

SCAVENGER HUNT: FIND THIS ISSUE'S ADORABLE ICONS FOR A CHANCE TO WIN CASH AND PRIZES

PARENTS

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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EXPERT ADVICE

TEACH YOUR
KIDS TO BE
GOOD LOSERS
(AND WINNERS!)

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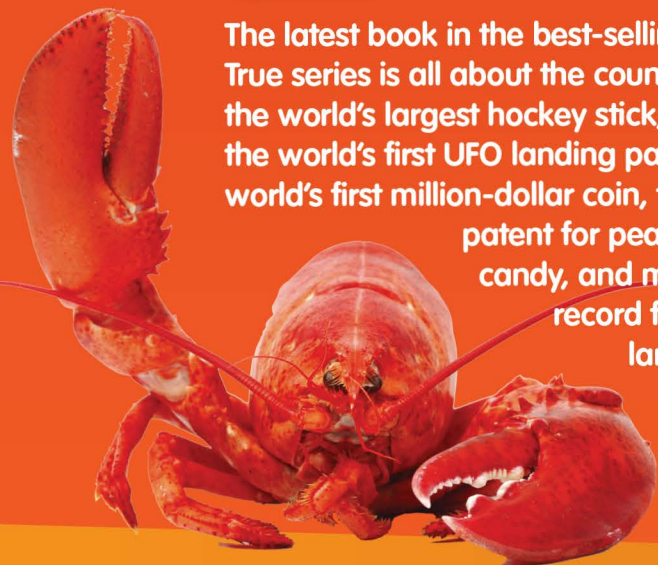
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The latest book in the best-selling Weird But True series is all about the country that boasts the world's largest hockey stick, is home to the world's first UFO landing pad, minted the world's first million-dollar coin, filed the first patent for peanut butter in candy, and maintains the record for the world's largest lobster!



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A FRESH START



first interviewed for the position of *ParentsCanada*'s editor-in-chief back in February. It was a snowy,

slushy day and I was frazzled from the drive. But when I met owner and publisher Jane Bradley, the weather outside melted away. Jane's company, Jane Media, had recently acquired *ParentsCanada* and she was beyond excited to take the brand in a new direction; her enthusiasm was contagious, and I knew I wanted to be a part of her project.

Fast-forward three whirlwind months, and we are so delighted to share with you the result of lots of inspiration and dedication on the part of our whole team. We've worked diligently and deliberately to preserve the legacy of *ParentsCanada* as a trusted Canadian parenting resource—a reputation the magazine has upheld for more than 11 years—while infusing a new aesthetic and energy to usher in a new chapter in the brand's life. We're even on a new platform; you'll get every issue of *ParentsCanada* on ISSUU from now on, no app download required.

Our goal is to be here for you, whenever you need us, with expertise, ideas and advice, in a supportive, friendly, sometimes cheeky voice. (Because parenting is serious business, and we all need to laugh sometimes.) In short, we want to be the pal you need in the middle of a sleepless night, when you're planning your kiddo's first birthday, when you need to reconnect with your partner, when you're trying to decide what to make for dinner (we know, the struggle is real). Basically, we'll be here for you as you navigate life as a parent.

It's fitting to me that this first issue launches just as the buds on the trees are beginning to open, as dormant bulbs begin to bloom. It marks a gorgeous new beginning for *ParentsCanada*, and we are so excited for what comes next.

Happy reading, friends. We can't wait to hear what you think.

Katie

KATIE DUPUIS
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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FIND ME!

Look for five of these guys hiding in our pages and email Katie the page numbers to win one of 10 My Gnome on the Roam Educational Family Adventure Kits.



SCAVENGER HUNT FUN

Look for the six summertime icons below as you turn the pages of this issue.

(Stuck in traffic or waiting for your order in a restaurant? Pass the tablet or phone to your kiddo and let them do the work!) Then, write to **katie@parentscanada.com** with the page numbers for each icon and **be entered to win one of three \$250 prizes.**

ICONS:



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Enter our sweepstakes (see page 73 for details)

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Drop us a line at **info@parentscanada.com**

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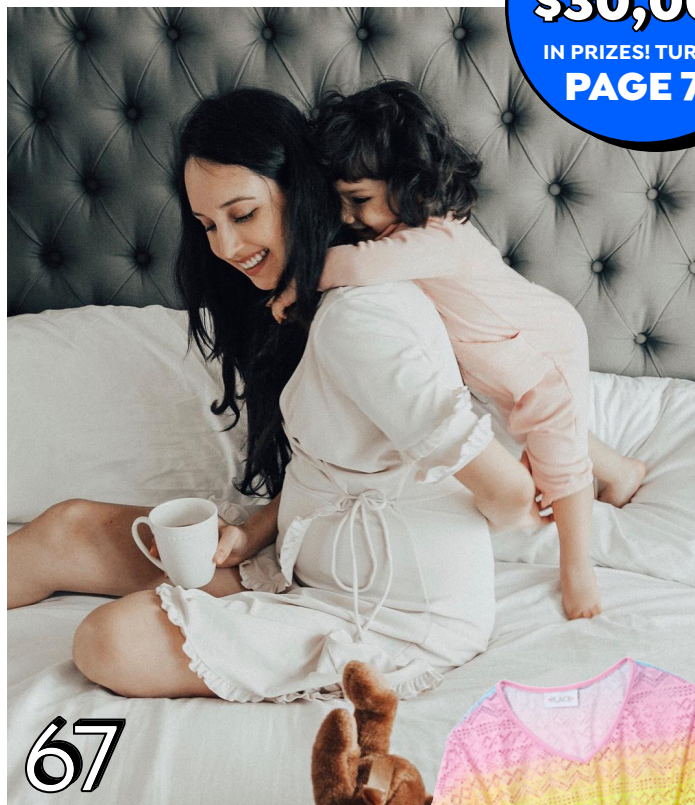
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A photograph of four school children in uniform running and laughing joyfully. The children are of diverse backgrounds and are wearing white shirts and dark trousers or skirts. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a school building.

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Q:

WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS SUMMER?



A: My favourite thing about summer, and what I am most looking forward to, is the colour. The flowers, green grass and trees coming to life. We move from the black and white world of winter to the full colour of summer. **–MEG**



A: More family cottage time at the cottage to swim and canoe by day, and watch outdoor movies by the fire at night. **–DALE**



A: Spending a week touring the Bruce Peninsula with my family. We'll be searching for shipwrecks and visiting the Grotto for sure! **–LORI**



A: This summer I am most looking forward to seeing my new Portuguese Water Dog puppy enjoy swimming in the pool! **–BONNIE**



A: I'm looking forward to floating in my pool and entertaining al fresco. **–JANE**

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- ³ British Columbia and Quebec offer provincial government grants to their respective residents.
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A close-up photograph of three children, two girls and one boy, gathered around a tablet. The girl in the foreground, with long blonde hair, is holding a grey stylus and pointing at the screen. The other two children are looking on with interest. The tablet screen displays a colorful interface with a grid of icons and a large image of a person. The background is softly blurred, showing more of the children and the classroom setting.

All children benefit from accessible classrooms.

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HOW MICROSOFT AND ITS PARTNERS ARE CHANGING THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

What parents need to know about the importance of inclusive education.

Every Canadian classroom is comprised of students with different learning abilities—each child learns differently, and at their own pace—and every teacher is tasked with adjusting their lessons to a range of aptitudes. But sometimes students struggle with traditional learning techniques, and they run the risk of falling behind their peers. To that end, many schools address learning challenges by taking students who require special accommodations out of the classroom. But is this the answer? Research says not likely.

Fortunately, more and more teachers and administrators across the country are employing inclusive education in their schools. This practice uses programs, activities and tech tools to enable all students to learn together. And it works: According to Inclusive Education Canada, studies have shown that when inclusive education is adopted, 70% of parents of children with intellectual disabilities report that their kids are doing average or better than average in their level of academic success.

That's why Microsoft Canada and Fair Chance Learning, a Microsoft Educational Learning Partner, are working to ensure that inclusive education becomes readily available and widely embraced across the nation. We had the chance to speak to Martha Jez from Fair Chance Learning about the importance of utilizing technology to strengthen inclusivity.

Jez, who has a Masters degree in Critical Disabilities Studies, and her team at Fair Chance Learning saw that technology was one way to support students of all abilities in their education; that said, they also recognized that the answer didn't lie in calling kids out of the classroom to work on separate technology away from their peers. "We wanted to change the conditions of the learning environment so that all of our peers—our classmates, our teachers, our neighbors—are welcomed in the learning environment," says Jez. "It's 2018 and we have access to tools that weren't offered even five or six years ago."

Believe it or not, inclusive-education technology doesn't need to be that complex or specialized. For example, a few of the premier Microsoft tools students have used include OneNote, and the features of Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel. OneNote has helped students with organizing their information to meet the challenges of any lesson. Features like 'dictate' in Microsoft Word help students that struggle with written expression.



Noah Rob is one of many children who have benefitted from inclusive education.

No one knows how important these tools are for a child's learning more than Courtney Rob and her son Noah. At age five, Noah lost a finger in a bicycle accident. He had the finger reattached, but he still struggles with fine-motor skills and writing. As he was also diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the same tender age, his teacher suggested to his parents that technology might be a wonderful addition to his learning strategies.

"We decided to invest in a Microsoft Surface just for Noah, and since then his grades have gone up. It has really brought learning to life for him," says Rob. She says her son was like a whole new kid. Suddenly he was on the same page as his friends, so his confidence soared. "All he wanted to talk about was what he learned at school, and that never used to happen before." His educational improvement also brought great comfort to Rob and her husband Joe, as they were able to watch their son succeed.

And Jez says this is exactly the goal. "Students need to be creative, to problem-solve and to be collaborative. Global competencies need to be encouraged in all of our children, and technology, while not the sole focus of inclusive education, is a major factor in getting us there."



Microsoft

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INFORMATION
ON ACCESSIBLE
LEARNING
TOOLS,
CLICK [HERE](#).

FAMILY ROOM



FOLLOW
@LAAURENHAHN



YEAH, WE'RE GOING TO SAY IT:

It's time to put down that smartphone and spend some quality time with your kiddos. (Don't get us wrong—we know how addictive your phone can be, and we're all for putting time aside each day to scroll through Instagram.) Watch this space—we'll give you fun ideas you can do with your crew in each issue.

#PutDownThePhone and...

BREAK OUT THE BOARD GAMES

Yup, we're going old school. Board games are a super easy way to spend time together, plus they're great for teaching social skills, working on sharing and taking turns, and practising reading and numbers. So get down on the floor and try these fun (and pretty hilarious) games with your brood. You'll all get a kick out of our favourite picks.

SHOP OUR FAVES

1. **DON'T STEP IN IT**, INDIGO, \$25;
2. **EGGED ON**, TOYS R US, \$20; 3. **PIZZA PANIC**, TOYS R US, \$20; 4. **BUGS IN THE KITCHEN**, MASTERMIND, \$40;
5. **BED BUGS**, INDIGO, \$24.95; 6. **CRAZY TOASTER**, INDIGO, \$22.95; 7. **UNICORN SURPRISE**, WALMART, \$25; 8. **POP-UP PIRATE**, MASTERMIND, \$20.

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BEAT THE PARENTS,
WALMART, \$34.



BOOKS

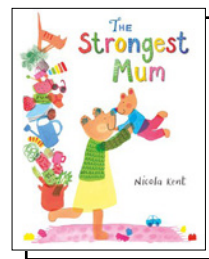
FOR KIDS



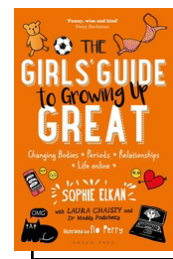
BACK TO THE FUTURE, \$20. (Ages 4 to 8) Great Scott! Marty McFly is back, this time in a picture book. Introduce your kids to Marty, who travels to the 1950s (with mad scientist Doc in tow) and meets his teen-aged parents. Fans of the flick will get a kick out of the adorable illustrations (Doc's so cute!).



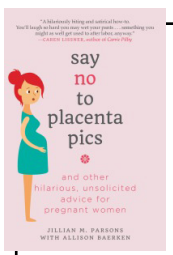
THE CARDBOARD KINGDOM, \$28. (Ages 8 to 12) This colourful graphic novel follows a group of kids who transform cardboard boxes into cool costumes, and their neighbourhood into a cardboard kingdom while on summer vacation. The importance of imagination and friendship are celebrated in this fun story.



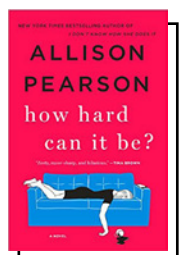
THE STRONGEST MUM, \$14. (Ages 3 to 5) Little Bear's mum is strong—she can carry everything from her cub's bike to Flamingo's piano. Eventually Little Bear realizes that even mums get tired and need a hand. This is a special story about helping each other and the sweet relationship between parent and child.



THE GIRLS' GUIDE TO GROWING UP GREAT, \$24. (Ages 10+) It's all about thriving during those sometimes trying tween and teen years and covers everything girls need to know about puberty, feelings, cyber-bullying, relationships with friends and even sex (but don't worry—it's very age appropriate).



SAY NO TO PLACENTA PICS AND OTHER HILARIOUS, UNSOLICITED ADVICE FOR PREGNANT WOMEN, \$22. The authors (who are also besties) were knocked up at the same time and their tell-all touches on every part of pregnancy, from hot flashes to oversharing on social media. Their take on mom-to-be-hood will crack you up. The perfect gift for the newly pregnant.



HOW HARD CAN IT BE? \$25. Remember *I Don't Know How She Does It*? This is the sequel to Kate Reddy's story, dubbed "the national anthem for working mothers." It's seven years later and Kate is staring down 50. Her kids are teens, her parents are aging, her husband is having a midlife crisis and she's anxious to get back to the workplace. Hilarity ensues.



THE HOME FOR UNWANTED GIRLS, \$21. Prepare for love, secrets and deceit in 1950s Quebec. Maggie, who's English-speaking, falls for poor, French-speaking Gabriel, the boy on the neighbouring farm. She gets pregnant at 15 and her parents force her to give Elodie up for adoption. Maggie later decides she must find the baby she gave away. The search begins.



ONE DAY YOU'LL THANK ME: LESSONS FROM AN UNEXPECTED FATHERHOOD, \$36. Author David McGlynn became a father faster than he anticipated—he says his sons were "conceived in quick succession." Terrified of becoming a dad, he ultimately grew into his position, and found super funny "life lessons" along the way. A great pick for Father's Day.

FOR YOU



SCREEN TIME



SMALL SCREEN
LOST IN SPACE, NOW STREAMING ON NETFLIX

If you don't remember the uber-kitschy 1960s TV series *Lost in Space*, this was the premise: a bunch of smarty-pants find themselves marooned on a new planet while on a mission to save human civilization. They had silly sets and used a heck of a lot of green-screens. Now, thanks to Netflix, the science-fiction show is back, appealing to a new generation of kids and adults who love all-things space. This isn't your grandmother's *Lost in Space*. This one's a big-budget, CGI-enhanced

intergalactic reboot that boasts much cooler sets and freakier aliens. The Robinson family—scientist and mom Maureen (Canadian actress Molly Parker), estranged husband John (Toby Stephens) and their three bickering kids—are picked to start civilization on a new planet when they get lost on their way and crash-land on an alien planet. (We hate when that happens.) They learn to work together on this crazy adventure. There's humour and weird creatures. Something for everyone.

UNICORN HAIR

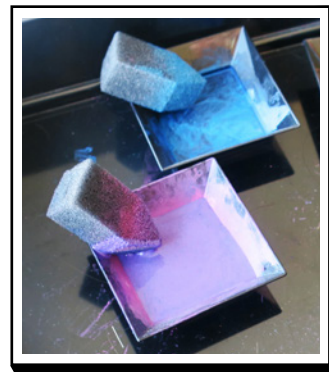
With a little help, kids can rock this non-permanent, no-bleaching-required rainbow-bright hair using chalk. Anyone can be a unicorn! Oshawa, Ont.-based hairstylist **ANNA GUGLIELMO** explains how.



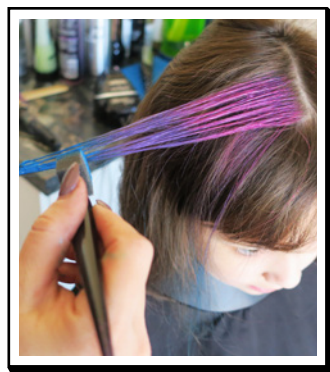
KEEP THE COLOUR FROM FADING BY WASHING WITH LUKEWARM OR COOL WATER, AVOIDING CHLORINE AND WEARING A HAT IN THE SUN.



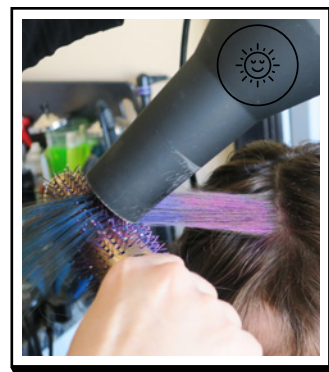
1. Get kids to choose their favourite colours. We used L'Oréal Professionnel's Hair Chalk Colour Polish for Hair in four vibrant shades: Sweet Sixteen Pink, First Date Violet, Blue Ocean Cruise and Garden Party.



2. Pour some of the chalk onto a piece of tin foil or a small plastic plate. Slice out a small section of dry hair using a comb. Dip a makeup sponge into the colour (starting with the pink chalk) and rub onto a small section from the root.



3. Apply the purple chalk where the pink left off, then the blue and teal. Softly blend the colours together where they meet to create a seamless look. (It's easier if you use three or four colours.)



4. Dry this section of hair with a round brush. (Head's up—the brush will get stained.) Reapply each colour to intensify the shade and dry the hair between applications. Colour will last up to seven shampoos.



BIG SCREEN THE INCREDIBLES 2, JUNE 15

Is there anyone who doesn't love the Parr family? (We didn't think so.) If you're a fan like us, you've been waiting 14 long years for Disney-Pixar to release a sequel to *The Incredibles*, and come June folks young and old will finally get to see what's been up with Mr. Incredible, Elastigirl and their three kids. Part two of the franchise picks up where the first flick left off. The superhero Parrs are trying to lead normal lives. This time Mr. Incredible (voiced by Craig T. Nelson) is looking after the kids

(Violet, Dash and Jack Jack) while his wife, Elastigirl (voiced by Holly Hunter), continues to fight crime and crusade for "supers" everywhere. Not only are we introduced to awesome new villains (the Underminer and Screenslaver) but we'll get to watch Jack Jack, the Parr's youngest son, discover his (multiple) secret superpowers. This much-anticipated sequel is full of wry jokes (perfect for the parental units) and just as heartwarming as the first one. It's the perfect movie to welcome summer vacation.

LIFE'S A BEACH

SHOP OUR FAVES

1. FLIP-FLOPS, CARTERS, \$6; **2. PEACOCK INFLATABLE**, MASTERMIND, \$20; **3. TWO-PIECE SWIMSUIT**, THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, \$30; **4. PINEAPPLE FAN**, WELL.CA, \$23; **5. SWIMSUIT COVERUP**, THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, \$35; **6. MELISSA & DOUG SUNNY PATCH FLEX OCTOPUS LARGE BEACH TOTE**, WALMART, \$32; **7. SUNNYLIFE ICE CREAM SUNGLASSES**, WELL.CA, \$10; **8. SUNNYLIFE BEACH SOUNDS BANANA PALM**, WELL.CA, \$65. **9. BUMKINS SWIM DIAPER IN RAINDROP**, WALMART, \$20.

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9



We're "shore" your family will have a blast ocean-, lake- and poolside with this super fun (and super cool) collection of the season's best beach gear.

10. SUNNYLIFE ARM BAND FLOATIES IN CRABBY, WELL.CA, \$15. **11. HI, SUNSHINE! FLOPPY STRAW SUN HAT**, OLD NAVY, \$23; **12. TOWEL FUNNY FOOD**, INDIGO, \$15; **13. SUNNYLIFE LUXE LIE-ON FLOAT CACTUS**, WELL.CA, \$80; **14. SHARK SWIM TRUNKS**, GAP KIDS, \$27; **15. SQUIDDIVERS DIVING TOYS**, MASTERMIND, \$15; **16. BOYS' PLACE SPORT SHORT RAGLAN SLEEVE GRAPHIC RASHGUARD**, THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, \$25; **17. LITTLE TIKES DIRT DIGGER 2-IN-1 HAULERS DUMP TRUCK**, LITTLETIKES.COM, \$20. **18. GIRLS' FLIP-FLOPS**, THE CHILDREN'S PLACE, \$6.



10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18

FAKE A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

PARENTING AND SLEEPLESS NIGHTS GO HAND-IN-HAND.

Whether you're getting up for nightly feedings, coaxing a cuddly toddler to go back to her bed, comforting a sick little one or lying awake worrying (which is basically every parent we know, at least occasionally), adulting the next day can be a slog. Here are a few clever tricks for looking like you caught your full eight hours, when really it felt like eight minutes. —KATIE DUPUIS

1

Don't discount the night before

Do yourself a favour and don't skip time at the sink before heading to bed. Taking off your makeup and washing your face go a long way toward looking brighter in the morning. "It's easy to just fall into bed after a long day, but going to bed with clean skin will help your complexion look fresher," says beauty expert and influencer Liv Judd Soye. "You want to remove all of the impurities that clog your

pores, so your skin can renew itself properly while you sleep." But it doesn't need to be a multi-step process, either. Try an effective cleanser, like Philosophy's Purity Made Simple (\$32), to take off the day. Philosophy also has Purity Made Simple cleansing clothes (\$21), for when it's even too much effort to turn on the tap. Can't keep your eyes open? Add a bit of moisturizer then hit the hay.



2

Start hydrating If you're facing down a gruelling day after a crap night's sleep, start the morning off with a big glass of water. Your instincts will tell you to reach for the coffee (obviously), but add a few tumblers of water, too. If you're dehydrated, you'll feel even more tired than you already are.

3

COLOUR-CORRECT YOURSELF

Spot-treating dark or dull spots before layering on your foundation helps to neutralize imperfections. Revlon's Colour Ready Photocorrecting Pens (\$15) come in formulas for counteracting redness, dullness and dark spots. It should only take a minute or two to survey your skin and smooth things out. Then you can add a light foundation and a dusting of translucent powder. "The powder helps to set the makeup so it doesn't crease," says Judd. "Bottom line—yes, we're basically suggesting you add a filter."



4

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO YOUR EYES

An undereye concealer formulated to handle the luggage under your eyes—like IT Cosmetics Bye Bye Under Eye Full Coverage Anti-aging waterproof concealer (\$32)—is a must-have. Tip: "A little goes a long way, so use sparingly," says Judd Soye. Focus on the dark bags under your peepers, and stay away from creases. Concealer caked into wrinkles will make you look less than fresh.



5

TRICK OF THE EYE

Keep it simple. Use a little shimmery shadow on your brow bone and in the inside corner of each eye. "This is an old stage trick to brighten the eyes," Judd Soye says. You can even use some shadows—like Revlon's Colourstay Crème Eyeshadow #705 (\$9)—as a highlighter on cheekbones. Finish by curling your lashes and adding mascara.



ONE MORE THING: There will be days when faking it isn't in the cards. And that's OK. Parenting is a hard gig, and you're sure to lose a lot of zzzs; just do your best to carve out a little you-time to catch up on rest, and soon you won't even have to think about the smoke-and-mirrors strategies.

Calling all parents! WE NEED YOU

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NO PIPING NEEDED

No need to mess around with piping tips to get an adorable cake for your kid's big day (or any other random day that requires cake!).



Instagram and Pinterest aren't doing anyone any favours when it comes to cake decorating. Search for birthday cake ideas and you're quickly rewarded with a deluge of delightful but not exactly rookie-friendly ideas for the piece de resistance at your kid-do's party. So close the browser window (no one needs to make perfect rosettes or fondant figurines) and look no further—here are three cute but simple solutions for the novice froster, piping tips not required.

Each of these ideas requires a simple chocolate or vanilla cake or cupcakes, and a batch of vanilla buttercream frosting. (Kitchen secret: Go for a boxed cake mix and homemade icing. A butter frosting—instead of store-bought, which is often oil-based—will work better for these cakes, and party guests will think the whole thing is from scratch.)



COOKIE-CUTTER STENCIL CAKE

SUPPLIES

- Sprinkles
- Cookie cutter(s)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Frost cooled cake or cupcakes with a thin layer of frosting (the cake should not show through).
2. Place cookie cutter(s) on cake and very gently press down. Leave in place.
3. Carefully spoon sprinkles into the cookie cutter (less is more, so that the pattern holds when you lift the cutter, but be sure to get the candies right to the edges of the shape). Using your fingers, press the sprinkles into the cake.
4. Very carefully lift the cookie cutter. Use the tip of a butter knife to remove or redirect any runaway sprinkles.

TIP You can reverse the stencil as well. Press the sprinkles up to the outside of the cookie cutter instead of filling in, leaving the shape as negative space.



CANDY RAINBOW CUPCAKES

SUPPLIES

- Blue or turquoise gel food colouring
- Sour rainbow ribbon candy
- Mini-marshmallows

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Add a bit of food colouring to frosting; stir to incorporate. Frost cupcakes.
2. Cut ribbon candy to 1½- to 2-in. pieces. Bend each piece into a rainbow shape and press each end into the top of a cupcake.
3. Just before serving, rip or cut mini-marshmallows in half and mound on either end of the rainbow arch to make the clouds.



TRI-COLOUR LAYER CAKE

SUPPLIES

- Three colours of gel food colouring
- A long, serrated knife

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the cake batter and divide into three separate bowls.
2. Add a little gel colour to each of the bowls; stir to incorporate fully. (If you'd like to create an ombre effect, use the same colour in increasing amounts for each layer.) Scrape into greased cake pans and bake. Cool completely and remove from pans. Level the tops of the bottom two layers with the knife.
3. Spread a layer of icing on the first layer and stack the second cake on top. Repeat with remaining cake. Continue with frosting the outside of the cake.

**This cake will only work with a vanilla cake mix or recipe. A chocolate cake won't show the colours.*



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ESCAPE THE CROWDS

While there's definitely a time to schlep kids around packed theme parks (enter that famous mouse), some trips call for less busy beaches and cities where families can take in the sights, take a load off and avoid the masses. We know you need a break. We picked six spots where you can ditch the droves. **BY LISA VAN DE GEYN AND JANE BRADLEY**



LOVE CHILLING ON THE BEACH?

VISIT BONAIRE OR CURACAO

These lesser-visited of the ABC islands (Aruba is the busiest of the three), Bonaire and Curacao are just north of Venezuela (so they're clear of hurricane paths) and are part of the Netherlands known as the Dutch Antilles. You'll find turquoise waters, white beaches and stunning spots, like Bonaire's Gotomeer (a salt-water lagoon surrounded by lush mountains and a pink flamingo colony) and Curacao's Shete Boka Park (full of multiple coves where sea turtles lay their eggs).



LOVE CITY SIGHTSEEING?

VISIT SEATTLE

You won't find the crazy hustle and bustle of Manhattan or Los Angeles here. Take the kids up the iconic Space Needle, the Seattle Children's Museum and Pike Place Market, where you can get some shopping in (check out more than 200 local artisans), watch the famous "fish tossers" and grab a cuppa in the very first Starbucks. Insider tip: Buy CityPasses for your crew (\$117 for adults, \$91 for kids) for admission to the Space Needle, Seattle Aquarium, a harbour tour, the Museum of Pop Culture or Woodland Park Zoo, and Chihuly Garden or the Pacific Science Centre.

LOVE PLACES FULL OF HISTORY?

VISIT SAN MARINO

The fifth smallest country in the world and one of the oldest, San Marino is hands-down one of the most picturesque places you can visit. It's an easy day trip from more populated areas in Italy (Florence and Bologna) and the perfect spot if you have tweens and teens who are history buffs (its home to more than one UNESCO world heritage site), or little ones who love pretending they're royalty (wait until they see the castles). Don't miss the very cool tradition of the changing of the guard (April to September) at the Palazzo Pubblico. And FYI, no trip is complete without trying the torta tre monti, a.k.a. chocolate and hazelnut layer cake. Mmm.



LOVE EXPLORING REMOTE POCKETS OF CANADA?

VISIT HAIDA GWAII

We promise you've never seen anything like Haida Gwaii, and you'll feel like you're in another part of the world when you visit the "Canadian Galapagos." A two-hour flight from Vancouver, Haida Gwaii forms a group of 450 islands 80 kilometres west of BC's coast. Here you'll find lush rainforests filled with some of the tallest cedars and spruce trees on the planet, as well as an impressive list of fauna (bald eagles, the Queen Charlotte black bear and animal subspecies that you won't find anywhere else). Hit the shore and your family might catch a glimpse of the 20 kinds of whales (including humpback and orca) and dolphins frolicking. Apparently there are islands that only allow a dozen visitors at a time, so do your research before you book.



LOVE ALL-INCLUSIVES WITH CHARACTERS FOR THE LITTLES?

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Beaches is a huge resort but it feels intimate on this small island that doesn't get the same traffic as some of the more popular locations in the Caribbean. You can choose to stay in one of four themed villages—Italian, French, Caribbean and Key West—each suite has its own distinct architecture and ambience. There's no shortage of activities that suit all kids from tots to teens—the wee ones will get a kick out of the Sesame Street characters, story time with Elmo, cookie baking with Cookie Monster and Camp Sesame (for the baby to four-year-old set). Expect school-agers, tweens and teens to spend endless hours in the Kids camp or the massive waterpark (the largest in the area), complete with surf simulator, waterslides galore and a relaxing lazy river. When they're tired of the sun, no sweat—the teen disco (Club Liquid) and the Xbox Play Lounge are great indoor-fun picks. Once you get the kids settled, do some scuba diving, get a mani at the spa or crack open your book on a beach chair oceanside.

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Dear ParentsCanada:
WILL SWEARING
IN FRONT
OF MY KIDS
**%#\$*
THEM UP?**

Deputy editor **LISA VAN DE GEYN** speaks to a child psychologist and potty-mouth parents (*raises hand*) to answer this %#\$&*@% question.

relieve pain and frustration—doesn't necessarily have lasting implications," she says.

HELL, YES—WATCH YOUR MOUTH.

While yelling, "S-word! I stubbed my toe!" won't hurt your kid, there are always caveats: Swearing at children can be considered abusive and have a lasting effect on their sense of self, says Ebenstiner. For many folks, exposing children to profanity is morally and ethically questionable. "When swearing involves slanderous statements and slurs about social and racial groups, for example, it can have a negative impact on their ability to form their own decisions and opinions." Another thing you may want to consider is that your kids are watching how you cope in difficult situations, and if your swearing always shows frustration and anger, these behaviours could rub off on your crew.

BOTTOM LINE. The good news is the type of cursing most of us engage in isn't going to cause any kind of emotional or cognitive damage. That said, when I'm letting off steam or let a bad word slip in front of my girls, I'm quick to follow it with a heartfelt, "Oops, I probably shouldn't have said that—sorry."

If you do get caught spouting off swears, "it's important to acknowledge the transgression and provide education. It's also key to distinguish those words that are socially taboo and the contexts whereby this type of profanity is less acceptable and will lead to negative consequences," Ebenstiner says.

"When I happen to swear around my kid," said Bergen, "I provide some coaching. I engage him in an honest dialogue about why some words are OK in some places and not others." It's good for kids to know that everyone makes mistakes—including parents. No one's freaking perfect. ■

Confession: I swear. Nay, I'm a veteran user of profanity; I have a mouth like a sailor. I'm a firm believer that a good, well-placed curse word in the right context can ease stress, accentuate a point and relieve physical and emotional pain. And sometimes the s-, f-, a- and all the other cusses (no not-super-offensive ones) surface when my daughters are indeed within earshot. That probably explains why my nine- and seven-year-olds have tossed out the "sh-word" (as they call it) twice or thrice. Does this make me a bad mother? I say no. And I don't think fellow parents who occasionally rhyme off obscenities are bad parents either.

An informal and admittedly unscientific poll on Facebook revealed I'm not alone when it comes to this effing habit. One mother said having children hasn't changed who she is, and she'll be damned if she speaks

or acts differently around her kids. Another mom of two said she doesn't always bite her tongue: "I don't view the use of profanities as vulgar or taboo, as it depends on the context of use—as a form of expression or as an extension of what I may be feeling. And to be honest, our tween has heard worse from his peers." Touché.

While it's probably safe to say that most parents do our best to censor ourselves around our offspring, there's no denying kiddos pick up on PG-13 or R-rated vocabulary. "Although the Federal government protects children from exposure to swearing by censoring language in the media, there seems to be little evidence that swearing is actually harmful to little ears," says Janice Ebenstiner, a child and family therapist in Vancouver. Of course that doesn't mean it's always OK to use expletives. There's a

time and place—everything in moderation, right?

HELL, NO—CUSS AWAY. In his book, *What the F: What Swearing Reveals About Our Language, Our Brains, and Ourselves*, Benjamin K. Bergen, a professor of cognitive science at the University of California at San Diego, says dropping the F-bomb around kids isn't the worst thing in the world. He says kids' minds are resilient to profanity. Obscenities that aren't used aggressively, and are instead used as a way to emphasize or for humour, aren't going to hurt anyone. "There's no proof that exposure to ordinary profanity—four-letter words—causes any sort of direct harm: no increased aggression, stunted vocabulary, numbed emotions or anything else," Bergen wrote in the *Los Angeles Times*. Ebenstiner concurs. "Some researchers suggest swearing can have a cathartic effect. This sort of cussing—to

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SHOULD WE GIVE OUR KIDS MORE FREEDOM?

Honestly, parents were way more chill decades ago. As kids we hung out under the sun, not always under our parents' watchful eyes. Is summer the season of supervision, or should we let our kids roam until the streetlights come on?

YES

As a free-spirit, and someone who gains awareness from being alone in my thoughts and space, I feel like I was meant to parent in another lifetime—the 1970s or 1980s.

I spent hours outside when I was a kid—free to explore and “just be.” It built resilience and fostered those crucial skills of self-regulation and resourcefulness. There was no parent-driven boredom-busting in our house; my older sister and I had to figure out life on the daily during summer break, and I’d say we were happier and better adjusted for it. I crave freedom for my kids.

I remember when playdates meant walking down the street to find friends instead of scheduled and chauffeured dates arranged by Mom and Dad; when trips to the beach were spent splashing carelessly and throwing mud pies, not subject to reprimand. Dad could park it by the pool to catch some rays, not watching every cannonball, and it wasn’t a topic of scrutiny. Mom could nosedive into a book at the park and not be given side-eye by onlookers because she

took a hot minute for herself. Fun was something we figured out—it wasn’t driven by two months’ worth of endless break-the-bank, over-planned experiences. We used outdoor voices and played in our backyards. Our parents didn’t worry about bugging the neighbours—their kids were out too. The goal was to make memories, not magic. The ordinary was extraordinary.

Yearning for that low-pressure parenting style, I admit I’d let my gang do a heck of a lot more if I wasn’t so aware of how quick society is to judge a laissez-faire approach. Today we’re barraged with too much information and we’ve come to equate good parenting with overprotection. I wonder if we’re hindering our kids’ confidence and trustworthiness.

I say bring back that ’70s summer vibe (with a few modern-day innovations like helmets, lifejackets and seatbelts—preventable injuries and accidents weren’t cool back then and they’re not cool now). The kids are gonna be alright; I’m done with over-parenting and sheltering. #BringBackWildhood.

— SONYA KERR, MOM OF FOUR

NO

Sure, letting the kids roam free sounds awesome but there’s just no way—I’m far too anxious to let my kids have the same liberties and freedoms I was allowed as a child. The mere thought of leaving my two girls unsupervised for any length of time starts every doomsday scenario possible in my head—they’ll get hurt, they’ll be approached by strangers, they’ll get lost, something even worse will happen—you name it, I guarantee I’m pondering it.

Now don’t think I’m a some nutty fear monger or afraid of my own shadow. I know there are more good people in the world than bad. But you can’t deny the horror stories we hear every single day (note to self: stop watching and listening to the news); they make me want to keep my babies on a very tight leash. I am all for giving my kids every opportunity I can afford them—they will be allowed to have copious playdates with friends, we’ll take daytrips to amusement parks, overnights at cool waterparks—but these will be done with mommy (or daddy) dearest present.

If they grow up not knowing anything different than me being within arm’s reach at all times, I’ve made peace with that. And I don’t think they’ll feel slighted in the least.

My girls are still little, but I can’t see my attitude and parenting style changing as they approach their tween and teenage years. (In fact, I’ll likely get more protective.) I’ll be the parent who gives the kids choices that give them the illusion of freedom (“Want insert-friend’s-name-here to come over to our house or do you want to go over to her house?”). And as long as I’m the one taking the kids to play places, indoor pools and the like, I can be parked in one place while keeping my eye on everything (and everyone) around us. They can feel as if they have the freedom to roam—I’m even cool if they fall and scrape their knees—in the cushy bubble of safety I have created. Look, this isn’t the ’70s. Times have changed and this anxious mama still needs to sleep at night. The kids probably won’t know the difference. And I’m totally OK with that. — WHITNEY HILTS,

MOM OF TWO

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WE LOVE RECOS FROM OTHER PARENTS:

So that's why we're aiming to give you go-tos that work, for everything from first foods to first aid. This month we tried bandaids, to figure out what bandages to have on hand for all kinds of ouchies. We threw in some fun ones, too, for the boo-boos you can't see but they totally can.

BEST BANDAGES

Summer's coming, so now's the time to top up your plaster stash. With our picks, you'll be ready for everything from blisters to skinned knees.

SHOP OUR FAVES



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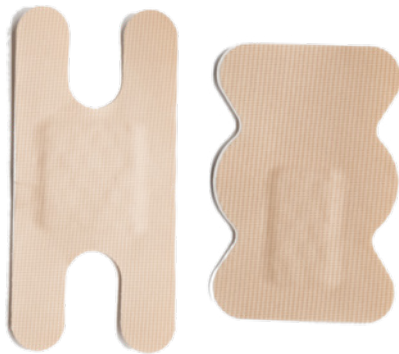
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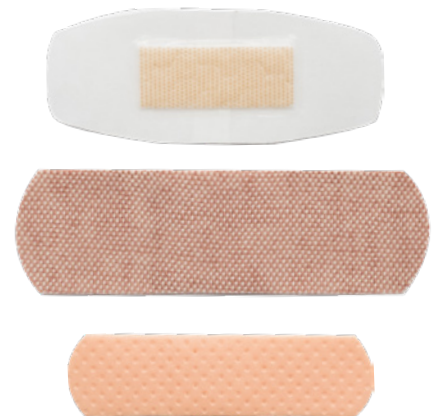
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TAKE A PUPPY BREAK

When life gets busy, it's easy to focus more on knocking items off of the to-do list and less on what you need to do | for yourself. And this isn't just true for parents; kids can get overwhelmed by life too. So, we asked Julia Sen, a registered clinical and counselling psychologist in Toronto, for a quick and easy mindfulness exercise to give every family member a much-needed moment of self-care. It takes almost no time and gives everyone's oxytocin—the hormone behind the rush of warm and fuzzy emotions—a much-needed boost.

1. Come together in a room and have everyone find a comfy spot. Allow everyone a few moments to settle down.

2. Inhale for five seconds through the nose, and exhale for five seconds through the mouth or nose. Repeat three times.

3. Visualize holding a puppy or another sweet, small animal. (If puppies aren't your thing, anything that makes you feel tenderness and love works. For small children, give them stuffed animals and ask them to pretend their stuffies are snuggling them.) Hold this sensation for 30 seconds.

4. Repeat whenever and however many times you find helpful, but at least once.

If you're leading this activity with your family, remember to be in the moment too, so you get the same benefits as the others, or repeat on your own a few more times than the kiddos.

CUTE STUFF

HYDRATION STATION

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- 5. MUNCHKIN 12-OZ. SPORTS REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE**, WALMART, \$17;
- 6. S'IP THE SCOOP WATER BOTTLE**, INDIGO, \$30;
- 7. JUMP KIDS WORLD ROBOT WATER BOTTLE**, SUPERSTORE.CA, \$5;
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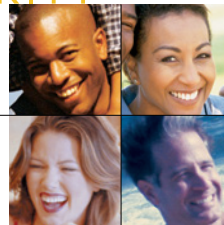
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HERE COMES THE SUN

Slathering your family in sunscreen's a no-brainer. But when it comes to Mom's face, heavy makeup + rising mercury = a sweaty, sticky mess. The hot, humid days ahead call for barely formulas that offer maximum coverage and a light, flawless finish. Here are 9 of our favourite complexion protectors for you and your crew.



SHOP OUR FAVES

1. ALMAY **BEST BLEND** FOREVER (12 SHADES), \$23; **2.** BANANA BOAT **SIMPLY PROTECT KIDS SUNSCREEN SPRAY SPF 50+**, \$14; **3.** MARY KAY **SUNCARE SPF 30**, \$23; **4.** HAHAARD CANDY **LOOK PRO! BARE IT ALL**, \$8; **5.** JOE FRESH **HYDRA-STAY LIQUID FOUNDATION WITH ARGAN OIL**, \$16; **6.** OLAY **TOTAL EFFECTS WHIP**, \$40; **7.** REVLON **COLORSTAY MAKEUP SPF 15**, \$20; **8.** SUNTHERA3 **BABY SUNSCREEN SPF 60**, \$13; **9.** HAWAIIAN TROPIC **DUO DEFENCE SUNSCREEN LOTION SPF 50+**, \$13.



FAMILY FITNESS

FULL-BODY ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS

A lot of parents find it difficult to fit exercise into their busy schedules, but news flash: You don't need to take up running or join a gym to get moving. Just take the kids outside instead! Playing in the backyard or taking a trip to the park have serious potential for getting your heart rate up. Consider this twist on rock-paper-scissors, for starters.

1. Divide players into teams. Each team goes to opposite ends of an open area and decides together whether to act out rock

(crouch down into a ball), paper (lie flat on the ground) or scissors (do a single jumping jack).

2. On the count of three, the teams run toward each other and do their actions. Rock beats scissors, scissors beat paper and paper beats rock.

3. Play best three out of five, or four out of seven, and then switch up the teams and play again. You can also play round-robin style, one-on-one. Before you know it, you'll have run across your yard or the park up to 14 times!



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Parenthood

an unconventional story of siblings, surrogacy and selflessness



Eric and Danielle's love story began long before they first met.

Their mothers were best friends in elementary school, but they lost touch. Years later, they reconnected at a school reunion. Both were pregnant and, from the beginning, it seemed that their children, Eric and Danielle, were meant to be together.

Fast forward to today. Eric and Danielle have been together for 13 years and have recently welcomed their first children, twin girls. The couple is overjoyed—especially when they remember the struggles they experienced along the way.

A SISTER'S LOVE

Seven years ago, Danielle was diagnosed with colon cancer. There were surgeries, complications, chemotherapy and radiation, happily resulting in complete remission. However, the couple was devastated when they learned that Danielle could not conceive or carry a child.

Then, unexpectedly, they received a gift of love. Natale, Eric's older sister, told

the couple, "I will be the person to make this happen for you guys."

Medela sat down with the family to discuss their journey. Eric recalls the process: "We had a donor egg from the United States. It was fertilized and transferred, but it split, resulting in our having identical twins."

Natale's own three sons didn't question what was going on. She says, "They felt like they were part of the process, and when we found out there were two, they asked if we could keep one!"

BRINGING THE GIRLS HOME

Eric recalls that after the birth, the days at the hospital were long. "We were there for 10 hours every day," Danielle says, "We slept at the hospital for the first five nights. The girls were in the NICU and on a strict feeding schedule."

Natale, being a physician herself, knew the benefits of breast milk, so she was pumping for the girls. Danielle recalls those early days: "Natale would come visit and bring breast milk or we would

go visit her and pick up milk every day. Now it's probably weekly when we get together, and she freezes the milk."

When they brought the twins home, they got the girls on the same schedule to make life easier. In order to get the girls to feed successfully, Eric recalls having to try a few teats prior to settling on one that worked for them. "We went to the Medela Calma bottle and the feeding time got faster and there was less mess. it changed everything. Calma was a life changer for us," Danielle agreed. "They just feed so well with these bottles."

HOPE AND HELP FOR OTHERS

Parents in Ontario may be eligible for government funding for artificial insemination (AI), intra-uterine insemination (IUI), or in vitro fertilization (IVF) through Ontario's new Fertility Program.

Surrogacy is legal in Canada, however, unlike the United States, Canadians are not legally allowed to pay a surrogate to carry a child. This form of unpaid surrogacy is called "altruistic surrogacy", but altruism doesn't seem to be a big enough word for the gift that Natale gave to her brother and sister-in-law.

"The twins are now approaching two years old," says Eric. "Their smiles first thing in the morning, the wide-armed sprints to the front door, the excitement of achieving new milestones, and the love, pride and joy we feel every day are all thanks to a very special person—Natale."



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HOW DO I TEACH MY KIDS TO BE GOOD SPORTS?

Got a sore loser or smug winner in the house? These kiddos don't make great team players and suck the fun out of the game. We asked a coach for pro tips on how to get your crew to play fair.

Here's the thing about sportsmanship—any coach will tell you it's an integral part of the game (any game, really—board games to the Olympic Games) for beginners and seasoned athletes alike. And it's something that needs to be taught from a young age. It's the responsibility of coaches, players and parents to ensure that when the buzzer sounds and the game ends, the victors and those who have been defeated engage in that all-important handshake and high-five. "My definition of sportsmanship is polite and fair behaviour, both on and off the field," says Bates. "Participants need to honour their sport by promoting integrity, self-discipline, honest competition and always respecting their opponent." We asked the coach how to teach your kids to be champions, whether they win or lose.

BE A GRACIOUS WINNER. BE A GRACIOUS LOSER. This isn't news but losing sucks. Full stop. And learning to lose is a skill kids need to learn, just like riding a bike and catching a ball. This isn't always an easy concept for kids (or, let's be honest, adults), and it's about more than waiting your turn and not sassing your opponent. Tell them that while it's OK to feel sad and disappointed when they lose, it's not OK to accuse the other team of cheating, throwing tantrums or storming off the field. This one's a biggie—kids need to understand that the game is no longer fun if they don't lose—and win—with grace.

SHOW RESPECT—FOR THE GAME AND TEAMMATES. You know what they say: "cheaters never win." Explaining fair play is probably one of the first lessons you'll teach. Kids should know that disagreements happen all the time in sports but it's important to follow the rules. Good sportsmanship is also about showing up for practices and games on time, helping teammates, listening to coaches and being willing to sit out and root for fellow players when it's not your turn on the ice, field, etc.

MODEL IT. Monkey see, monkey do, right? "In many cases players will emulate their parents. That means you must lead by example and keep it fun, whether your team wins or loses," says Bates. Of course this also means not taking the game too seriously—no trash talking, no fighting in the bleachers, no arguing with refs. "When players are beginning to learn a sport, seeing and hearing parents screaming at ump's, for example, sends a message that this is acceptable behaviour. Remember, there is a correct way to show support for your child and others while respecting the game—cheer don't jeer," he says. ■

SHOP OUR FAVES



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GIRLS' GRADE SCHOOL UA JET 2017, UNDER ARMOUR, \$65.



ALL-SURFACE SOCCER SWINGBALL, MASTERMIND, \$40.

CREEPY-CRAWLY BITES

INSECTS, MOSQUITOS AND SPIDERS...OH MY! It's pretty much impossible to avoid buzzing, flying, web-weaving pests this time of year, but there are ways to prevent painful, pesky stings and bites. Here's what you might not have known about summer's not-so-loved creatures. —SADIE JINNAH



HONEYBEES DIE AFTER THEY STING YOU. (Wasps and hornets can sting multiple times.) Bees' stingers are barbed so they're unable to remove them once they've stung. They leave behind a venom sac, plus part of their digestive tract, muscles and nerves. Use a credit card to scrape away the stinger. You may develop allergies to stings; if you're nauseous, cramping, swelling or have difficulty breathing, call 911 immediately.



"They're actually using you as a blood meal to make their eggs," says Dr. Curtis Russell, a Toronto-based entomologist at Public Health Ontario. While their attraction to us stems from the carbon monoxide we exhale, mosquitos are drawn to darker-coloured clothes, how we move and the way we smell. Using bug sprays (with DEET or icaridin) has shown to help decrease bites, but wearing light-coloured clothing and avoiding floral

scents in shampoos, lotions and perfumes also helps.

If you end up a main dish, apply a cold compress to dull the itch, says Dr. Janice Heard, a paediatrician in Calgary. "When a mosquito bites us, they inject a small amount of saliva in us to thin our blood. The cells in our body recognize that as something foreign and releases histamines in an attempt to clean it up. So the more you scratch, the more it will itch."



Not all ticks transmit Lyme disease The deer tick is the only one that carries the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Folks who get nipped may develop a bullseye rash within three to 30 days. If you've been camping or hiking and you or your child has flu-like symptoms without a runny nose or cough, go to your health-care provider. An antibiotic is enough to cure what ails you.



ALL SPIDER BITES ARE VENOMOUS, BUT NOT TO HUMANS.

OK, some are venomous to us but the eight-legged varieties found in Canada are usually nothing more than creepy creatures. "The only time a spider will bite you is if it's in your shoe or you're trying to smoosh them," says Dr. Russell. Some people may experience a significant amount of pain from a bite and it may blister, but it's usually nothing serious, says Dr. Heard. If you live in an area where dangerous spiders (think black widows or brown recluses) are present, it's a good idea to have your doctor check the bite.



TICKS SECRETE CEMENT-LIKE GLUE. Part of the arachnid family (eek!), ticks are difficult to remove because once they latch on, they excrete a strong substance to secure themselves into place so they can feed. Baby ticks can be as tiny as a poppy seed so they're hard to spot. Prevention is key—wear long-sleeved tops and pants when you're in wooded areas and always do a tick check when you come inside.



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MOVIES FOR MOMMIES: BECAUSE GROWN-UP TIME IS IMPORTANT TOO!

HERE'S THE THING: Moms need to take time for themselves; self-care is really important. Becoming a mom is exciting, but for most of us, the first few weeks and months of motherhood are challenging. There's lots to learn about our little ones—navigating our way through feeding schedules, sleep routines and trying to balance everything on our plates. Until we find our groove, it can also be isolating and we tend to put ourselves last.

To be at our best, moms need to be able to recharge their batteries. Self-care can be as simple as taking time for a manicure or spending an hour at the gym. But with a tot under 12 months in tow, it can be hard to get that break.

Enter *Movies for Mommies* (MFM), which was created for just this reason—to provide new parents with the opportunity for some much-deserved “me time.” MFM allows Mom to take her baby with her to the movies, and enjoy a grown-up outing. The good news? You and your babe can catch all the big releases this spring and summer, including *Ocean's 8*, *Jurassic World 2* and *Mama Mia 2*.

Canada's original parent-and-baby film event launched 18 years ago in Toronto and now runs in cities across the country, with thousands of parents enjoying Hollywood's latest and greatest adult flicks at their local theatres, in a baby-friendly environment.

How does a “baby-friendly” movie experience work? MFM screenings are weekly or bi-weekly matinées that run with reduced sound levels to protect sensitive ears. Lights are left dim to make nursing and feeding easy, and all screenings have change tables with wipes and hand sanitizer in the theatre so you don't have to duck out and miss your show.

It's not just a movie—it's an event! Over the years, MFM has evolved into the quintessential mommy meet-up. When Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day and Mother's Day roll around, MFM has local professional photographers on-site doing complimentary photo sessions for Mom and her babe. *Movies for Mommies'* monthly pre-show events include guest speakers, “mocktail” parties, live demos and weekly door prizes. It's really a great way to meet other new moms.

FIRST TIME EXPERIENCING MOVIES FOR MOMMIES?

Here's what you need to know:

These are grown-up movies, not animated kids' movies. Given the adult content of the films, the suggested age of babies is newborn to a year old. If the little one is older than 12 months, parents should use their discretion as to whether or not to attend.

The younger the baby is, the more likely they are to sleep through the flicks. Second- and third-time parents have learned this—they start coming to movies when their wee ones are two or three weeks old.

Crying is permitted because, well, babies cry! Most settle down and sleep in the semi-dark theatre, but if your baby cries, that's OK, you're always amongst friends.

You will be able to hear the movie. Even with a few babies fussing, it won't affect your experience. If there is one unsettled little film critic, the normal etiquette is for Mom to step out briefly to soothe them.

Bring the appropriate gear. The movie is best enjoyed by having your baby in a car seat, which rests safely on the seat beside you, or by wearing a baby wrap.

Make it a date! Dads and partners are always welcome at our screenings. If they're on paternity leave or taking a day off, MFM is the perfect outing for a date afternoon, and you don't have to worry about finding a babysitter.

Arrive early. All first-time visitors receive a MFM welcome package which includes amazing samples and offers, as well as a membership card, so allow enough time to stop at our welcome table.

Be in the know! Register online at moviesformommies.com to receive MFM's weekly e-blast, and be the first to know about pre-show events, what's playing, special offers and more!



Movies for Mommies

The Original Parent & Baby Film Event

Movies for Mommies runs in select theatres in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Movie locations, screenings and show times can be found at moviesformommies.com.

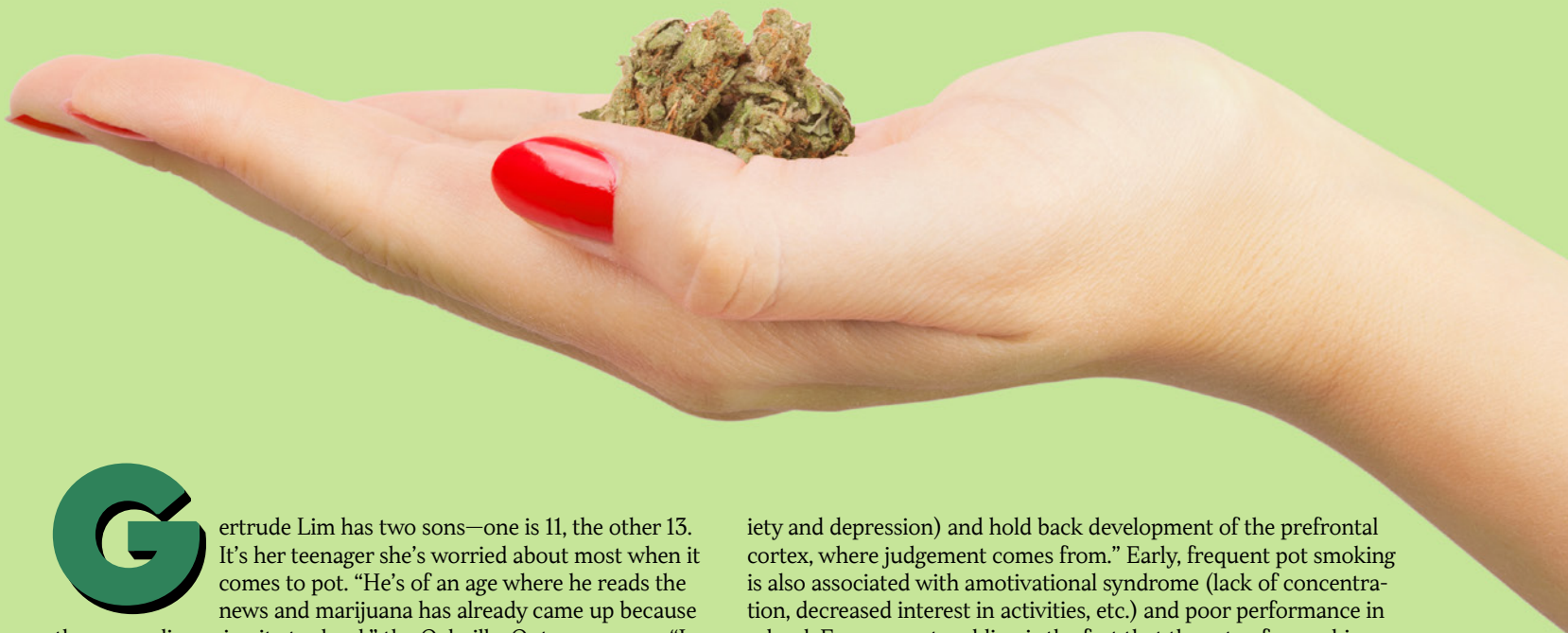
No advance registration is required to attend the show and there is no charge for babies. Dads, partners, grandparents, friends and caregivers are always welcome.

Not at a theatre near you? If MFM isn't in your neighbourhood, maybe it should be! Movies for Mommies offers licensing opportunities. If you're outgoing, organized, socially connected, creative and love movies, you can run your own business. Work flexible hours from home and have fun. For more information email: info@moviesformommies.com.

It's time to talk

WEED

Since buying marijuana will soon be legal, your kids will likely have a few questions about pot. Writer **SYDNEY LONEY** went to the experts for help with the answers.



Gertrude Lim has two sons—one is 11, the other 13. It's her teenager she's worried about most when it comes to pot. "He's of an age where he reads the news and marijuana has already come up because they were discussing it at school," the Oakville, Ont., mom says. "I worry that legalization will encourage kids, who otherwise might not have done it when it was illegal, to try it."

It's a common concern among parents these days, says Marc Paris, the executive director of Drug Free Kids Canada. And we're not the only ones who are confused about cannabis legalization. "Kids' perceptions of the drug are all over the place, from 'it can cause cancer' to 'it's just a plant, so what's the big deal?'"

The problem, Paris says, is that it's a big deal. "Early and frequent consumption of high tetrahydrocannabinol content can aggravate predispositions to certain mental disorders (such as psychosis, anx-

iety and depression) and hold back development of the prefrontal cortex, where judgement comes from." Early, frequent pot smoking is also associated with amotivational syndrome (lack of concentration, decreased interest in activities, etc.) and poor performance in school. Even more troubling is the fact that the rate of cannabis use is two times higher for Canadian youth (ages 15 to 24) as it is for adults; one in five teens ages 15 and 19 didn't wait for it to be legal to puff away. "We need to re-educate our kids," says Paris.

What should be of some comfort to parents, he adds, is that kids really do pay attention to us, and care what we think. "Parents assume their kids don't listen, but research shows that in households where there's an ongoing conversation about drugs, kids are less likely to try them," he says. "In fact, parents are the first line of defense in any drug prevention strategy." Here's how to get the conversation started—and how to address the questions they're sure to ask.

“WHAT’S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT MARIJUANA?”

Parents often feel ill-equipped and think their kids know more about pot than they do. Paris recommends doing some research ahead of time, then start the conversation casually. “Have the facts straight, then say, ‘Here’s what they’re saying about this, let’s talk about it.’”

Dr. Victoria Creighton is the clinical director of the Pine River Institute, a residential treatment centre for youth who struggle with addiction, addictive behaviours and mental health issues near Shelburne, Ont. She agrees with Paris and adds parents should aim for the talk to be “part of an ongoing, regular, informal conversation where you’re offering thoughts and ideas,” she says. “Trust in the relationship you have with your kids, and make sure the conversation isn’t a fear-driven lecture using scare tactics or threats.”

When Elena Welch, a mom who lives near Calgary, first talked to her twins (now in their teens) about smoking pot, she kept it casual. “We have very honest discussions about a range of topics, so this particular one was no different,” she says. They talked about the effects (physical, psychological and social) of smoking dope and presented all sides of the argument with her brood. “The new reality is that legalization is happening in our country and our children will be exposed to marijuana in a different way than before—and that’s what needs to be discussed.”

“WEED’S LEGAL—DOESN’T THAT MEAN IT’S OK?”

This was the first question Welch’s kids asked her. “We told them that it’s similar to alcohol, and once upon a time there was prohibition because alcohol was deemed unsafe,” she says. “And just as with any ‘adult’ substance, maturity and common sense are key, which is why you must be the age of majority (18 or 19, depending on your province) to make the choice to partake.”

Remind them that alcohol is legal, but can damage the liver, and cigarettes are legal, but cause cancer—and like both alcohol and cigarettes, cannabis is addictive. “They need to know that marijuana isn’t benign, it’s not something you can play with,” Dr. Creighton says. “Explain that their brain is still developing and it’s fragile. If they expose it to a substance that affects it, there can be lasting damage.”

“MY FRIENDS DID IT AND SAID IT WAS NO BIG DEAL. WHY DOES IT MATTER IF I TRY IT?”

Drugs are everywhere, Paris says, and parents often don’t realize how much peer pressure comes with them. “At some point, your kids will be faced with the critical decision to take a joint that’s offered to them, or to get in a car with someone who’s high. If you’ve had the conversation, when your child is having second thoughts your voice will be like that little angel sitting on his shoulder saying, ‘remember what we talked about?’”

He suggests role playing to give them strategies they can use. Ask them, “What could you do if you’re at a party and someone offers you a joint?” Getting their input makes kids more open to sharing what they’re facing, Paris adds. “Explain the consequences of consuming and ask them, ‘Why do you think that would be something of interest to you?’”

Dr. Creighton says encouraging children to develop an identity outside of drugs also helps them cope with peer pressure. “Their best defense is a strong sense of self and their own values, so they won’t be like leaves in the wind,” she says. “Help them build a sense of identity: ‘I’m a dancer or a soccer player—I don’t do drugs. I have something to be proud of and I don’t want to mess that up.’”


“HEY, PARENTAL UNIT! HAVE YOU EVER SMOKED WEED?”

Hmm. This one’s a toughie, but yes—the experts say you should be honest. “Talking about marijuana is a two-way conversation,” Welch says. “My kids are aware that I’ve tried it, I know that they haven’t tried it and they know kids at school who have done it.” Dr. Creighton says a concern is that kids will use their parents’ past to justify doing it themselves. You can explain that, as with cigarettes, people didn’t have the same facts about the consequences even a decade ago and now we know just how destructive these substances can be.

“IF PEOPLE USE IT AS MEDICINE, HOW CAN IT BE HARMFUL?”

Find the answers together, Dr. Creighton says. “You could say, ‘I’m in the process of trying to figure this out, let’s take a look at the research.’” Discovering that there are different strains and not all cannabis is created equal also demonstrates just how complex the issue is. Plus, not all medications are good for us—many cause side effects, for instance. The same is true for Mary Jane.

Lim opted to go the science route when she spoke to her son. “We talked about how it affects short-term memory and how, though it will be legal, it has a detrimental effect on the brain.” Her kids are already anti-smoking (they have a grandparent who smokes), which helps. “For kids his age, smoking is seen really negatively and he mentioned that aspect of it,” she says. “He also asked us what we thought—he’s one of those kids who will take the information away, absorb it and ask more questions.” So far, he hasn’t tried pot and neither have his friends. But Lim knows it’s a conversation that the family will continue to have—and that’s a good thing. ■

A photograph of a man and a woman lying in bed, facing each other and smiling. The woman is on the left, with blonde hair, and the man is on the right, with a beard. They are both wearing blue shirts. The bed has a blue blanket and a blue pillow. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window. The entire image is framed by a red border with a white floral pattern.

A 2016 study in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* found that couples were happier and felt more fulfilled when they spent more time together.

THE CASE FOR PUTTING YOUR MARRIAGE *BEFORE* YOUR KIDS

Parents often feel pressure to put their kids first in all areas of life, but writer **STACY LEE KONG** learns why prioritizing your relationship with your partner is good for the whole family.

For Kate Lamonica and her husband, David, the decision to put marriage before kids was made before they became parents. “Before we got married, we went to ‘marriage class’ at our church and one of the things they really stressed was this idea of being on the same page as parents and as people, and the importance of finding the time and energy to prioritize your relationship above all else,” the mom of two says. “For some reason, it really hit a nerve—it was one of those things that we had never really discussed, but we immediately realized it was exactly what we wanted to model in our relationship and as parents.”

For some couples, this is a strange notion—the idea of putting each other “above” their children feels uncomfortable, something Nicole McCance, a registered psychologist and relationship expert in Toronto, says is normal but unnecessary. “If, say, Mom and Dad are solid and respect each other, the whole family unit flows more smoothly.” In fact, putting your marriage before your kids just means, “making your partner feel like a priority and showing that you are committed to the partnership—and know that the strength of this bond will overflow onto the kids.” Read on to find out how making your partner your number one benefits not just your marriage but your brood.

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR KIDS

Seems obvious, right? A strong bond absolutely has a positive impact on children. When the parental unit doesn't function, well, like a unit, it puts stress on the whole family—including the wee ones. McCance sees it in her own practice, particularly when it comes to moms. “With my clients, the wives will often put the kids first. Then their partners often say that they feel like they're on the bottom of her list... even after the dog! Eventually, they start to feel alone and as a result, they retreat. This causes tension in the relationship, which children almost always pick up on.”

That's something Lamonica and her husband have largely avoided. "I think we model a well-balanced relationship," she says. "We fight and we make up—completely transparently to our kids—but in the end, we're always modelling a healthy and committed relationship." And, she says, as her kids grow up (they're now teens) they're learning about what they should look for in partners of their own. "It's my hope that they can learn from us what a real relationship looks like so that they too look forward to finding the significant other that they'll head on this crazy journey called life with."

Yashy Murphy agrees. A mom who runs a social media marketing company and blogs with her husband, Chris, about maintaining their pre-baby lives, she says prioritizing her marriage lays a great foundation for her kids' relationships. "They have grown up to see us dedicate time and energy into our marriage, and they've seen the joy we have when we're together."

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR HAPPINESS

Here's something you might not have considered—there's actually plenty of research that suggests parenthood can have a negative impact on happiness and marital satisfaction. A 2015 headline in the *Washington Post* blared, "It turns out parenthood is worse than divorce, unemployment—even the death of a partner." (There were lots of similar headlines that summer; the source was a study in the journal *Demography*.) And last year, the *Telegraph* reported: "Parenthood leaves half of mothers and fathers feeling lonely."

Much of that unhappiness can be explained by the new dynamic kids bring to a relationship. "The arrival of children changes how couples interact," Matthew Johnson, a professor of psychology and the director of the Marriage and Family Studies Laboratory at the State University of New York, explains in a 2016 editorial for *Fortune*. "Parents often become more distant and businesslike with each other as they attend to the details of parenting... These changes can be profound. Fundamental identities may shift—from wife to mother, or, at a more intimate level, from lovers to parents. Even in same-sex couples, the arrival of children predicts less relationship satisfaction and sex."



It's my hope that our kids can learn from us what a real relationship looks like so that they can one day find the significant other they'll spend their life with.

HOW TO DO IT

You're in luck, says McCance—there's lots of little things you can do to strengthen your relationship. "Try to reconnect with your partner. Try date nights on a weekly basis—it's amazing how connected you can feel with alone time. Commit to hugging your partner every morning and as soon as you get home from work. Physical touch releases the hormone oxytocin, which is the attachment hormone." And, adds McCance, if you need some extra help and feel like you've lost that lovin' feeling, it's worth trying couples' counselling.

For Lamonica and her husband, the little things are enough to keep their marriage strong. "We're really crappy at making the big gestures, but we make tiny choices in our everyday that bring us together and give us the opportunity to get closer, to talk more, to unite more," she says. For example, they're a one-car family, which they use as an opportunity to spend time

with one another. "We do a lot of things together—working out, groceries, errands—and that means we have lots of time to talk about the weather, our kids, politics and about our relationship."

Parents of younger kids, take heart—Lamonica is quick to acknowledge that having older kids makes following this advice a bit easier. "I have the benefit of a perspective that so many young couples just don't have yet. My kids are teenagers and they're so much more self-sufficient than they were when they were younger. While our priorities never changed, those early years were hard."

Murphy, whose kids are still young, says it isn't easy—but it's worth it. "My husband and I are in this parenting game together and I honestly could not do everything I do without his support," she says. Focusing on our marriage is focusing on our family. It's important for me that we support each other. It's the reason we got together in the first place." ■



How to be a (VERY SUCCESSFUL) **MOM BLOGGER**

Every year, smart, creative women take to the internet to try their hand at becoming parenting influencers, with visions of work-life balance dancing through their heads. But the reality is, building a personal brand is not for the faint of heart. It takes time and energy to make it on the influencer circuit. Writer **ROSEMARY COUNTER** investigates just how much.



hadn't even given birth yet before people started asking the questions: Would I start a mommy blog? When would I start said mommy blog? When would I stop fighting the inevitable and just start a mommy blog? As a magazine writer (read: snooty), I was mildly offended, but as an always-enterprising mom-to-be, I was also intrigued.

Who are the more than four million so-called “mompreneurs” turning mundane daily details of life with kids into cold, hard cash? How can a new mom like me go from the former to the latter? And once you get there, is mommy blogging really the at-home, swag-filled, no-research-required dream gig people think it is?

I doubted it. But to learn more, I reached out to three women making it big in the world of mommy blogging to ask.

Already, I was way off. “Mommy blogging, mompreneurs, mommy anything can be offensive,” warns Vanessa Rempel, one half of Vanessa + Melissa, a four-year-old TV show turned blog turned vlog. None of the bloggers in this piece is particularly offended by the term, which is why I’m still using it, but slapping a reductive label on the wide range of work from writers, photographers, influencers and content producers in this space inherently contradicts the whole point of mommy blogging: finding your unique voice so that readers can find you.

Six years ago, Maya Fitzpatrick of Mayahood Blog added a year to her first maternity leave during which she got pregnant again, so she, with her husband’s support, decided to stay home indefinitely. Fighting the baby blues, she began to blog. “I didn’t think anyone would actually read it, so I didn’t really think of it as a business,” says the Toronto mom of three boys.

A passion project turned profitable is a dream come true for most bloggers, and a not uncommon origin story. Marielle Altenor, the brains behind the Lady Marielle blog, began in much the same way. “I used to post my recipes to Facebook, but when people started to seem tired of it, I started a blog instead,” says the mom of two from the Montreal area. Lady Marielle is part food and part parenting, depending on how real life is unfolding, and as Altenor’s readership climbed higher and higher, blogging suddenly became a viable career option in late 2016. Brands reached out to her for partnerships—which are a big part of many influencer business models—at around 5,000 followers but Altenor says there’s no official magic number to hit before payday (unofficially, 10,000 followers is what many would-be influencers shoot for). “It’s not all

about the numbers, it’s about engagement,” says Altenor.

“Five years ago, there was a big shift in the online world toward connection,” says Melissa Melnychuk, Vanessa’s other half. Gone are the fly-on-the-wall days of reading blogs from a strictly voyeuristic standpoint. “Now we’re creating online content that feels like you’re right there with us, so everything we can do live, we do.” The majority of Vanessa + Melissa content is now video, largely on Facebook and Instagram Live (traditional blogging fills just 30 percent of their feed) and they strive to connect with followers and readers. In this world, comments are everything.

Like most lifestyle blogs, all three of these influencers monetize their content and engagement via sponsorships; Huggies, Playtex and Disney have all recently popped up on the sites. Each spot is negotiated separately, with bloggers banking variable, tailored rates per package. But too many ads—all marked #ad, as per the law, lest you face the Federal Trade Commission—can bother and discourage readers. “I see bloggers write about diapers when their kids aren’t in diapers, and everyone knows that because they read the blog, so it comes off as weird and fake.” A few years ago, this happened a bit last year on Mayahood Blog, when sponsorships took up so much time she didn’t do any personal writing. “I didn’t write anything personal for about a month and it really put me in a funk,” says Fitzpatrick. “I felt like I was selling out my readers and it didn’t feel right.” When your whole business rides on authenticity and connection, this is a sin that’s taken seriously.

Which of course brings up another question: How much personal info is too much to upload online? For me, here’s where I get nervous: While I’m mostly comfortable dumping my own stories into cyberspace, I’m not quite sure I’m comfortable putting my daughter’s stories out there. It’s a common concern for mommy bloggers. Fitzpatrick runs her usual open-book posts by her slightly more closed-off husband for “changes I might consider” (though they don’t always agree). “I have a deal with my older kids that they have to give permission for anything I share

about them,” explains Rempel. Altenor’s 10-year-old son, meanwhile, has decided he’s deserving of a cut. “I actually hired him last year to work on the blog with me,” says Altenor. “He earned enough money to buy all his own Christmas gifts.”

Happy family memories as such are very sharable, but despite the picture-perfect world of Instagram, not-so-uplifting truths exist for mommy bloggers just the same. When and if to share these stories as well is a line always up for consideration, as is whether or not bloggers “owe” gritty details to their followers. “I’m going through a separation right now, and I shared it even though I’m scared it will affect the blog or change what people think about me,” says Melnychuk. As frightening as it is to disclose, lying (even by omission) can be a worse fate.

So Vanessa + Melissa will have to evolve ever so slightly, as will all blogs to exist alongside the ever-changing lives of their creators. Each has a limited shelf life and no blogger knows how long that might be. “I hope this can go on for a while, because I feel like I’m only getting started,” says Altenor. “I think a lot about how long I can write the blog,” says Fitzpatrick. “Will it have to end? Will it evolve into something else?”

Nobody knows where the blogging world might go next, or what the net in general might look like in a few more years, so everyone’s plan in the meantime is to keep posting. But for anyone imaging a relaxing, part-time pastime while the baby sleeps, be warned: “We started this to be more available to our kids, but to actually make a living is a ton of work,” says Rempel. “You’ll be far busier than any 9-to-5 job.” That said, adds Melnychuk, mommy blogging can be far more rewarding than trekking yourself to the office. “If there’s passion behind it, it won’t feel like a job at all.”

It sounds dreamy in theory, I’ll admit, but my passion at the moment isn’t blogging about the baby experience—it’s living the baby experience. I admire the savvy businesswomen doing both, and perhaps by this time next year I’ll have the energy and gusto to be one of them, but for now I’ll enjoy mommy blogs from the sidelines. With coffee, please. ■

Happy family memories are very sharable, but despite the picture-perfect world of Instagram, not-so-uplifting truths exist for mommy bloggers just the same. When and if to share is always up for consideration.



MARIELLE ALTENOR OF
LADY MARIELLE



VANESSA REMPEL AND
MELISSA MELNYCHUK OF
VANESSA + MELISSA



MAYA FITZPATRICK OF
MAYAHOOD BLOG



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KITCHEN TABLE



#YUCKTOYUM

You know there are ingredients that, by their very nature, are more likely to get a “yuck!” We’re aiming to change that. Take broccoli: There’s no way your kiddos can turn up their noses at these crispy, cheesy nibbles. Plate with a little ketchup for dipping and your brood will never realize (or they won’t care!) that you served them two heads of broccoli as a snack.

Cheesy Baked Broccoli Bites

HANDS-ON TIME 25 MINS TOTAL TIME 40 MINS YIELD 18 TO 20 BROCCOLI BITES

- 2 large crowns of broccoli, cut into florets
- 1 large clove garlic
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shredded aged cheddar cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup panko breadcrumbs
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp each salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Ketchup for serving

1. Preheat oven to 400F. Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to boil. Fill large bowl with ice water. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. Cook broccoli in boiling water until bright green and tender-crisp, about 4-5 min. Drain in colander and transfer immediately to ice water to cool. Drain again, and gently pat dry with clean dish towel. Dry off ice water bowl.

3. In food processor, pulse garlic until finely chopped. Working in batches, add broccoli and pulse until it's in very small, rice-like pieces (but not puréed); transfer to large bowl you were using earlier. Use hands to stir in cheddar, Parmesan, eggs, panko, salt and pepper.

4. Firmly roll broccoli mixture into golf-ball-sized balls, and transfer to prepared baking sheet. Drizzle olive oil over top and use fingers to gently roll balls in oil, until coated.

5. Bake for 15-18 min, until firm and just beginning to turn golden-brown. Serve immediately, with ketchup if desired. Leftovers will keep, refrigerated in a single layer in a resealable container, for up to 3 days.

TIME-SAVING TIP You can use frozen broccoli florets instead of fresh ones. Cook the broccoli as directed—take out when the florets are bright green and easily pierced with a knife, and then continue with the recipe. Just note that you may need to adjust the cooking time.





SNEAKY & SWEET

Just because a label doesn't broadcast sugar by its common name doesn't mean it isn't there. In fact, there are upwards of 50 different names for added sugar (!), and some of them could trick even the smartest shopper. Here are a few to look out for:

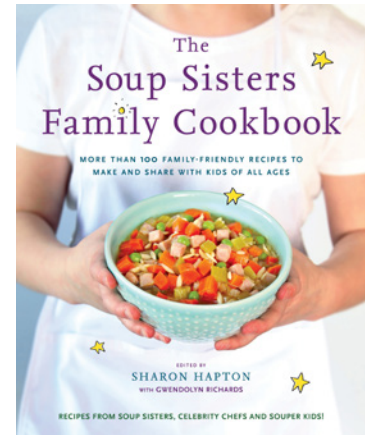
- 1** Glucose. This one is pretty well-known, but we figured a reminder couldn't hurt.
- 2** Fructose or HFCS. Don't be fooled, this is high-fructose corn syrup—and they thought they could sneak the acronym by you!
- 3** Agave nectar. Many of us think this natural sweetener is a better

choice, but it's actually high in both glucose and fructose.

- 4** Anything with sugar in the name. It's still the same stuff, despite the ingredient list calling for the likes of the date, cane, demerara or golden varieties.
- 5** Barley malt, maltodextrin, maltose and ethyl maltol.
- 6** Molasses.

Aside from learning the less common names, also pay attention to the order of ingredients. If one of these sweet synonyms is the first or second ingredient, consider looking for a less sugary option.

OFF THE SHELF



Since 2009 when Sharon Hampton started Soup Sisters—a non-profit dedicated to providing comfort to women, children and youth—volunteers have been cooking up delicious, soul-soothing soups for those in need. This cookbook is the third instalment of the Soup Sisters series and is a compilation of recipes from both celebrity chefs and regular home cooks of every age. I tested a number of recipes, including the Yummy Broccoli and Cashew soup and the Spicy Sweet Potato and Kale soup. The addition of cashew cream and nutritional yeast in the broccoli soup recipe makes you forget completely that this is a vegan recipe—trust me, you will not miss the dairy. But by far, my family's favourite soup from this book is the Spaghetti and Mini Meatball Soup. Not only did my family love it, but my neighbour who has three kids younger than 10 has made it twice since she originally tasted it at my house. I say the *Soup Sisters Family Cookbook* should live not on your bookshelf, but on your kitchen counter.

—BONNIE YOUNG



SEVENTH GENERATION DISINFECTING WIPES

You know the grubby hands of your kids get even grubbier when the weather turns warmer. They happily drag hide-and-seek and Capture the Flag dirt through the house, leaving handprints everywhere, including your kitchen counters, the fridge door, cupboard handles...you name it, they're gonna touch it. Enter Seventh Generation: Their disinfecting wipes (from \$4) will be your summertime superheroes, killing 99.9% of household germs, with no rinsing required. You can even cook on most surfaces you've wiped down with these babies, because the active ingredient is thymol—it's a component of thyme oil and safe for widespread use.

KIDS IN THE KITCHEN



It might make you cringe to think of the mess, but teaching your kids to cook early, and giving them the opportunity to practise often, equips them for a long, delicious life of taking care of themselves. But this doesn't mean you have to go out and buy them chef's whites right away. Let them try something simple to start, like these yogurt parfait pops. Supervise as kiddos whirl together plain yogurt and fresh, ripe fruit (we like strawberries) in a food processor. Then, in small paper cups, have them place layers of yogurt, fruit and granola, starting and ending with yogurt. Your mini-chef can insert a wooden skewer or craft stick in each Popsicle and place the batch in the freezer to set, at least four hours. When frozen, kids can peel off the paper cups and enjoy!



TRY THIS

LEFTOVERS FOR BREAKFAST

For those of you with breakfast-averse family members (hey, it happens!), try giving leftovers from dinner a new life in the morning with one of these ideas:

| LEFTOVER PASTA | MEATBALLS | PIZZA |
|--|--|---|
| Try adding 1-2 cups of cooked spaghetti (or other pasta, with or without sauce) to your favourite omelette or frittata recipe. Serve with extra sauce for dipping. | These aren't just for lunchtime hoagies. Slice leftover meatballs in half and serve warmed on toast, with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese. | Maybe this one is a no-brainer, but we consider pizza for breakfast one of the great joys in life. Serve a slice cold and cut into soldiers, with a side of fruit or veggies. |



ROLL WITH IT

IN THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER, the last thing you want to do is turn on the oven to make dinner. We've got your back. Here's a delish, no-cook solution bursting with fresh veggies and pre-roasted chicken, with a sweet and savoury dipping sauce on the side. Feel free to mix and match fillings to your family's preferences—you pretty much can't go wrong with any vegetable and protein combo.

Rainbow Fresh Rolls with Peanut Dipping Sauce

HANDS-ON TIME 40 MINS **TOTAL TIME** 40 MINS
YIELD 10 ROLLS; ¾ CUP SAUCE

PEANUT SAUCE

- ½ cup smooth, natural peanut butter
- 4 tsp unseasoned rice vinegar (or apple cider vinegar)
- 1 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1 tbsp reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2-3 tbsp warm water, as needed

ROLLS

- 1 small deli rotisserie chicken
- 10 rice paper wrappers for fresh rolls
- 1 small yellow pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 large carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 1 cup shredded purple cabbage
- 2 cups packed baby spinach
- ½ cup loosely packed chopped mint or cilantro (optional)

1. In medium bowl, whisk together peanut butter, vinegar, maple syrup and soy. Whisk in 2-3 tbsp water until desired consistency.

2. Remove and discard skin from chicken. Remove meat from bones and shred enough to yield 2½ cups.

3. Fill 9-in. pie plate or shallow bowl with hot tap water. Soak one rice paper wrapper in water until soft, 5 to 10 sec. Set wrapper on clean cutting board. Along bottom third of wrapper, place roughly one tenth of each of the chicken, pepper, carrot, cabbage, spinach and mint, if using. Starting where the filling is, roll wrapper tightly over filling; fold sides over and roll up. Place, seam-side down, on serving dish. Repeat with remaining rolls and ingredients. Slice each roll in half and serve with dipping sauce.

TIME-SAVING TIP All of your ingredients (except the mint) can be cut the day before and kept, covered with a damp paper towel, in a resealable container in the fridge.

KITCHEN TIP Any excess chicken can be made into chicken salad for lunch the next day, and the bones are terrific for making stock (you can even freeze the carcass to use at a later date, when it's not so hot outside!).



YOU ASKED US...

You posed your pressing kitchen questions and we found the expert to answer. Read on for foodie wisdom from **SHAI MANDEL**, owner of Toronto children's cooking school Rooks to Cooks.

Q Are non-stick pots and pans harmful to use when scratched? Does a scratched product release harmful chemicals in our food?

A Non-stick material (commonly a synthetic resin referred to as Teflon) is not necessarily harmful when scratched, but it does have the potential flake off and be ingested. It's not going to make you instantly sick, but it's definitely something you to watch out for.

The biggest way to avoid scratches in your Teflon kitchenware is to use plastic or rubber utensils (instead of metal); getting into this habit should stop any scratching from occurring in the first place. You should also be wary of burning Teflon cookware. If you burn your pan, the coating will flake off or crack a lot more easily.

Q If I want to invest in one good kitchen knife, what should I consider?

A My suggestion is always a good quality Japanese steel knife with a Japanese handle—I personally love santuko knives. We use santuko-style knives with all of our students. Japanese steel stays sharp for longer, which is what you should look for when purchasing a knife. I would recommend everyone have one chef knife between eight and 10 inches in diameter, and one utility knife around four to five inches in diameter on hand at all times. Buying a knife is like finding a wand in Harry Potter: The knife picks you, you don't pick the knife. Know what you need the knife for, and then go into a high-end knife store to get a feel for each option. Whatever feels best is the choice for you.

Q What is the difference between a broth and bouillon? How do you use each one?

A Broth is flavoured, seasoned liquid traditionally made by slow-simmering bones and meat. Stock, while also made with bones and meat, is left unseasoned. Bouillon is dehydrated broth. (You have to be careful when purchasing bouillon because they're often packed with salt and preservatives since it's a dried product with a very long shelf life.) I always recommend making your own stocks instead (it's so easy!) and leaving the seasoning to the very end of the product. This means you'll season your sauce or soup once you've simmered long enough to develop the desired flavour.

Q Why should I use a potato ricer for mashed potatoes, instead of just a plain old masher?

A Ricers do a great job of milling potatoes to a small, consistent size without over-mixing them. When you over-mix potatoes, they get gummy, sticky and glossy. You want your potatoes to be fluffy and matte. Traditional mashers are very ineffective when actually breaking down the potatoes. It takes forever, and the potatoes are never uniform in size.

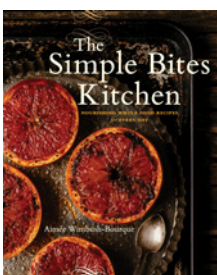
ABOUT THE CHEF

Chef Shai Mandel has 8-plus years of culinary experience under her apron. She's also a trained teacher, and combines her passion for teaching with her love of food at her child- and youth-centred cooking school Rooks to Cooks, opened in 2016.

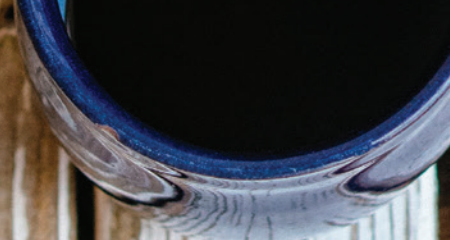
SIMPLE BITES FOR SUMMER

From a new take on porridge to the best chicken fingers ever, read on for a day's worth of recipes from *The Simple Bites Kitchen*, blogger **AIMÉE WIMBUSH-BORQUE'S** second cookbook.

OUR PICK



PENGUIN RANDOM
HOUSE CANADA, \$32



MAPLE MILLET
POLENTA PORRIDGE
P.58
▼





ONE-POT SHRIMP
AND PEA ORZO





**AIMÉE WIMBUSH-BORQUE
IS THE DEFINITION OF AN
URBAN HOMESTEADER.**

She lives on a third-of-an-acre of land on the edge of a maple forest in Quebec, with her high school sweetheart, Danny, her three children, Noah, Mateo and Clara, and a handful of chickens. The former chef is the creator of *Simple Bites*, an award-winning blog devoted to healthy, family-friendly food made with humble ingredients. It's a passion she comes by honestly—her parents raised much of their family's food themselves, and Aimée was no stranger to milking goats and collecting eggs as a child. She calls these her *Little House on the Prairie* moments, and we love that she used these memories as the springboard for a successful writing and cooking career.



Maple Millet Polenta Porridge

YIELD 4 TO 6 SERVINGS

- 1 cup millet
- 1 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2½ cups water
- 2 cups 2% milk
- ½ tsp sea salt
- 2 tbsp pure maple syrup, or to taste
- Table (18%) cream, to taste
- Fresh fruit such as stone fruit, berries or banana, for garnish

- 1.** Grind millet until it is the texture of coarse cornmeal. I use a blade-type coffee grinder, but a food processor would work.
- 2.** Melt the Golden Ghee in a large, heavy pot over medium-high heat. When it is bubbling, tip in the millet and stir to toast it slightly. Add the water and milk, whisking to eliminate lumps. Bring to a simmer, whisking occasionally, about 5 minutes. The porridge will thicken.
- 3.** Reduce heat to low, cover porridge and cook for 8 minutes without stirring. Stir in the salt and cook, uncovered, for another 5 to 8 minutes, until the porridge is thick and creamy, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin from forming on the top.
- 4.** Turn off heat and cool for a minute. Ladle into bowls and pour over maple syrup. Add a splash of cream, if desired. Top with fresh fruit and serve.



One-Pot Shrimp and Pea Orzo

YIELD 4 SERVINGS

- 2 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- ½ tsp dried thyme
- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- dash cayenne pepper
- 2 cups orzo
- 1¼ cups vegetable stock
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 5 green onions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 3 tbsp salted butter, cubed
- 12 oz. cold-water shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 lemon, zest and juice

- 1.** In a small bowl, stir together paprika, oregano, thyme, salt, black pepper and cayenne.
- 2.** Bring a large pot of water to a boil and salt it generously. Cook orzo according to package directions, draining it when it is still a little al dente. Set aside.
- 3.** Combine the vegetable stock and white wine in the same pot. Add the spice mix and bring to a boil. Add the green onions, garlic and peas. Return to a rapid boil. Drop in the butter cubes and stir until the butter is melted.
- 4.** Carefully add the shrimp and cook for 2 minutes, or until shrimp turn pink. Add the cooked orzo and the lemon zest and juice. Stir for a minute or two until the pasta absorbs all the flavourful liquid. Serve immediately.

Baked Buttermilk Chicken Strips

YIELD 2 TO 4 SERVINGS

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup Buttermilk
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ tsp Worcestershire sauce, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp sea salt, divided
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp freshly ground black pepper, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sweet smoked paprika
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 cup panko crumbs
- 2 large eggs
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup all-purpose flour
- Mustard or liquid honey, for dipping

1. Using a chef's knife, cut the chicken breasts into "fingers," about 5 per breast. Tap the thicker parts with the side of the knife to even out the thickness. They should be about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick at most.

2. In a medium-size container with a lid, combine buttermilk, 1 teaspoon of the Worcestershire sauce, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of the pepper and the paprika; stir well. Add the chicken strips and turn to coat. Cover the container tightly and refrigerate the chicken for at least 6 hours or overnight.

3. Position an oven rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly brush a wire rack with oil and place it on a rimmed baking sheet.

4. In a small saucepan, melt butter gently over medium heat. Keep a close eye on it as it foams and changes to a light golden colour. It will smell slightly nutty. Be careful not to let it burn. Remove the browned butter from heat.

5. Combine panko and browned butter in a small bowl and stir well to coat the crumbs. Transfer to a pie plate or shallow bowl. In another bowl, beat the eggs with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce. In a third bowl, combine the flour with the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt and remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper.

6. Drain the chicken, discarding the buttermilk. Using tongs and working with one strip of chicken at a time, dredge chicken through the flour to coat, then the egg, and lastly the buttery panko. Place the crumb-coated chicken on the prepared rack. Repeat with the remaining chicken, allowing at least 1 inch of space around each chicken strip.

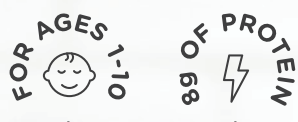
7. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until the panko is pale golden and the chicken is cooked through. Finish under the broiler for an extra-crispy, dark brown coating. Serve hot with a dollop of mustard or a drizzle of honey.



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PLAIN YOGURT

THE ARRAY OF OPTIONS IN THE YOGURT AISLE IS OVERWHELMING.

It's a minefield of choices from zero-fat, probiotic health food to caramel or chocolate dessert pots. Yogurt is a delicious snack or even a part of a meal, but it has also become the poster child for nutritious foods. We know we should probably eat it—and feed it to our kids—but in the of options, is there an easy, uncomplicated choice? There sure is: Always choose plain yogurt. And if you think it's too boring to be enjoyable, read on for five tips that'll change your mind.

—CLAIRE TANSEY

1

CHOOSE A HIGHER-FAT YOGURT.

This is the key to falling in love with plain yogurt. Low-fat yogurt is pasty in texture and almost flavourless (unless its packed with excessive amounts of sweetened fruit or other sugars). Full-fat yogurt has a luxurious quality and even better flavour, since fat molecules help to transmit taste to our palates. Also, fat isn't the enemy we once thought, as registered dietitian Dara Gurau explains: "Science has now proven that higher-fat dairy

is better for blood sugar control and heart health. Kids in particular need higher-fat dairy for brain development, and in order to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins in everyday foods." It's also more satisfying and less processed. So when it comes to plain yogurt, look for at least three percent fat (but six percent or nine percent is even better) and you'll be on your way toward having a new favourite food in your household.



2

Add a drizzle of pure maple syrup or molasses.

Syrup isn't just for pancakes. Drizzle maple syrup or molasses over plain yogurt (and don't stir it in so kids can see it). Molasses is thicker, so try drawing your child's initial in the yogurt. This way you control the amount of sweet stuff getting into the yogurt (and your little one!).



3

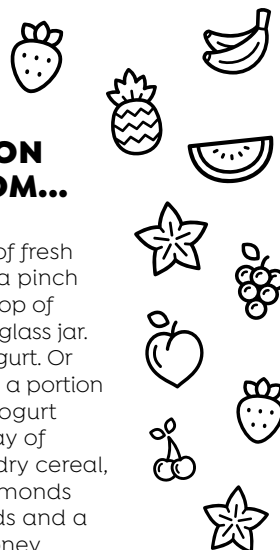
Make it spreadable.

Drain full-fat plain yogurt in a cheesecloth-lined sieve or fine-mesh colander overnight. This removes much of the water, which also increases the yogurt's protein content. Use plain or stir in a small pinch of garlic powder, chopped chives and salt. Spread on crackers or toast.

4

DIY FRUIT ON THE BOTTOM... OR TOP.

Mash a handful of fresh raspberries with a pinch of sugar and a drop of vanilla in a small glass jar. Top with plain yogurt. Or reverse it and top a portion of full-fat plain yogurt with a pretty array of sliced bananas, dry cereal, toasted sliced almonds or sunflower seeds and a little drizzle of honey.



5

GUAC IT.

Mash equal parts plain yogurt with ripe avocado. Stir in salt and a little freshly grated lime zest or juice. Serve with veggie sticks and tortilla chips.

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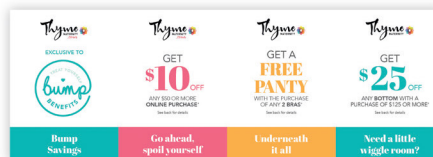
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HOW TO:

TREAT MORNING SICKNESS NATURALLY

Morning-or-all-day sickness can be daunting. We asked a naturopath for her top tips to help mamas-to-be cope. **BY KAREN ROBOCK**

IF you find yourself suddenly offended by strong smells or too often running for the loo, you're not alone. As many as three-quarters of pregnant women experience nausea and vomiting of pregnancy (NVP). And, as you may have noticed, morning sickness doesn't only strike before noon. Luckily, there are things you can do to get you through this stomach-churning time (which, by the way, usually subsides by the end of the first trimester).

Doctor-prescribed medication is one option, but a new Canadian report, led by a physician at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, indicates that Diclectin, the go-to drug for treating morning sickness, might not be as effective as once thought. So what's a nauseous mom-to-be to do? Talk to your healthcare provider about all the treatment options available to you, says Sarah White, a naturopathic doctor with Bronte Wellness Boutique in Oakville, Ont. "Severe and prolonged

vomiting has been linked to a greater risk of preterm birth and low birth weight, which is why it's important to seek medical guidance," she says. For women with mild to moderate cases of NVP, however, there are a range of drug-free options proven to ease the queasies. Here are a few of the treatments White recommends to her patients.

DRINK PEPPERMINT TEA

You may have already gone off coffee, to cut back on caffeine

and curb an iffy tummy, but if not, now's a good time to switch to peppermint tea in the mornings. "Many of my patients report less nausea and vomiting when drinking mint tea daily," White says.

EAT FREQUENT SMALL MEALS

Instead of three squares, opt for five to six mini-meals throughout the day. Focus on a combination of foods that are high in protein and complex carbohydrates. Some of White's favourite snack recommendations include hard boiled eggs, trail mix, whole grain toast with smashed avocado, and a banana with nut butter.

TRY ACUPRESSURE

See a naturopathic doctor or massage therapist who specializes in acupressure to trigger some of the spots related to nausea. "One of my favourite points for relieving nausea of pregnancy is located on the wrist and is called PC6," says White. (If you've ever been on a cruise you may have worn "sea bands"—bracelets that put pressure on the same spot to ward off motion sickness.) A massage can also help you destress, which may ease nausea, says White.

TAKE A B6 SUPPLEMENT

Research shows that upping your intake of vitamin B6 may help to relieve that queasy feeling. A dose of 25 milligrams three times a day is typically recommended, but talk to your healthcare provider before you start a supplement. In the meantime, load up on B6-rich foods like bananas, nuts and cauliflower. ■

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THE AUTHOR WITH HER
NEW SON, BORN AT
32 WEEKS AND 6 DAYS.

HOW TO:

NAVIGATE THE NICU

The neonatal intensive care unit can be a scary place. But don't worry—we talked to parents who've been there. **BY LINDA LUONG LUCK**

Born at 32 weeks and six days and weighing a tiny 3.2 pounds, my son spent the first month of his life in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). That's also where I spent long 12-hour days—watching nurses, the glow of incubators, listening to the hushed voices of other preemie parents. The experience can be a roller coaster for new moms and dads. Here's how to get through those first few days.

MAKE FRIENDS.

It may seem like an unusual place to befriend someone, but no other parent can truly understand the ups and downs of life with a preemie than a fellow NICU parent. Leanne Tully and I met while we were both at McMaster Hospital in Hamilton, Ont., where our babies were born a day apart. We ate lunch together, shared updates, discussed our postpartum woes and breastfeeding struggles. It was comforting having someone to lean on.

MEET THE MEDICAL TEAM.

Make an effort to meet the healthcare providers who make up your babe's team. And try to be available when doctors and nurses are doing rounds so you can hear the latest updates and ask questions.

BE HANDS-ON.

It can seem frightening to handle your baby with all those cords and monitors, but take on as much of his or her care as you're able (without becoming overly anxious), whether it's

**TRY
KANGAROO CARE**

WHEN BABY'S READY, SKIN-TO-SKIN TIME IS ESSENTIAL. STUDIES HAVE SHOWN IT HELPS WEE ONES LEARN TO BREATHE ON THEIR OWN, INCREASES BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND SOOTHES STRESS.

changing diapers, bathing or feeding. Last fall, BC Women's Hospital and Health Care Centre in Vancouver launched a new NICU model, in which each family has a room to themselves rather than being in a multi-patient ward. Julie de Salaberry, the director of the hospital's neonatal programs, says, "high maternal involvement can lead to greater weight gain, as well as fewer infections, less time on breathing machines, increased rates of breastfeeding at discharge and reduced length of stay."

ACCEPT HELP.

It will make friends and family feel they can take some of the load off you, giving you time and energy to focus on your babe. Our families prepared meals for us so that we wouldn't have to grocery shop or cook and my best friend bought and washed clothes for our son.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.

"I encourage parents to rest—go home, eat a healthy meal, have a shower and do whatever they need to prepare to bring their baby home," says Dr. Catherine Taylor, a paediatrician, neonatologist and service medical director of the NICU with Trillium Health Partners in Mississauga, Ont. Many hospitals also have special lounges for caregivers, including rooms where you can catch up on sleep. ■

**HOW TO:**

AVOID TANGLES AND TEARS

Keeping your toddler's locks neat and tidy can be tricky. Here's how to banish tears and keep those dreaded knots at bay. **BY KAREN ROBOCK**

Most kids don't like having their hair brushed because it hurts," says Daniela Serban, a manager at Melon-head kids' salon in Mississauga, Ont. And after rolling around in bed all night or playing all day, it's common for little ones to have tangled tresses. But, there are some things you can do to prevent knots and make brushing more fun.

USE THE RIGHT TOOLS

Before you brush, spritz a

leave-in conditioner or detangling spray through the lengths of your little one's hair. (This will also add moisture, which over time should prevent future knots, since dry, frizzy strands are more prone to tangles.) Avoid using round brushes or ones with coarse bristles, like you might use on yourself when doing a blow-out, since they can be rough on kids' scalps and make knots worse. Opt instead for a paddle brush with soft plastic bristles or a detangling brush specifically

designed for tangle-prone kids' hair (products like Knot Genie or Tangle Teezer are available in most haircare aisles and at beauty supply stores).

BRUSH THOROUGHLY AND MORE OFTEN

This may sound counter-intuitive, especially if your little one starts screaming and foot-stomping when she sees the hairbrush coming, but keeping tangle-prone strands smooth is essential for quicker and more positive experiences over time. Serban recommends

STAY ON TOP OF TRIMS

REGULAR HAIRCUTS, AT LEAST EVERY TWO TO THREE MONTHS, WILL KEEP HAIR IN GOOD CONDITION, DECREASE YOUR CHANCES OF KNOTS (SINCE SPLIT ENDS ARE MORE PRONE TO TANGLES) AND REDUCE THE RISK OF BRUSHING MELTDOWNS.

brushing twice a day, in the morning and before bed, to prevent big knots from forming in the first place. When you brush, start halfway down the hair shaft, as opposed to at the crown. Hold all of the hair in one hand, then brush gently, in small strokes as you work the tangles out, making your way down to the ends. (If your child's hair is very thick or coarse, work in sections.) Once the lengths of hair are smooth, run the brush from the crown of the head through to the ends, to finish the job.

MAKE IT FUN! Sing a song while you brush (something from a favourite movie can distract a fussy toddler). You can also set up a "hair salon." Wrap a towel around her shoulders, spritz her hair with water or leave-in conditioner and lay out fun accessories like colourful elastics, bows and clips for her to choose from. If your child is still unsure, practice on a favourite dolly first. "Some of my clients have said watching a YouTube video of little kids having their hair styled has helped, too," says Serban. If your toddler still isn't convinced that brushing her hair is fun, just keep trying. "Most kids will outgrow this eventually," she says. ■



HOW TO:

PREPARE THEM TO BATHE ALONE

Get those cute bath pics in now—one day soon they'll be asking for privacy. Here's how to get them ready and keep them safe. **BY LIZ BRUCKNER**

You've been a very necessary participant in your wee one's bath-time ritual since they first made a splash in your life, so it makes sense that you're a tad hesitant now that they're starting to show signs of bathing sans parents.

The thing is, independent tub time is a very big deal, and whether you suspect your child is days or years away from going it alone, here's expert intel on how to prep for the feat.

WATCH FOR SIGNS OF READINESS.

In some cases, kids younger than 10 may show signs of being ready to manage their tub time alone. Even if this is the case, be cautious about letting down on your supervision level, says Dr. Sarah Hall, a paediatrician at Alberta Children's Hospital in Calgary. "Children can drown in the colloquial one inch of water and in a very short period of time. Drowning remains a major cause of injury-related deaths amongst Canadian

children, particularly in toddlers younger than five," she says. "Close adult supervision while young children are in the bath is absolutely required."

TEACH SAFETY...

Dr. Hall says parents can best prepare young kids to make the move to independent bathing through education. Explain drowning, burns from hot water and slips, and coach them on what to do if they need help. Consider having them keep the door open when they're in the

tub so you can hear if they call (whether there's a safety issue or they just need a hand). You could also set the temperature and turn the water off before the tub's full (giving them a good idea of how much water is needed when they bathe).

...AND GOOD HYGIENE.

For some kids it's not enough to say, "Wash your body." It's OK to walk them through the importance of personal hygiene and the steps involved in making sure they're clean as a whistle. This includes how to shampoo and rinse their hair, as well as where and how to wash (including their face, bits and bobs). As they grow, take a purposeful hands-off approach so they can demonstrate their ability. "When practised consistently, these steps help prepare kids for an easier transition to independent bathing," says Dr. Hall.

OFFER DEGREES OF PRIVACY.

Believe us—you'll know when your kiddo doesn't want Mom or Dad hanging out when they're in the buff. You can start by sitting outside the tub with the curtain closed, then outside the bathroom door and gradually offer them more independence and privacy as they mature and show readiness that they no longer need your undivided attention.

WAIT ON SHOWERING.

This comes with its own set of risks that children need to be ready to handle—think scalds and falls, plus the challenges that accompany soaping, washing and rinsing. "Once a kid hits their later childhood years, it tends to become the bathing method of choice, but there's no need to rush the process," says Dr. Hall. "The important thing is to follow the child's lead when they express an interest." ■

**HOW TO:**

TALK ABOUT CAR-SEAT SAFETY

They may not be happy about it but the booster is necessary until they properly fit in their car seat.

Here's how to explain it. **BY RACHEL NAUD**

Bor Krista Donaldson and her son, Graydon, car rides can get bumpy. While Graydon is 10 years old, he has a smaller frame than other kids his age. At just 60 pounds, he is too light to be out of his booster seat, according to the safety regulations. The thing is, “none of his friends use a booster seat anymore,” says Donaldson. “So he is embarrassed about it and tries to hide it when we pick up any of his friends.” And, while Donaldson

is strict to enforce the rules, the debate can get heated between the Mom and son.

Car safety can most certainly be a point of contention, especially when kids feel they are too old to sit in what they feel is a baby seat. Experts agree that progressing them out of their seat or letting them sit in the passenger side too early can be dangerous. If your child is fighting back to ditch the booster and sit upfront prematurely, you're going to need to put on the brakes. Here's how.

SHARE THE STATS.

According to Safe Kids Worldwide, a nonprofit organization working to help families keep kids safe from injuries, booster seats can reduce the risk of serious injury by 45 percent, compared to seatbelts alone. Plus, Transport Canada says proper use of child restraints can reduce the likelihood of death by 71 percent and injury by 67 percent. While many children ages eight to 12 might argue they're too old for a booster (and they're bound

to have pals who don't use one), kids should stay in one until they're at least 4'9" and weight 80 to 100 pounds.

TRY THE SEATBELT TEST.

“Children should stay in the booster until they outgrow it by height or weight and can pass the safety belt fit test. Seatbelts fit by size not age,” says Lorrie Walker, training and technical advisor for Safe Kids Buckle Up.

According to safekids.org, to determine if the seatbelt is sitting where it should be for maximum safety, your child's knees should bend at the edge of the seat when his or her back and bottom are against the seat back; the vehicle lap belt should fit across the upper thighs; and the shoulder belt should fit across the shoulder and chest (not lie by the neck). “Many kids move prematurely to just the seatbelt and are at risk for serious internal injuries in a crash.” Kids also need to remain backseat drivers until they're at least 13 years old—the airbag can impact the face, neck and chest.

GET REAL.

Because your kids listen to, well, everything, and are bound to hear about car wrecks and deadly collisions on the news, there's no way to escape it. It's important to explain road safety in a way that hits home but doesn't completely frighten. “Let them know that they will eventually transition and move through the car,” says Dr. Richard Stanwick, chair of the Injury Prevention Committee at the Canadian Pediatric Society. “At some point they will move out of their booster and just use a seatbelt. And they'll be able to sit in the front seat and even drive the car. But, for now, this is what they have to do.” Safety first. ■

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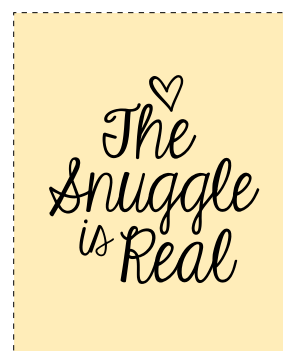
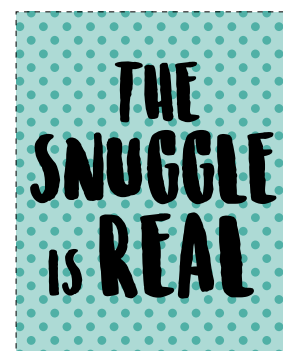
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