A mom from GGMG knows the perfect sitter for you.

UrbanSitter unlocks your personal network to find sitters and nannies of people you trust

*Subject to UrbanSitter, Inc.'s Terms of Service. New customers receive 20% off UrbanSitter Monthly or Annual Membership fees and $70 credit to be used toward membership or babysitter payments. Returning customers receive 20% off UrbanSitter Monthly or Annual Membership fees (not valid for babysitter payments). Recipient must become a registered user of UrbanSitter with valid credit card on file to redeem offer. Restrictions include sitter availability and service to requested location (not all areas served). For GGMG Members only - Please note that your name and email will be shared with GGMG to confirm eligibility. UrbanSitter reserves the right to modify these terms. Valid through June 30, 2020.

Get your 2020 GGMG member discount today!

20% + $70 credit for new customers

Visit: urbansitter.com/promo/ggmg
Letter from the Editor: Harnessing Our Collective Wisdom
By Sonya Abrams

During life’s most challenging moments, we often look to the people around us to help guide our behavior. Our mothers dispense hard-earned marriage advice when we’ve in the midst of a relationship crisis. During a health scare, our friends share their own experiences navigating the medical system or undergoing chemotherapy. A selection of friends who’ve been there, done that, can share their own tips for getting out of a serious financial hole. Each human struggle is unique, but there’s often someone in our lives who has faced a similar battle and can provide the wisdom borne of experience.

This pandemic has felt different. We’ve been launched onto a journey without a roadmap. I can’t call my mom and ask her tips on homeschooling three children, because she never had to. Instead, she just offers up a heartfelt but unsatisfying “I so impressed that you’re tackling this!” I can’t comfort my kids by saying that life will be back to normal quickly, because we haven’t suffered a crisis of this magnitude, and we don’t know the course of this illness. When I sit down at the computer in the morning and peek at the news, confusion and stress are coursing through my veins, I am confronted with all kinds of conflicting evidence, advice, reports, and prognostications. It feels like we’re all stumbling blindly through this frightening new era. The sheer uncertainty of it all can feel overwhelming and render us helpless.

But we’re not helpless. Deep into uncharted territory, we may not be able to turn to people in our lives who have endured a similar crisis, but we can harness our collective wisdom on universal topics to better arm ourselves with the knowledge we need to weather this storm. For this issue, we mined dozens of GGMG Magazines past to find topics that are relevant to the moment. We are featuring Jessica Williams’ guide to fostering resilience in children—and advice we parents desperately need now. With so many kids so closely attached to screens during the pandemic, we’re sharing Jami Grich’s article on what you need to know about technology and children. As we each cycle through a myriad of exhausting emotions these days, Gail Cornwall’s article on embracing anger will help us cope. And with levity seemingly in short supply, we thought it important to find a reason to laugh, so we are taking another look at Catherine Symons’ discussion of how humor develops in children.

Uncertainty is frightening. But as mothers, we are clever, resourceful, and well-versed in crisis management, so we are particularly well-positioned to make it through the pandemic.

Opinions expressed in this issue are those of the contributors. Acceptance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by GGMG of any products or services. The editors reserve the right to accept, edit, or reject any content submitted to the magazine.

ADVERTISING: Advertisements are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For submission information, email advertising@ggmg.org.

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

Letter from the Board: The Wisdom to Know the Difference
By Virginia Green

I asked to name the one person who loved them unconditionally, was their strongest supporter, and was most influential in their lives, the majority of people would name their mother. But in the midst of this global pandemic, I do not feel as if I’m passing along many nuggets of wisdom to my children or even to my fellow moms; I am simply doing my best to survive.

Like it did for many parents, my support system seemed to disappear when shelter-in-place took effect. Since then, like the peddler in the picture book Caps for Sale, I have been precariously balancing too many hats on my head. Parents are now full-time caregivers, teachers, tech support, and crisis counselors. Any other roles, like being a spouse, friend, co-worker, or independent person with personal needs, simmer on the back burner. It’s exhausting. I just want to take a nap like the peddler, who lies carefully against a shady tree to keep his stack of hats balanced, even while sleeping.

I try to remind myself that even though “doing our best” looks differently now, our current “best” is not nothing. Bowled macaroni again? Baking cookies instead of finishing homeschool assignments? Another afternoon showing of Frozen 2? These choices once felt like the easy way out. But a home-cooked meal, a baking project, and a singalong in our Day Pajamas are not nothing. What matters is that I am giving my children plenty of love. I am trying to spread calm over anxiety. I am reflecting on the choices and assignments? Another afternoon showing of Frozen 2? These choices once felt like the easy way out. But a home-cooked meal, a baking project, and a singalong in our Day Pajamas are not nothing. What matters is that I am giving my children plenty of love. I am trying to spread calm over anxiety. I am reflecting on tough times already conquered. There will be good, productive days, and there will be days that feel like a wash. I am doing my best to find the wisdom within me to accept them, and that is not nothing.

Despite being physically isolated, I find strength in knowing where we are in this together: nowhere is more than ever a space to discuss the good, the bad, and the ugly aspects of parenthood. Now more than ever, they are a lifeline for finding resources and venting about current challenges. GGMG volunteers have created Zoom calls to replace a range of in-person events: new mommy meetups, virtual playgroups, happy hours, and book club meetings. We are reimagining what Preschool Preview Night will look like this fall. And we are supporting members who have experienced great loss, from jobs to loved ones. I am grateful for the volunteers that have donated their creative and compassionate hats for our benefit.

Volume 24, No. 3
On your 2020 membership fee hinders your ability to participate, please reach out to member.support@ggmg.org.

As we live through the COVID-19 pandemic together, I look forward to sharing strength, love, and grace as a community. And who knows? Maybe we’ll look back on a moms-only Zoom call, a pillow fort, or a failed bread-making attempt as a moment where we did, in fact, gain a little wisdom: one in which we found that doing our best was not nothing after all.

Virginia, her husband, and their two daughters live north of the Panhandle. This pandemic has reinforced her love for sweatpants, doughnuts, and Scrabble.

This issue made possible by: GGMG MAGAZINE | JUNE/JULY 2020

Cover model: Keira, 5

Cover photo by Sonya Abrams Photography
Detecting and Preventing Cyberbullying

With Eve Kupferman, PhD

What is cyberbullying and how common is it?
Cyberbullying is when someone uses technology to willfully and repeatedly inflict harm on another person. Chat apps, anonymous forums, even gaming sites can create opportunities to harass, humiliate, and threaten others.

Today, 25 percent of 11- to 18-year-olds report being cyberbullied, with half of those being at the middle school level. Another 17 percent of teens admit to cyberbullying—the problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever.

Some parents believe that peers sticking up for someone is the problem, but it is not. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real. What makes cyberbullying particularly devastating is how quickly it can spread thanks to social media, texting, etc. Cyberbullying also has a scary permanence since everything is saved online indefinitely. A victim can feel haunted by hateful comments forever. The problem is very real.

What can parents do?

Most kids are too ashamed to tell their parents they are being victimized. Many also worry that parental involvement (especially at school) will make the situation worse. Becoming aware of key signs can help parents be alert to potential problems. Watch out if your child unexpectedly stops using his device, appears nervous when online, doesn’t want to go to school, seems depressed, or sleeps more or less than usual.

On the flip side, the signs a child may be a cyberbully include tendencies to quickly switch screens or hide a device, being online at all hours, and avoiding discussions about online behavior.

How can parents help?

If your child has been cyberbullied, it is important to remain calm, show unconditional support and compassion, and help the facts to assess the situation. Being a victim of bullying makes one feel helpless, so it’s critical that children feel validated and in control as much as possible. Acknowledge how much this must hurt and work on a plan of action together.

Start documenting evidence of the bullying (texts, social media, etc.) in case you need proof down the road. Help your child also understand that she can disengage, detach, and switch focus. Remind her that computers and phones can be turned off. Cyberbullies feed off responses, so it’s important to control the online behavior. Parents can help their kids keep their online behavior in check. For example, setting device curfews, blocking devices at dinner, or turning off internet at set times can be ways you set healthy boundaries and limits.

There are also software applications to help parents and children use devices responsibly. Some offer the ability for parents to see all texts (even if they are deleted) or choose the sites kids can access. Finally, parents should be very intentional and clear about their own device use. Remember, kids model their behavior after your actions.

How can schools prevent cyberbullying?

Schools play a critical role in teaching kids how to be good “net citizens.” Most teach community standards for how to treat one another online and offline. Schools also play a part in fostering the role of bystanders, and many encourage supporting peers when they see bullying and coming forward. Finally, schools often provide guidance for parents, such as holding formal and informal conversations or distributing advice and guidelines. Check with your child’s school to see what is offered.

This article originally appeared in the November 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Dr. Kupferman is a clinical psychologist with a private practice in San Francisco.

For parents to hold off on intervening. By waiting and coaching children, you provide a chance for them to reach out to friends and take action themselves.

Sometimes intervention is necessary, especially if your child doesn’t want to go back to school. If this happens, it’s important to explain to your child that it’s your job to protect and help him. Set up meetings with teachers, school counselors, and key administrators. Parents can reach out to the parents of the bully—many schools even help facilitate these discussions. If there are serious physical threats, you may need to contact the police.

How can parents monitor and prevent destructive online behavior?

There is no question that kids will encounter mean behavior in some form online. Just as with anything else, parents should talk to kids about responsible and ethical online behavior and thinking critically about online conduct. Start conversations early, as most kids begin spending time online at a very young age. Having empathy and compassion for others can help prevent negative behavior.

Parents shouldn’t be afraid to have rules and monitor kids’ online behavior. Explain that just as you keep them safe in other ways, you set limits and monitor behavior to keep them safe online. For example, setting device curfews, blocking devices at dinner, or turning off internet at set times can be ways you set healthy boundaries and limits.

There are also software applications to help parents and children use devices responsibly. Some offer the ability for parents to see all texts (even if they are deleted) or choose the sites kids can access. Finally, parents should be very intentional and clear about their own device use. Remember, kids model their behavior after your actions.

How can schools prevent cyberbullying?

Schools play a critical role in teaching kids how to be good “net citizens.” Most teach community standards for how to treat one another online and offline. Schools also play a part in fostering the role of bystanders, and many encourage supporting peers when they see bullying and coming forward. Finally, schools often provide guidance for parents, such as holding formal and informal conversations or distributing advice and guidelines. Check with your child’s school to see what is offered.

This article originally appeared in the November 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Dr. Kupferman is a clinical psychologist with a private practice in San Francisco.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Where to donate to those in need

As you are well aware, the COVID-19 pandemic has swiftly caused immense suffering—from illness, deaths in the family, unemployment, and poverty to name a few. There are so many organizations to give to in times like these. We would like to offer some guidance on where to give—for those who are able and trying to decide where to help. This list is by no means exhaustive—it contains local organizations that we frequently partner with whose clients are disproportionately impacted by this crisis.

Help A Mother Out (HAMO)
HAMO is focused on distributing diapers, and they report that diaper demand has already surged 500% since the crisis started.
Donate financially here: www.strongwomenstoon.com/hamo

Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP)
HPP is distributing food, formula, diapers, wipes, hygiene kits, cleaning products, child activity sets, and more to their clients.

San Francisco-Marin Food Bank
The Food Bank has launched pop-up pantries as well as home delivery for low-income seniors who are sheltering in place. Here’s how you can help:
• Donate financially here: www.sffoodbank.org
• Volunteer to deliver groceries. Sign up here: www.sffoodbank.org/volunteer/home-delivered-groceries-2/

CONTEST

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

Treat yourself to some serious medical pampering with our Mirror, Mirror on the Wall prize! Win a $300 gift card toward a non-surgical service of your choice at Pacific Heights Plastic Surgery. Services include Latisse (eyelash growth) and Botox/XEOMIN for facial wrinkles.

Dr. Jonathan Kaplan at Pacific Heights Plastic Surgery was voted “Best Cosmetic Surgeon in San Francisco” by SF Weekly in 2018. Dr. Kaplan showcases his surgeries (with the patient’s permission) on Snapchat, Instagram, and YouTube, so you can see what he’s like behind the scenes. His website explains a wide variety of services.

Enter the contest by emailing contest@ggmg.org with “Mirror” in the subject line by July 15, 2020. Winners are selected at random.

Thank you to our generous prize donor, Pacific Heights Plastic Surgery.

Find it and a full list of services, costs, and details of the procedures including anticipated time and recovery for each, at www.pacificheightsplasticsurgery.com.

Congratulations to the winner of the last contest! The winner of the Laura Dallagata Portrait is Nina Clingan.
Daddy’s Kinda Different
By Bobby McMullen

I t was my turn to keep “eyes” on my daughter Ella. My wife Heidi and I were at a barbecue, with lots of noise and distractions, and Ella was a handful as she scrambled about. I was having a ball, head down, closely following her. Suddenly a woman shrieked loudly, and all took notice. I pulled Ella close, comforting her, attempting to sort out what was happening. “That’s my baby! That’s my baby!” she screamed. A friend grasped my arm and said, “That’s not Ella.” Feeling confused, I tried to explain, guiding the tiny girl to her mother. It hit me immediately. “I’ve lost my daughter!” I barely heard our friend explain to the woman how I could make such a mistake. I moved through the house, around blurred shapes, yelling for Ella and Heidi. Heidi’s calm voice came over the din, “What’s going on? You OK?” She was close enough for me to realize Ella was with her. This was the first time as an adult that I felt true fear and vulnerability. The moment I thought my disability caused me to lose my daughter. My name is Bobby, and I am blind. I was 29 and in law school when I lost my sight to Type 1 diabetes. I’m blind in my left eye and 20/1200 out of my right. Close your left eye and look through a toilet paper roll with Vaseline smeared over plastic wrap on the end. That’s how I see the world. I am also a double organ transplant recipient (kidney and pancreas), had a few years of dialysis, had heart surgery, went a few rounds with cancer, and rock a pacemaker. I’m held together by more tape than I remember. None of that makes me special or defines me. I don’t speak of spare parts, pins, rods, and duct tape than I can remember.

Acceptance of others begins with acceptance of oneself.

Inclusion is a new classroom paradigm to improve education for those with disabilities. It is a cooperative learning process that recognizes the significance of social interaction, allowing students to learn from each other, ask questions, and embrace and explore diversity using positive daily interactions as a tool to grow. Inclusion voids the archaic notion that exclusion and separation were best for persons with disabilities. For those individuals or for parents who have a child with cognitive or physical challenges, this is an educational benchmark. Placing students in special education (“special ed”) programs based on different physical and learning abilities sends a clear message of exclusion, affirming that singling out individuals for being different, for any reason is OK. A caveat to this is that some disabilities are extremely complex. In these cases, an individualized approach to education and socialization are key.

Parents can be vehicles of change. Differences and diversity in all walks of life are to be celebrated and learned from, but acceptance of others begins with acceptance of oneself. We can help our children develop a positive self-image, so that they have the emotional intelligence and confidence to see the best in others.

I strive to live the life I am lucky to have to the best of my ability, and not let abnormal circumstances dictate my outlook. Every day I work to be the best man, husband, and loving father I can be. I have a remarkable wife and brilliant daughter, so I’ve done all right so far. Growing with them is a privilege with huge responsibilities often complicated by real life, illness, and being blind. I have never used my lack of sight or health as an excuse. Long ago I established high expectations for myself, and when not met, I learn from that experience and forge on. All life philosophies that I share with Ella. Our daily conversation always consist of moments explaining that “Daddy’s eyes don’t work as well as yours.” And sometimes I need help finding things or getting around. With time, she will understand my differences and with time this will become our normal. Recently, while we were out running errands, Ella said, without prompt and matter-of-factly, “Daddy, hold my hand. I help you down the steps.” My 25-year-old is leading the dialogue. I hope other parents and children follow suit.

This article originally appeared in the December 2016/January 2017 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Bobby is a professional mountain biker who considers his marriage to wife Heidi and raising daughter Ella his greatest achievements. Read more about him from www.ridelindaracing.com

Books on Looking Back

Inheritance: A Memoir of Genealogy, Paternity, and Love
Dani Shapiro is an accomplished writer who, in midlife, accidentally discovered that she shares no DNA with her idealized, deceased father. By conceiving with a sperm donor, her parents had done something radical during a time when "religious leaders of every faith decreed donor insemination an abomination...It was often considered adultery, and the child a bastard!" To say the news threw her for a loop is to say nothing of Inheritance, the book that chronicles how Shapiro wrestled to reclaim her identity, perhaps to truly claim it for the first time.

To a member of a blended family used to thinking of familial relationships as more breaches than blood, Shapiro’s dissection of her traumatized felt a touch overdue. That said, there’s no questioning her ability to form art out of words, and Inheritance provides plenty of general interest.

Inheritance…. It was often considered adultery, and the child a bastard! To say the news throws her for a loop is to say nothing of Inheritance, the book that chronicles how Shapiro wrestled to reclaim her identity, perhaps to truly claim it for the first time.

To a member of a blended family used to thinking of familial relationships as more breaches than blood, Shapiro’s dissection of her traumatized felt a touch overdue. That said, there’s no questioning her ability to form art out of words, and Inheritance provides plenty of general interest.

For GGMG’s retrospective issue, I decided to review three new memoir (and memoir-ish) books, each of which takes a look at parenting through the rearview mirror.

The Girlfriend Mom
In her author’s note, Dani Alpert writes, “The story you are about to read was written over many years,” and that explains a lot. Without a clear perspective to balance the narrative, we don’t know who to like and what to hope for. The result is a bumpy and fairly unfurling ride. In some ways, that’s a gift. A bravely transparent Alpert gives readers an all-access pass to the good, bad, and ugly bits of a woman who “had never aspired to be a mother” becoming “the other mom.” She touches on hot pickers known to tag new stepmothers, especially those who aren’t already mothers themselves: How do you come to terms with what you give up when dedicating hours to someone else’s kid? Is your partner’s affection a zero-sum game? But I’d summarize the overarching voice of The Girlfriend Mom as “I had these selfish moments, and I’m admitting it and making fun of myself, which means I can’t actually be a selfish person.” As a forward to her book, Alpert includes rejection slips. One reads: “I feel overly specific and even a bit self-centered. I didn’t fall in love here.” Neither did I.

Adult Conversation
“Adult Conversation” is a novel, but it’s also a manifesto. It is a serious take by someone who’s branded herself a humorist. These dualities turn out to be the book’s strength—and its Achilles heel.

The first two-thirds of Adult Conversation reads like a blog post on the overwhelming and unsustainable experience of modern middle-class motherhood written by a spitfire with few fucks left to give. In fact, Ferner does such a thorough job illuminating the cumulative impact of the mundane that she gets redundant and neglects to provide a plot. When the action starts, there issues for starters, how the law works.

Still, Adult Conversation adds value. Ferner puts the condition down on paper in a format few have yet tried. Many readers will see their experience reflected and validated. More importantly, they’d be left with a more feminist note ringing in their ears than the one struck in popular nonfiction books: “The frenzied framework of modern parenthood wasn’t going to change, so we had to—” he had to—if we wanted to survive it, together.”

Gail works as a mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at gailcornwall.comics.com or by finding her on Facebook and Twitter.
Positivity in the Making
By Laure Latham

Hope can take many forms in young children, whether it’s looking forward to making new friends, being optimistic about a new school, or hoping for the best when the situation is less than ideal. Some of these books function as how-tos while others tell stories of overcoming struggles, but they all inspire us to seek a better world where hope and understanding prevail.

Sleepy Toes
Written and illustrated by Kelli McNeil
Falling asleep can be a scary thing for little ones, but this book will help them become aware of their body as it prepares for sleep. The book asks if each body part is getting sleepy and then refers to simple happenings of the day for each. Step by step, children will give permission to their body parts to feel sleepy. It’s a yego bedtime ritual in the making and a book that your children will hope to read regularly.
Ages: 0 to 3 years

Ishi, Simple Tips from a Solid Friend
Written and illustrated by Akiko Yabuki
If your child needs a smile and a hug, Ishi can help. Ishi means “rock” in Japanese and it’s also a rock in this book, but not just any old rock. Ishi is a happy rock that makes good choices in life, overcomes challenges, and turns despair into hope. This clever little book has few words, but can ameliorate almost any bad day with mindfulness and a positive attitude.
Ages: 2 to 5 years

Lola Goes to Work: A Nine-to-Five Therapy Dog
Written by Marcia Goldman
For young and old, hope is embodied by an adorable little terrier with a great attitude. The story of Lola the therapy dog illustrates how therapy dogs are trained and what they do for work. Whether visiting elder care centers, bookstores, or classrooms, Lola brings comfort to people who need it. Using real life pictures and simple text, this book is a great early reader to prompt questions about how we can help others feel better and find hope when they are sad.
Ages: 3 to 8 years

The Kraken’s Rules for Making Friends
Written by Brittany R. Jacobs
Poor Kraken has lost all hope of making friends in the ocean; it’s not easy being terrifying to others. When he tries passing as a friendly koi with a home-knitted costume, his trickery backfires and other sea creatures swim away. The only one who is willing to share some friendly advice is the great white shark. With witty puns and thoughtful wisdom, this book is for anybody who has a hard time making friends.
Ages: 3 to 7 years

Isaac and His Amazing Asperger Superpowers!
Written and illustrated by Melanie Walsh
When your brain works a little differently than other kids, you can have superpowers to help you cope with the outside world. For young Isaac, assistance comes from his incredible memory or his extraordinary sensitivity to sounds. Told from Isaac’s perspective with superhero-themed illustrations, this book goes a long way to inform readers about Asperger’s Syndrome and how kids like Isaac see and feel the world. A great tool to help children with Asperger’s cope socially.
Ages: 3 to 7 years

How to Be Human
Written and illustrated by Florida Frenz
This autobiographical account of autism provides a detailed insight into an autistic child’s head. From figuring out feelings to matching feelings to facial expressions, Florida has to define emotions in a way that she could understand, such as with color illustrations and textures. What’s wonderful about this book is how Florida creates strategies to overcome her inner struggles. Now an articulate young adult, she shares excerpts from her therapy journal so others can find hope in her experience.
Ages: 7 to 12 years

Matylda, Bright and Tender
Written by Holly M. McGhee
Like spaghetti and meatballs, Guy and Sussy are inseparable fourth grade friends who share everything, even a pet gecko named Matylda. When tragedy strikes and Guy dies in a bicycle accident, Sussy feels lost, angry, and confused. In Sussy’s grieving journey, Matylda becomes a beacon of hope. This is an emotional story of friendship, loss, and hope that remains sweet and hopeful.
Ages: 6 to 12 years

Wonder
Written by R.J. Palacio
Auggie is a 10-year-old boy who’s been homeschooled all his life because of craniofacial anomalies. When he starts fifth grade at a local school, he just wants to be accepted as a normal kid, but it’s difficult for his classmates to get past his appearance. The story follows Auggie’s journey from black sheep to school superstar, featuring realistic episodes of middle school life. This amazing book conveys an inspiring story of acceptance and friendship.
Ages: 8 to 12 years

Lucía the Luchadora
Written by Cynthia Leonor Garcia, illustrated by Alyssa Bermudez
Can girls be superheroes? It’s not enough to wear a red cape at the playground and jump off the monkey bars like a boss; Lucía is disheartened when boys at the playground ignore her best efforts, saying that girls are just made of sugar, spice, and everything nice. Thanks to her abuela, she turns up at the playground the next day with a full luchadora costume and a mask. Her secret identity and swift moves get everyone’s attention. Pretty soon, she’s a star and the playground fills with other luchadoras and luchadores. This is a fantastic girl-power book against bullying.
Ages: 3 to 7 years

This article originally appeared in the June/July 2017 issue of GGMG Magazine.
Laure is the author of the mommy blog Frog Mom (www.frogmom.com), as well as the book Best Heels 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 compulsory cream tea stops. You can reach her at info@frogmom.com.
Every Single Thing About Pregnancy Is Amazing!

By Anna Gracia

In a recent survey of GGMG members, moms were divided over which aspects of pregnancy they most enjoyed. Though enduring frequent reminders at the doctor’s office to gain no more than 35 pounds was a popular choice, it was outstripped by more glamorous options such as abstaining from alcohol, leaking pee while sneezing, and being asked if their pregnancy was “planned.”

As one mom puts it, “I love how majestic I felt with my larger body. My husband and I went to the beach when I was 8 months pregnant and he told me I reminded him of a manatee. Manatees were once believed to be goddesses when he told me that.” She pauses. “I might have been slightly offended if he had called me a whale, but a swelle sea cow? I couldn’t wait to get back into that swimsuit.” Another mom notes the unintended benefit of lingering varicose veins: “My toddler just adores using the lines snaking down the back of my legs as a racetrack for his toy cars. It’s a great activity for him while I prop up my swollen ankles!”

“I love how majestic I felt with my larger body. My husband and I went to the beach when I was eight months pregnant and he told me I reminded him of a manatee.”

For Maria Gonzalez, all the physical side effects have been the key to bringing her and her husband closer together. “Before, we would sometimes run out of things to talk about from our day. But now, I’ve got hemorrhoids, constipation, bloating, acid reflux, morning sickness, cramps—you name it. Even though I’m on bed rest and my days might seem boring, bloating, acid reflux, morning sickness, cramps—you name it. I always have something to talk about over dinner.”

Ling Xiang has a different take. “I really appreciate the sense of community my pregnancy brings. Not only do strangers at the supermarket rub my belly and predict how many babies I’m carrying and when I might ‘pop,’ but I just love how fellow restaurant patrons look out for dangerous foods I might eat.” She explains that thanks to her local barista, she is no longer consuming coffee or even tea because he carefully explained all the possible side effects of caffeine on the developing fetus. “My next door neighbor also told me to beware of mangos. She doesn’t actually have kids of her own, but I’m sure she’s done research on the matter, so I’m going to trust her judgment.”

Other GGMG moms highlighted the more nuanced side effects of pregnancy. “I am grateful my mother-in-law is so concerned with when I’m having my next baby,” Caroline Welsley coos. “It makes me feel like she’s really invested in being a grandmother.”

“I’m sure my clients will be more than understanding if I have to reschedule a meeting or two so I can pump or pick up my daughter from daycare,” she states with confidence.

Preeta Singh sums it all up by saying, “I am just so happy to be pregnant, which is great since that’s all anyone seems to talk to me about. And every time someone says, ‘Don’t you just love being pregnant?’ I get to exclaim, ‘Yes!’” She continues, “Even if there were one or two things I didn’t love as much, like people criticizing the names we’ve already chosen or not being able to take any sort of medication because my baby’s comfort and health always comes before my own, I’m sure most people would find them trivial in comparison to the miracle of life I’m growing!”

This article originally appeared in the March 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Anna has survived pregnancy three times and is thrilled not to experience it again.
How Humor Develops in Children

Humor serves as a window into the state of our children’s cognitive skills and contributes to intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

By Catherine Symon

Photographs by Carolyn Soiling Photography

Act 1: The preschool years

[Father and 3-year-old daughter sit together on a couch in their living room. Father is making up a fanciful story and asks daughter to fill in some important names.]

“Father: What kind of story do you want?"

“Daughter: Diddums, a nice little fairy story."

“Father: What do the poop and knock-knock jokes have in common?"

“Daughter: They’re both funny!"

“You know, poop and knock-knock jokes are a big part of our family’s humor. It all begins in infancy."

It all begins in infancy

Humor is such a widespread human competency that the inability to appreciate or understand humor is listed as a characteristic of several developmental and psychological disorders. That near universality, however, doesn’t mean humor is innate. Rather, humor is a learned skill that children start developing as early as infancy. During their first year, infants look to their parents (or other attachment figures) to help them interpret situations they don’t understand. By observing the reactions of their parent or caregiver, babies begin to correlate the situation with a particular reaction. This is what developmental psychologists call social referencing.

Social referencing is important for identifying dangerous situations. For example, the concept of peek-a-boo could be alarming to an infant because her mother’s face keeps disappearing unexpectedly. However, seeing her mother smile and hearing her coo each time she appears communicates to the infant that the game is safe and fun. By 12 months, babies are already capable of identifying certain humorous situations without having to check the reaction of their parent or caregiver. Social referencing continues through much of childhood, but declines as a child gains life experience and establishes her own perceptions of what is funny.

Funny = smart

In recent years, much attention has been paid to the importance of play in a child’s development. For example, free play is thought to promote problem solving, independence, and resiliency, among other things. Paul McGhee, PhD, longtime humor researcher and author of Understanding and Promoting the Development of Children’s Humor, looks at humor as a form of mental play.

McGhee explains that humorous word play, for example, facilitates intellectual development. It can expand a child’s vocabulary by exposing him to new words that he is motivated to learn because he enjoys making people laugh. This motivation also improves his reading skills because he is compelled to read and re-read jokes to memorize them and he even derives pleasure by poring over them when alone. And while your child might drive you crazy by telling the same two or three jokes over and over, that repetition helps to reinforce his memory of both the words and their meanings.

Take these jokes from kidspot.com.au:

“What is a cow without a map? Udderly lost!”

“Why can’t fishermen be generous? Because their business makes them sell fish.”

“Why didn’t the teddy bear finish his dinner? Because he was stuffed!”

“Where does a fish go when it can’t swim? Nowhere; that’s why it’s called fish.”

“Why did the apples break up? Because they had too much sauce!”

“Why did the banana break up with the grape? Because it was too bunch!”

“Why do cows get sick like we do? Because they eat grass!”

“Why did the hamburger walk to the doctor? Because he was bunless!”

“Why were the two sheep playing tennis? Because they had two sheep in!”

“Why are sheep so good at math? Because they always come in flocks.”

“Why didn’t the candy say his prayers? Because he was too sweet!”

“No matter how different kids are from each other, children’s humor development tracks with cognitive development. As our brains mature, so does our ability to understand, appreciate, and create increasingly complex forms of humor. Each new milestone reveals itself in our evolving sense of humor: Discovering object permanence? Let’s play peek-a-boo. Learning how to walk? Watch me pretend to slip on a banana peel. Ditching diapers? Poop and pee it is."

From a developmental standpoint, humor contributes to intellectual, social, and emotional growth. Newer studies point to potential health benefits, including stimulation of the immune system and stress reduction. So how do the poop and knock-knock jokes benefit our children?"

Jennifer Cunningham, MA, a researcher in educational best practices, agrees with McGhee’s appraisal of humor as a form of play. In Children’s Play she writes: “First, humor is enjoyable—in the ways that most play is enjoyable. Second, humor constructs an unreal world—much as make-believe play does. Third, the enjoyable, unreal world of humor often performs the same cognitive, social, and emotional functions as play in general.” Cunningham also cites research that shows elementary-school-aged children seem to find jokes funnier if they have to work to understand it. They enjoy the intellectual challenge of deciphering the joke and appreciate complicated jokes more than overly simplistic or repeated ones.

Incidentally, people who are exceptionally talented at creating humor are generally also highly intelligent. Anthropologist Gil Greengross and his University of New Mexico colleague Geoffrey Miller published a research paper in 2011 confirming results of an earlier study showing that “intelligence predicts humor ability.”

Act 2: Early elementary school

[Impromtu Skype session between aunt and niece.]

“Aunt: Do you know any good jokes?

“Niece: 6-year-old niece [grinning and talking in rapid succession]:

“Why did the apple go to the doctor? Because it had too much sauce!

“Why was the sandwich depressed? Because it had too much bread!”

“Why did the chicken cross the road? To get to the other side!"

“Aunt: Did you know any good jokes?

“Niece: What did the zero say to the eight? I’m Sorry!"

“Aunt: What did the tornado say to the other tornado? See you around!

“Niece: Okay, gotta go. Nice talking to you!

McGhee’s appraisal of humor as a form of play. In Children’s Play she writes: “First, humor is enjoyable—in the ways that most play is enjoyable. Second, humor constructs an unreal world—much as make-believe play does. Third, the enjoyable, unreal world of humor often performs the same cognitive, social, and emotional functions as play in general.” Cunningham also cites research that shows elementary-school-aged children seem to find jokes funnier if they have to work to understand it. They enjoy the intellectual challenge of deciphering the joke and appreciate complicated jokes more than overly simplistic or repeated ones. Incidentally, people who are exceptionally talented at creating humor are generally also highly intelligent. Anthropologist Gil Greengross and his University of New Mexico colleague Geoffrey Miller published a research paper in 2011 confirming results of an earlier study showing that “intelligence predicts humor ability.”

Jennifer Cunningham, MA, a researcher in educational best practices, agrees with McGhee’s appraisal of humor as a form of play. In Children’s Play she writes: “First, humor is enjoyable—in the ways that most play is enjoyable. Second, humor constructs an unreal world—much as make-believe play does. Third, the enjoyable, unreal world of humor often performs the same cognitive, social, and emotional functions as play in general.” Cunningham also cites research that shows elementary-school-aged children seem to find jokes funnier if they have to work to understand it. They enjoy the intellectual challenge of deciphering the joke and appreciate complicated jokes more than overly simplistic or repeated ones. Incidentally, people who are exceptionally talented at creating humor are generally also highly intelligent. Anthropologist Gil Greengross and his University of New Mexico colleague Geoffrey Miller published a research paper in 2011 confirming results of an earlier study showing that “intelligence predicts humor ability.”
Laugh...in good times and in bad
Humor also facilitates social development, particularly when forging relationships. McGhee writes that children who initiate humor are seen as more likable and sociable by their peers. This peer evaluation starts as early as preschool and continues through adulthood. The fact that social bonds are reinforced by humor is especially evident in early elementary school and middle school, when groups of friends use inside jokes to maximize their feeling of belonging.

Making classmates laugh can also help a child to overcome social stigmas (e.g., lack of athleticism, speech or learning delays, poor social skills) that may otherwise isolate them from their peers. The ability to make other people laugh is an incredibly powerful tool: it provides positive reinforcement, which builds self-esteem, boosts confidence, and promotes social ties.

In terms of emotional development, humor and laughter help us to manage our strongest emotions. Children and adults alike can control anger and minimize stress if they can find humor in even the most irritating situations. In this case, McGhee reminds us that laughter isn’t just an expression of joy; humor and laughter can diffuse tense situations. So the next time your child is having a rough day, see if a bout of laughter can get her out of her funk. You should also try it yourself.

Humor offers a window into development
Graduating from one humor stage to another coincides with certain leaps in development. Using Jean Piaget’s classic stages of cognitive development as a model, McGhee created the “Stages of Humor Development.” These stages describe typical humor abilities from infancy through early elementary school.

One basic requirement in understanding humor is the ability to differentiate between intentional (“Ha ha, Mommy pretended to fall asleep and snored!”) and unintentional (“Oops, Mommy fell asleep while she was reading to me”) acts. Research led by Malinda Carpenter of the University of Liverpool shows that this differentiation happens as early as 14 months. Humor can therefore be an effective gauge for what cognitive milestones children have achieved starting at a very young age.

A child’s sense of humor also gives us a window into what concepts they are trying to master. In spite of the fact that my 3-year-old has popped about 2,000 times in her life, her recent experience of saying goodbye to diapers (hooray!) has elevated poop and pee to the top spot in her joke repertoire. She also enjoys silly word games and rhymes now that her command of language is blossoming. A young toddler, on the other hand, would be more interested in physical humor (peek-a-boo, tickling, making funny faces) because his language skills are less developed and he explores his world by moving and touching. As your child approaches tweendom and adolescence, don’t be surprised when you start to love/off-off-color jokes. It can be shocking, but know that it is normal for children this age to be grappling with novel topics like sex as they navigate puberty.

How to encourage your child’s humor
Clearly humor plays an important role in child development. We also know that kids start by learning from their parents and other key attachment figures. How can you help build your child’s sense of humor? Don’t be concerned if you’re not a natural comedian. McGhee writes that humor will develop without any special effort from parents. Simple actions like engaging in silly play and laughing at your child’s jokes (whether learned or made up) encourages them to explore humor. But if you want to help your child’s sense of humor blossom, there are a number of things you can do:

• Tell jokes and teach them to your kids. Help them to learn what is appropriate. It may often use humor as a testing ground to explore boundaries when humor becomes offensive or mean-spirited. Children often use humor as a safety net to see what is appropriate. It may also indicate that they are looking for help in understanding the subject of the joke.

“Graduating from one humor stage to another coincides with certain leaps in development.”

• Most importantly, join in the fun. Don’t just send them off to play. Participate in freeze dancing, Duck Duck Goose, funny face contests and whatever else they’re into.

• Lastly, don’t be afraid to draw your child into the joke. If you don’t remember any or you need more examples, there are countless kid-friendly jokes online.

Stages of Humor Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0: Pre-humor smiling and laughing</td>
<td>Pre-humor smiling and laughing</td>
<td>Early infancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1: Laughter at the attachment figure</td>
<td>Laughing during peek-a-boo with parent</td>
<td>6 months to 12 or 15 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2: Treating an object as a different object</td>
<td>Using a banana as a “phone”</td>
<td>12 or 15 months to 3, 4 or 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a: Misnaming objects or actions</td>
<td>When asked to point to her nose, grins and points to her ear</td>
<td>2 years to 3 or 4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b: Opposites—a special case of misnaming</td>
<td>“This ice cube is so hot!”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a: Playing with word sounds</td>
<td>“Funny bunny hunny dunny wunny!”</td>
<td>3 years to 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b: Nonsense real-word combinations</td>
<td>“Can I have some moon juice?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4c: Distortion of features of objects, people or animals</td>
<td>“The giraffes at the zoo can fly.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4d: Gender reversal</td>
<td>“Raggedy Ann is my pretend brother.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-riddle stage</td>
<td>Doesn’t have firm command of riddles or jokes, but attempts to make them up</td>
<td>5 years to 6 or 7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Jokes and riddles</td>
<td>Jokes contain words with clever double meanings</td>
<td>6 or 7 years +</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Paul E. McGhee, PhD

This article originally appeared in the March 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Catherine is a medical writer. In spite of what the experts say, she is pretty sure that potty humor never gets old.
Building resilience

Certain conditions in a child's family, school, or community can promote resilience, maintains Bonnie Benard, author of Fostering Resiliency in Kids: Protective Factors in the Family, School, and Community. Children who receive warm, affectionate care and support from at least one person form a sense of basic trust and safety. Children who are held to high expectations begin to believe that they are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encouraged to participate meaningfully within the family (for example, by taking care of little brother or the family pet), school, or community come to assume they are worthy. Children who are bright and capable. Children who are encour
and sexy; but also stay thin, maintain their relationships, and become accomplished at high levels. They have to do everything boys are expected to do and more, and accomplish it all perfectly.” Moreover, according to Choate, social media pressures affect girls far more than boys, primarily because girls spend more time on social media and value their social media “numbers” such as likes, followers, friends, and re-tweets more than boys.

How can parents help develop a child’s resilience to cultural pressures? “As a new parent, decide what you want for your child,” Choate says. “What is most important to you? Then decide to make parenting decisions about whether you want to participate in these cultural trends.”

Although we parents cannot bear our children’s heartaches or eliminate all cultural pressures, we can help develop their resilience. Every child can learn how to bounce back a little more quickly than before and be stronger for it.

Additional Parenting Resources

This article originally appeared in the July/August 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Jessica remembers vividly the day she got a 37 percent on a high school math test. She lives in Noe Valley and has an almost 2-year-old daughter.

Moms’ Concerns

As much as we’d like to shield our children from pain, social challenges and cultural pressures are inescapable. Here are some GGMG moms’ responses when asked, “What’s your biggest concern for your daughter or son in today’s culture?”

DAUGHTERS

“I think it’s extremely important to make her confident and proud of being a woman, for her to understand the differences between genders, but not to accept the discrimination caused by these differences…” Another thing I am very concerned about is sexual harassment… and not only the extreme cases. I am afraid of her experiencing anything that makes her uncomfortable.” —Marissa

“This is hard to answer as my daughter is only 10 months old.” That said, one of my future concerns will certainly be gender equality. Not only when it comes to compensation and career growth, but also when it comes to men and women in managerial roles and how these managers are perceived. For example, a driven, direct, and successful female manager may be viewed as ‘bossy’… A man exuding the same qualities is simply a successful manager who has worked his way up and knows what he’s doing.” —Shannon

“I don’t have any particular concerns regarding raising a boy over a girl. It’s important that he learns to treat others who are different than him with respect. I think that goes without saying for both genders though.” —Nicole

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla

SONS

“What’s your biggest concern for your son in today’s culture?”

“I don’t have any particular concerns regarding raising a boy over a girl. It’s important that he learns to treat others who are different than him with respect. I think that goes without saying for both genders though.” —Nicole

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time to be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla

Parents were also asked, “Is there anything you would like to pass on to other parents about raising a boy or girl?”

“…one thing that stands out is that the stereotypes regarding what a boy or girl should be or do are really harmful.” —Nicolette

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time to be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla

...but also stay thin, maintain their relationships, and become accomplished at high levels. They have to do everything boys are expected to do and more, and accomplish it all perfectly.” Moreover, according to Choate, social media pressures affect girls far more than boys, primarily because girls spend more time on social media and value their social media “numbers” such as likes, followers, friends, and re-tweets more than boys.

How can parents help develop a child’s resilience to cultural pressures? “As a new parent, decide what you want for your child,” Choate says. “What is most important to you? Then decide to make parenting decisions about whether you want to participate in these cultural trends.”

Although we parents cannot bear our children’s heartaches or eliminate all cultural pressures, we can help develop their resilience. Every child can learn how to bounce back a little more quickly than before and be stronger for it.

Additional Parenting Resources

This article originally appeared in the July/August 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Jessica remembers vividly the day she got a 37 percent on a high school math test. She lives in Noe Valley and has an almost 2-year-old daughter.

Moms’ Concerns

As much as we’d like to shield our children from pain, social challenges and cultural pressures are inescapable. Here are some GGMG moms’ responses when asked, “What’s your biggest concern for your daughter or son in today’s culture?”

DAUGHTERS

“I think it’s extremely important to make her confident and proud of being a woman, for her to understand the differences between genders, but not to accept the discrimination caused by these differences…” Another thing I am very concerned about is sexual harassment… and not only the extreme cases. I am afraid of her experiencing anything that makes her uncomfortable.” —Marissa

“This is hard to answer as my daughter is only 10 months old.” That said, one of my future concerns will certainly be gender equality. Not only when it comes to compensation and career growth, but also when it comes to men and women in managerial roles and how these managers are perceived. For example, a driven, direct, and successful female manager may be viewed as ‘bossy’… A man exuding the same qualities is simply a successful manager who has worked his way up and knows what he’s doing.” —Shannon

“I don’t have any particular concerns regarding raising a boy over a girl. It’s important that he learns to treat others who are different than him with respect. I think that goes without saying for both genders though.” —Nicole

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time to be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla

SONS

“What’s your biggest concern for your son in today’s culture?”

“I don’t have any particular concerns regarding raising a boy over a girl. It’s important that he learns to treat others who are different than him with respect. I think that goes without saying for both genders though.” —Nicole

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time to be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla

Parents were also asked, “Is there anything you would like to pass on to other parents about raising a boy or girl?”

“…” —Nicolette

“I hope for my boy to be confident enough to stand for himself and at the same time to be confident enough to show his emotions. I think there is a big pressure on men to be stoic and hide their insecurities and fears as if they don’t even exist. I think it is very hard to live in such [a] way…” —Ludmilla
Anti-anger parenting: from yelling diets to unfailing calm

These days the mommy blogosphere is awash with posts urging parents to stop raising their voices. Articles like “10 Things I Learned When I Stopped ‘Shouting at My Kids’” and “When Yelling Is Worse Than Spanking,” as well as books with even more emphatic titles like Not Less, Love More and Peaceful Parent, Happy Kids: How to Stop Yelling and Start Connecting, extort us to rein in our expressions of anger. These writers treat yelling as a weakness or failing, an injustice even, about which one ought to feel ashamed. Hands Free Mama writes, “I hated myself in those moments. What had become of me that I needed to scream at two precious little people who I loved more than life”? Rachel Zimmerman succinctly adds, “I do it, and then I feel dirty.”

Some parenting books go further than warning against shouting, telling us to maintain an even keel at all times, to be an unwaveringly tranquil ship on the turbulent seas of toddlerhood. Parenting with Love & Logic. Adults will need to set firm, loving limits using enforceable statements without showing anger. After all, these authors reason, adult emotion is not something that needs to be taught. If you make it clear that you’ll deny them that satisfaction—affecting a sort of preternatural calm and responding to screaming children with a level tone—you stop tantrums midstream and prevent future ones. Like Princess Elsa in Frozen, many of us internalize these admonitions, struggling to “conceal, don’t feel,” put on a show. It’s all too easy to lose sight of the fact that the anti-yelling, positive-emoting-only parenting push is a relatively new and limited movement. Historically, yelling was the least of children’s (let alone parents’) communication issues.

Yelling is defined as “saying something” very loudly especially because you are angry, surprised, or are trying to get someone’s attention.” It is not synonymous with verbal abuse, which generally involves name-calling and other substantively destructive language. Of course, communicating perfectly reasonable messaging at a higher than standard volume can rise to the level of verbal abuse if it is imbued with enough venom. Frequency alone, however, does not convert yelling into child maltreatment under standards propagated by psychiatrists and government agencies.

“Railing hypocritically about using one’s words and problem-solving to resolve conflict, I sputtered and spat until all four of us shed tears. It was not my best moment. But was it bad parenting?”

Constructive anger

Some of parenting’s most educated and trusted voices agree that parental displays of rage can be quite constructive. In Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, preeminent psychologist John Gottman explains that by permitting your kids to perceive your anger, “you are demonstrating a level tone—you stop tantrums midstream and prevent future ones. Like Princess Elsa in Frozen, many of us internalize these admonitions, struggling to “conceal, don’t feel,” put on a show. It’s all too easy to lose sight of the fact that the anti-yelling, positive-emoting-only parenting push is a relatively new and limited movement. Historically, yelling was the least of children’s (let alone parents’) communication issues.

Yelling is defined as “saying something” very loudly especially because you are angry, surprised, or are trying to get someone’s attention.” It is not synonymous with verbal abuse, which generally involves name-calling and other substantively destructive language. Of course, communicating perfectly reasonable messaging at a higher than standard volume can rise to the level of verbal abuse if it is imbued with enough venom. Frequency alone, however, does not convert yelling into child maltreatment under standards propagated by psychiatrists and government agencies.

“Railing hypocritically about using one’s words and problem-solving to resolve conflict, I sputtered and spat until all four of us shed tears. It was not my best moment. But was it bad parenting?”

Constructive anger

Some of parenting’s most educated and trusted voices agree that parental displays of rage can be quite constructive. In Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child, preeminent psychologist John Gottman explains that by permitting your kids to perceive your anger, “you are demonstrating...”

Embracing Anger

By Gail Cornwall

Photographs by Lindsay Loyer Photography

Shifting my screaming newborn from my shoulder down to my arms (an attempt to calm the cocky little bunny as well as buy myself a few additional inches between her mouth and my ear drum), I surveyed the disaster unfolding in the single space that serves as playroom, living room, dining room, and kitchen in our small San Francisco apartment. An unfolded jumble of clean laundry sat on the couch, and dirty clothes littered the floor. Crushy clothes covered the counters. The hardwood floor beneath the kids’ chairs appeared carpeted thanks to food droppings, and the broom I’d gotten out five hours ago but not yet used leaned mockingly against the wall.

Despite my best shrug and sway, her howling continued. Don’t shake the baby, I reminded myself.

My almost three-year-old son, one hand planted inside the back of his underwear, upended yet another bin of toys.

And still she wailed. Don’t shake the baby. My five-year-old demanded immediate attention in the grating cadence she’d picked up after just two weeks of kindergartening, a song-song of ineradicable that somehow manages to combine the shrill whine of a baby with the sassiness of a teenager. The latest crisis? “Hungry.” My darlings have divided into two pant legs of her jeggings touched her shins at slightly different points.

“Tricks to limit yelling

In order for shouting to serve as an effective teaching moment, however, it must be fairly infrequent. Here are a few tips I rely on to help prevent yelling from becoming the status quo in my household:

Focus on self-care: paying down your sleep debt is proven to enhance impulse control, and snacking can keep you from getting “hangry” (a portmanteau of “hungry” and “angry”).

• Try to maintain age-appropriate expectations
• Relax the schedule: I often let you at
the kids because I’m racing the clock.

• Separate: I leave the room or send my kids to theirs, explain- ing, “I need a little space right now because if we stay together I will probably end up yelling.”

• Take a deep breath.

• Adopt code words: when I say “Run, Monkey Sauce, Run,” my little ones know I’m on the brink of blowing a gasket.

• Vent: find a judgment-free friend to whom you can text such truths as “if motherhood were a job I’d hand in my resignation today.”

• Whisper: sometimes you’ve got to fake it ’til you make it, and being barely audible forces everyone to pipe down and focus for a few moments.

• Repeat “no one can be perfect”: this mantra both helps me see my child’s offense as forgivable and keeps me from exploding simply due to the pressure to explode.

• Find a way to blow off steam: techniques that help kids channel their frustra-tion—like screaming into a pillow, biting a stuffed animal, and ripping paper—work for moms, too.

• Don’t hold a grudge: to keep their misbehavior from having a cumulative effect, I ask my kids to lay their upturned hands on top of mine, we then take turns putting offenses into our layered palms (e.g., “when Stuart banged holes into the new window sill with the ice cream scoop” and “when Mommy grabbed the ice cream scoop away from Stuart”) and together shout “put it behind us!” as we fling the imaginary contents over our shoulders.

• Give everyone an out: I often avoid a power struggle by asking the offending child if they’d like a “do over” and then letting the initial transgression slide.

• Be silly: do something bonkers to shock and awe the kiddos and take the edge off your own ire (I like to announce, “It’s donkey time” and try my best “hee-oo” while kicking a log out behind me).

• Get out of the house: physical exertion, containment of the kids (in a stroller, car seat, or shopping cart), change of venue, fresh air, and the presence of other adults all work wonders.

Refusing guilt

At the end of the day, high-quality parenting allows freedom of choice within the confines of firm boundaries, makes sure children feel valued, and models healthy physical, emotional, and social behavior. If you limit the occurrence of yelling and engage your kids in a postmortem when it happens, you can serve each of these purposes and let go of the guilt we’re told to feel when our negative emotions inevi-tably find expression. You are only human, and your humanity can be used to bring you and your child closer rather than threaten your brand. Do your best to accept this truth: you can act in anger and still be mom of the year.

Case in point: after I lost it that day shortly after my third child’s birth, I asked the two big kids to sit down on the floor with me. I told them I got angry because my son broke one of our family’s rules by hurting his big sister on purpose. I explained that instead of saying, “I feel mad,” I yelled because I also felt tired, overwhelmed, and frustrated about all the things I wanted to do but couldn’t get done, like helping the kids with their problems right away and keeping the house tidy. I concluded, “Mommy’s a little fuzzy, and it’s harder to remember to use my inside voice and take deep breaths when I’m fuzzy.” Both kids nodded knowingly. My five-year-old excitedly piped up, “Mommy, that totally happens to me! But it’s okay, Mommy. No one can be perfect. We just have to try our best and then make amends when we mess up. You said sorry. Why don’t we put it behind us?” At the end of that day I didn’t hate myself, and I didn’t feel dirty. I stood tall, proud of my parenting—anger and all.

This article originally appeared in the March 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.
Technology and Kids: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Sifting through the data, we determine how best to use technology to help children develop lifelong skills.

By Jani Grich Photographs by Mini Anna Photography

Parenting so often calls us to check in with our biases and assumptions, and do our homework to discover what’s actually best for our children. There’s hardly a topic more pressing than technology, which has bombarded our lives in recent years.

In my household there’s a divide: my husband is an avid techie who couldn’t wait to download educational apps for our daughter. I, on the other hand, would prefer she get her education from the natural world, and am skeptical about the effects of technology on her young brain. So researching this article was compelling.

What became clear immediately is that the information is incredibly loaded, with headlines ranging from “The Terrifying Truth About What Technology is Doing to Children” to “Technology in the Natural World, and Am Skeptical About the Effects of Technology on Her Young Brain.” So researching this article was compelling.

In my household there’s a divide: my husband is an avid techie who couldn’t wait to download educational apps for our daughter. I, on the other hand, would prefer she get her education from the natural world, and am skeptical about the effects of technology on her young brain. So researching this article was compelling.

What became clear immediately is that the information is incredibly loaded, with headlines ranging from “The Terrifying Truth About What Technology is Doing to Children” to “Technology in the Natural World, and Am Skeptical About the Effects of Technology on Her Young Brain.” So researching this article was compelling.

In my household there’s a divide: my husband is an avid techie who couldn’t wait to download educational apps for our daughter. I, on the other hand, would prefer she get her education from the natural world, and am skeptical about the effects of technology on her young brain. So researching this article was compelling.

What became clear immediately is that the information is incredibly loaded, with headlines ranging from “The Terrifying Truth About What Technology is Doing to Children” to “Technology in the Natural World, and Am Skeptical About the Effects of Technology on Her Young Brain.” So researching this article was compelling.
video games increase aggression and participants concluded that violent video games do not appear to result in poor impulse control. Frighteningly, though, one study found that kids who had played violent video games were four times more likely to report that they’d carried a weapon to school and were more likely to be arrested and prosecuted for criminal acts as adults. Another convincing piece of research was a longitudinal, cross-cultural, meta-analysis that reported a link between exposure to violent video games and increased aggressive behavior.

Christopher Ferguson, a prolific researcher who believes that the previously mentioned studies overstate the situation, claims that factors such as depression, antisocial personality traits, family violence, and peer influence are larger factors than media violence contributing to violent behavior. Although that may be true, it doesn’t negate the link. Groups including the AAP, American Medical Association (AMA), and American Psychological Association (APA) support the conclusion that the research translates to significant societal level effects. The good news? Research shows that kids whose parents actively manage their media use consume less and make higher quality choices on their own.

And about that Facebook post...

Many of us have a love-hate relationship with social media. And it’s no wonder, given that the immediate rewards of social media have a dopaminergic effect on the brain: every time a text or a “like” is received, happy hormones are released in the brain, at a level similar to when a groom sees his bride at the altar. In addition, social media is ripe with opportunities for social comparison, which can potentially lead to either enhanced or harmed self-image. In fact, satisfaction with body image and/or life is negatively associated with time spent on Facebook. And unfortunately, kids are seeing and learning things on the internet we’d rather they weren’t. One study found increased risk-taking behavior in adolescents to be related to exposure to risky social media content.

This is yet another area where parents are called to monitor their children’s use of media, teach self-regulation, and encourage healthy media choices. The same way you wouldn’t let them eat cookies all day long, it’s best not to let them indulge their Instagram obsession. Although “Facebook Depression” exists, it’s also been shown that supportive communication with parents can alleviate it. And don’t forget that there are powerful pro-social opportunities presented by social media. Kids can and do use Facebook to pay it forward and change the world.

The big takeaway

Don’t get lackadecal. The evidence so far supports that smart use of technology includes:

- avoiding over-consumption/sedentary lifestyles,
- allowing kids to be their digital native selves and remembering that their brains are radically different from ours,
- balancing technological and non-technological growth and learning opportunities,
- choosing technology that has an educational component or pro-social benefit more often than passive consumption or addictive social media,
- proactively encouraging kids to flourish with the amazing opportunities provided in the digital environment, and
- recognizing the negative impact of violent media and educating children about the reality of violence when they are exposed to it.

We’re all familiar with IQ and EQ. Perhaps we ought to start thinking in terms of a TQ—technological quotient. This would include both hard skills, such as skillful gaming and discerning internet surfing, as well as soft skills like knowing when to turn it off and how to use technology to maximize our own creative potential, sense of belonging and self-worth, and interpersonal relationships.

In the decades to come, the gap between those with high and low TQ is likely to be frighteningly evident. For particularly moving examples, see the movie Idiocracy and compare it to a series of inspiring TED talks by young adults called TEDxNextGenerationAsheville.

Being mindful and investing significant time and energy in teaching our kids lifelong skills to maximize their TQ is perhaps one of the best things we can do for them.

This article originally appeared in the November 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Jami is a psychologist specializing in teaching couples how to have healthy conflict in just four hours. She’s definitely a digital immigrant and is grateful to have married a man who functions as her personal tech support hotline.

How Much Screen Time Is OK?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) previously recommended no screen time for kids under 2 and two hours maximum daily for children, but their new guidelines highlight the importance of teaching kids “healthy concepts of digital use and citizenship.” The AAP’s 2016 recommendations for children’s use of screen time, listed below, can be summarized as “monitor, co-view, and model.”

- pay attention to their online environment just as you would any other environment
- set limits and make unplugged time a daily priority
- be aware of what kids are doing online and what friends they’re doing it with
- join them in their online activities
- be a good role model in your own media use
- remember that media use is not a good substitution for face-to-face communication
- create tech-free zones (especially kids’ bedrooms) and times (such as dinner)
- don’t use technology as an emotional pacifier; teach kids emotional regulation
- do your homework regarding “educational” apps and read reviews of video games (www.commonsensemedia.org is a great resource)
- help teens create appropriate online relationships and behave appropriately; help them understand the importance of privacy and the fact that their digital footprint is indefinite
- use kids’ online mistakes as teachable moments and seek help if you see any red flags such as sexting, bullying, or posting self-harm images
GGMG COMMITTEE UPDATES

As the news about the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) spread globally from this past winter into spring, another set of articles appeared alongside those about the virus: discrimination, xenophobia, and racism against people of Asian descent.

Throughout the world, these stories have become a creeping presence in the COVID-19 pandemic. Research shows that there is a link between discriminatory language and actions, and the stories about discriminatory language progressed to people and groups of people and that the name COVID-19 was chosen very carefully to avoid repeating those mistakes. We can echo other people’s statements when they stand up to racism, by agreeing or offering our support.

“We can echo other people's statements when they stand up to racism, by agreeing or offering our support.”

We teach our kids not to interrupt, yet interrupting can signal that something is so important to address that it can’t wait. Combining this tactic with asking questions can open the door to education. As Tolerance.org offers, “you might explain that it’s actually not common anymore to name a disease after its place of origin, that there’s a long, bad history of associating diseases with specific groups of people and that the name COVID-19 was chosen very carefully to avoid repeating those mistakes.”

Talking to kids about any hard topic is, well... hard. When you talk to your kids about the COVID-19 pandemic, use age-appropriate language and break the information up into separate conversations. Be conscious of how you frame places and groups of people. If your kids are older and reading the news, point out the articles on discrimination and racism and ask what they think. Hard topics don’t have to be a single conversation, but instead let the discussion be open-ended and ongoing. And if the way you handled a particular conversation doesn’t sit well with you, don’t hesitate to revisit the topic with your children, which makes it a learning experience for all involved.

1. Access the form and read more at www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org/stop-aapi-hate/
2. www.tolerance.org/magazine/how-to-respond-to-coronavirus-racism

PARTNERSHIPS

Our team of amazing women works with local businesses to bring exclusive deals to our members. We work closely with strategic partners such as JCCSF, UrbanSitter, Recess Collective, and Peekadoodle, to obtain benefits for all GGMG members on an annual contractual basis, as well as additional benefits for GGMG volunteers. Through our Friends Program, we also work with various local companies to obtain substantial promotions and discounts for GGMG members. With roughly 3,000 members, we use the power of our community to gain exclusive deals on everything from childcare to adult fitness classes to food delivery services. We look forward to continuing to support our GGMG community with new and relevant discounts through these unprecedented times.

Current discounts and benefits for GGMG members are listed in the “Member Perks” section of our website:
www.ggmg.org/member-perks/friends (Friends Program) and www.ggmg.org/member-perks/partners (Partners Program) And look for our monthly GGMG Member Perks email highlighting many of these great deals! We are always searching for new members to join our committee. If you are interested in joining, please contact Director of Partnerships Kimberly Newman at partnerships@ggmg.org.

MEMBER SUPPORT

The global pandemic has impacted parents hard, each of us feeling deeply the loss of our support systems. Without childcare, extended family support, self-care time, and in many cases, employment and income, we find ourselves in exhausting daily marathons. Networks like GGMG are more critical than ever before. The Member Support committee has been urgently responding to members’ needs for a helping hand during this crisis. Now, as always, we are available to support you by providing:
- Resources for domestic violence, marriage therapy, and child behavior specialists
- Membership scholarships for financially strained members
- Single moms meet-ups
- Grocery assistance to lighten your load

Please don’t hesitate to reach out to member.support@ggmg.org if you need a hand. We’re always looking for more volunteers as well!
Virtual Music & Movement Class with Cucu’s PlayHouse

A fun class for kids of various ages (newborn to 6 years old), this virtual music and movement class includes a selection of children’s songs in English and Spanish that guide the class from start to finish. Activities are related to the lyrics in order to familiarize the children with the words and their meanings. Participants (children, parents, caregivers) are able to join the Zoom video from home and interact in real time. After registering, participants will receive an email with a personal link to join the classes, as well as an email reminder 1 hour prior to each class.

- **Date:** Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. and Thursdays at 10:30 a.m.
- **Cost:** $25 for one month of weekly classes
- **Register:** [www.cucusplayhouse.com/ggmg](http://www.cucusplayhouse.com/ggmg)

KidzToPros LIVE STEM, Arts, and Sports Programs

KidzToPros LIVE is a series of online, weekly enrichment programs for students in grades K through 12. Their most popular STEM, Arts, and Sports programs are taught in real time by expert instructors to groups of 10 students. Your child can join our online programs from anywhere with a wifi or cell connection and a computer. The variety of activities offered will improve your child’s critical thinking and decision-making skills, spark their creativity, and get them moving! GGMG members receive a 20% discount on all online programs. Use code LIVE20P at checkout.

- **Date:** Multiple dates during May through December
- **Cost:** $100 to $600 depending on age and the class.
- **Register:** [www.kidztopros.com](http://www.kidztopros.com)

**GGMG NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS**

Due to the ongoing shelter-in-place and related COVID-19 shutdowns we are not planning events more than 3-4 weeks ahead. As things slowly start to open back up, and we add more events, we will update the events calendar on the GGMG website as well as the GGMG Facebook page. Hope you are all safe and healthy.

---

Wine Country Retreat

Enjoy a relaxing getaway in West Sonoma! Local wineries, breweries, hiking trails, and apple orchards nearby.

- **Features**
  - Sleeps 10 people - 3 bed / 3 bath + 2 sleeper couches
  - 1 hour from San Francisco
  - 15 min drive to Russian River / Bodega Bay
  - Kids play area, heated pool, hot tub, shaded lounge, outdoor shower, and grill

- **Learn More**
  - Airbnb: [familygetaway.org](http://familygetaway.org)
  - VRBO: [https://www.vrbo.com/1835391](https://www.vrbo.com/1835391)
  - [www.lauradallagata.com](http://www.lauradallagata.com)

---

**CAREER COACHING TO HELP YOU CRAFT A STRATEGY TO THRIVE AT BOTH WORK AND HOME**

**Workable Concept**

Your employer deserves your best work. Your partner deserves your best self. Your child deserves more than you can imagine. Your aging loved ones deserve more of your attention. You deserve to have our help shaping your game plan.

- [www.workableconcept.com](http://www.workableconcept.com)
- heather@workableconcept.com
- Heather Ainsworth
  - (650) 731-1857
Dining Together When You’re 3,000 Miles Apart
By Jennifer Hofmann

My children have dinner with my parents twice a week. My 5-year-old daughter, Lotte, and twin toddler sons, Jamie and Ryan, wash their hands, climb into their seats—one kitchen chair and two high chairs—and patiently wait for the electronic beep that indicates a call coming in. Then my parents, at 8:30 p.m. New York time, show up on the laptop, sitting at their dining room table, to great cheering and squealing from my tiny army of three. Meals are described, analyzed, and shared through the screen; glasses and sippy cups are cheered repeatedly and a great mass of smiling kids and an even broader set of smiling grandparents fill my kitchen.

We first started our twice-a-week dinners when Lotte was small, around 2 years old. I would sit at the table with her and we would talk to my parents. I’d ask her questions and she would answer me, sometimes looking at them, but really just responding to me. My parents called it “Baby TV.” It was mostly them observing, and my daughter didn’t really seem to pay much attention to their presence. It was fun, but not interactive.

Then one day, while I was pregnant with the boys, we were having dinner, and I left the table to grab something in the kitchen. While I was gone, I heard Lotte start describing to my parents what was happening. She was chattering away—it wasn’t hard to see what was going on, so a few minutes later I walked back into the kitchen—with the table in view but out of Lotte’s line of sight, and she started talking to my parents again. She even offered to sing them a song. I had been trying for weeks to get her to engage; apparently all I had to do was leave her alone with the laptop.

I had been trying for weeks to get her to engage; apparently all I had to do was leave her alone with the laptop. My parents what was happening. She was chattering away—it was so great! Then when I returned to the table, she stopped and resumed her dinner, and my parents continued talking to me. It wasn’t hard to see what was going on, so a few minutes later I walked back into the kitchen—with the table in view but out of Lotte’s line of sight, and she started talking to my parents again. She even offered to sing them a song. I had been trying for weeks to get her to engage; apparently all I had to do was leave her alone with the laptop.

Dinner with my parents became really wonderful from that instant—no shyness or quiet side glances, just immediate smiles and laughter followed by reaching requests of “up! up! up!” We’ve even branched out a little and roped in some other family members, a “Super Skype,” as Lotte calls it. Sometimes we conference chat with my great aunt in Florida along with my parents. The quality of the conversation seems to decrease as the number of people chatting increases, but everyone still seems pretty happy when we log off. This summer while in Buffalo, my aunt came up for a surprise visit and as we all sat down to dinner Lotte declared, “We’re Skyping—in real life!” We all agreed and cheered the declaration.

Communicating this way makes me really happy. Would I prefer my parents to live close enough so we could see them once a week? Sure. But a very simple piece of free technology makes the distance and time apart a little easier to bear, and allows my most favorite people a chance to come together, over dinner, twice a week.

This article originally appeared in the November 2016 issue of GGMG Magazine.

Jennifer is a mother to a small army of children, a writer, and a member of various book clubs despite rarely reading the books. She is an expert on playgrounds that are completely enclosed and finds herself daily explaining that “yes, they’re twins, yes, they do look alike—they’re identical.” She hopes her daughter will be able to tell her brothers apart before they start to seriously mess with her.
Golden Gate Mothers Group
P.O. Box 475866
San Francisco, CA 94147

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.

Are you a Bay Area mom?
Want to receive this magazine?
Join GGMG today at www.ggmg.org.

Home has never been as important.
Marin offers more home for the money, more
sunshine, more outdoor space and an easy
commute. Low interest rates and more
inventory make this the time to explore what
your next chapter could look like in Marin.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

It is a common dilemma among young families
living in San Francisco, to stay in the City or
venture across the bridge to Marin. Meet SF
expert, Emily Beaven, and Marin expert, Lori
Docherty. We’re here to guide you home.

Emily Beaven
415.730.9759
emily.beaven@compass.com
www.emilybeaven.com
DRE 01972840

Lori Docherty
415.254.7016
lori.docherty@compass.com
www.loridocherty.com
DRE 01370723

Compass is a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdraw without notice. No statement is made as to accuracy of any description. All measurements and square footages are approximate. Exact dimensions can be obtained by retaining the services of an architect or engineer. This is not intended to solicit property already listed.