Change
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Letter from the Editor: The more things change, the more things stay the same
By Sonya Abrams

I’ve always been one of those people who resist change, like a dog being dragged into the vet’s office, claws dug into the ground. But sometimes we have no choice. Change finds us even when we try to avoid it. It’s a monster wave against a boat, upending everything, leaving us wet and struggling, grasping at anything to keep ourselves afloat.

Several months ago I found myself—a lover of routine, an enemy of change—a new widow, the family I’d created suddenly without an anchor. It was the biggest, most irremediable change I’d ever experienced, and it was thrust upon me without warning. The initial wave of grief ushered in a deep anxiety that the loss of my husband would alter everything so fundamentally that my family wouldn’t know how to function anymore.

“The most important person in my life is gone—and without him I often feel empty and directionless—but the fundamental structures of my world are still here.”

But one of the biggest surprises of my current reality is how much hasn’t changed. The most important person in my life is gone—and without him I often feel empty and directionless—but the fundamental structures of my world are still here. My children still complain about waking up early, still bombard me for meals, activities, and weekends away. And I still find solace in the things that brought me happiness before: concerts, podcasts, parties, dark comedies with a glass of champagne, hikes with friends. My identity may have fundamentally shifted, but the individual components—the preferences, the passions, the personality quirks—remain. In those moments of feeling crushed by grief, I often consciously force myself to consider that all is still the same, and that calms me and reminds me that change doesn’t mean an end to everything.

Our writers in this issue help us face change head on. On page 24, Jennifer Butterbss shares her family’s experience with switching schools and provides a roadmap to a successful transition for the whole family. On page 16, Clare Diegnan discovers which of our children’s bad habits are worth changing, and which we should let slide. And Victoria Dvorak on page 20 muses on the changing nature of parenthood over the decades as evolving technology gives parents more surveillance opportunities and others in new challenges.

We are living in a time of change. Global warming is changing our experience with the planet’s behavior. Technology is changing how we engage with each other. And the COVID-19 pandemic is changing our daily movements and challenging our sense of safety. Change can be frightening, but I’ve been learning that it doesn’t have to define or derail us, that we can draw on the constant threads of our life to support us when we face a new reality.

Letter from the Board: Growing Up is Hard to Do
By Erin Cahill

Change. This is something we continuously go through as parents, as children, as siblings, as friends, in our personal lives, and in our careers. In all aspects of our lives, change—whether big life events or smaller day-to-day occurrences—is constantly happening.

For me personally, the last few years have included some significant changes: becoming a first-time homeowner in San Francisco, becoming a parent in October 2017 and again in August 2019, making partner at my company. All of a sudden, it feels like I took the fast track lane to “grow up”—all by the time I turned 40. My weekends are no longer full of watching football all day at the local bar, long runs on a Saturday morning, or last-minute getaways to Wine Country. Instead, I experience the joys of middle-of-the-night wake-ups, broken water heaters and dishwashers, never-ending diaper changes, and laundry, long walks to get my sleep-deprived son to sleep, and dealing with some sort of strange illness rampaging throughout our household.

But change isn’t all bad. I now have a void (and I didn’t realize existed before kids: my daughter’s excited screams when I come home from work, seeing my son reach new milestones, the realization that my daughter imitates me constantly and wants to be like me). I have found joy in the simpler things in life (Sunday Funday is now a morning at the playground), and am appreciating the world from the perspective of a toddler.

My husband and I have relied a lot on our extended “family” to help through much of this. We are both transplants to San Francisco with no blood relation family here, so instead our family consists of the friends we have made here—those we’ve known since we were children, those we met as singles living in San Francisco, and those we’ve met as parents. GGGMG has been a great resource for dealing with change, introducing me to friends through the Board and through my committee, late-night friends on the message boards as I read through posts on how to get my child to take a bottle, and even our new nanny. My new “family” has come from many sources, but I definitely would not be able to do this parent thing without the friends and support I’ve gotten through GGGMG.

“As I transition into the role of Vice Chair, I am excited to help lead this organization as it continues to grow and change to meet the needs of our members. If there are things you would like to see GGGMG doing, changes made to the organization, or just a great idea to share with us, please reach out to Chair Virginia Green or me. We would love to hear from you.”

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Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email editor@ggmg.org.

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Managing to tear my ACL and MCL on the last run of the day. Deeply failing at my no spend year new year resolution, Moving again; Trying to cope with two teenagers suffering from mental health illnesses; Teaching my kids how to tell jokes; A trip to New Orleans; Moving cross country.

CORRECTION: In our February issue’s Loving Parenthood Without Corcoran article, we incorrectly listed a study that alcohol increases the risk of breast cancer by 5%; the correct statistic is 15%.

Cover Outtakes

Only one shot can make it to the cover. Here are some of our other favorites.
Earth Day Around the Bay

By Colleen Morgan

As the flowers bloom, celebrate the beauty of our planet with these family-friendly activities. Make sure to check event websites as the evolving COVID-19 pandemic may alter activities.

Earth Day SF
Enjoy live music, workshops, art, local food, and a kids’ zone at this popular event’s 50th anniversary. April 19, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Earthday.sf.org

National Park Week
Celebrate the beauty of national parks across the country from April 18 to 26 when special programs are introduced daily. To kick off the celebration, all parks are free on April 18. Learn more and find your local park at www.nps.gov/subjects/npscelebrates/national-park-week.htm

Earth Day 2020 Eco Sail
Board the Schooner Freda B sailboat in Sausalito and explore the Bay’s diverse wildlife as you travel under the Golden Gate Bridge to Point Bonita Lighthouse. Choose from three special sails for Earth Day on April 22 (morning, afternoon, or sunset). Regularly scheduled sails are available every Saturday and Sunday. schoonerfredab.com/ticketed-sails

Berkeley Earth Day
Celebrating its 50th anniversary, this event features eco-vendors, music, crafts, a kids zone, vegan food, and The Wild & Scenic Film Festival. Tickets for the FilmFest are sold separately. April 19, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. berkeleyearthday.org

Celebration of Earth Day at Oakland Zoo
Enjoy over 60 hands-on Earth Day stations and connect with local environmental organizations. All activities are included with paid Zoo admission. April 18, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.oaklandzoo.org/programs-and-events/earth-day

SF Bicycle Coalition’s Family Bike Fest
Ditch your car for a more ecological set of wheels. Advocate for more family-friendly bike lanes, domo cargo bikes and kids bikes, and enjoy free coffee, mimosas, and food from El Rito while your kids are entertained by games, crafts, and activities. April 18, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. sfbike.org/event/family-bike-fest

Earth Day with the Environmental Education Coalition of Napa County
Over 100 organizations and vendors will showcase green products and services, teach you how you can get involved locally, and serve delicious food, wine, and beer. April 26, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Oebow Commons mappenvironmentalcoalition.org/earth-day

The 15th Annual Earth Day Celebration at Stinson Beach
Combines beach clean up with public sculpture-making and dance. Bring a picnic lunch and April 19, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.earthdayatstinsonbeach.org

Presidio Earth Day Celebration
Volunteer your time during the Earth Week festivities happening around the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. This event is free and open to all ages and abilities. April 26, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. www.presidio.gov/volunteer/events

Li’l Kid, Big City: Golden Gate Park

By Christine Chen

One of the area’s most beautiful and inexpensive carousels can be found in the Koret Children’s Center in Golden Gate Park, where kids ages 6 to 12 can ride for $1 and children under 6 are free, though those under 40 inches tall must ride with a paying adult. The nearby playground is one of the best in the city, with structures and a concrete slide—fun for all age ranges.

During your visit to Golden Gate Park, you will discover a wide variety of plant species, including Alumroot, which can be found in the Koret Children’s Center and the Botanical Gardens. These unique plants are only found in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The park is open daily from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is located just a short walk from the San Francisco Zoo.

Hikes

By Neha Masson

Year-round access to the outdoors is one of the best things about living in California. Trails ranging from easy strolls to challenging workouts give us many opportunities to spend time in nature. Here are a few hikes you can add to your list in 2020.

Mount Sutro
Intersection of Clarendon Ave. & Johnstone Dr., San Francisco Difficulty: Easy 1.8 mile loop Cost: FREE

Hidden behind UCSF’s Parnassus campus is an 80-acre nature reserve. Studded with eucalyptus trees, flowering bushes, and the iconic Fairytale Forest is marked by a small sign and takes you on a restorative hike in this hidden oasis.

Panoramic Loop, Muir Woods
Muir Woods National Monument, Marin County Difficulty: Easy to Intermediate 4.5 mile loop Cost: $15 park entry plus parking with reservation Enter the park and start at the Redwood Creek Trail. Hike amongst historic redwoods and join the Fern Creek Trail, lush with beautiful greenery. Once you reach the Lost Trail, take a steep climb until you loop back down to Muir Woods where you started.

Scenic Loop, Joaquin Miller Park
Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland Difficulty: Intermediate 4 mile loop Cost: FREE

Oakland is home to many hidden gems, including this 500-acre park, which showcases a dense redwood forest. You’ll encounter streams, canyons, and stunning views before looping back to the towering redwoods. Keep an eye out for wild turkeys, California quail, lizards, and scrub jays. Check out the park’s other hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails, picnic areas, and a 2,000-seat amphitheater that hosts Broadway musicals every summer.

Christine is mother to a 6-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter, both of whom love all that Golden Gate Park has to offer.

Neha enjoys taking her 4-year-old on hikes where they explore nature and look out for birds, colorful flowers, and the Gruffalo.
Crafting a Personal Style

with Allison Lodish

Allison Lodish is a personal stylist at Nordstrom in Corte Madera. A mother of two girls, she frequently works with clients who are experiencing a change in their life.

What’s the easiest way to change your look?
You can easily evolve into a new look, but don’t try to be something you’re not. Updating is the easiest way to make a change. Retire the old sweaters, try to incorporate a new color or pattern, maybe a new pair of sunglasses. Just remember, not everything that is on trend is flattering for every body type, but adding a few fun pieces can change your whole attitude.

What do moms look for when creating a new wardrobe after baby?
Bodies change after babies and that can be difficult to accept (but look at the reward!). The biggest mistake new moms make is trying to hide their bodies by buying big pieces. Find the right denim that is comfortable and flattering. There are so many styles and types, but adding a few fun pieces can change your whole attitude.

A new top can brighten anyone’s day. Find a great t-shirt in basic colors (not too big) which you can wear alone or under a blazer. Also, a simple silky fabric or blend that can be dressed up or down and you’re ready for date night!

“Not everything that is on trend is flattering for every body type but adding a few fun pieces can change your whole attitude.”

What are some must-have pieces for moms in SF?
An awesome handbag, a great blazer, and a fun pair of mules or sneakers that add a little pep in your step!

How do you build a capsule wardrobe?
Start with your core pieces: great jeans, pants, dress, a blazer, and a few tops that work together but keep it fresh and simple at the same time.

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Finding Gratitude through Fatherhood
By Brett Harrison

Y ou can read all the books in the world and listen to all the advice that is given to you, but nothing can truly prepare you for fatherhood. Twenty years ago I never thought that I would be changing poop diapers, watching Elmo, or singing nursery songs to my child (though my toddler, Gene, gets mad when I sing songs to him).

Becoming a parent has taught me what it’s like to be selfless. Growing up as an only child, it was all about me. Recently, I have been really starting to understand that it’s not all about me anymore, but now almost everything goes into caring for my children. I don’t have time to be selfish! Until recently, I never knew what it felt like to care for someone else. There are times when I feel overwhelmed with the many responsibilities that come with being a dad. There are days I change a soiled diaper every hour. The constant need for attention and dealing with insane tantrums and meltdowns, one after the other (or both at the same time), can be overwhelming, but it grounds me.

You can put a price on diapers and food; however, hearing my Gene say a complete sentence and seeing Zack wave to me when I come home from work is truly priceless. I couldn’t believe how excited Gene got about Halloween. Every day after preschool, Gene couldn’t wait to see the skeleton prop outside. He kept saying “Dada.”

“Oooh, scary! What is that?” He relieves my work stress by just acting goofy and making me laugh.

Last week I was having a bad day, and I couldn’t even force a smile. Gene had me put a sheet over my head and act like a zombie. I couldn’t stop laughing after seeing both of my sons’ reactions. When I’m playing around with them, it’s like being a kid again.

I see a lot of my own dad in me when I am coaching my sons in their early development. I was a lot to deal with as a child. My dad was always very patient and was there to comfort me when I got discouraged or angry. When I act up or misbehave, he was firm yet taught me the right next thing. I was very hyper and cried a lot. I never knew what my dad went through, but now that I have two kids running around, I get it.

I now know the sacrifices my dad made in encouraging my development. My dad was always there for me. He shaped me into who I am today. Now that I’m a dad, I am grateful to get to watch my sons grow and develop. That’s what makes my day. My sons have unconditional love for me and I am their hero. My wife said I am the primary role model for these boys. I thought, “Wow! That’s a scary thought.” Not that I would be a bad role model, but that I have never been in this role before. There are some days that I feel like I’m not cut out for this, but I know it’s worth it when they look up at me and give me their big smiles while saying “Dada.”

“Becoming a parent has taught me what it’s like to be selfless.”

Renata Stoica
Photo by Bhavya Thyagarajan

Renata Stoica is the founder of San Francisco-based tinyB Chocolate. She lives with her husband and two kids (ages 20 months and 3.5 years) in the Twin Peaks neighborhood. She was interviewed by Trips Reddy, a marketer and mother of a 2-year-old.

You can put a price on books in the world. But the love and connection they bring to your family is irreplaceable. Have you found a way to share your love of reading with your children? If you want to be featured in the next issue, please email editor@ggmg.org with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.
San Francisco

By Laure Latham

In honor of the 150th birthday of Golden Gate Park, we are celebrating San Francisco in books. One of these books was written by a GGMG mom while others place to visits you regularly with your kids. To add to the San Francisco appeal, some of these books will be easier to find at local bookstores or GG/NRA stores (Crispy Field, Marr Headlands) than on Amazon. Yey for the City by the Bay!

San Francisco: A Book of Numbers (Hello, World)
Written and Illustrated by Ashley Ervinson
One cable car rolls down the steep hill. Six boats go for a sail in the Bay. Little ones learning their numbers will be delighted in finding them in familiar places and sights. Using vintage-style illustrations, the author makes this number primer a fun learning experience. The book comes with a map of the best places to see the numbers and is perfect for your young family.

Ages: 0 to 3 years

Golden Gate Park, An A to Z Adventure
Written by Martha Lindsey, Illustrated by Michael Wertz
Did you know that a famous bocce ball once lived in Golden Gate Park? Or that in 1921, 25 bronze fountains were put on display in the park? All of these details and more are included in this alphabetical adventure. Whether you're a local or just visiting the park, this book is a great way to explore the park and learn about its history.

Ages: 2 to 7 years

Books on the Bay
Written by Jeanne Wheat Holley, Illustrated by Grady McGinns
Written by an author living in Sausalito, this book features all kinds of boats and explains their jobs in simple yet interesting rhymes and sound combinations. From fishing boats to racing ships, the book takes you on a journey through the Bay's maritime history.

Ages: 4+ years

California Dreaming (Miras Diary)
Written and Illustrated by Marissa Moss
Fans of the Amelia Notebooks series will be happy to find out that another author, Marissa Moss, has written a time travel series called Miras Diary. The third installment takes place in San Francisco, where 14-year-old Mia travels back in time to 1896, 1906, and 1934 to find her missing mother. Expect to meet local historical figures and a reporting Mark Twain taken by surprise by the coldest winter he ever saw. It was the summer he spent in San Francisco, of course.

Ages: 9 to 14 years

Love Issues Without the Long Face
By Gail Cornwall

Many of us appreciate a little laughter when it comes to the momentous matters of marriage and family life; three recently published books attempt to provide just that.

Dear Girls
Since comedian Ali Wong shot to fame with her Netflix stand-up specials Baby Cobra and Hard Knock Wife, both filmed while visibly pregnant, it makes sense that her first book is styled as a series of letters to her daughters. Unfortunately, she opens with, essentially, “I don’t want to write this, but I got a book deal and now I have to.” Fortunately, the material she begrudgingly generates isn’t half-bad. As her husband, Justin Hakuta, puts it, “Wong takes her readers to church like a ‘preacher who offer[s] up profane salvation.’” I laughed at plenty of zingers, like “Daddy came... with his yoga mat slung over his shoulder in a yoga mat case, like a Santa Monica trophy wife running errands.” But Hakuta’s analogy is apt: it often seems Wong shocks and awes her audience awake so she can impart sober lessons on life’s thorniest issues. “If our relatives had been able to come... with his yoga mat slung over his shoulder in a yoga mat case, like a Santa Monica trophy wife running errands,” she writes: “Those reviews would have been mixed: ‘The opportunity is on point, but they kind of overdo it with the institutional racism and the guns. 3 stars.’” For the most part, Wong’s purposeful rambling works, but I can’t help but wonder what Dear Girls could have been had she crafted this with the unsparring perfectionism behind her standup and Always Be My Maybe.

How Not to Hate Your Husband After Kids
If How To Be a Family takes a magazine writer’s “I-tried-it-for-a-month” approach to four different cultures’ parenting, Jancee Dunn’s book is the marital analog, only she seems to try all the strategies of all the experts. That includes home organizers, financial managers, and sex therapists. It can feel contrived, like when she says, “I research hostage negotiators...and promptly phone [one] up.” But Dunn’s comprehensive gusto, as she mastersthe truly extraordinary amount of information in prose that flows like strawberry syrup on a sundae—and her attempts at humor, which don’t always land but consistently lighten things up—let me thinking the ends justify the imperfect means.

Which isn’t to say I have no other issues with the book. Multiple times Dunn buys into sexist theories about intimate gender difference and evolutionary biology. More fundamentally, her suggestions can be so diplomatic as to border on victim-blaming (e.g., “admit your role by finding some contribution you made to the problem”). And her overarching strategy puts yet another onus on women, asking them to employ a web of husband-management techniques. He has a related knack for producing every-man imagery. “The bays carved out of the land like biles from an apple,” he describes New Zealand. There, “kids in front-packs and toddlers in backpack carriers.” The author of this book will “serve his” confectionery on “his” plate. The result is “Oh god, this book is a satire.”

How to Be a Family
When I heard that Dan Kois, Slate’s parenting editor and co-host of the podcast “Mom and Dad Are Fighting,” had written a book, I assumed it would be about parenting, and it kinda is. Sorta. Kois and his wife took their two kids on a four-country tour over the course of a year as a “chance to control-alt-delete the life we’d trapped ourselves in.” How To Be a Family is the resulting memoir slash-travelogue and like the trip, it’s both glorious in parts and disappointingly uneven. Kois’s self-awareness around his personal failings and privilege makes for refreshing and relatable mea culpas. He has a related knack for producing every-man imagery. “The bays carved out of the land like biles from an apple,” he describes New Zealand. There, “kids in front-packs and toddlers in backpack carriers.” The author of this book will “serve his” confectionery on “his” plate. The result is “Oh god, this book is a satire.”

Laure is the author of the mommy blog Frog Mom (frogmom com), as well as the book Best Hikes with Kids: San Francisco Bay Area. She writes for several parenting websites and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her husband and two daughters with triumphant career two stops. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog. She writes for several parenting websites and lives in London, where she peppers adventures with her husband and two daughters with triumphant career two stops. You can find her on social media @frogmomblog.
Sibling Love: Worth All the Work
By Christine Chen

As a “generically” parent who had her firstborn at 44, one of the things that always made me sad was that my son would never experience the love and life companionship from having a sibling. I had resigned myself to being grateful for my sweet little baby boy, despite initially wondering, What am I supposed to do with a boy?, as I so desperately wanted a girl—a mini-me. Imagine my shock when I found out I was unexpectedly pregnant and that it was actually healthy AND a girl.

I was excited I would be able to give my son the best present ever, but I also worried how he might react to having to share all the attention that had been lavished on him throughout his first two years. To prepare him, we bought The New Baby: I’m a Big Brother! Now, my personal favorite, You Were the First, and the one that still makes me tear up every time I read it, I’ll Love You Forever. To ward off sibling jealousy, we made sure to visiting at the hospital. Were we trying to buy his love for her? she had gifts for him (Hot Wheels to be exact) when he came home from the hospital. Was the better toy is always the one that the other has in their hands—yes even still, though they are now four and six and starting to develop separate interests. Even the dump truck in the previous example? They’d been fighting over it not five minutes before the other girl dove in to take it. But there was no way my daughter was going to let an outsider take it away from her brother. She quickly became the best of friends and now play together well when they want to (which is about 70 percent of the time) and are always thinking about the other. If one goes to the doctor, they must get an extra sticker for the other not to be left out.

Despite this, or maybe because of it, he loves his little sister just as much as she adores her big brother. One of my proudest moments was at Alta Plaza park when a 3-year-old girl, who was bullying everyone in the sandbox, took the dump truck we had bought from home for my polite then 5-year-old son, who kept asking her to “please give it back, I brought it from home” to no avail. My then-2-year-old daughter swooped in to grab it from the girl, who was much larger than her, only to hand it back to her brother.

If one goes to the doctor, they must get an extra sticker for the other not because it’s a clever way to get two stickers, but because they know the other really would want one, too. I love that because it’s a clever way to get two stickers, but because they know the other really would want one, too.

Christine unconditionally loves her “little” brother who is 5 years younger and one foot taller, and to this day, feels compelled to protect him, though she used to take his toys too.

To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a $150 gift card from Mini Anna Photography, fill out the form at tinyurl.com/ggmgNewArrivals.
The Problem of the Blue Suede Shoes and Other Habits That Have Got to Go

By Clare Deignan
Photos by Mini Anna Photography

An important part of parenting is to instill healthy habits and prevent unhealthy ones. Habits are just something we do without really thinking about it. According to Dr. Reinecke, they can be positive in one context and negative in another, but he thinks calling a habit “bad” isn’t helpful. Labeling a habit healthy or unhealthy is a better way to think about it.

Dr. Reinecke believes an important part of parenting is to instill healthy habits and prevent unhealthy ones. “It’s easier to establish a good behavior than it is to remove a well-established negative one. If you want a habit to be learned, reward it frequently and immediately,” he suggests.

So what’s a parent to do?

There are many vigorous conversations about this topic. For example, you can mention it and offer a stuffy or blanket they know it’s only for sleeping or napping, not for out in public.”

Beyond thumb-sucking

Sometimes a habit is more than just inconvenient or embarrassing. Some habits can be destructive, unhealthy, and even dangerous, especially as kids grow older. Dr. Reinecke suggests if a habit becomes harmful, parents may wish to seek help.

“Is this really a problem?” He continues, “What’s its impact on the child’s life? If it doesn’t have a negative impact, it’s not a ‘bad’ habit... It’s just a habit.”

Dr. Reinecke suggests a fun and relaxing way for families to help their kids learn healthy habits and gain social awareness without having to leave the couch. As a family, he and his wife would watch television with their daughter to identify appropriate social behavior and point out what not to do.

When his daughter was older, Dr. Reinecke and his family especially enjoyed watching reality TV shows together. “We could make your child anxious. You can accomplish the same goal without putting your child in pain.”

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Dr. Reinecke says families should contact an addiction specialist.

Regarding addictive substances, just as it’s better to prevent bad behavioral habits, he strongly emphasizes, “Whatever can be done to prevent an addiction up front is easier than trying to stop it once it’s established.”

Bad vs. unhealthy

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My two-year-old won’t wear any other pair, except for her blue suede Stride Rite right under my nose. Shoes in my face is how I wake up most mornings. My two-year-old won’t wear any other pair, except for her blue suede shoes. She cries—no, screams—when it’s time to take them off for bedtime. Even though healthy habits and prevent unhealthy ones. “It’s easier to establish a good behavior than it is to remove a well-established negative one. If you want a habit to be learned, reward it frequently and immediately,” he suggests.

Other Habits That Have Got to Go

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went out. Although his wife would roll her eyes, he recalls, “Parents in the stores would smile when they passed, every parent knew what was going on.” He adds, “What touched us was how proud our daughter was. To her, this was the greatest outfit in the world.”

Embracing the Elvis shoes
So taking Dr. Reinecke’s advice, we are embracing our daughter’s beloved blue suede shoes, or as he called them her “Elvis shoes.” But no shoes in bed—we have standards.

As an experiment, I did leave out a pair of Minnie Mouse fuzzy snow boots in hopes of enticing her to try a new shoe. And you guessed it, within an hour she was clunking around the house in those Minnie boots. Problem solved? Too early to tell. Except now, she won’t take off her puffy magenta coat. I guess with changing habits and life in general, it’s important to remember—this too shall pass.

Care is a freelance journalist and mother of two.

**DR. REINECKE’S 10-STEP PLAN TO HELP OVERCOME ANY UNHEALTHY HABIT, SUCH AS JUNK FOOD AFTER SCHOOL**

1. Remove the cues. Out of sight, out of mind. Put the junk food in a high cupboard.
2. Encourage conscious reflection on our actions. Awareness is the first step. Gently mention to your child or teen that you’ve noticed they are eating junk food after school.
3. Reward positive and healthy behavior. Point out some healthy snacks and give them positive feedback.
4. Use rewards that are developmentally important for the child or teen. Keep track of how many days they’ve eaten healthy snacks after school and then pick some rewards that will entice your child to keep up this new habit.
5. Practice healthy behavior, build good habits. Eat right and keep healthy foods in the house. Limit junk foods to only special occasions and treats.
6. Help the child see that their behavior is leading them to fall short of their goals. If they slip back into diving for junk food after school, remind them of the reward they’ll be missing and encourage them to keep reaching for their goal.
7. Challenge maladaptive “permission statements”. Permission statements are ways we excuse our unhealthy habits. We all use permission statements, “Oh, I’ll go to the gym tomorrow” or “I’ll just watch one more TV show” Listen for your child’s permission statements and gently remind them that what we do every day makes us who we are—choose wisely.
8. Teach and reward new, healthy behaviors while the individual is under stress and drifting back toward a bad habit. Stress is when we can easily slip back into unhealthy habits. This is a great opportunity for a parent or a caretaker to strengthen a new habit.
9. Discuss negative and positive outcomes. Talk with your child about how they will feel when they naturally enjoy healthy foods. How will they feel if they keep eating junk food?
10. Be patient and help your child maintain a positive vision of their future as they develop a more positive, healthy habit. Dr. Reinecke points out, “Simply admonishing your child to change most likely won’t work, nor will simple encouragement. Rather, help them to see, to visualize, how they will feel if they succeed in developing a more positive habit.”

"If you or someone you love is struggling with mental health issues or addiction, contact the Substance Abuse And Mental Health Service Administration at https://www.samhsa.gov/ or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357)."
I was late afternoon the day I “casually” ran into my uncle outside his apartment. I struck up conversation about this happy, accidental encounter, and then asked him if he had any mail for me to bring home to my parents so I could, you know, save both of them a trip. So thoughtful! My uncle handed me the stack of mail from SFUSD, which contained the goal of my operation: the report card. Back then, SFUSD was a neighborhood-based system. My parents designated my uncle’s house as our home to which contained the goal of my operation: the report card. I went from a below-average student to a believably average one. My trade craft was real. Using a blunt ripped open the dreaded report card and proceeded to change my grades. I went from a school, they’d never bothered to change the address.

“Don’t pave the way by clearing roadblocks. Let them fail. Let them feel the sting of not making the team.”

I can safely and confidently say that my children will never get away with this stunt. Aside from their innocent, isolated upbringing that has made coups like mine unnecessary, it’s not physically possible. Everything related to my kids’ education is collated neatly online where I can browse their progress anytime, anywhere. I know everything. I almost feel sorry for my kids,

Perils of device addiction

We’ve become so dependent on our phones for everything that we don’t even remember phone numbers. Jessica, Southern California mother of two, damaged her phone and lost access to her car’s navigation all on the same dreadful day she was to take her boys to their second swim class. “I was so scared! We were driving to swim and I didn’t know how to get there fast without navigation and I couldn’t call Bobby to tell me how to get there!” I’ve avoided thinking about the consequences of my kids seeing me at my computer or phone for so much of the day. My youngest child often physically puts herself between me and whatever device I’m on. I wish I could say that I oblige her every time she does this, but I don’t, and then I avoid thinking about what message I’m sending her. I often deny my kids the use of their tablets during the week, and on the weekends my husband and I have to push them out the door, most often under extreme resistance.

Go outside

According to a study by the Seattle Children’s Institute in JAMA Pediatrics, it was noted that because kids don’t spend as much time outdoors, they are missing out on spatial awareness navigation, not to mention natural exposure to vitamin D, use of imagination, and gross motor skills. The study maintains that time spent indoors is more likely today to be time spent on a smart device. In South Korea, there’s a government-funded outdoor therapy program for kids who are addicted to their devices. An informal poll of friends’ childhoods tells me that compared to their children, these parents in their mid 30s to mid 40s spent on average, 50 percent more outside and if not outside, time was spent on reading, music, or crafting.

In our home, we have to first deny tablet usage or television before our children will go to my senior boyfriend’s prom at his school. Honestly, if my children did somehow pull off a scheme where they were able to break the school’s firewall and hack into the system, I wouldn’t care how bad their grades are. I’d jump for joy at the ingenuity of my little evil-masterminds.

It’s a well-known fact that parenting has changed. For the parents who grew up in the ’90s, we are one of the last, youngest people to remember a time when there were no touch screens, when computers only came in black and white, and white, and the internet as we know it was in its primordial phase. Nowadays there’s no incubation period for parents to adjust to changes because everything is constantly evolving. There’s an app for everything and a hashtag with which to label everything.

With the convenience comes the pressure to have more, be more; the competition for your attention is overwhelming. For every convenience and minute of time saved given to us by our devices, it also takes away our connection with one another. The annihilation of technology is unrealistic. Perhaps finding the fundamentals of parenting we lost along the way is the answer to balancing and managing the changes we face in this new world of parenting.

The rapidly shifting landscape of parenting highlights the virtues of fundamental parenting

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By Victoria Dvorka

Photos by Amy Nghe Photography

Ch-Ch-Changes
follows is a hilarious skit acted out for my benefit. Eventually, my kids will find their feet and imagination, but first we must do this dance.

The basics of parenting fundamentals dictate that we encourage outdoor and/or self-directed play. This can happen at home in the yard, a park, or indoors: just take away screens. Another essential principle is we ourselves put our devices down and connect with our children. This includes not experiencing their lives behind a camera. But where’s the balance? After all, not understanding how to navigate a tablet or computer puts anyone behind the masses today. There are good learning apps designed to help kids learn. Many kids use a device in school, which can be considered more “green” because assignments are accessed via school portals and papers turned in and graded online. And because it’s online, parents can track their child’s progress in real time.

The downside of immediate technology

However, this visibility in real time can lead to an obsessiveness over our kids’ grades, which can lead to micromanagement and the clearing of roadblocks for our children’s benefit. Private tutoring has been on a steady, recession-proof rise. According to Business Wire, private tutoring is expected to grow 7 percent between 2018 to 2022, and the market driver is pressure—to get ahead of test scores and the competition; in many cases, the end goal is a polishing student who gets a spot in a coveted school. Tutoring used to be a necessary means to help students who are struggling in a particular subject. Increasingly, it’s now used to help students stay ahead of the pack. So Tutoring used to be a necessary means to help students who are struggling in a particular subject. Increasingly, it’s now used to help students stay ahead of the pack. So Tutoring used to be a necessary means to help students who are struggling in a particular subject. Increasingly, it’s now used to help students stay ahead of the pack. So Tutoring used to be a necessary means to help students who are struggling in a particular subject. Increasingly, it’s now used to help students stay ahead of the pack.

In a May 2018 article in the Washington Post, Amy Ellis Nutt cites a report in The Journal of Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics that claims anxiety, not depression, is on the rise. The current political and environmental situation to social media is to blame. In line with Dr. Gray’s study on extrinsic goals, Marco Grados, associate professor of psychology and clinical director of child and adolescent psychiatry, says, “With (social media), it’s all about the self image—what’s liking them… everything can turn into something negative.”

Among five friends with a total of 16 kids ranging from age 2 to 11, every kid has a smart-device and the kids 9 and over have social media accounts. Also in addition to all having private tutoring, the following professionals have been consulted: acupuncturist, allergist, behavioral, psychiatrist, cranoSacral therapy, occupa-tional therapist for speech, occupational therapist for fine and gross motor skills, yoga-therapy (yes, really), diakological therapy, and good old fashioned talk therapy to help with family dynamics, like divorce, pressure, anxiety, and depression.

There are times when therapy is the only answer. But how do we determine what’s necessary to help our kids without hinder-ing them? Whenever our children have issues at school, therapy and tutoring is the go-to answer. One daughter sits in a “W” on the floor so we’re told to try physical therapy to strengthen her core, which will in turn help her focus. One daughter fidgets, so occupational therapy was suggested. She also forgets to line up her numbers in subtraction—tutoring! I don’t disagree that there are issues that can hinder learning, but it would be refreshing to have someone say to me, “Try X and Y and Z to see if it will help first.”

At home, we try a mixture of “therapies” borne from “Dr. Google” and our school counselors. My “W” string daughter reads while standing on a boogie board, the ones who must balance to prevent the sides of the board to hit the floor. She also has a water spray bottle and she stands on her board while aiming for the leaves on our lemon tree. My fidgeting daughter has a “sandbox” made up of dried rice, beans, lentils, and pasta. She sits for hours to sort and sift. After a long day containing her emotions, the “sandbox” is integral to my sensory-sensitive child. To help with fidgeting at school, she has a small ball of clay she squeezes and shapes throughout the day. And as for the movement from the hiccups? It will sort itself out, I hope. When we got involved as a family and implement-ed some fundamental parenting, the difference was measurable.

Of course this isn’t to say that every issue is amendable at home without therapy or that professionals should never be consulted. Things we did help in part because we consulted professionals. For my family, these were small victories in line with what Dr. Gray preaches.

Changing habits and ourselves

So how does one help a child develop an internal locus of self-worth and control? Don’t pave the way by clearing roadblocks. Let them fail. Let them feel the sting of not making the team. Encourage play, indoor or out, and let them get dirty. Create reasonable boundaries outside and build their confidence by having confidence in them. If they’re old enough, let them walk to the corner store and buy a stick of gum, and let them stay home alone for small (in my case, very small) chunks of time. Reward not with material goods, but experiences. Teach them how to delay in the effort, the journey and focus less on the end result. Finally, delay the introduc-
tion of social media for as long as you possibly can. This is fundamental parenting defined.

I know what you’re thinking. Okay, that is all sound advice, but really? Really. I say this because I know better, even though I don’t actually do better. I clean roadblocks. Because I don’t want to spend my days in the ER, I am overly cautious with my children. I too often will reward with stuff opposed to an experience. There’s a large stick of artisanal cookie dough in my refrigerator that I’ve been meaning to bake with them. I meant to do this as a Valentine’s treat. Valentine’s has come and gone and instead I got them necklaces.

Fundamental parenting sounds easy. It’s anything but easy. It’s far easier to put my kids in front of screens and let them have packaged food for every meal all day because I can complete my tasks without interruption. My caution as a parent isn’t borne out of overwhelming concern for my kids, but overwhelming concern of how inconvenient it would be if they got hurt. These are all things I have to remain conscious about. Small steps are the answer and maybe, just maybe, I’ll get around to baking the bar of cookie dough in my fridge, but until then, Siri, send this to my editor.

Victoria lives in San Francisco, has recently added a guinea pig to her family, and needs to spend less time on her devices.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

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Changing Schools? How to Maximize the Pros and Minimize the Cons

Change can be hard, but family support and planning can make the transition smoother

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

If anyone has earned an advanced certificate in the fine art of changing schools, it’s 7-year-old daughter, Lily. She will proudly state that she is now in her fourth school in San Francisco. Our journey through the complicated maze that is San Francisco’s Educational Placement Center policy came close to implooding our happy little household. We floundered in our attempts to wedge our child’s school into the perfect fit of an ideal commute, or to find the right cultural, neighborhood, and language program, for her younger brother with a Transitional Kindergarten birthday (TK is for children who turn 5 between September 2 and December 31). Through a lot of trial and error, plus confiding in fellow parents who had been through similar school-changing drama, a few best practices became clear for how to support kids when changing schools, whether changing schools is due to a geographic move, the need for a new fit needed or educational opportunity, or whether it is from a natural transition, such as moving from elementary to middle school.

Switching schools due to a geographic move

Child experts agree that the key to helping a little one transition to a new school, regardless of the reason, is to clue them into the possibility as early as possible. “There are no shortcuts,” states Chaya Rivka Mayerson, a San Francisco-based clinical psychologist specializing in children. “The kid needs to know they may be switching schools from the beginning. It can’t be a surprise, and the child needs to be informed and know what’s going on.” So if you’re house hunting in the East Bay or starting to have conversations about moving closer to grandparents in the Midwest, let your child know this is coming once an official plan is in motion. Anything earlier than that might be unnecessary, since plans often change.

It’s also important that you and your partner are clear on your rationale for moving, and you are both able to share this often with your children in different ways to help them get on board as well. If new job opportunities mean a chance for mommy to finally pursue her dream of running her own company, use this to model a lifelong goal and communicate that this is what you want for your own children one day, too. If living near grandparents means a chance for your kids to spend quality time with more caring adults, be sure to emphasize this point.

Another way to ensure a smooth transition due to a move is to demystify the new location as much as possible. Kids can now watch short videos, do virtual tours, and even exchange messages with potential new classmates with the help of local forums or YouTube. You may even have some short trips planned before the official big move that kids can be included in as well. The more time you can spend virtually or in person in the new location, the easier it will be to imagine attending a new school. If you’re lucky enough to have some contacts the same age or who attend the new school, even knowing a familiar face or two before that important first day will be a real lifesaver.

Moving to a new city means there could be an element of choice involved in selecting the ultimate school your child will attend. Older children can be involved in the research process as long as you make it clear that as parents, you will be making the final decision. Take them along on tours, have them participate in a shadow day, or just surf your laptop together and look at pictures of potential new schools. Use this as a bonding experience.

New fit needed

Sometimes your child’s school simply isn’t working out. Maybe there’s a challenging dynamic with classmates or issues with a teacher. Proceed with caution before concluding that a change in school is needed. Whatever the underlying issues may be, seek to exhaust all interventions and remedies before resorting to something as drastic as switching your child’s learning environment entirely.

“It’s more about how long [the challenges] have been going on,” explains Rivka Mayerson. “Does the child have other friends? Is this the way they interact socially? For some kids, being in a difficult dynamic is how they relate to others.” For instance, kids for attention can look more like instigating a fight or causing conflict in lieu of invitations to play or finding commonalities.

Start by getting some objective perspectives from outside of the school or your own family. Ask a trusted friend or two for their observations of your child’s demeanor and social interactions. Is there a pattern emerging across multiple settings and friend groups? Will this pattern simply repeat itself in a new environment? According to Rivka Mayerson, “It’s always better if they can stay at their current site. There is a resilience factor there, as well as an opportunity to develop confidence over time. It’s important for parents to be proactive and to work with the teachers at school. You can’t guarantee there won’t be mean kids, and the teachers don’t always see it. But they can certainly shut it down.”

With the right approach and thoughtful planning and involvement, tackling this change together as a team can be an opportunity to develop resilience and bring your relationship with your child even closer.

Better opportunity

Sometimes, better opportunities await your child in the form of a school with a renowned arts program, language pathway, or STEM focus. Changing to a school that offers better financial assistance or has significantly less or no tuition can also be an element of choice involved in selecting the ultimate school your child will attend.

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Whether you decide to stick it out with your child’s existing school or transition to a new one, make sure you meet with staff members with a clear plan for supporting your kid that includes a few concrete asks. Teachers will not know what you want if you don’t specifically ask and put it in writing, ideally electronically so it can be referenced later if needed. Can the school staff help encourage some new friendships through an extracurricular club or a lunch buddy? Is changing classrooms an option or changing a few classes in your older child’s schedule?

Finally, continue to focus on strengthening your child’s outside bonds and friendships, the ones formed beyond the school environment such as a church community, sports team, or performance group. The more close relationships she forms outside the walls of school, the more confident she can become in navigating whatever challenges confront her on a daily basis.

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Sometimes, better opportunities await your child in the form of a school with a renowned arts program, language pathway, or STEM focus. Changing to a school that offers better financial assistance or has significantly less or no tuition can also be an opportunity to develop confidence over time. It’s important for parents to be proactive and to work with the teachers at school. You can’t guarantee there won’t be mean kids, and the teachers don’t always see it. But they can certainly shut it down.”

With the right approach and thoughtful planning and involvement, tackling this change together as a team can be an opportunity to develop resilience and bring your relationship with your child even closer.

Whether you decide to stick it out with your child’s existing school or transition to a new one, make sure you meet with staff members with a clear plan for supporting your kid that includes a few concrete asks. Teachers will not know what you want if you don’t specifically ask and put it in writing, ideally electronically so it can be referenced later if needed. Can the school staff help encourage some new friendships through an extracurricular club or a lunch buddy? Is changing classrooms an option or changing a few classes in your older child’s schedule? Finally, continue to focus on strengthening your child’s outside bonds and friendships, the ones formed beyond the school environment such as a church community, sports team, or performance group. The more close relationships she forms outside the walls of school, the more confident she can become in navigating whatever challenges confront her on a daily basis.
decision to move schools lies in deeply knowing your child and his needs, preferences, and aptitudes. For example, if your child has always shown a natural aptitude and interest in the arts, moving to an arts-focused school might be disruptive initially but ease up as he more fully develops this interest and passion with more like-minded peers.

On the other hand, if your child has always resisted learning a second language, prefers to answer only in English, and has exhibited other challenges in an academic environment, moving into a full language immersion experience might not be the best idea. It’s hard enough adjusting to a completely new school environment, so adding the extra dimension of an entirely different language can be too much change at once for even the most resilient and flexible kids. Make sure the enhanced learning opportunity, whether it’s a language or a content area, is one that your child has shown an interest in and affinity for so that the move is one that will help him more fully realize his potential instead of disrupting and impeding it.

One of the benefits of changing schools for a better opportunity is that often friends from the old school are still within a reasonable geographic distance. This makes relationships easier to maintain and even strengthen as a change in schools forces increased out-of-school socialization.

“We kept the same relationships,” explained mother of three, Lisa Rother, of her move from a private to a public school. “We still go on [our previous school’s] camping trip every year, even though we haven’t been there for a while. We still have play dates. There’s something special seeing familiar faces in our neighborhood from our different school communities. One day, [my daughter] saw someone from every school she’s ever been to. Her community has actually broadened a bit and we have so many people to pull from.”

Natural transition

If your child is aging out of his program and moving on to elementary or middle school, there are a number of things you can do to provide a sense of closure with his old school and get ready to embrace the new one. Many kids are excited to grow older and embrace changes, so capitalize on this by going shopping together for a big kid backpack or a new wallet to hold a Clipper Card for middle schoolers ready to brave MUNI. Involve your child in his new school’s social events or activities to meet new families and learn about the school. Some schools offer summertime meetups, play dates, or an orientation session that can help new families meet people and get excited for the changes ahead.

Many parents are surprised by how much they find themselves missing their old communities in periods of transition from preschool to elementary, or elementary to middle school. However, it’s never been easier to stay in touch thanks to group text threads, Facebook Groups, or even monthly meetup rituals. The bonds formed at one school can continue long after the kids are no longer bound by the same site through extracurricular activities.

Regardless of your reason for moving schools, change is hard for many people. As a parent, your number one job is to help your child feel safe, secure, and loved unconditionally. Reassuring your child that you are there for her and on her side is crucial. With the right approach and thoughtful planning and involvement, tackling this change together as a team can be an opportunity to develop resilience and bring your relationship with your child even closer.

Jennifer is an educational consultant and mother of two school-changing children. One is a Spanish enthusiast who requested an immersion school in first grade, and one is a preschooler transitioning to elementary soon.
Embracing Differences

Learning differences can make kids feel different or misunderstood by their peers. Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, sensory processing, all affect learning. For kids with these kinds of learning differences, taking medication or having special support staff and teachers can be a regular part of life. But these situations can raise questions that are hard for kids to talk about.

Books are a great way to open and explore a topic, and there are a growing number of children’s and young adult books that feature main characters with learning differences. The Hank Zipzer series, by Lin Oliver and Henry Winkler (known as the Fonzie from the TV show Happy Days), were born out of Winkler’s personal struggles with his learning differences. The well-known Percy Jackson and the Olympians series by Rick Riordan highlights ADHD and dyslexia as features for demigods. Ellie Bean, the Drama Queen by Jennie Harding tells the story of Ellie, a child with sensory issues. Nelson Beats the Odds by Ronnie Sidney also stems from the author’s experience with dysgraphia. This book is also notable for featuring an African-American cast.

The emerging neurodiversity movement aims to reframe the conversation around these learning differences, stressing that each person’s brain is simply different, instead of the idea that some brains are “normal” and others are not. Reducing the stigma about the ways our brains are different can benefit both the kids with learning and thinking differences as well as the people who know them.

Like so many complex topics, talking about learning differences may take more than one or two conversations. Don’t be afraid to say “I don’t know” or go back to your child with new information or a new perspective. These conversations are meant as a growing process, for both child and parent, so you can always go back and reframe the things you wish you’d said differently.

Are you looking for a way to use your skills to give back to the GGMG community? Consider joining the GGMG Partnerships Committee! Our team of amazing women works with local businesses to bring exclusive deals to our members. Through our Partners Program, the Partnership Committee works closely with GGMG partners such as JCCSF, UrbanSitter, Recess Collective, and Peekadoodle to obtain strategic benefits for all GGMG members on an annual basis, as well as additional benefits for GGMG volunteers. Through our Friends Program, we work with various local companies to obtain substantial promotions and discounts for members on a limited-time or ongoing basis. With thousands of members, we use the power of our community to gain exclusive deals on everything from child care to adult fitness classes to professional services. Check out the “Member Perks” section of the GGMG website for member discounts and benefits. And look for our monthly GGMG Member Perks email highlighting many of these great deals! If you are interested in joining our committee, please contact our new Director of Partnerships, Kimberly Newman, at partnerships@ggmg.org. We look forward to bringing you even more discounts and savings in 2020!

The Social Media Committee is thrilled to start a new year with even more engagement on all platforms! Our first step has been to expand! Please join us in welcoming new volunteer Shannon Higa to our committee. She’ll be starting off by assisting with Eventbrite creation so all of you can more easily manage your events. A reminder to all that requests for publicity on social media should be submitted at least one week before the event to be promoted. All requests should include:

- the exact wording to be used for the brief description;
- for events, the name of the event, date, times, location, and any link to the GGMG calendar, Eventbrite, etc.; and
- any images to be used

All of this will help us help you! We’ll make sure your post is taken care of, on the appropriate channel, within 72 hours of receipt. Remember to like/follow us on all forms of social media (@ggmg_sf) and re-post/re-tweet/share to your heart’s content!! And if you attend our events, don’t forget to post your pictures and include the hashtag #ggmg! You may just get re-posted/re-tweeted/shared yourself!!

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Member Support’s goal is to be a helping hand for our members who are experiencing tough times, looking for member-vetted resources, or need a lighter load. You may occasionally see us responding to forum posts, but much of our work occurs behind the scenes as we offer meals, babysitting credits, and membership scholarships to moms seeking support. Last year, we helped our community through challenges including illness, divorce and manage counseling, challenging kids, and postpartum depression. We also began single moms group meetups and look forward to offering more connection opportunities in the future. If you are experiencing a tough time and need assistance, please reach out to member support@ggmg.org. We’re also looking for volunteers for our highly impactful committee! It’s a great way to have a direct impact on other moms in our community.
The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving. GGMG is currently cancelling all events through Sunday, April 12. Please check ggmg.org to see the status of all upcoming events.

CAREERS & ENTREPRENEURS

Career Change Workshop
Do you feel stuck in a soul-sucking job and long to do something that feels more fulfilling...even if you have no idea what that might be? Do you know you’re in the wrong career but feel stuck because of fear or self-doubt when you think about trying to make a change? Do you think about starting your own business but feel scared to take the first step? Whether you’re going back to work after maternity leave, thinking about returning to the workforce after a break, or are currently in a job and just know you’re meant to do something more, this workshop is for you.
Join career coach and GGMG mom Julie Houghton for this popular workshop from the Careers & Entrepreneurs Committee and take the first step towards finding work that is in alignment with who you are.
DATE: Friday, April 24
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: Women’s Building, Room A, 3543 18th St
COST: $5

Resume Development Webinar
Does your resume need a refresh? Have you been out of the workforce for a while and want to make a comeback? Or are you eying a new position and want to tailor your resume towards a different career path? This webinar will help you update and improve your resume to present your background and experience in the best possible light.
We will cover basic topics, such as typical sections and content, as well as offer insight around the most effective ways to present your skills and experience, how to customize your resume for a specific industry or opening, and how to deal with gaps. We will also spare time at the end of the webinar to address questions not covered by the presentation.
DATE: Friday, May 8
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: 218 Montgomery St. (Cafe Venue)
COST: $5

May Moms Networking Lunch
Join us for this month’s networking lunch! Look for the GGMG Moms Networking Lunch sign on the table. All are welcome!
DATE: Wednesday, May 6
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: Specialty Cafe & Bakery, 100 California St.
COST: FREE

PARENT EDUCATION

Retirement Planning Tools
In this webinar, you’ll find out which retirement vehicles to consider when building your next egg, how to choose investments in 401(k) and 403(b) Plans, whether traditional or Roth IRA make more sense in different scenarios, and basic rules of thumb for Social Security Planning. This is the second webinar in a series of four webinars on financial planning with Courtney Jones, CFP®.
DATE: Thursday, April 9
TIME: Noon to 12:45 p.m.
PLACE: Online
COST: FREE

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Family Mani-Pedi Day at SF Nail Spa
Celebrate Mother’s Day by pampering yourself and your kids to a manicure and/or pedicure at SF Nail Spa. Kids Activities is hosting this event so it is open to moms and children. SF Nail Spa offers special junior treatments so your child can join in the fun! Spots are limited so please RSVP early.
DATE: Sunday, May 3
TIME: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
PLACE: 1324 Noriega St.
COST: $10/adult for manicure OR pedicure, $20/adult for both, $7.50/child for manicure OR pedicure, $15/child for both

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DATE: Wednesday, May 6
TIME: Noon to 1 p.m.
PLACE: Specialty Cafe & Bakery, 100 California St.
COST: FREE

Reserve for events at ggmg.org/calendar unless otherwise noted

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The COVID-19 situation is rapidly evolving. GGMG is currently canceling all events through Sunday, April 12. Please check ggmg.org to see the status of all upcoming events.

Coffee + Stroller Walks
Calling all GGMG mamas and babes! Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? We’re organizing this Coffee + Stroller just for you! You’ll meet at a coffee shop before you go out for an hour of fresh air, tight exercise, and great conversations!

**Date:** Every third Wednesday, 5/20, 6/17, 7/15, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16

**Time:** 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Place:** More than 10 locations throughout the city. Please select the date of your walk and a list of locations will be available for you to choose.

**Cost:** FREE

This event will be on every third Wednesday of the month. Please remember to RSVP to us so we can put you in touch with other attendees via email prior to the walk.

North Beach Stroller Walk: Beacon Coffee & Pantry, 805 Columbus Ave.

Marina Green Stroller Walk: Pier 39 Coffee, 2080 Chestnut St.

Lower Pac Heights Stroller Walk B.Patisserie, 2821 California St.

Richmond/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk: Rise & Grind, 785 8th Ave.

Baker Beach Stroller Walk: Bazaar Cafe, 5927 California St.

NOPA Stroller Walk: The HI, 750 Divisadero St.

Duboce Stroller Walk: Duboce Park Cafe, 2 Sanchez St.

Mission Stroller Walk: Lucy’s, 5628 Geary Blvd.

Noe Stroller Walk: Bonnie’s, 3966 24th St.

Sunset/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk: Bird and Beak, 4560 16th St.

Cove Valley Stroller Walk: Flywheel, 617 Spyian St.

South Beach Stroller Walk: Crossroads Cafe, 699 Delacorte St.

Pacifica Stroller Walk: February’s, 418 18th St.

Mission Bay Stroller Walk: Cafe Reveille, 610 Long Bridge St.

Bernal Stroller Walk at Pinhole Cafe: Pinhole Coffee, 238 Cortland Ave.

Visitacion Valley Stroller Walk: Mission Blue Cafe, 144 Leland Ave.

Weekday Playdates for Moms and Toddlers
Are you a stay-at-home mom looking to connect with other stay-at-home moms of toddlers? Would you like to bring your little one to make friends with similar-aged little people? Then join us at this month’s Weekday Playdate for Moms and Toddlers!

Being a stay-at-home mom in the toddler years can be especially isolating. Little ones are not quite ready to forge their own relationships, but you want to make connections with other moms and build your village. This event is for you!

We will provide refreshments and a jumping-off point to form a playgroup for you and your toddler. Please look for the GGMG sign and add your info to the sign sheet when you arrive.

**Date:**
- The third Wednesday of each month
  - (4/21, 5/26, 6/23, 7/21, 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18, 12/16)

**Time:** 1:30 to 5 p.m.

**Place:** 254 Laguna Honda Blvd. Parking is free at the Forest Hill Church lot next door.

**Cost:** GGMG members enjoy a special price of $5 per kid. Parents, caregivers, and infants 6 months and under are free. Spots are limited. Must RSVP & prepay. Non-Members please pay $15 at the venue.

Please enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members: GGMGPlayhaven20

**Weekend Playdates**

**Monday Playdate for Moms and Toddlers**

Looking for something to do on Monday afternoon after your little one’s nap and before dinner? Tuesday Afternoon Open Stroller Playdate at Messy Art Lab is the answer!

Messy Art Lab is a process-oriented art experience. They focus on the exploration of materials, colors, textures, art recipes, and all the squishy-goopy-sticky stuff kids love to get their hands on. All materials and art supplies are non-toxic and made from scratch.

**Date:**
- First Sunday of each month (5/3)
- Third Sunday of each month (5/23)

**Time:**
- 3 to 5 p.m.

**Place:**
- 345 Judah St.

**Cost:** GGMG members pay $5/kid. Perfect for children ages 1 to 5 but all ages welcome. Caretakers/parents are free. Spots are limited. Must RSVP & PAYPAL. Non-GGMG members please pay $20 at the venue.

Please enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members: GGMGmessyArt20

**GGMG X Imaginaction Playhouse**

Looking for a fun after-school activity? Imaginaction Playhouse in the Richmond is the perfect place for children to run off their energy before dinner time. Sign up now!

**Date:**
- Second Wednesday of each month
  - (5/13, 6/10)

**Time:**
- 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

**Place:**
- 1917 Ocean Ave.

**Cost:** GGMG members pay a special rate of $6 per kid, parents, caregivers, and infants 6 months and under free. Must RSVP and prepay as limited spots are available. Non-Members please pay $15 at the venue.

Please enter GGMG Members’ special code to reveal hidden event ticket created exclusively for GGMG members: GGMGImaginact20
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Mandarin Mania (3-17) Learn. Play. Immerses yourself in another culture.

Ski School Simulator (5-17) Take your skills to the next level. No snow required.

Digital Music Composition (10-17) Produce, loop and make music digitally.


Pre-Academics & Skills (3-6.5) Get ready for Kindergarten. Strengthen fine motor, sensory and cognitive skills. Get a head start on academic and life routines.

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The Evolution of a Mom

By Emily Beaver

Change. It seems like the only constant in parenthood and life for that matter. Having a child has been the biggest change in my life—as it is for many parents and caregivers. When children are young it can feel like they are changing sometimes daily—there’s always a new sleep regression, growth spurt, and tooth coming in. The physical demands of keeping up with babies and toddlers can be overwhelming, and it can feel challenging to try and get ahead of the next phase and think about things such as your parenting style, how you’ll discipline your child, your educational philosophy, and more. Most of us come to these answers with some preconceived beliefs, many shaped by how we ourselves were raised.

For me, growing up in the ‘80s in Ohio meant no car seats or bike helmets as well as playing outside all day completely unsupervised. I have vivid memories of roaming the neighborhood and woods while terrorizing my younger brother. To say that we had a long leash was an understatement. As a Montessori educator, my mother saw me as a fiercely independent child and she gave me the space she thought I needed. Her style of parenting can best be described in today’s terms as free-range parenting—a style of child-rearing in which parents allow their children to move about without constant adult supervision, aiming at instilling independence and self-reliance.

Looking back as an adult, I thought “how was I not kidnapped?” My mom seemed downright absent—and I wondered that when I had kids I’d do things differently. I wanted to be present, more engaged, more diligent, and watchful. There’s no way I would let my kids spend as much time alone and unsupervised as I did. And besides, that was then and this is now. I couldn’t raise my kids like that if I wanted to—especially in San Francisco. Terrible things happen to children in our modern era—things that never seemed to happen when I was growing up, or did but were never reported. What if my child was taken from the playground while I wasn’t looking, or assaulted in a restroom, or fell into an animal habitat at the zoo? On a million other what-ifs.

But after having kids, I changed. I couldn’t help it. It’s what felt natural to me as a mother because it’s how I was raised. As I read more about the free-range parenting movement, the more common-sense it appeared to be, and as I did more research on child abductions and crime rates, I realized the media might be to blame for a lot of unsubstantiated fears.

So what does free-range parenting look like for my oldest, a four-year-old boy? At the playground he has always been off on his own—I’m close by on the bench, but he’s exploring at his own pace. At home, he loves to make his own toast and drink his own milk, and sometimes he’ll even be able talking with adults, practicing good manners, handling money, and having a sense of responsibility.

I don’t know how this will translate as my son gets older, and perhaps it will change as his needs change. It seems like the only constant in parenthood and life as it is for many parents and caregivers. When children are young it can feel like they are changing sometimes daily—there’s always a new sleep regression, growth spurt, and tooth coming in. The physical demands of keeping up with babies and toddlers can be overwhelming, and it can feel challenging to try and get ahead of the next phase and think about things such as your parenting style, how you’ll discipline your child, your educational philosophy, and more. Most of us come to these answers with some preconceived beliefs, many shaped by how we ourselves were raised.

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I don’t know how this will translate as my son gets older, and perhaps it will change as his needs change. What I do know is that it’s okay to change your mind, question your values, and adapt your parenting style to fit where you are in your life. We’re quick to label ourselves and others, but it’s also okay to live in the gray. I wouldn’t call myself a free-range parent, but there are a lot of elements that I subscribe to. The truth is I don’t know who I am yet as a parent—it’s evolving as my children grow and change themselves.

Emily is a residential Real Estate Agent at Compass, mother of two, and passionate supporter of reproductive rights and Waldorf education.
**Statement of Purpose:**
nurture ourselves, our children, our partners, and our community; create an environment of support, information sharing, and connection; learn, teach, create, have fun, and provide balance in our lives and in the lives of our growing families.

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