importantly, they are practicing the crucial life skills of communicating face to face, solving problems in the moment, handling stress, completing tasks, helping others – and maybe even having a good time.

No need to take on this whole list. Pick just one or two things to try and practice. Then talk with your kids and your kids' friends, discuss with fellow parents and get and share ideas. I especially love talking to parents with kids 5-8 years older than my kids for wisdom, lessons learned and tips from the trail. The point is to keep yourself engaged and encouraged.

At the end of the day, we all want healthy kids, good relationships with them and to be able to launch them into the world with confidence. The struggles, lessons and solutions we can get from grappling with screens can actually help us reach those goals.

Paige Trevor is a certified parent educator with the Parent Encouragement Program (PEP) and a professional organizer and time management coach (paigetrevor.com) who offers a free tutorial on [Screens and Teens](#). For information about PEP's online programs for parents and organizations, see pepparent.org.

ECO-FRIENDLY FITNESS GEAR

FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY AND WHERE TO FIND IT IN THE DC AREA

By Sandi Schwartz



One way that you can be a positive role model to your kids is in fitness. Staying fit is critical to our health and well-being – including our mental health and happiness. We can help shape our children's views on exercise by modeling healthy behavior and making fitness a fun part of our family's daily routine. Another aspect of fitness that we may not think about but must is getting fit with less plastic. There is no time like the present to eliminate as much plastic as possible and create a greener family fitness routine.

When you stop to think about it, plastic is everywhere in the exercise world: clothing, shoes, water bottles, yoga mats and other equipment. As it happens, improving sports performance typically correlates with plastic technology. Snowboards, for example, are made out of wood but coated with plastic resin to glide on the snow more effectively. Workout clothes are typically made with plastic materials because of their wicking properties that keep sweat away from skin and help athletes stay more comfortable and perform better.

But now fitness companies are beginning to think more sustainably and develop products either made from recycled plastic or that use alternative, nonplastic materials. Here are some easy ways that you can nix plastic from your family's fitness routine, and where to find eco-friendly family fitness gear in the DMV.

Opt For Glass or Stainless Steel Water Bottles

The simplest step you can take to reduce plastic at the gym and for your kids' sporting events is to invest in a reusable water bottle made from glass or stainless steel. Not only will you reduce plastic use, but you will also be choosing a healthier option that does not contain harmful chemicals like BPA. Be mindful not to choose a reusable water bottle made out of plastic. It may be a better option than throwaway plastic bottles, but it still doesn't help with the overall plastic issue that we are trying to address.

Shop: Stanley water bottles made of recycled stainless steel at [REI](#), multiple DMV locations.

Purchase Eco-Friendly Workout Clothes

Eco clothing is finally taking off, and now there are plenty of options to go green in the gym as well. Workout clothes made mostly from plastic materials have traditionally been associated with better performance, but now some companies are tapping into other types of materials and improving their characteristics when it comes to fitness, so they are breathable and do not absorb perspiration. Look for clothes made from Merino wool, silk, organic cotton, hemp, linen and Lyocell or Tencel made from bamboo that does not contain any harmful chemicals. Some brands are also using recycled plastic to make the yarns that create their products. If you or your children are swimmers, you can also now find plenty of plastic-free swimwear options online. Conventional swimwear is made of new nylon, polyester and spandex – all plastic. Several companies around the world are now designing eco swimwear using recycled fiber from trashed fishnets and plastic bottles.

Shop: Organic athleticwear, such as Maggie's Organic sweatpants and Kooshoo headbands, at [Mom's Organic Market](#), multiple DMV locations.

Look For Innovative Shoe Brands

Sneakers are tough since there are endless brands and the majority on the market are made from a combination of plastic materials including ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA), polyurethane, nylon and other synthetic materials containing some form of plastic. Even the eyelets that the laces fit through are usually made of plastic. However, there are a few innovators out there now manufacturing sneakers from recycled plastic materials like plastic bottles and fish nets. If you do some research, you can definitely find a comfortable, durable pair of shoes for your workout that is also more eco-friendly.

Shop: Allbirds eco-friendly sneakers, perfect for running, hiking and working out, available at the [Allbirds store](#) in Georgetown.

Discover Green Fitness Equipment

This one is a bit challenging, but there are some ways to swap your fitness equipment from plastic to greener materials. Yoga mats are the perfect example. Most mats are made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a toxic type of plastic that is a known carcinogen. That doesn't sound very relaxing! Fortunately, you can now find mats made from a variety of natural materials like organic cotton, hemp, natural rubber, and jute that are free from harmful toxic chemicals, heavy metals and smelly rubbers. Also, a quick online search will result in other exercise equipment, such as jump ropes and floor mats, that are made from recycled materials.

Shop: Lululemon Align™ Yoga Mat 5mm is made with FSC™ Certified Rubber in which the Forest Stewardship Council International verifies that strict forestry standards are met at each point along the supply chain. [Lululemon](#), multiple DMV locations.

Choose Used

Another easy way to reduce plastic – and all types of waste – is to borrow fitness equipment from a friend or to buy used. So many people purchase dumbbells, yoga accessories, jump ropes, sporting equipment and even large items like treadmills and indoor bikes with good intentions, only to hardly use them. Instead of purchasing brand new equipment, break the plastic production cycle and look for fitness equipment at garage sales, thrift stores and online sites like eBay. You'll also be saving a ton of cash!

Shop: Look for used treadmills, indoor cycles, dumbbells and more at [Total Fitness Outlet](#) in Purcellville, Va.; they deliver to the entire DC area.

Keeping your family moving is a key part of staying happy and healthy. Now you can also help the planet by cutting back on your plastic use during your fitness routine.

Sandi Schwartz is an award-winning author and journalist, and mother of two. She has 25 years of experience writing about parenting, wellness and environmental issues. Her books *Finding Ecohappiness* and *Sky's Search for Ecohappiness* inspire families to build a nature habit to feel happier and calmer. Learn more at [ecohappinessproject.com](#).



MORE

for Moms & Dads

Estate Planning for Parents:

What You Need to Do to Protect Your Family's Future



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By Paul Riekhof

Among the many important responsibilities for a parent is providing for their children in the event of an untimely death or incapacity. There are several critical considerations involved in this type of estate planning. They include selecting guardians for your children who will make parental-type decisions for them, helping to manage your children's financial resources and decision-making while they are still minors and planning for the management of your financial resources for the benefit of your children.

Selecting Guardians

Selecting the guardians themselves may be the most important issue as they will take the parental role for the children if both parents pass away.

- **Guardians** make the living arrangements, health and education decisions for your children, help shape and grow them into good and responsible people, guide them through the various personal and moral challenges that occur as they grow up and be responsible for everything else that a parent does for a child.
- Guardians of the property will help your children manage any income they make through work, receive as an inheritance from someone else or acquire through other means. Great care needs to be exercised in selecting guardians for your children.

Financial Responsibility

Regarding the management of the parents' financial resources, testamentary trusts are often used to accomplish the parent's goals. A testamentary trust is written into a last will and testament or an **inter vivos** (living) trust to come into existence upon the death of the person making that document. It is written while the parent is alive but does not have any legal existence or get funded until the parent passes away.

For married couples when one spouse passes away, they typically leave all of their assets to the surviving spouse and rely on the surviving spouse to manage the resources and leave whatever is left to the kids upon the surviving spouse's later passing. This can work fine unless the surviving parent gets remarried or has additional children.

Managing Assets

When married parents are concerned about those possibilities, they may leave their assets in trust for the benefit of the surviving parent to use during his or her lifetime. This trust can be written to exclude the assets it holds from being considered as: 1) marital property in a future marriage, 2) the surviving spouse's own assets for the purposes of their creditors and death taxes and 3) estate assets upon the surviving parent's passing. Upon the surviving parent's death, the disposition of the assets in this type of trust is controlled by the provisions written by the first parent to die, not the wishes of the surviving parent.

Young children: All parents of young children should also make provisions in their estate planning to ensure that their assets are properly managed and used for the children's benefit. This is often accomplished by leaving the assets in trust for the benefit of the children, until the children reach a specific age by which the parents believe the child should be able to appropriately handle the assets themselves.

Older children: Once the children are older and have become independent and responsible, parents will typically leave assets directly to the children to manage themselves. However, there are a few circumstances that might prompt the parents to take a different approach:

1. If the parents or their families are wealthy enough to be concerned with generational estate taxation, they may use certain types of trusts to hold and manage the assets so that they skip taxation at the children's passing (and potentially at other generations' as well).

2. If the children have certain incapacitating conditions that cause the parents to believe that they could not manage the assets properly or would be hurt by doing so, the parents may use trusts that protect the assets for their children and perhaps allow for the children to receive means-tested benefits as well.
3. If the parents have concerns with how the children are living their lives, such as concerns regarding their significant others, how they spend their money or certain habits the children may develop, the parents may use a trust written to exclude the assets it holds from being considered as: a) marital property in any marriage, b) the child's own assets for the purposes of their creditors and c) estate assets upon the child's passing.

Parental divorce: For a parent who is divorced or estranged from their child's other parent, the planning considerations will generally be similar. However, great care is usually given to excluding the other parent from controlling or benefitting from the estate in any way.

Making a thoughtful and comprehensive estate plan to benefit your children is one of the greatest gifts that you can give to them.

Paul Riekhof is Joseph, Greenwald & Laake's managing director and a principal in the firm's Estates and Trusts Group. He has more than 25 years of experience in representing individuals, families and businesses in matters including estate planning, probate, trust administration, estate tax planning, business planning, guardianships and estate litigation matters.

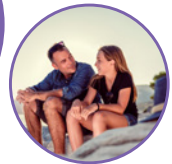
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Annie Family Night

April 15. The family night fun starts at 6:30 p.m., with the show itself beginning at 7:30 p.m. Little Orphan Annie has reminded generations of theatergoers that sunshine is always right around the corner, and now the best-loved musical of all time is set to return in a new production – just as you remember it and just when we need it most. The Sun Will Come Out on Family Night, where kids and adults will enjoy sweet treats, coloring fun-packs and more surprises. Get your tickets today for a night of family fun and see why this heartwarming show is a crowd-pleaser for the whole family! Washington, DC

EXCELLENT FOR EARTH DAY



Gus Goes Green: Earth Day Edition

April 8. This performance is recommended for grades 2-6. Just in time for Earth Day, this play follows “Gus” (a giant dog puppet), who leads audiences on a STEM-inspired adventure around the globe. He uses clever resources to find creative solutions for a thirsty man in the desert, a wacky inventor, a toy maker and one very funny bug. Volunteers join Gus on stage to engineer a device for gathering water, build a unique toy from recycled materials and more! By the end of the play Gus and his friends use science, technology, engineering and math to find smart solutions to real-life issues. This show is designed to encourage young people to help the Earth through recycling, energy conservation and creative thinking. Hyattsville, Md.

El Verde es Vida - Kermes & Spring Festival

April 13. An all-day family friendly and community-oriented event with live music and entertainment, raffles and prizes, food vendors and community organizations coming together to welcome spring, celebrate Earth Day and promote the adoption of clean/green energy. El Verde Es Vida (EV2) is a national environmental justice movement aimed at educating the Latino community about adopting the use of clean energy, tree-planting and learning about consumer incentives and job opportunities in the clean/green energy sector. Riverdale Park, Md.



SATISFYING SPRING EVENTS



Spring Fest

April 5. Neighbors come together to celebrate the changing of seasons with spring-themed arts and crafts, entertainment and the opportunity for your child to take a photo with the Easter Bunny. Make sure to bring your camera as an Old Firehouse staff member will be on hand to take a photo of you and your family. McLean, Va.



UPCA Spring Egg Hunt and Games

April 6. The Egg Hunt will start at 3:15 p.m., so participants should arrive a few minutes early. Children as young as infants through elementary school age are welcome to participate in the egg hunt, face painting, crafts and more. Wear warm clothes and shoes appropriate for walking in the park, and please bring your own basket and drinks. University Park, Md.

Easter Bunny Hosts Kids and Family Festival

April 13. Enjoy a day of excitement at the Shipgarten Easter Kids and Family Festival. For the little ones there will be free face painting and arts and crafts, allowing their creativity to shine. Additionally, there will be live music, moon bounces and a full outdoor playground to ensure everyone has a blast. Dogs are welcome, either on-leash or in their off-leash dog park. McLean, Va.

Blooming Wonders: A Best of Spring Exhibition

Through April 30. Enter a world where nature, art and technology collide in a vibrant tribute to Washington, D.C.'s beloved cherry blossom season. Now in its 8th year as an official National Cherry Blossom Festival program, ARTECHOUSE's annual spring time celebration has become a seasonal must-see for locals and visitors alike. Washington, DC

MUSICAL MERRYMAKING

Blippi: Join the Band

April 18. C'mon and join Blippi to make music in your hometown in the brand new live Blippi: Join the Band Tour! Blippi will be joined onstage by Meekah, their singing and dancing buddies and LIVE musicians to explore what makes music, including sounds, rhythms and instruments, through all your favorite Blippi hits. So grab your drumsticks, tune up your guitar and move those feet with Blippi and get ready for a musical performance that's fun for the whole family. Tysons, Va.



Gamer Symphony Orchestra Small Ensemble Concert

April 6. Join individuals and small groups from The Gamer Symphony Orchestra on a foray into the world of video game music! The Gamer Symphony Orchestra is a student-run symphonic orchestra at the University of Maryland and the first collegiate ensemble exclusively devoted to performing orchestral arrangements of video game music. If you can't attend in person, this concert will be streamed on their Twitch channel. College Park, Md.

Voices United: A Celebration of Global Harmony

April 6. Experience an extraordinary evening of music that celebrates youth voices and the power of global harmony. This concert will feature the Strathmore Children's Chorus, the New England Youth Symphony and the choruses of George Mason University and Washington Adventist University. Together, they will present John Rutter's deeply moving *Mass of the Children*, a piece that blends the innocence of children's voices with the rich tones of adult singers. Ken Wakia of the Nairobi Chamber Chorus will lead performances of vibrant Kenyan music with the choruses of George Mason University and Strathmore Children's Chorus. This blend of classical and traditional sounds promises to be a joyous and uplifting experience.

EVEN MORE EVENTS

Washington Wizards Harry Potter Night (vs Orlando Magic)

April 3. Calling all witches, wizards and Muggles! The Washington Wizards are celebrating Harry Potter Night with themed player videos and in-game entertainment inspired by the movie series played throughout the game. The first 5,000 fans at the arena will get a limited-edition Harry Potter scarf. Start the night with a magical pre-game Harry Potter-inspired Block Party at District E starting at 5 p.m. Arrive early to score a limited-edition Hogwarts House beanie at the door, while supplies last. Washington, DC



Awesome Con 2025

April 4-6. A family-friendly celebration of geek culture, bringing over 60,000 fans together with their favorite comics, movies, television shows, books, toys, games, cosplay and more! And meet Blue's Clues hosts Josh dela Cruz, Donovan "Joe" Patton and Steve Burns. Awesome Con is proud to offer Awesome Con Jr. which is designed to delight the littlest fans. Awesome Con Jr. brings the whole family together for an interactive and fun-filled weekend full of kid-friendly activities spanning a variety of interests. Families can see incredible performances and get moving in the Awesome Con Jr. Movement Zone, experience tons of hand-on activations at vendor booths and get creative in the workshops area – being taught by professional artists. Fun for the whole family awaits. Washington, DC

Snow White

April 7. Come to the library for a magical, interactive story-reading of Snow White, where children become part of the adventure. This enchanting event blends ballet and mime, puppetry and beautiful classical music, all guided by a loveable Cupid storyteller. Little ones will get to dance, mime and join in a fun craft activity to create their own magical keepsake, as well as take photos with the Snow White. For children of all ages. No registration required. Fairfax, Va.

Shakespeare's Birthday Celebration

April 19. Celebrate Shakespeare's birthday at the Folger with fun, family-friendly activities and birthday cake for all. Make an Elizabethan ruff, watch sword-fighting and printing press demonstrations, write sonnets, learn about Elizabethan dance and music in a dance contest and more. Washington, DC



Lyrid Meteor Campfire

April 22. Families are invited to the nature center to make s'mores and catch a glimpse of the annual Lyrid meteor shower away from the lights of the city. Arlington, Va.

Teen Takeover: Spring Skate Night

April 26. Teens of middle and high school ages are invited to Thomas Jefferson Community Center for a night of skating, music, games and more. Arlington, Va.



Tips for a Mindful Pregnancy

by Joy Rains

Although pregnancy can be a time of joy, it can also be a time of stress. When you add surging hormones and physical discomfort to worries about medical tests, upcoming labor and more, you have a recipe for anxiety. But here's the good news: adding mindfulness practices to this recipe is like adding pure water to salt to lessen its sting. Here are some simple tips for a mindful pregnancy to help keep you centered amidst this time of change.

Embrace the unknown. Does each little physical pang trigger anxious thoughts? Do you find yourself on edge as you await results of standard medical tests? Are you apprehensive about going into labor? The truth is that none of us knows what the future holds. As the old saying goes, the past is history and the future is a mystery.

Try to pay attention to your thoughts, so you can protect yourself from negative thinking. For instance, if you notice that you're imagining dire outcomes, remind yourself, "I don't know and it's OK not to know" and then gently shift your attention back to the present moment. Repeat as needed.

Stay present. A great way to shift your attention to the present is to notice what you're experiencing with your senses. For instance, focus on your breath for a few minutes, noticing the coolness of the air when you inhale and its warmth when you exhale. You can also place your hands on your belly and notice

it rising and falling with each breath. (You may even notice your baby's movement during this exercise.) Or you can try a mindful walk, noticing the feeling of the soles of your feet connecting with the ground. You can even practice mindful walking for just a few steps. For instance, when you get out of bed in the morning and walk to the bathroom, rather than focusing on your "to do" list, notice your feet as they touch the ground.

Use affirmations and visualizations. [Affirmations](#) are positive statements you repeat to yourself, such as "I trust my body to create a nourishing environment for my baby or I trust my pregnancy to progress just as it should." During labor, you can affirm that "each pang brings me closer to meeting my baby." Consider tucking one of the many [affirmations for pregnancy and childbirth](#) books into your labor & delivery overnight bag. You can find additional tips for a mindful pregnancy on the InsightTimer app, which offers many free [guided meditations related to pregnancy and childbirth](#).

Finally, although this time of profound change can be rife with anxiety, it's also a perfect time to practice shifting your attention to the present. After all, once your little one arrives, there will be more worries – and more opportunities to practice [adding mindfulness practices to your life](#).

Joy Rains is a corporate mindfulness trainer and author of [Meditation Illuminated: Simple Ways to Manage Your Busy Mind](#). Learn more at joyrains.com.

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