

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2019



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magazine

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# Letter from the Editor: Fear Itself

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a Cole Valley-based editor and photographer and mom to three children who she's determined not to pass her phobias on to.

and particularly since becoming a mother, my fears have skyrocketed in quantity. Taxis, gondolas, the open sea, doctors—all are fair game for a healthy dose of anxiety.

Recently I was riding an elevator at Target with my 4-year-old. Elevators are a brand-new addition to my fear portfolio. Once encased in the lurching metal contraption, I tense up until I hear that reassuring ding, signaling a successful ride. Except on that day, the ding never came. Somewhere between the first and second floors, the elevator quietly came to a halt. My throat closed up, my heart began to pound in my head, and I was overcome by the urge to pee. I turned my panicked gaze to my daughter, who was smiling, blissfully unaware of the unfolding crisis. I silently berated myself. We should have taken the escalator. We should

For most of my life, only two things really frightened me: airplanes and heights. Triggering situations presented themselves infrequently and could usually be smoothly mitigated—popping a couple of Xanax before a flight, skipping a field trip to Boston's tallest skyscraper. But as I've rounded the corner from youth and see middle age in the distance,

have done our errands the following day. We would be trapped for hours. I would wet my pants. I felt trapped by my life choices that were now threatening the future of my family. There was no escape.

Not all fears are so dire, but many are similarly overstated and sometimes irrational. Veronica Reilly-Granich on page 20 takes a look at some of our most common fears surrounding safety and investigates whether our emotional experiences are grounded in facts. On page 16, Jennifer Butterfoss pushes back against the idea of helicopter parenting and explores how risky play is beneficial to children's development. And on page 24 we present an important archival piece by Juli Fraga, who explains the warning signs of postpartum depression and anxiety and demystifies this frightening but treatable condition.

My elevator ordeal lasted about 20 seconds, after which time a fellow passenger said, "Whoops, *that's* not supposed to happen. Good thing you folks are riding with a repairman!" and took a key attached to his belt, opened the master panel,

pressed a few buttons, and we started moving again. I took a deep breath, gripped the hand of my daughter (still completely unfazed), and we

stepped out into the buzz of the store.

It's clear that as I've gotten older and become responsible for the safety of others, I've begun to see the world as scarier, less predictable, and often out of my control. And I'm coming to realize that being an adult—and especially a parent—requires accepting uncertainty and facing our fears head-on, taking that first step into the unknown and having faith that things will turn out ok.

Sonya Abrams

## Housekeeping

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**COMING NEXT:** December/January: Connections

Have an idea for an issue theme or article? Please email [editor@ggmg.org](mailto:editor@ggmg.org).

**THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY:** Big and consuming client (that is awesome with amazing people), transitions into West Portal K, and first weeks of preschool; starting kindergarten; gearing up to take the GRE in a few weeks; trip to Paris and Champagne, going to Disneyland, and riding the Millennium Falcon; nonstop house guests (counting 7 weeks now); still "moving in" to our new house, 3 months later.

# Letter from the Board: All We Have to Fear

by Virginia Green

There are plenty of things I used to think I was afraid of—spiders, public speaking, and gas station restrooms, to name a few—but I don't think I ever knew true fear until I became a mother and a part of me, so tiny and vulnerable, was suddenly living outside of me. New to both motherhood and San Francisco, overcome by postpartum hormones and the fear that I was undoubtedly messing up this new baby of mine (who cried all the time and didn't like nursing), I turned to the GGMG forums. Was it normal to feel this way? I asked. Was I doing everything wrong? Other moms were quick to help me realize that this was not an uncommon feeling, especially mere days after giving birth. I breathed a sigh of relief that I was not alone.

From the moment our children arrive, we torture ourselves with fears that, while they may vary slightly from parent to parent, essentially boil down to the same worry: How can I keep my child safe? And those fears can quickly become incapacitating if not balanced with trust—trust that my child will wake up every morning, trust that she will look both ways

current fears are related to my kids (my old fear of spiders seems almost laughable by comparison). From swim lessons and CPR course recommendations, to earthquake prep and childproofing tips, I am a less fearful and better-prepared mother thanks to all of you, and I have found comfort in the reassurance that we're all in this together.

And yet, don't forget that your GGMG membership includes more than just access to the forums! We hope you have taken advantage of your membership by attending some of our fabulous autumn events, like Preschool Preview Night and Fall Festival. The holiday season is around the corner, and our volunteers are in the process of planning a multitude of fun events to celebrate. Be sure to check our calendar often to see what's in store!

Lastly, a big thank you to all our volunteers. We so greatly appreciate you and all of the hard work you've done this past year. GGMG is completely run by volunteers; volunteering is a wonderful experience and a unique opportunity to work in a female-run, nonprofit organization. (And most volunteer work can be done in your spare time, from the comfort of your own home, while wearing sweatpants!) If you are interested in volunteering, please email [recruiting@ggmg.org](mailto:recruiting@ggmg.org).



Virginia and her husband Alex are parents to Eloise (age 6) and Margaret (age 3). They live north of the Panhandle. She is still squeamish about spiders but looks forward to decorating her house with fake ones for Halloween.

“From the moment our children arrive, we torture ourselves with... the same worry: How can I keep my child safe?”

before crossing the street, trust that she will be there when I pick her up after school.

The forums have been an invaluable resource on my journey as a mother, allowing me to ask for help in a safe space and find information on how to face whatever my

Virginia Green

## Cover Outtakes



**Only one shot can make it to the cover. Here are some of our other favorites.**

Cover photo by Marie Hamonic Photography  
Cover model: Margo (6)





# Spooky Movies for Kids

By Jessica Perry

With Halloween fast approaching, it's time to put on some spooky movies for your more adventurous kids.



## Early Elementary School (Ages 6 to 8)

**Casper:** An expert on the paranormal and his daughter live in a house with three mischievous ghosts and one friendly one.

**Ghostbusters:** A team of parapsychologists sets up shop to rid New York City of some pesky spirits.

## Older Elementary School (Ages 9 to 10)

**The Nightmare Before Christmas:** Jack the Pumpkin King decides he and his ghoulish friends will take on Christmas.

**Coraline:** A curious girl discovers a parallel world seemingly better than her own but finds it hides sinister secrets.

**Spirited Away:** After a move to the suburbs, a lonely girl wanders into an enchanted world inhabited by spirits, gods, witches, and more.

## Middle School (Ages 11 to 13)

**Return to Oz:** Dorothy returns to find Oz has changed a lot. She embarks on a quest with her old friends to revive the Emerald City.

**Beetlejuice:** A recently deceased married couple haunts the new inhabitants of their home with the help of a troublemaking spirit.

## Early High School (Ages 14 to 15)

**Poltergeist:** A young family lives in a home inhabited by seemingly innocuous ghosts that quickly turn evil.

**Arachnophobia:** A city doctor uproots his family for life in the country only to discover his new community is plagued by a deadly spider infestation.



# Li'l Kid, Big City: Petaluma

By Sonya Abrams

Are 45 minutes north of the city but light years away in vibe, Petaluma is a laid-back, historic community well worth the 101 traffic juggernaut. Petaluma's pioneer roots are on display in its downtown, which is packed with shops and restaurants housed in historic buildings. Start your day carbo-loading at the renowned **Della Fattoria**, a bakery and cafe offering fresh breads and pastries. In addition to the town's famed antique stores, there are gift shops and toy stores to entertain eager little shoppers. **Toy B Ville** has classic offerings, and **Heebe Jeebe** has toys and trinkets, as well as gift items for grownups too. Grab a meal at **Brewsters Beer Garden**, which has a restaurant and outdoor seating with firepits and a big play area for children. If your sweet tooth is calling, **Lala's Creamery** has you covered. **Helen Putnam Regional Park** hosts a playground, trails, and views for days, and if you want to make a weekend of it, the **Petaluma KOA** offers tent sites, cabins with full bathrooms, Saturday pool parties, a petting zoo, a jumpy pillow, a climbing wall, and an arcade.

*A mom to three, Sonya began a torrid love affair with Petaluma this past summer, over multiple trips. They are very happy together.*



# Celebrate Diwali!

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

Diwali, also known as the "Festival of Lights," is India's biggest and most important holiday of the year. It is celebrated every autumn to mark the beginning of the Hindu calendar. During this time, people light *diyas* (small candles), hold *pujas* (prayers), invite friends and family for dinner, and exchange gifts and sweets. Different parts of India attribute the story behind the celebration to various events, but more broadly, it celebrates the victory of light over darkness, knowledge over ignorance, hope over despair, and good over evil. The Bay Area has several events for those looking to celebrate Diwali closer to home.

## Bay Area Diwali Festival

Where: Memorial Park, Cupertino

When: Saturday, October 12

Time: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cost: FREE

Details: Festivities include a wonderful feast of traditional Indian food, music, and dance and numerous kids activities including a petting zoo, pony rides, jump houses, face painting, and more. Trees will be covered in beautiful saris and hanging lanterns. More information at [www.cupertino-chamber.org/Diwali](http://www.cupertino-chamber.org/Diwali)

## Pomeroy LIVE Arts Series Diwali 2019

Where: Pomeroy Recreation & Rehabilitation Center, San Francisco

When: Friday, November 8

Time: 6 to 9 p.m.

Cost: \$10 per person, kids under 10 and people with disabilities FREE

Details: Featuring Indian music, crafts, dance, and food, the Pomeroy Center Arts Series serves a diverse population: people living on San Francisco's west side; and adults with developmental disabilities from throughout the city. More information at [www.prrcsf.org/diwali2019](http://www.prrcsf.org/diwali2019)

## Diwali Celebration with NonStop Bhangra

Where: Rhythmix Cultural Works, Alameda

When: Saturday, November 16

Time: 6 to 8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$20 advance, \$25 day of, \$12 kids

Details: A celebration including a dance lesson, performances, live drumming, henna, and food. More information at [rhythmix.org/events/non-stop-bhangra-2019](http://rhythmix.org/events/non-stop-bhangra-2019)

*Jennifer is an educational consultant and aspiring Bhangra dance enthusiast. When she's not showing off some serious shoulder moves, you can find her chasing her two kids, Lilly and Duke.*

*Jessica is a lifelong scary movie enthusiast with two little goblins of her own (ages 4 and 6) with very active imaginations. They may watch a scary movie together sometime in the next decade.*





# Allergies

with Zahida Rani Maskatia, M.D.

*Zahida is a board-certified allergist and immunologist. She specializes in care for food allergy patients at Latitude Food Allergy Care in Redwood City. In her practice, she emphasizes accurate diagnosis, treatment options including oral immunotherapy, and long-term support for families with food allergies. Dr. Maskatia is a mom of a new kindergartener and a third-grader. You can “ask the expert” in person on October 2, at Dr. Maskatia’s presentation at the JCCSF; see the Events section for details (page 31).*

Nationwide, more than 32 million Americans are impacted by food allergies—that’s an estimated 1 in 13 children (two in every classroom!) and more than 1 in 10 adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of food allergies in children increased by 50 percent from 1997 to 2011 and continues to rise.

### How do I know if my child has food allergies?

If you suspect that your child has a food allergy, it’s important to receive an accurate diagnosis from a board-certified allergist so your child and family do not unnecessarily avoid a food. The testing process can include blood testing, skin testing and, when necessary to rule out a false positive, an oral food challenge. The signs of a food allergy can be confusing and sometimes alarming for parents. Sensitivities might cause a tummy ache or minor contact rash, but potentially life-threatening food allergies could cause anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction and can present with wheezing, chest tightness or trouble breathing, loss of consciousness, or feeling faint.

If two of the following symptoms occur, consider anaphylaxis and inject epinephrine (commonly referred to as EpiPen or Auvi-Q), and seek urgent emergency care:

- Hives—rash, or red, itchy skin
- Stuffiness or itchy nose, sneezing, or itchy/watery eyes
- Vomiting, stomach cramps, or diarrhea
- Angioedema or swelling
- Hoarseness, throat tightness, or a lump in the throat

*Foodallergy.org* is an excellent resource for food allergy families. Their site has a great list of words children may use to describe a food allergy reaction.

### Can a child grow out of a food allergy?

The simple answer is yes; however, certain foods are more likely to be outgrown than others. With milk and eggs, for instance, studies show that around 60-80 percent of children will outgrow their allergy. But with other allergens such as peanuts, the percentage is significantly lower, with only 20 percent outgrowing the allergy.

### How do I introduce foods to my baby if there is a risk of food allergies?

In the last few years, there has been a dramatic shift in recommendations for the early introduction of potentially allergenic foods. It is now recommended not to delay the introduction of allergenic foods into the diet. In fact, for patients at a higher risk of developing a food allergy (such as those with moderate or severe eczema requiring prescription treatment), early introduction of peanut is now recommended as early as 4 to 6 months of age. Similar recommendations exist for egg introduction in these higher-risk infants. For infants with moderate to severe eczema, or if you have been told by your pediatrician that your baby has a higher risk of developing a food allergy, you can consider an evaluation with an allergist before early introduction.

“There is no one-size-fits-all care plan for a food allergy family, but it’s exciting to be able to offer options and determine the best plan for patients and their families.”

### What is the latest in treatment and care for food allergies?

It’s an exciting time for families with food allergies. In the past, allergists could mostly only recommend avoidance. Today, treatments that have had significant success in clinical trials at institutions like Stanford and UCSF are becoming available in doctors’ offices. With oral immunotherapy, for instance, patients can be desensitized to increasingly larger amounts of an allergen, which helps decrease the risk of accidental ingestions. The best food allergy care today emphasizes the importance and value of providing options for food allergy families. There is no one-size-fits-all care plan for a food allergy family, but it’s exciting to be able to offer options and determine the best customized plan for patients and their families.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH



### Give Homeless Kids Bedtime Essentials for the Holidays

GGMG is partnering with Project Night Night ([www.projectnightnight.org](http://www.projectnightnight.org)) to host our annual holiday fund drive during November and December.

Project Night Night (PNN) delivers packages of bedtime essentials to homeless children ages 0–12 to provide a sense of security and support learning. Each Night Night package contains a new security blanket, an age-appropriate children’s book, and a stuffed animal—all nestled inside a new canvas tote bag. Every year, PNN delivers over 25,000 packages to children in need.

Please join us in supporting this incredible organization by making a donation to PNN this holiday.

You can donate funds via [www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/ggmg-fundraiser-for-project-night-night](http://www.crowdrise.com/o/en/campaign/ggmg-fundraiser-for-project-night-night). Any donation amount is greatly appreciated and will be put to

good use by providing nighttime comforts for homeless children throughout the Bay Area.

In order to involve children in the giving process, we will place donation bins around the city for members to drop off blankets, books, and stuffed animals.\* We will also have a hands-on volunteering event where you and your children can stuff tote bags with donated blankets, books, and stuffed animals that will be delivered to homeless children by PNN. Please check the forums for more information as we approach the holidays.

If you have any questions about this or any of GGMG’s community outreach initiatives, email us at [communityoutreach@ggmg.org](mailto:communityoutreach@ggmg.org).

\*The donations must be new with tags, and no-sew blankets are not permitted.

## CONTEST

### Engage

Get up close and personal with some of the world’s most powerful and interesting people. The Commonwealth Club of California is the nation’s oldest and largest public affairs forum, hosting 450+ live speakers per year on topics such as society, politics, the environment, and arts and culture. In its 116-year history the Club has hosted everyone from Franklin Roosevelt to Cesar Chavez to Hillary Clinton to Jane Goodall to Kim Kardashian. Members also receive discounted admission to various programs and events, such as member parties on the spectacular rooftop terrace.

Commonwealth Club members can also enjoy using the beautiful new club building at 110 The Embarcadero. Members and a guest can visit the library, lounge, or rooftop deck with sweeping views of the Bay. As a member, bring your own lunch, work from your laptop, or catch up with a friend at the Commonwealth Club during member hours.

Individual membership is valued at \$120. Enter the contest by emailing [contest@ggmg.org](mailto:contest@ggmg.org) with “Engage” in the subject line by October 31. A winner will be selected at random. Learn more about the Commonwealth Club at [www.commonwealthclub.org](http://www.commonwealthclub.org).

Congratulations to **Lindsey Kooker**, winner of the August contest prize, an overnight stay and breakfast at El Pueblo Inn in Sonoma.





# Swedish Parenting

By Oscar Boberg

Ten years ago I moved to California from Sweden and six years ago I became a parent for the first time. Since I am a foreigner in this country, I have to learn along the way—what norms there are, what social contracts apply, and especially what it means to be a parent in this culture. It might not seem that Sweden and California are that different at first glance, but they are.

My childhood in Sweden was very sheltered. I lived in what is best described as a planned community designed for families, a sort of cul-de-sac consisting of townhouses encircling a playground. No cars were allowed and as children, we played outside as grownups watched through the kitchen window. On a grander scale, families could also relax knowing they had free health and dental care; preschools were heavily subsidized, and school was free all the way through college.

That level of security takes away a lot of stress for families, stress that so easily can be translated into fear. Fear that you won't be able to send your child to a good school. Fear that they might get sick, or injured, and that medical bills will start piling up. Fear of losing a job that provides health-care benefits. Despite the flaws of Sweden's social democracy, it can at least give some peace of mind when it comes to providing a public safety net for families. I am of the firm belief that having had such a safe upbringing makes me worry less. Even though I am not in Sweden anymore, I somehow still feel that security, or shall I say "lack of worry." Which is why as a parent I try to not give in to feelings of fear.

When I start thinking about the risk factors that surround my kids—the sharp objects in our house, the uncovered outlets, the front door that they can unlock themselves, the stairs—I try and reflect on my own childhood, the things that we would get away with, and try to approach these hazards as learning opportunities.

The Nerf gun battles of today are child's play compared to the time I got my first black eye from a rock throwing fight. With that in mind, I might be more inclined to allow my children to explore their limits in a more controlled setting.

We camp a lot and initiated both of our kids to our favorite pastime when they were only three months old. We always have campfires, much to my son's delight. He has always had a huge fascination for fire, and we simply could not keep him away from it. Despite our anxiety, we started teaching him about fire safety very early on. From age 2, he slowly learned to respect fire, and at 6, can now confidently gather kindling and light a match to safely get our fires going. There has certainly been a fair amount of stress (and dare I say, fear) along the way, but it has surely been worth it.

If I allowed myself to fear all these potential dangers, what would that mean for my children's ability to navigate the world? Such fear would keep me from letting my children learn for themselves, make me overprotective and overbearing, and turn me into a nervous wreck. I would never feel comfortable letting my children climb trees, help flip pancakes on our gas stove, or play on the top bunk in their

bedroom. Instead of thinking about the consequences of every little activity, I try to push through my apprehension, to talk about cause and effect, to prepare them for life, and make sure that they have a frame of reference that makes them responsible human beings. As cliché as it might sound, we can only defeat our fears by facing them.

Becoming a parent also made me think of fear in a completely new way, especially concerning myself. Before having children, no one depended on me in quite the same way. But now, there are new consequences to me being sick, injured, or dead.

My children depend on me to be around, and if something happened to me, it would be devastating. While I still avoid fearing the unforeseen, I feel a new motivation as a parent to take care of myself, to be a safe driver, to be an environmentalist, to be a feminist, and to engage in politics. Not just because it is good for me, but because it is good for my family.

*Oscar is a father of two, a watercolor artist, and member of City Art Gallery where he frequently exhibits his work.*



**“Even though I am not in Sweden anymore, I somehow still feel that security, or shall I say ‘lack of worry.’”**

# Gabriella Judd Cirelli

Photo by Marie Hamonic Photography

Gabriella Judd Cirelli is a trained singer, completed the Masters in Architecture program at UC Berkeley, is currently obtaining a Masters in Early Childhood Education, and is a mother of two kids (Donatella, 8 and Salvatore, 4), living in San Francisco. Cirelli started Primeros Pasos, a Spanish immersion daycare and preschool ([www.primerospasossf.com](http://www.primerospasossf.com)) in 2013 with her husband, Franco. They opened a second location in Silver Park in May. She spoke with GGMG Magazine writer Jennifer Sato, founder of Nutrition for Moms ([www.nutritionformoms.org](http://www.nutritionformoms.org)).

## What motivated you to open up a preschool?

Our daughter was originally at a large corporate preschool while we worked long hours outside the home. The idea of starting our own school for her to attend came out of having an in-law unit. We had a space that could be a cozy, family-like environment, separate from our home. I had a great time designing the space, which sparked my desire to do something different and I thought, why not me? I'd previously worked in design and construction.

## What makes Primeros Pasos unique?

We are a full Spanish immersion program with child-centered curriculum and a nurturing relationship focus. Our professional curriculum is play-based and is inspired by Stanford research and curriculum. These studies show that play-based curricula help children develop, grow, and have fun as they learn. We maintain a high teacher-to-child ratio and bring in outside experts for gymnastics, art, and music.

## What challenges did you face opening up your school? Any fears or concerns before switching careers?

Loss of income was a fear, but we soon found that the demand for quality care was very high in San Francisco. We created a clean, inviting space, staffed with caring people and implemented a thoughtful curriculum and people responded very quickly.

The development of the second location posed another challenge. The construction of a 7,000 square foot school involved many departments, checklists, and licenses. It was quite daunting, but luckily, my background in planning and construction helped us be efficient. My husband, who is an MBA, also mastered the business side. His competence and support have been key to our team's success.

## What has been the best thing about running your school?

Meeting families and seeing their children's development. We are a lifecycle school, with infant, toddler, and preschool programs, and I have a family whose children have been with me since we opened in 2013. The relationship with families and seeing their children flourish over time is very rewarding. Running a school isn't easy—it's very labor intensive but it truly is one of love. I've been able to merge my architecture and design background with my studies in early childhood education to create a beautiful space and program people love, and that makes us really proud.

## How do you face your fears as a mother?

It's important not to feel the need to be perfect, and for moms to be forgiving when they make mistakes. We all work hard, we get tired, and we get irritable. When we model for kids, we teach them it is okay for adults to apologize, adults can say “you were right, I was wrong.” Nobody's perfect.

## What are your favorite activities to do with your kids?

We enjoy exploring parks, pools, restaurants, cultural events, new buildings, and musical performances.

## Biggest lesson you have learned about being a mom?

Be who you are. Be gentle to yourself.



**Know a mom you want to spotlight in the next issue?**

Email [editor@ggmag.org](mailto:editor@ggmag.org) with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.



# Facing Your Fears

By Laure Latham

No time of the year is more appropriate to face your fears than the build-up to Halloween and the shortening of days. Young ones will prefer to focus on the fun and happy side of Halloween while older kids will be ready for spookier books and stories, but fear not, we’ve got books for all ages.



## Halloween Kitty

Written and illustrated by Salina Yoon

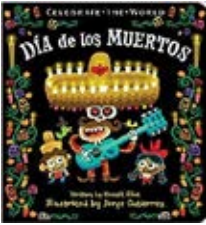
Who wants to play with a young kitty? Turns out everyone is busy on Halloween, including the usual creepy crawlies—a bat, a spider, and a crow. Fortunately for Kitty, a ghost becomes the best playmate. With a wagging tail kids can wiggle and a simple question-answer format, Halloween Kitty is a great introduction to Halloween fun. **Ages: 0 to 3 years**



## The Scarecrow

Written by Beth Ferry, illustrated by The Fan Brothers

While most scarecrows conjure images of lonely, scary figures in fields, this scarecrow hides a tender heart underneath the overalls. When a young crow falls out of its nest, the scarecrow takes over parental duties and a wonderful friendship forms. Kids will appreciate the peaceful country setting of this story unfolding over several seasons. **Ages: 3 to 6 years**



## Día de los Muertos

Written by Hannah Eliot, illustrated by Jorge Gutierrez

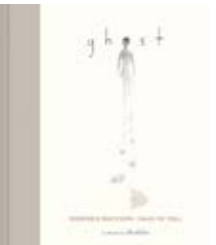
Learn how to celebrate Día de los Muertos with this richly illustrated book, where each page introduces traditions, characters, and items that make the celebration unique. From flower-festooned altars to skeletons in mariachi outfits, Día de los Muertos is how Latinx honor their dearly departed, and this book is a perfect primer before you join the procession in the Mission. **Ages: 2 to 5 years**



## Snitchy Witch

Written by Frank Sileo, illustrated by MacKenzie Haley

What’s the difference between telling and tattling? Young witch Wanda is about to discover at Camp Spellbound. Trying to attract the attention of the Head Witch, she ruins the other kids’ fun and gets them into trouble. Isolated from other campers who’ve cast a spell on her not to tattletale, Wanda finds herself conflicted when she needs to prevent an accident during the broom race without being even more cast out. Will she be able to make new friends? This is a touchy subject that’s made all the more palatable with pointy hats and magic potions. **Ages: 4 to 8 years**



## Ghost: Thirteen Haunting Tales to Tell

By Illustrátus

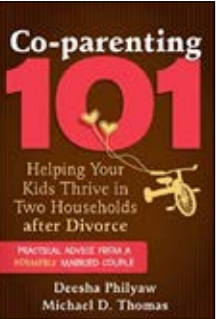
Young readers may wish to read these tales with a comforting friend or parent in the room at night. This collection of scary poems and tales is not for the faint of heart, turning ordinary places or objects into the spookiest things you’ve ever read about. Imagine: a finger against the inside of a mirror, woods where the trees look back, or a basement door blocked by a brick wall so thick that it stifles the screams from below. No hope for a good night’s sleep. **Ages: 10+ years**

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

# Managing Divorce

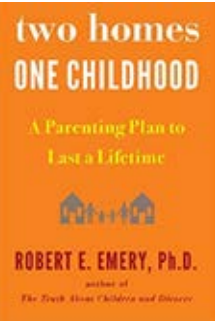
By Gail Cornwall

Because pop culture and my own experience as a kid say divorce is terrible for children, separating from my husband would have been one of my biggest fears—if it had been within the realm of possibility. It wasn’t. And then all of a sudden it was. The following books take a look at how to manage the unimaginable.



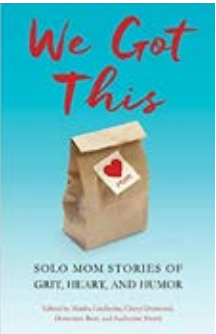
## Co-Parenting 101: Helping Your Kids Thrive in Two Households After Divorce

After becoming “the poster children for divorce” in their community, Deesha Philyaw and Michael D. Thomas started the blog Co-Parenting 101 “to provide a place for cooperative co-parents to share their stories so that others might be encouraged, and to challenge the stereotype of the always-messy divorce.” Their streamlined paperback presents the wealth of information the two acquired in a well-organized format and authoritative-yet-conversational tone that makes it easy to read and relate (e.g., “You can’t commit to honoring your child’s relationship with the other parent and commit to punishing that parent forever at the same time. Guess which ‘commitment’ has to go.”). Philyaw and Thomas also cover the basics of different legal mechanisms as well as the various schedule options. But their strength lies in encouraging self-regulation and acceptance of a bottom line: kids need to be reassured that even though the family is changing, it’s still a family.



## Two Homes, One Childhood: A Parenting Plan to Last a Lifetime

Robert Emery is a psychologist, researcher, professor, and mediator who has lived and breathed divorce for decades. In *Two Homes, One Childhood*, he speaks to parents’ deepest fears (“Is your child’s challenging behavior part of normal development or a sign of something deeper, perhaps owing to the upheaval of your divorce?”) and hopes (“Children shouldn’t be defined by divorce.... And you can make sure that doesn’t happen.”). Emery’s tone is clear and steady with no beautiful turns of phrase but nothing to trip the reader up either. My one complaint in terms of style is the repetition, both on the sentence level and between chapters. *Two Homes* nonetheless add substantial value by synthesizing nuanced research and offering big-picture recommendations. “Here is what your children need,” Emery summarizes: “a good relationship with at least one authoritative parent, that is, a parent who is both loving and firm with discipline” and “low levels of conflict between parents.” A second high-quality parental relationship is ideal but not as important as not “living in the middle of a war zone between two parents.” When it comes to the day-to-day, Emery is blunt: Be the adult. Shield the kids. Do your job.



## We Got This: Solo Mom Stories of Grit, Heart, and Humor

*We Got This* contains quotes, poems, and stories from a diverse group of 75 individuals impacted by solo parenting. Like most anthologies, the result is both hit and miss. That said, there’s quite a bit of hit. Co-editor Cheryl Dumesnil writes: “My marriage broke, irreparably, years before it ended. I had done my level best to create a healthy life for myself and the kids, despite the brokenness, hoping someday, eventually, maybe my ex and I could fix it. This was a lot like trying to live a fulfilling life while a shark is eating your leg.” Evie Peck’s hilarious essay explains, “It was weird sexting at my son’s game, but I was snack mom today, so I’d redeem myself later.” And I still can’t rid myself of the image of Angela Ricketts wearing “one ugly green Croc” as she heads to the hospital with a barefoot and myocardial infarction. Isa Down, Robin Rogers, Kelly Sundberg, Kim Addonizio, Ylonda Gault, and Mika Yamamoto also make truly stunning contributions.

Gail works as a stay-at-home mom and writer in San Francisco. Read about parenting and education from the perspective of a former teacher and lawyer at gailcornwall.com/articles.



# New Mom Fears

By Christine Chen

When my first child was born, my typically fearless attitude gave way to normal fears that strike many new mothers: *What if the baby gets really sick?*

(This was heightened by my firstborn's first week in the CPMC NICU because of low white blood cell count. Luckily it was temporary, but a terrifying week nonetheless that made germa-phobe me extra scared). *The baby is so small, what if I break it?* (They are actually sturdier than one thinks). *What if the baby rolls off something? Or worse, what if I drop them?* (I never did but a family member did and I almost had a heart attack). *What if the baby flips over and suffocates in bed?* (No crib bumpers for us).

Of course now, I find some of the above fears funny. Babies are sturdier than you think, as evidenced by my second child who is more accident-prone than her older brother simply because she thinks she can do anything he can. Now that both kids are speedy, my main fears are what if I lose them in a crowd or what if they get hurt? I have no doubt that as the kids get older, especially during the teenage years, the fears will only grow in magnitude. I now seriously question the wisdom behind some of my decisions during my own teenage years and shudder at what my parents would have thought.

In some women, something changes after becoming a mom that makes you more risk-averse, and unexpected sources of fear surface that you might have never had before. While I have never been the type to engage in extreme activities such as climbing Everest or skydiving, I would have never put myself in the overly cautious camp either, as I rarely hesitated in following my husband down ski runs at Squaw that I knew were above my skiing ability. (I always figured it would just make me a better skier and at least someone would be there to pick up the equipment littering the slopes.) Now that I am a mother of two little kids, I have become a more cautious skier.



**"I no longer jaywalk or dash across intersections and yellow, to me, now means slow down, not speed up."**

If I broke a leg skiing, not only would it be painful but a major inconvenience, and how am I supposed to chase after two kids? (My two kids, of course, don't seem to have this fear when they tear down the mountain, which is why I have no doubt they will both become better skiers than me sooner than I can imagine). This more cautious outlook has permeated almost all aspects of my life. The days of speeding in my convertible are long behind me regardless of whether the kids are in the car with me, as, a gain, what would the kids do if something happened to me? I no longer jaywalk or dash across intersections and yellow, to me, now means slow down, not speed up.

My media consumption habits have also changed. Never a fan of local news, to begin with, I find it particularly difficult to hear stories about children with life-changing illnesses, let alone those about missing children. National news, of course, is fraught with heartbreaking shooting stories affecting our children on an almost weekly basis, which I can no longer bear to watch. Even movies, which are still escapism, for the most part, are more difficult to

watch if the subject matter is about children in distress. While my friends and I laugh at our newfound fears, there are some women who experience postpartum anxiety, where fears become debilitating and interfere with their ability to function on a day-to-day basis. Not as well-known as postpartum depression, anxiety is also hormone-induced, and professional treatment will help women through a difficult time. See the GGMG community support page for more information: [www.gmg.org/community-support/category/postpartum](http://www.gmg.org/community-support/category/postpartum).

*Christine is the mother to an almost 6 and almost 4-year-old, both who constantly test her fears on a daily basis.*



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# Risky Play: Loosening the Reins on Our Children

Promoting risk-taking in play can encourage children to make safer choices in the long run

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss

Photos by Katya Mizrahi Photography

In the span of 30 minutes, my 7-year-old daughter, Lilly, went from sobbing to being taken home by the cops. Since we'd moved to Bernal Heights several months ago, she had been begging to take a solo trip to the corner store. My husband did this as young as 5, and I was not much older. We had been preparing her, making sure she knew our phone numbers, our address, how to cross the street safely, and how to spot a "good" stranger (look for a mommy) or a "tricky person" (don't speak to grownups asking children for help; they should be asking other grownups). Even though I watched her from a hidden location, the whole experiment ended in catastrophe. There was no bloodshed, attempted abduction,

or bully. The store owner kicked her out before she even got a few dollar bills out, prompting tears of embarrassment. He refused to serve a 7-year-old without a parent present. Once the heartbreak subsided, we allowed her to go to the parklet across the street from our home. Just ten minutes into her "freedom," neighbors called the police, who escorted her to our front door.

Times have changed, and I will not be able to allow my kids to go out and play and come home in time for dinner like previous generations. Local writer and musician Chuck Poling referred to this exact phenomenon in his July 31<sup>st</sup> performance piece for the Bernal Historical Society called "Growing Up Bernal."

"Precita Park used to be crawling with hundreds of kids playing kickball and other games on the green after school. Some kids had strict instructions not to come home until sunset," he crooned. "Now you just see a group of moms huddled around a few small children fenced in." Turns out that our family is about three decades late to the party.

## Why risky play?

Exploration—the freedom to roam the neighborhood or woods alone—is one of the six categories of "risky play" that are so critical for developing independent, creative, and confident young people, according to play expert and University of British Columbia Professor Mariana

Brussoni (see next page). The term itself didn't start appearing in research until 2009, because previous generations simply referred to these types of explorations as play. It was just what kids did. They roamed their neighborhoods by foot, bike, or skateboard, built forts, climbed trees, and got into trouble. Over time, an increased obsession with safety precautions has eroded what parents will allow their children to do, thus creating a need to coin a term to define what kids might be missing, and possible effects. More sedentary, coddled lifestyles result in an obesity epidemic in addition to an increased risk of anxiety and depression.

"When adults interfere with child exploration, they're learning that somebody else needs to decide what's safe. It affects their self-confidence, and they learn to believe that the world is a scary, dangerous place," Brussoni states in a 2017 interview.

The irony is that in our urgency to protect our kids from every scrape, bruise, or potentially dangerous encounter, we may have positioned them to be more vulnerable and at risk. A child who never gets out in his own neighborhood won't know the way back home should he ever get lost, or which neighbors he can go to for help.

## Bravery in our girls

It is worth noting that we encounter some sharp differences between how parents encourage risk taking in boys versus girls. In an age where women continue to get passed up for promotions, raises, and leadership positions over men, bravery needs to be tended to in our girls more than ever. As mothers, we all want to continue to build up our daughters' courage and fearlessness, so one day they will confidently be able to ask for more pay, advocate for a promotion, or stand up to a bully.

"How do we become brave?" asked author Caroline Paul in her 2017 TedX talk. "Bravery is learned, and like anything learned, it needs to be practiced. We need to take a deep breath and encourage our girls to skateboard, climb trees, and climb that fire pole on the playground. Risky play is important for all kids. It teaches



resilience and confidence." Paul was one of the first five female firefighters ever hired by the San Francisco Fire Department, and also the author of several books, including most recently *The Gutsy Girl: Escapades for Your Life of Epic Adventure*.

Parents aren't the only barriers to a girl's access to risk-taking in play. Our

**"The irony is that, in our urgency to protect our kids from every scrape, bruise, or potentially dangerous encounter, we may have positioned them to be more vulnerable and at-risk."**

playgrounds themselves have slowly become more sterile and safe over time, which has led to unintended consequences for all kids. They are playing less and getting injured more. Meghan Talarowski, the founder of playground research and design firm Studio Ludo, conducted a study of several hundred playgrounds across U.S. cities, comparing these more fixed and seemingly safe playgrounds with those in London, known for containing higher elements of risk and movable parts (think: logs, tires, rocks). She found that riskier playgrounds have, on average, fewer injuries than more fixed playgrounds with traditional structures. Children also tend to stay more physically active and remain in the British playgrounds longer than in American ones.

"The U.S. seems to have reached 'peak safety,'" Talarowski concludes in her Studio Ludo report. "We have created a nation of overly expensive, homogeneously safe, and insidiously boring play spaces. In pursuit of fun, children are using play structures in

unintended ways, falling on surfaces too expensive to maintain, and they are not moving enough. They are becoming too weak to play without injuring themselves."

## Adventure playgrounds

Adventure playgrounds emerged after World War II when a Danish landscape architect noticed that children were more content playing in rubble than in regular playgrounds. These "playgrounds" that spawned from this observation are open-air play spaces containing significant amounts of moveable materials and opportunities to experiment with tools, heights, and other elements of risk. Many of these spaces encourage parents to leave their children in the hands of mostly hands-off supervisors. Children roam about, use hammers, roll tires, create massive structures, swing from ropes, and climb extraordinary heights. There are a little more than 1,000 of these play spaces

across Europe, and we even have one in Berkeley. I hauled my own two children there this summer for some primary research.

The roughly one-acre fenced-in area along Berkeley's shoreline looks

like one, giant, sprawling clubhouse. Slabs of wood nailed together with plastic tubing, slides, and ropes come from all directions. The place is crawling with kids young and old, many of them carrying saws or hammers. An incessant pounding is pierced by shouts of excitement as young people work together to add to the random mass of assorted materials.

Lilly disappeared the minute we entered. I followed my 4-year-old son, Duke, closely. Parents are welcome to drop off kids over the age of 6 unsupervised for up to three hours, provided they sign a release. While Duke swung around a giant pole on a rope, I watched a group of about four boys working together to nail an old basketball rim onto the side of one of the forts, overhearing their introductions.

"Dude! I got three nails! What's your name, by the way? I'm Zig." The boys were deep in their project.

"Oh, you're from Vancouver? I live in the South Bay," another boy chimed in.

I had come hoping to interview kindred





spirits who were regulars and believed in pushing the boundaries of safety. Instead I met mostly first-timers like me, mesmerized by the signage, the noise, the structures, and the overall frenetic energy of the place. I was struck by the absence of cell phones, except for a few parents snapping photos.

At the tail-end of our stay, I found a family of four who knew one of the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront (PRW) workers personally and had come to Adventure Playground several times.

"I think compared to the average parent, we're less risk-averse," admitted Aasa Wheelock, mom of Torin, age 6, and Freya, age 9. "We gave our 6-year-old a knife for summer camp. It was a knife and fire camp. He learned really good safety skills. It's better to learn how to do [these activities] safely because they'll do it anyways. We let them use knives a lot at home."

"Unless I know how to use a tool, I won't use it," Freya chimed in.

"What about a saw?" asked Aasa. "I saw you sawing a lot today."

Freya rolled her eyes. "I *know* how to use a *saw*, mom."

Craig Wheelock interjected, "By the time they're 10, they're not going to listen to us," motioning to Ms. Eye Roller. "We've got a few good years to get them to do things safely so they don't get hurt."

When I asked one of the PRW workers about an injury report she was filling out for a child that banged his finger, she stated they keep the reports for their own records and as a means to protect from liability.

"We don't have any more injuries or incidents than the average playground," she stated confidently. "Sometimes we won't have any incidents for a few weeks and then one day, there will be a spike. But there has never been anything too serious. Kids are more careful here because they know they have to be, so they get less hurt."

Does this mean we should all go out and buy our kids a pocket knife or insist they climb higher at the playground, even if they're scared? According to Brussoni,

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Mariana Brussoni's website [www.outsideplay.ca](http://www.outsideplay.ca) provides a space for parents to reflect and reverse the trend that is limiting children's chances to play outside and take risks in play. Types of risky play include:

- Height: climbing trees or structures
- Speed: running or skating really fast
- Tools: using hammers and saws
- Elements: building a fire or playing near water
- Exploring: wandering the neighborhood with friends, playing hide and seek
- Rough: play wrestling

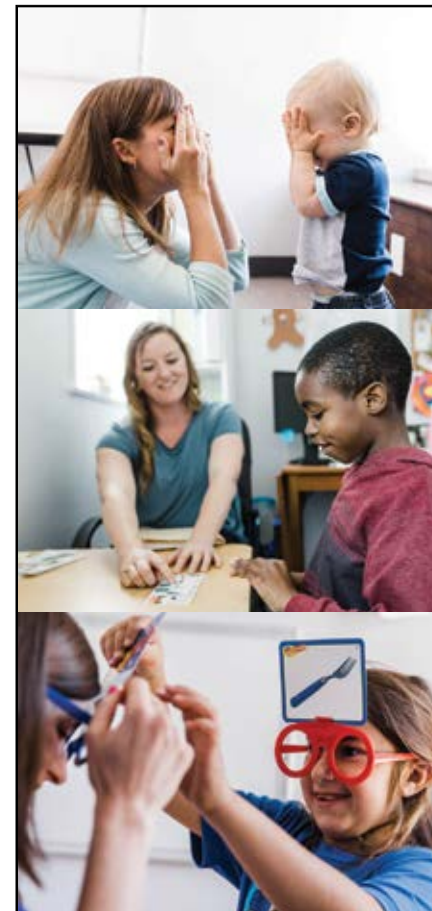
"It's not about pushing them or stopping them, but supporting them in the decisions they want to make. Kids get more engaged and actually want to go outside and play because it's fun, instead of sticking to screens."

So far, every request my kids have made for greater freedom and adventure, my husband and I have encouraged and guided. We've developed a consciousness to support risky play in their lives. I hope to find more like-minded parents as excited as I am.

Just moments before starting the process of cajoling my kids to go home, I met another mother who was a first-time visitor. I asked her how she enjoyed her experience. "Well, some of these kids you can tell they come all the time. They are just fearless. Like this little girl over there on that rope."

I looked in the direction in which she was pointing. High above the other kids, reaching and striving to get even higher still, was my Lilly.

*Jennifer is an educational consultant and trainer with New Leaders. When she is not encouraging her two children to juggle knives and jump from airplanes, you can find her at [jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com](http://jenniferkuhrbutterfoss.com).*



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# What Do We Have to Fear?

## Getting to the Bottom of Parents' Common Concerns

Sifting through the data to identify which parental fears are real and which are unlikely

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

Photos by Mini Anna Photography



**W**e all worry about our children, some of us more than others. As writer and teacher Elizabeth Stone said, “Making the decision to have a child—it is momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking around outside your body.” How can we tell the real fears from those that are unlikely or completely unfounded? Though there is something to be said for trusting your gut, there is also something to be said for facts.

A top fear among many parents is that their child may be abducted by a stranger on the street or at a park. Recent highly publicized abductions of children have fueled these fears, including a few local attempts in San Francisco. Should you take precautions to

prevent this from happening to your child? According to the most recent comprehensive survey from the US Department of Justice in 2013, about 238,000 children are reported missing to the police each year. This may sound like an enormous number. However, according to a very reassuring statistic from the Polly Klaas Foundation, 99.8 percent of all

children who go missing do come home. In almost 90 percent of these cases, the child has simply gotten lost or miscommunicated their whereabouts. Another

9 percent of children are abducted by a family member as a result of a custody dispute. Approximately 3 percent of children who are abducted are taken by non-family members, and these are usually someone the child knows.

**“...a common water fear, that of shark attack, is almost completely baseless.”**

There are only about 100 children each year in the United States who are kidnapped in the terrifying way that parents lie awake imagining at night, and about half of those children return home. To put this in perspective, about 50 people in the United States are killed by lightning strikes each year, so the chances of your child being abducted and not returning home are about equal to your chances of being struck and killed by lightning. The latter is not something most of us spend much time worrying about.

Another common fear is that a child will get hit and injured or killed by a vehicle while crossing the street. Although this can happen, only about 8000 children are hit and 250 children are killed in this way each year in the United States. It is more likely than stranger abduction, but not by much. And it is a very small number considering that there are about 74 million children in the United States.

Children are more likely to get hit in urban areas, and when crossing the street outside of an official crosswalk. They are also four times more likely to get hit by a car on Halloween than on any other day of the year. Although crossing the street may not be your biggest worry, it is still a good idea to practice safe crossing skills with children. Let them choose when to cross at quieter intersections starting around age five, and then discuss any less than optimal choices they make that might risk their safety, so they can learn to improve their ability to cross safely and independently as

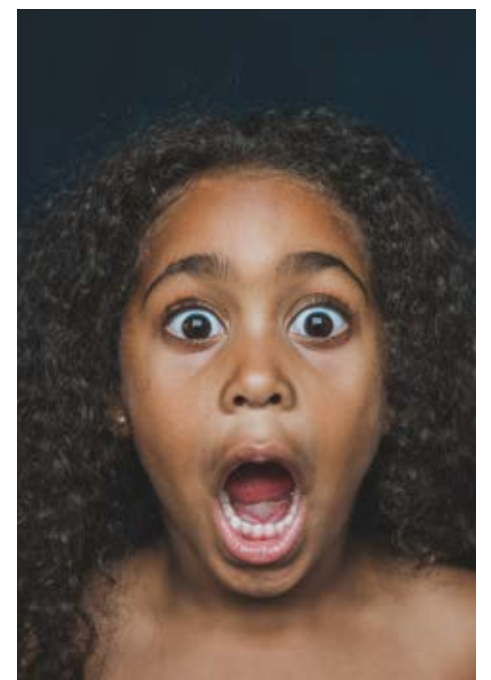
**“...the chances of your child being abducted and not returning home are about equal to your chances of being struck and killed by lightning.”**

they grow. Starting in middle school, distracted walking, primarily while looking at a cell phone, increases the possibility of getting hit by a moving vehicle, so make sure to model alert, undistracted walking for your children.

A related fear is a real concern—motor vehicle crashes, which in 2015, injured 178,000 children in the United States. In the same year 1,132 were killed in such accidents. This is the leading cause of death for children ages five to nineteen. Restraining your child in an appropriate car seat is one of the best ways to protect them in case of an accident. According to recent statistics from the National Highway Safety Traffic Administration, 39 percent of children who died in a car accident were unrestrained.

You can take steps to decrease the likelihood of being involved in an accident. Remember not to tailgate, even if someone is driving so slowly you can't stand it; just wait until a good opportunity to safely pass. Keep an eye out for people running red lights, counting to at least three before entering the intersection after you get the green. Reduce distractions like eating or adjusting the radio while driving, and put your cell phone away. You can't avoid all accidents, but these actions and other defensive driving moves make it much less likely you'll end up in a collision.

The other common fear that should get some real attention is that of drowning. According to the CDC, this is the leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 4. Statistics from the CDC show that about 700 children die from drowning each year, with a higher proportion of those under the age of 5. Although this is a relatively small number, it is a very preventable kind of accident. Despite some modern myths to the contrary, there is no “drown-proofing” children this age. It is great to have children take swimming lessons when they are ready and you have the time. However, even a young child who seems like a competent swimmer must be watched in the water at all times, ideally by a lifeguard who is trained in proper rescue techniques.



Flotation devices, such as water wings and inflatable vests, are not a substitute for supervision, although they may decrease chances of drowning. When visiting a place with a pool, make sure it is surrounded by a fence with a locking gate or has a secure cover. Awareness of this real danger will help you keep your child safe.

On the other hand, a common water fear, that of shark attack, is almost completely baseless. These attacks are usually highly publicized, but they are incredibly rare, even compared to death by lightning. Over recent years in the United States there have been an average of 19 shark attacks per year, with 1 or 2 fatalities. Although Ocean Beach may not be a safe place for children to swim for a variety of other reasons, shark attacks are very low on that list. Thank *Jaws* for the way this fear has been blown completely out of proportion in the modern world!

Oh, and getting eaten by monsters in a dark bedroom? You can assure your child that this never happens! A recent study proves conclusively that monsters much prefer candy to children any day. In fact, if you don't keep candy in your house, monsters won't even visit.

*Veronica is an educator living in San Francisco with her husband and two daughters. She tries not to worry too much about shark attacks, but her mother was struck by lightning (she survived).*







# Moving through Postpartum Depression

It's important to talk openly and honestly about postpartum depression (PPD) and related maternal health issues

By Juli Fraga      Photos by Mini Anna Photography

Annabelle\* had an amazing, “glowing” pregnancy, but after her baby was born, the sleep deprivation, hormonal fluctuations, and around-the-clock newborn care took a toll on her mental health.

“My son was a difficult baby. I had to rock him to sleep, and he didn't nap for more than 30 minutes at a time. Whenever he wasn't crying, I was so grateful for a break that I didn't want anything to do with him,” she says.

Annabelle was suffering from postpartum depression (PPD), the number one medical complication of pregnancy. In recent months, celebrities like model Chrissy Teigen and actress Hayden Panettiere

have spoken up about their experiences with this maternal mental health concern. Even though more women are talking about PPD, many mothers are still unaware of the signs and symptoms of this mood disorder.

According to Postpartum Support International, almost 20 percent of women suffer from PPD. A woman can develop PPD anytime during the first year of her baby's life (also known as the postpartum period). Signs and symptoms include crying, feelings of hopelessness, fear of being alone with the baby, sleeping concerns, appetite changes, and feelings of irritability. A small percentage of women also have thoughts about hurting themselves or harming their children.

“I felt irritable and emotionally detached,” says Annabelle. “I cried a lot for the first 10 days after my son was born, but after that, I felt numb.”

It was difficult for Annabelle to bond with her baby during this painful time. She stayed home a lot because her son was colicky, which caused her to feel very isolated. Despite feeling so awful, it wasn't until her son was 6 months old that Annabelle finally went to see a therapist. Unfortunately, her story is not uncommon.

Research conducted by the 2020MOM project shows that many new mothers are never properly screened or diagnosed with PPD. Because the postpartum period is a

stressful time when women feel overwhelmed, it can be difficult to tell how the typical “baby blues,” which affects up to 85 percent of mothers, differs from PPD.

“I tell new moms that if they're feeling tearful, sad, and overwhelmed one week after the baby's birth, it's a good idea to reach out to a healthcare provider for a PPD screening,” says Melissa Whippo, LCSW, a social worker in the Pregnancy and Postpartum Mood Clinic at the University of California, San Francisco.

While the US Preventive Task Force recommends screening all women for prenatal and postpartum depression, Whippo says it's important for new mothers to tell their healthcare providers if they are sad or anxious. With a proper postpartum mood screening, the doctor can help mom receive the support that she needs.

## The truth about maternal health issues

After birth, mom's hormones progesterone and estrogen plummet. For some women, these hormonal shifts significantly affect their moods, and they become depressed and anxious. A previous history of depression or anxiety, lack of social support, financial hardships, nursing difficulties, traumatic birth, or a difficult pregnancy can also impact a mother's mood during the postpartum period.

Recent research conducted at Northwestern University discovered that many women develop symptoms of depression during pregnancy. They found that prenatal depression is just as

concerning as postpartum depression and that when women are not diagnosed during pregnancy, their mood concerns may worsen after giving birth. For this reason, they recommend that expectant mothers inform their doctors if they experience sadness, sleeping concerns, anxiety, or irritability before their babies are born.

“Even though more women are talking about PPD, many mothers are still unaware of the signs and symptoms of this mood disorder.”

A lot of the education surrounding maternal mental health concerns focuses on PPD. But women can also experience anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and in rare instances, psychosis, after giving birth.

**Postpartum Anxiety:** Postpartum anxiety is also a common maternal mental health concern. It's estimated that between 20 to 25 percent of new mothers experience anxiety. Symptoms include extreme worries and fears about the baby's safety, feelings of being overwhelmed, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, insomnia, and appetite changes.

**Postpartum OCD:** This is one of the most misunderstood and misdiagnosed of the

postpartum mood concerns. According to Postpartum Support International, 3 to 5 percent of new mothers and fathers experience symptoms of postpartum OCD. These symptoms include intrusive thoughts, compulsive “checking behaviors” such as cleaning, hand washing, and counting.

**Postpartum Psychosis:** Postpartum psychosis is very rare. It occurs in 0.1 percent of births; however, it is severe. Symptoms generally emerge within 1 to 2 weeks after giving birth and include delusions, hallucinations, paranoia, and lack of contact with reality. Postpartum psychosis requires immediate medical attention, psychotropic medication, and often hospitalization.

## Treatment

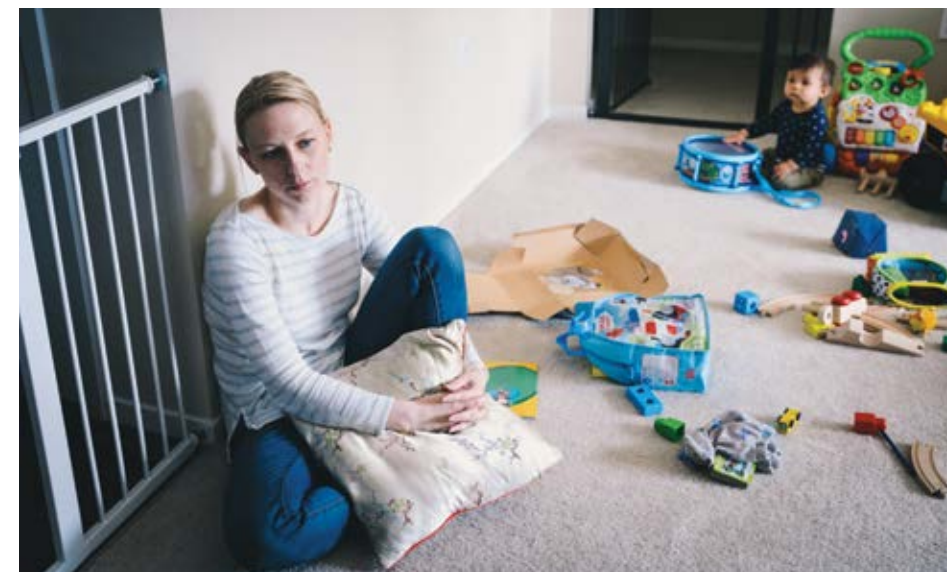
“I saw an amazing psychotherapist who taught me how to have compassion for myself and the importance of self-care,” says Annabelle. Her therapist also validated how difficult new motherhood had been for her, which helped soften her “mom guilt.”

The recommended treatments for postpartum mood concerns involve psychotherapy with a maternal mental health psychologist, group support, and antidepressant or anti-anxiety medication. Many women respond well to a brief course of psychotherapy (8 to 10 sessions). The GGMG crisis-resource page also provides a list of PPD psychotherapists and psychiatrists in San Francisco.

## Outline your emotional map

During pregnancy, it can be difficult to see beyond the birth of the baby. But motherhood is a huge identity change, and women learn to care for their children largely from the ways they were parented. Emotional nesting during pregnancy can provide some insight into how you are likely to approach this role transition. You might reflect on some simple questions, such as: “What is one thing I wanted from my parents that I did not receive?” “How will this impact me as a mother?” “What is it like for me to feel out of control?” “How might this affect me during motherhood?”

By outlining an emotional map, you can become familiar with the range of feelings that may accompany new parenthood. Because our culture focuses on the presumption that pregnancy and







motherhood are “joyful,” there’s not a lot of discussion about the feelings of grief that this life change brings. It’s normal for families and mothers to experience feelings of shock and sadness as they say goodbye to their freedom and adjust to the profound responsibility that caring for a newborn requires. It’s an enormous adjustment to have a small person depending on you for his or her growth and survival 24 hours a day, and it’s common for mothers and parents to have difficulty adjusting to this type of dependency. Reflecting on these questions before the baby’s arrival can help to distill feelings of shame and mom guilt when they arise.

### San Francisco resources

UCSF and CPMC hospitals in San Francisco have several resources for women suffering from postpartum mood concerns. At UCSF, the Pregnancy and Postpartum Mood Assessment Clinic provides mental health services, and UCSF also sponsors a six-week postpartum support group, “The Afterglow” at the Mission Bay Campus, as well as a three-week pregnancy support circle, “The New Nest.” CPMC also has a perinatal health and wellness program. Here, patients are triaged via phone and connected to a variety of services, such as psychotherapy and peer group support.

One practice in San Francisco is bringing behavioral health services into the setting where women seek care: doctor’s offices. At Pacific Gynecology & Obstetrics Medical Group (PGOMG), patients can schedule in-house psychotherapy appointments with myself or Dr. Meg Earls. Earls says, “By integrating mental health services into medical practices, women receive timely access to care during new motherhood,

one of the most transformative times in a woman’s life. Timely access to care is hugely impactful when it comes to ensuring robust support and a full recovery from PPD.”

DayOne Baby\*\*, Carmel Blue\*\*, and Natural Resources also provide new mom support groups, working mom support groups, breastfeeding support groups, and new parenting resources.

### Complementary and alternative medicine

Though complementary and alternative medical treatments are not the first line of recommended therapies for postpartum mood concerns, they can be helpful. Acupuncture, yoga, and naturopathic remedies are all holistic treatments that may provide additional support for new mothers. The Root and the Branch acupuncture clinic in Pacific Heights specializes in women’s health concerns especially related to pregnancy and the postpartum period. There are also community acupuncture clinics in the Mission where women can receive group treatments. Yoga Tree and The Mindful Body both offer prenatal and postnatal yoga classes.

*Dr. Juli Fraga is a maternal mental health psychologist in San Francisco. She leads a pregnancy support circle, “The New Nest” at UCSF and “The Afterglow,” a 6-week postpartum support group. She has written about women’s health concerns for NPR, Time, The Washington Post, and The New York Times.*

\*Name has been changed for privacy.

\*\*DayOne Baby and Carmel Blue closed in 2018, the year after this article was first printed.

## FIVE WAYS PARTNERS CAN HELP

**PPD impacts the entire family, yet partners are often at a loss about how they can help during this vulnerable time. Here are five ways that partners can provide support:**

**Know the symptoms.** Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of PPD. If symptoms last for more than two weeks, you should schedule a postpartum mood screening with your physician or a psychotherapist. If mom is feeling extra irritable, it might be a sign of a postpartum mood concern: 25 percent of moms with a mood concern feel extra irritable during the postpartum period.

**Normalize her feelings.** Let her know that you understand her concerns, and offer emotional support by acknowledging that she’s undergoing an enormous transition, and that it’s okay to feel overwhelmed. If you’re concerned that she’s experiencing depression, be gentle. Moms with postpartum depression often feel ashamed. Let her know that she’s not alone and that postnatal depression is nothing to feel ashamed of.

**Consider reaching out for support.** Sometimes getting someone to help with the baby is supportive for the entire family. You might find a postpartum doula or a mother’s helper—someone who can help care for mom and the baby during the day. If sleep deprivation is taking an emotional toll, consider hiring a night doula.

**Be patient and reassuring.** Let her know that, although she may feel terrible and even hopeless, PPD is very treatable, and she doesn’t need to continue to suffer. Help her get help. The sooner, the better—early treatment will minimize the impact on her and your family. Treatment can come in many forms, such as individual psychotherapy, group support, or couples therapy. Even a handful of sessions can provide immense relief.

**Make sure she gets plenty of sleep.** Lack of sleep can be one of the causes of PPD. Do everything you can to help her get the rest she needs. Research shows that two to three-hour stretches of uninterrupted sleep are crucial for mood regulation.

# Thanksgiving Reimagined

By Tara Hardesty

**S**tove Top Stuffing. Something about this stuffing out of a box makes my mouth water. It is way too salty, and homemade is often great too, but nothing can replace my once-a-year craving for Stove Top Stuffing. Thanksgiving meals in general don’t do much for me. I’ve never been a big fan of turkey or pumpkin pie, but I love the gathering with community, and the break in the regularly scheduled programming that is busy mom life.

During my childhood, my family had a very traditional Thanksgiving. I have fond memories of sitting down with my big family, and with friends who didn’t have other places to be. But as we all grew and went our separate ways so did our traditions. Fast forward 15 years to when my husband and I started to create our own “traditions”. We

made some decisions about what was important to us on holidays and decided that we really didn’t care for the giant feast or the crowded table. So, we decided to create our own tradition.

Before children, Thanksgiving started with a good workout, then a movie, and finally Shalimar on Polk Street for some super spicy Indian food paired with a bottle of Riesling in plastic cups. We have continued this tradition with a few tweaks. We stopped the workout and movie when our first son arrived. But, we continued with Shalimar. Now, with a 6- and a 3-year-old, we plan to bring back the movie and sub the workout with a morning at a playground.

I know many moms with young children who are starting their own new traditions. Whatever form these traditions take and



whoever we call family, the gathering together and the moment to pause is cause for celebration.

We reached out to other GGMG moms to learn about their nontraditional Thanksgiving plans...

## potluck

For my first-ever Thanksgiving in SF I went on a long run in Crissy Field and came across this incredible group of friends/neighbors all setting up for a giant potluck. They were there early morning like me to take over all the picnic tables with a great view of the bridge/water (those are first come, first served) and apparently have been doing this for over a decade. The folks setting up had gorgeous tablecloths and centerpieces...you could tell it was going to be a really nice event and very photo-fantastic. Everyone just kind of put their foot down on traveling and hosting and cobbled together a consistent group of “over it” locals—such a cool tradition!

## cake

We celebrate a “Steak and Cake” Thanksgiving. My mother-in-law loved eating at a steakhouse on Thanksgiving (and not cooking!). My husband, daughter, and I continue this tradition (with the addition of a giant piece of chocolate cake for dessert).

## Celebrate

We spend a lot of time with my family...and not enough with my husband’s, who mostly grew up in India but live in the Bay Area now. A few years ago, we decided to make Thanksgiving the holiday we celebrate with his family. We now host a gourmet vegetarian Euro-Asian meal—meaning we blend our favorite veggie Asian fare and some Italian (my side)/Western food to include: fresh veggie spring rolls, pakoras, a lavish cheeseboard hand-picked from Bi-rite, pumpkin ravioli with browned butter and sage, a vegetable Thai curry, green salad and other roasted veggies, with fresh berry galettes for dessert. It is a feast we love preparing and have fun sharing with his family. While my kids won’t grow-up with turkey, they will have a unique tradition, which I hope they will grow fond of. I also try to get in a Thanksgiving morning yoga class with Mark M. at the Yoga Tree...so awesome!

*Tara is the owner of The Marketing Method Group, Inc., a boutique marketing firm in San Francisco. When she’s not working or parenting her 3 and 6-year-old sons, she enjoys writing freelance about things she is passionate about, the hairy underbelly of life, motherhood, and entrepreneurship.*

## ZOO

When we lived in the Bay Area we celebrated thanksgiving on Friday for a zillion boring family schedule reasons. So, on Thanksgiving proper we would go to the zoo and watch the zookeepers feed the animals thanksgiving food (a whole turkey for the tigers, a pumpkin for the bears), then go to the Cliff House for lunch, then run around on the beach by the Sutro Baths.

## steak

## VEGGIES







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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Cultures Are Not Costumes



Halloween is a time for creativity, magic, and make-believe. Whether you're buying, borrowing, or making a costume, it's a time for kids to stretch their imaginations and have some fun! However, it's important to be thoughtful about the appropriateness of the costume you choose to wear.

One GGMG parent shares a personal experience about Halloween: "When it was my baby's first time to get dressed up, there was a fall party at a baby play center. I was so excited and got my baby all dressed up. While there, I saw that a couple I knew had dressed up their 6-month-old as Disney's Pocahontas. This was hard for me [as a Native American person] because Pocahontas is an indigenous woman who went missing and was murdered... I remember just staring, and feeling afraid for my baby... knowing that there are parents and kids who will see my Native child as invisible and decide that our culture and regalia is something that can be worn as a costume."

At the heart of it, traditional clothing or regalia of another culture is not a costume. While this clothing is beautiful and worthy of celebration, wearing another culture's traditional clothing for "dress-up" is cultural appropriation. This is true any day of the year, but it's particularly important to remember at Halloween and Día de Los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, a Mexican holiday that has come to be celebrated around the same time as Halloween. If you are unsure if a costume is appropriate or not, ask yourself questions like: Is your costume based on ethnicity, race, or culture

**“If you are unsure if a costume is appropriate or not, ask yourself... Is your costume based on ethnicity, race, or culture that is not your own?”**



that is not your own? Do you know and identify with the history behind your costume? Would you wear this around the people you're dressing up as? If you are unable to answer these questions confidently, then it might be time to rethink your costume choice.

Costumes can be hard to navigate with children, who are excited to dress up as their favorite character and don't always understand that their choice is not appropriate. It's also complicated by the marketing and advertising of inappropriate costumes that make it seem like a particular costume is okay for everyone when it is really only appropriate for some. However, these moments can be an opening to talk to kids about race and cultural appropriation. Research indicates that children as young as 3 years old are ready to start to delve into these topics. In addition, if your child expresses interest in another culture's clothing or traditions, it's an opportunity to explore with them through learning their history, reading authors who are of that culture, podcasts, food, shows, and experiences. Halloween (and playing dress-up in general) is about exploring your imagination, so try focusing the conversation on all the possibilities.

For a more light-hearted take on the subject, check out Pakistani-American comedian and actor Kumail Nanjiani's video, "Kumail Nanjiani Shows You How to Dress Up as Not-a-Racist for Halloween" here: <https://youtu.be/WMBnCe3rJlg>.

CAREERS & ENTREPRENEURS

Not So Corporate Headshots



Our headshot event is back by popular demand! On October 18, we are partnering with Sarah Deragon of Portraits to the People to provide 20 GGMG members with brand-new headshots!

Rather than frame you in a staid, traditional headshot, Sarah works closely with each client to create images that have lasting value, reflecting the authentic you—think fresh, flattering, yet professional. See examples of her work at [portraitstothepeople.com](http://portraitstothepeople.com).

These mini Not So Corporate headshot sessions will take place outdoors using natural light (location TBD), and participants will receive three high-resolution images for \$100. This is a great opportunity to work with Sarah at a steeply discounted rate, as her basic package starts at \$400. This event is limited to the first 20 GGMG members and is expected to sell out fast, so reserve your spot today. Once you're confirmed, you'll also receive a helpful prep document to make sure you nail your look! See more details on page 31.

MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

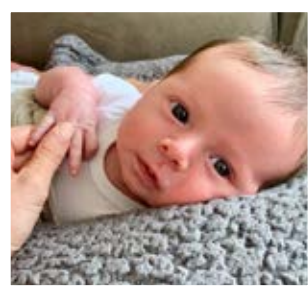
Build Your Mom Village

The Membership Engagement Committee welcomes new members and helps them meet other moms face-to-face, turning online connections into real-life friendships. There is nothing quite as rewarding, bewildering, and isolating as being a new mom, but having the support and kinship of other mothers sharing the same experiences can make all the difference. We are excited to help you find that support system and build your mom village! We facilitate this by organizing three types of events each year: Newborn Playgroup Formation events for new moms, Mom & Toddler Playgroups, and Member Mixers. These events are posted on [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org) and on our Facebook page. Please RSVP for all events through [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org).

We also send out new member welcome emails and membership perk emails to remind all members of their membership benefits, which are also listed in the membership perks section on [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org). We have great partnerships with vendors and service providers who offer special pricing or discounts for GGMG members.

Our goal is to engage moms in the early stages of motherhood. If you have questions or want to learn more about volunteering for our committee, please contact us at [playgroups@ggmg.org](mailto:playgroups@ggmg.org).

NEW ARRIVALS



Paige B. **Baby Matilda Eloise**  
Emily Beckwith M. **Baby Dylan Rhodes**  
Alison G. **Baby Sascha Davis**  
Frances W. **Baby Nicholas Astro**  
Jenny Young **Baby George John**



Congratulations to **Paige B.**! She will be getting joyful moments captured by Anna Munandar from Mini Anna Photography. Anna specializes in capturing joy and every milestone in your family, from birth to college. See her work at [www.minianna.com](http://www.minianna.com).



To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a \$150 gift card from **Mini Anna Photography**, fill out the form at [tinyurl.com/ggmgNewArrivals](http://tinyurl.com/ggmgNewArrivals).

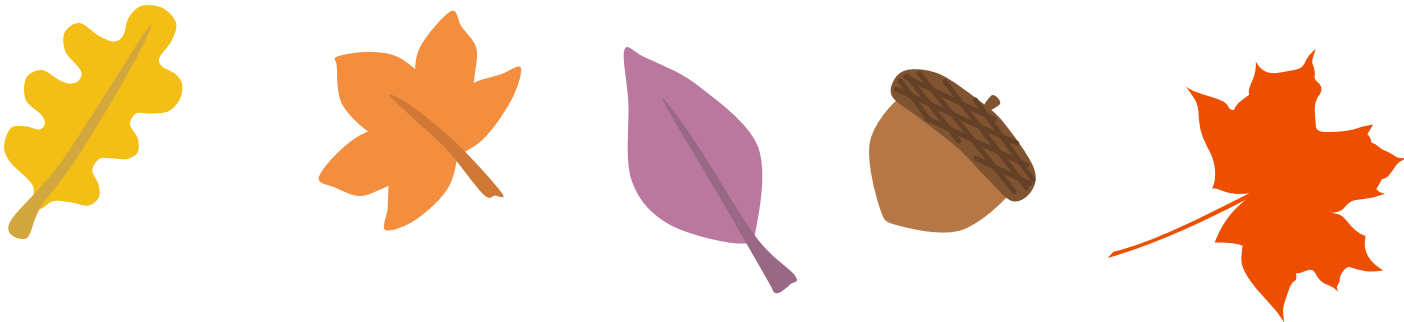




# Fall Festival

## Fun for the Whole Family!

Thank you to all the members and their families for joining us at this year's GGMG Fall Festival held at the SFF Soccer Field in Mission Bay. It is wonderful to see everyone exploring the pumpkin patch, jumping in the bounce houses, rockin' out to live music, savoring the yummy treats, making arts and crafts, kicking a ball around, and enjoying so many other fun-filled activities! We really appreciate all the volunteers who work tirelessly to make this fun event possible, and we would especially like to thank all of our amazing sponsors who contributed so generously. Please be sure to check them out.



### KIDS ACTIVITIES

**Fall Dress-Up Party at the Rabbit Hole Children's Theater**  
Join us for a fall-themed dress-up party at the Rabbit Hole. There will be a wall mural to color, special arts and crafts, a puppet show, and theater games. Enjoy all the magic of the Rabbit Hole with fun festivities at this GGMG-exclusive party. Event signup is limited to 25 kids (pre-walking babies not included). Please RSVP to reserve your spot.

**DATE:** Sunday, October 20  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 800 Diamond St.  
**COST:** \$5 and register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

### PARENT EDUCATION

**The Latest on Food Allergy Treatment and Care**  
Join us for this informative talk by Dr. Zahida Rani Maskatia, a board-certified allergist and immunologist who specializes in food allergy diagnosis and treatment at Latitude Food Allergy Care. She will provide an introduction to allergenic foods, discuss signs that your baby or child has a food allergy, reveal the best ways to diagnose food allergies, and present the latest research on treatment of food allergies.

You will have the opportunity to talk with families that have been through treatment and hear how it has improved their quality of life. Light refreshments will be served.

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 2  
**TIME:** 6:30 to 8 p.m.  
**PLACE:** JCCSF, 3200 California St., Room 209  
**COST:** GGMG members FREE. Non-members \$5

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**GGMG Volunteer Project: Ages 8 and Up at the Food Bank**  
Join GGMG families and their kids 8 and up in a fun morning of giving back to the community. Please note that the food bank requires one parent per child 10 and under. We will be either sorting fruit (or vegetables) or packing food to go to various community organizations.

**DATE:** Saturday, November 2  
**TIME:** 9 to 11 a.m.  
**PLACE:** SF-Marin Food Bank, 900 Pennsylvania Ave.  
**COST:** FREE but please register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

**GGMG Volunteer Project: Ages 4 and Up at the Food Bank**  
Join GGMG families and their kids 4 and up in a fun morning of giving back to the community. Please note that the food bank requires one parent per child 10 and under. We will be either sorting fruit (or vegetables) or packing food to go to various community organizations.

**DATE:** Sunday, November 3  
**TIME:** 9 to 11 a.m.  
**PLACE:** SF-Marin Food Bank, 900 Pennsylvania Ave.  
**COST:** FREE but please register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

### CAREERS & ENTREPRENEURS

**How to Have More Confidence at Work and as a Mom**  
Do you wish you felt more confident in your career or life outside of work? Whether you're currently working, thinking about returning to work, or debating whether to be a stay-at-home mom, this workshop will help you find the tools to manage self-doubt and fear and feel more confident in your career choices and as a mom. Join Julie Houghton and Paula Jenkins (both life coaches and local moms) for this free webinar. Details on how to join will be sent to those who RSVP.

**DATE:** Thursday, October 3  
**TIME:** Noon to 1 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Online webinar (details to be sent to those who RSVP)  
**COST:** FREE but please register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

**Not-So-Corporate Headshot Event**  
Back by popular demand! This year we are partnering with Sarah Deragon of Portraits to the People to provide 20 GGMG members with brand-new headshots!  
  
These mini Not-So-Corporate headshot sessions will take place outdoors (location TBD) and are limited to the first 20 GGMG members. Participants will receive three high-resolution images at a steep discount (her basic package starts at \$400). This event is expected to sell out fast, so reserve your spot today. Once you're confirmed, you'll also receive a helpful prep document to make sure you nail your look!

**DATE:** Friday, October 18  
**TIME:** 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Credo Beauty, 2136 Fillmore St.  
**COST:** \$90 and register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

**Moms Networking Lunch at Specialty's**  
Join us for this month's networking lunch at Specialty's on California Street. Please look for the GGMG Moms Downtown Lunch Group sign on the table to find us. Everyone is welcome, from pregnant moms to working moms to stay-at-home moms and everyone in between! We look forward to seeing you there.

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 8  
**TIME:** Noon  
**PLACE:** 100 California St.  
**COST:** FREE but please register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)

**Moms Networking Lunch at Cafe Venue**  
Join us for this month's networking lunch at Cafe Venue on Montgomery Street. Please look for the GGMG Moms Downtown Lunch Group sign on the table to find us. Everyone is welcome, from pregnant moms to working moms to stay-at-home moms and everyone in between! We look forward to seeing you there.

**DATE:** Wednesday, November 6  
**TIME:** Noon  
**PLACE:** 218 Montgomery St.  
**COST:** FREE but please register at [ggmg.org](http://ggmg.org)





Coffee + Stroller Walks

Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? GGMG Neighborhood Meetups Committee organizes a stroller walks with 11 meetup locations throughout the city. Visit the main GGMG calendar to learn more and RSVP.

**Marina Green Stroller Walk**  
3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Peet’s Coffee, 2080 Chestnut St.

**\*NEW\* Lower Pac Heights Stroller Walk**  
4th Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: b. Patisserie, 2821 California St.

**Richmond/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk**  
3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Rise & Grind, 785 8th Ave.

**Baker Beach Stroller Walk**  
3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Bazaar Cafe, 5927 California St.

**NOPA Stroller Walk**  
2nd Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: The Mill, 736 Divisadero St.

**Mission Stroller Walk**  
2nd Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Dolores Park Cafe, 501 Dolores St.

**Sunset/Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk**  
2nd Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Beanery, 1307 9th Ave.

**Cole Valley/GGP Stroller Walk**  
3rd Wednesday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Flywheel, 672 Stanyan St.

**Noe Stroller Walk**  
2nd Monday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Bernie’s Coffee, 3966 24th St.

**Bernal Stroller Walk at Precita Park Cafe & Grill**  
1st Monday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Precita Park Cafe & Grill, 500 Precita Ave.

**\*NEW\* Bernal Stroller Walk at Pinhole Cafe**  
4th Monday of the month at 10 a.m.  
MEETING POINT: Pinhole Cafe, 231 Cortland Ave.



Afternoon Playdates

**Baby & Toddler Playdates at Play Haven**  
Come meet fellow GGMG moms and their babies and toddlers for a playdate at Play Haven SF at a hugely discounted rate. All babies, toddlers, and older siblings welcome. Coffee, tea, and snacks are provided by GGMG. Parking is free at the Forest Hill Church lot next door.

**DATE:** 3rd Wednesday of every month  
**TIME:** 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Play Haven, 254 Laguna Honda Blvd.  
**COST:** \$5 per kid (regularly \$16). Infants 6 months and under and parents/caretakers free.

*Must RSVP and PREPAY. Limited spots available.*

**Playdates at Little Oceanauts**  
Need something to do in the afternoon after school? Join GGMG moms and kids for a playdate at a hugely discounted rate. Babies, toddlers, and older siblings welcome! Snacks provided by GGMG.

**DATE:** 3rd Wednesday of every month  
**TIME:** 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Little Oceanauts, 1917 Ocean Ave.  
**COST:** \$5 per kid (regularly \$15). Infants 6 months and under and parents/caretakers free.

*Must RSVP and PREPAY. Limited spots available.*

**Playdates at Imagination Playhouse**  
Do you need a place for your little one to burn off some energy? Come meet fellow GGMG families and enjoy a playdate at Imagination Playhouse in the Richmond at a hugely discounted rate. GGMG will provide snacks. This is a recurring event on every second Wednesday.

**DATE:** 2nd Wednesday of every month  
**TIME:** 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Imagination Playhouse, 5628 Geary Blvd.  
**COST:** \$5 per child with snacks. Infants 6 months and under and parents/caretakers free.

*Must RSVP and PREPAY. Limited spots available.*



**Playdates and Art at Messy Art Lab on Sundays**

Looking for something to do Sunday afternoon, after your little one’s nap and before dinner? Join us for a really fun Sunday Afternoon Open Studio Playdate at the Messy Art Lab, a process-oriented art experience focused on the exploration of materials, colors, textures, art recipes, and all the squishy-gooey-messy stuff kids love to get their hands on. All materials and art supplies are non-toxic and made from scratch.

**DATE:** 1st Sunday of every month  
**TIME:** 3 to 5 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Messy Art Lab. 345 Judah St.  
**COST:** \$5/kid (regularly \$20). All ages welcome. Caretakers/parents are free.

*Must RSVP and PREPAY. Limited spots available.*

**Playdates at My Gym**  
Calling all mamas in Dogpatch, Potrero Hill, and Mission Bay! Enjoy a playdate and meet fellow GGMG moms, babies, toddlers, and preschoolers at My Gym SF at a hugely discounted rate. All proceeds benefit The Village Project, whose mission is to provide a safe environment for after school and summer enrichment programs and to implement activities in an inclusive manner for children from neighborhoods traditionally lacking mentorship and services.

**DATE:** 3rd Wednesday of every month  
**TIME:** 4:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** My Gym, 901 Minnesota St.  
**COST:** \$5 per kid (regularly \$15). Infants 6 months and under and parents/caretakers free.

*Please RSVP and PREPAY via the main GGMG calendar. No payment taken at the door. Registration closes the morning of the event at 8 a.m.*



Evening

**Monthly Wine Nights**  
Come have some wine, meet other GGMG moms, and enjoy a relaxing evening.

**Date/Time/Location:** Multiple locations. Please check GGMG calendar for the latest updates.

**Sip and Shop Night for Moms**  
Join us at Ambiance for a night out of shopping, socializing, and snacks. The store will will be providing merchandise discounts and styling advice.

**DATE:** Thursday, October 3  
**TIME:** 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.  
**PLACE:** Ambiance, 756 Irving St.  
**COST:** FREE



**October Wine & Dress-Up Night at Messy Art Lab**

South of Golden Gate Park (N6) and West of Divisadero (N2) are coming together hosting a fabulous dress-up party at the Messy Art Lab. Put on your Halloween costume and come meet other moms for wine, snacks, and fun conversation. Owned by GGMG member Yoissy Thomas, ths creative studio lets your kids get their hands on squishy-gooey-messy art! Moms can join a “make your own slime” project during the party. Limited spots so please RSVP to reserve yours.

**DATE:** Tuesday, October 8  
**TIME:** 7 to 10 p.m.  
**PLACE:** 345 Judah St.  
**COST:** FREE

**November Wine Night – Flip and Sip Part Two**

Inspired by the huge success of our last event, South of GGP (N6), South of Bernal (N7) neighborhoods and the Community Outreach Committee will be hosting another fun Flip and Sip event, just in time for holiday shopping. We’ll have an Usborne Books consultant sharing sample books and catalogs and GGMG will provide some wine and snacks. The more books we sell, the more free books we get to donate to a select charity. If you can’t attend in person you can participate via the online shopping page.

**DATE:** Tuesday, November 19  
**TIME:** 7 to 10 p.m.  
**PLACE:** TBD  
**COST:** FREE

Weekend

**Pumpkins and Potions – Halloween Nature Walk in Richmond**

Come out for a fun morning nature walk at Mountain Lake Park, Halloween edition! Led by Lani Schreiberstein, we will explore nature during this spooky time of the year, make colorful potions with finds like leaves, flower petals and sticks, and more! Plus little ones will get to search for hidden mini-pumpkins, and then decorate and take one home. Costumes not required but highly encouraged. Perfect for children ages 1-8. Space is limited so RSVP early!

**DATE:** Saturday, October 26  
**TIME:** 10 to 11 a.m.  
**PLACE:** Mountain Lake Park, 12th Ave. entrance  
**COST:** \$5/kid (regularly \$25)

**De Young for Family Art Making – New & Recurring\***

The de Young offers free family programming on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit the drop-in Family Art Making tables to explore a theme related to the art in our permanent collection or special exhibitions. Join us the second Saturday of the month for a fun time together!

**DATE:** 2nd Saturday of every month starting in October  
**TIME:** 10:45 a.m.  
**PLACE:** The de Young Museum, Golden Gate Park (meet in lobby)  
**COST:** FREE and open to the public. (The museum is free for SF residents on Saturdays)

First 2 RSVPs win a free beverage from the cafe.

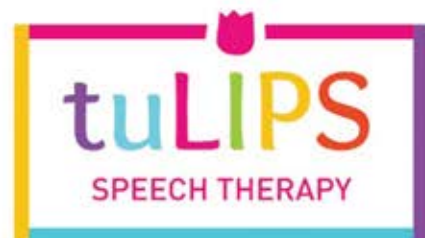






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## What Lurks Beneath the Surface

By Victoria Dvorak

“Stop moving,” I repeated no less than three times as I brushed my 6-year-old’s little teeth. Having already brushed her big and little sister’s teeth earlier, I was eager to be done so I could get them to bed and finally have a moment to myself. My kids often ask me why I don’t let them brush their own teeth. My answer is simply, “Because I like doing it.” Truth is I hate brushing their teeth. It’s a tedious chore but one I simply cannot let go of, and what’s worse, I know why. Understanding makes nothing about this easier. Understanding is recognizing that the truth is steeped in fear, pain, and trauma. As a child, I had a mouth full of decayed teeth, and I am determined to a fault to not let this be my children’s fate.

Everyone in my family has had dental issues. It makes sense when I see people in my home country. Dental care is a luxury few in the third world are able to prioritize. I’ve had no less than eight root canals. I’m impervious to dental pain because there’s no pain like a tooth abscess. Four times. It’s no coincidence that I don’t remember having

amounted to going to the dental school where “students” were uncaring at best and abusive at worst. Teeth were pulled from my mouth, and when I screamed, a female student yanked my ponytail and ordered me to stop. Yeah, I have issues with dental care.

My kids have a Sonicare toothbrush. It’s in my reminders to change the brush head every three months. I don’t even have a reminder to refresh the EpiPen meant save my life in case I get stung by a bee. Brush heads are sanitized with a UV light twice a week, their tongue scrapers are soaked in hydrogen peroxide, they use mouthwash, they’re adept at the “v” flossing motion, and I have a dental pick and mirror to micromanage every tooth. Lollipops are so rare and special, we use them as stocking stuffers, to my kids’ delirious delight.

Ours is not a home where Elmo’s brushing tutorial plays on one of the many iPads.

Cheerful, bright picture books about brushing have no home on the shelves. There’s no easing into it. Ours is a home where I am the dental dictator. My babies cut their teeth on toothbrushes. Eighteen months is when the Sonicare starts. There’s no flavored toothpaste. My normally wild kids file into the bathroom for their turn with obedience. This isn’t over-compensating. It’s not an over-reaction. This is a full breakdown realized.

My growing children will shake me out of my living breakdown. No matter how powerful my pain, rage, trauma, my kids will win. They insist they’re capable. We compromise. Compromise is growth. They do the first round and I follow up if needed and I FIGHT the urge to undermine their efforts. Fight is growth. Space for the trauma is another step.

My will to not have my parents’ mistake repeat in me is a too-powerful force for me to control. My kids are 3, 6, 9, and there’s not one cavity among them. Their dentist constantly raves about their teeth and praises my good parenting. I remain silent, hiding the truth behind perfection. My hope is that with each small battle won, the overwhelming need to ameliorate my trauma will wane. We’ll see.

*Victoria lives in SF with her husband and three kids. She is an occasional writer, cactus mom, and forum troll.*



**“I looked like that villain in the old James Bond movies, the one who was really strong, tall, mute, and had steel teeth that could cut through rope and wire.”**

but one, maybe two toothbrushes, ever, or flossing. What’s the floss? We were never told to brush our teeth. The “Westernized” practice of twice-daily brushing did not comport with our values.

I have a picture of me, 5 years old with a mouthful of silver caps. My teeth were so rotted, those silver caps prevented any further decay until my baby teeth fell out. I looked like that villain in the old James Bond movies, the one who was really strong, tall, mute, and had steel teeth that could cut through rope and wire. Jaws was his villain name. I went to bed every night without brushing. I “brushed” in the morning, but whatever I was doing was not brushing. Dentist care





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