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Letter from the Editor:

I Am Mother, Hear Me Roar

By Sonya Abrams



Sonya is a loud mother to even three louder children. She hopes that one of them will someday be a singer in the family band.

I have found my voice as a mother. And it makes me cringe. It turns out that my voice is a loud one, capable of snapping heads around and causing small children to cower in fear. I have become a yell—a person I said I’d never be. I start off each day with a simple, silent vow to keep my cool, to be the easygoing, fun-loving parent I set out to be. But this ideal is illusory. If I make it through the morning routine with an even tone, teeth clenched to restrain my displeasure, I consider it a victory. More often than not, however, a series of small child grievances swells into a cacophony of complaints, and my gentle admonishments or attempts at positive reinforcement fall on deaf ears. So my patience crumbles, and I yell. Loud, and threateningly. It feels like sweet relief in the moment, and it certainly gets their attention and intimidates, but it often doesn’t solve the problem. My kids get upset and then they give me that LOOK, that guilt-inducing wide-eyed look of disappointment. I begin to self-flagellate, worrying I’m scarring my offspring permanently and questioning my value as a mother. I confuse them and muddle my message by overcorrecting, apologizing, and taking the blame. And it’s not even 8 a.m.

What does it mean to find our voice? Our writers this issue have a lot to say on the subject, exploring ways in which we and our children can establish a better sense of self and purpose. On page 16, Jessica Williams sets her sights on civics. What are our children being taught, and how can we as parents encourage them to be thoughtful and participatory citizens of our communities? Jennifer Butterfoss on page 20 pulls back the curtain of

I will never be the mother I hope to be. Is that ok? Or, is it not enough?

household dynamics, explaining how relationship burdens are often uneven and provides strategies for self-advocating and establishing better balance with partners. And on page 24, Tara Hardesty shares ways to spark confidence in children and nurture an early love of reading.

I will never be the mother I hope to be. Is that ok? Or, is it not enough? Perhaps part of finding our voice is striving to do our best but finding peace in recognizing our imperfections. We should hold close the faith that our gentle words of love will overpower the sharp words of anger in our children’s hearts and know that the loudest voices of judgment are actually in our own heads.

Sonya

Housekeeping

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

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COMING NEXT: October/November: Facing Your Fears

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Visiting Thomasland and Legoland; Solo trip to Andalucia; The circle of life—love you Dad!; First baby turned one; A move, a 5th birthday party, and a first trip to Disneyland, all in one week; Trips to Vegas, Florida, the Sierras, and the ER (not in that order); Trips to Napa, Western Massachusetts, Lake George, NY, and Central New Jersey; Trips to Sonoma and Seattle and a preschool graduation.

Letter from the Board:

Seeking Advice When We Need It Most

By Karen Brein

I will always remember my son’s 18-month well-child visit. As a first-time mom, I was extremely anxious about his speech, or lack thereof. Navigating this new challenge of motherhood was scary and isolating. Thankfully I had the GGMG forums, which helped me access resources for speech delays and connect with other moms going through similar experiences. Several months of intense speech therapy did wonders for my son and I don’t think I could have gracefully navigated our situation without GGMG. I’m happy to share that my boy did eventually find his voice and now, as a four-year-old, he never stops talking!

GGMG has been a constant source of knowledge and support for me in each stage of my journey as a mom. I’m extremely proud to be a member of such a dynamic organization that serves so many in our community. Do you know all the ways

Several months of intense speech therapy did wonders for my son, and I don’t think I could have gracefully navigated our situation without GGMG.

that you can engage with GGMG both in person and online?

The GGMG calendar is always full of engaging and interesting events for members: neighborhood book clubs and wine nights, coffee and stroller walks, and a weekly LGBTQ playgroup are just a few upcoming offerings. For new moms, don’t miss out on

our next Playgroup Formation event happening on Sunday, August 11.

Preschool Preview Night, one of GGMG’s signature annual events, is happening on Thursday, September 19. This event is open to the public (but tickets are heavily discounted for GGMG members!) and is the best place to learn about more than 70 local preschool programs. If you are a mom of a baby or toddler, this event is not to be missed. More information is available on the GGMG website.

I hope you’ll join us at an upcoming event and engage with GGMG on the online forums. If you have any feedback for the GGMG board please email us at codirectors@ggmog.org. We really want to hear from you—whether it’s feedback, suggestions, volunteer inquiries, or just to commiserate on why four-year-olds ask so many questions.



Karen is mom to three adorable and spirited kids: Adam, Ava, and Nina. Her favorite pastimes include coffee, wine, indoor cycling, and taking long walks around San Francisco..

Karen

Cover Outtakes



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

Cover photo by Marissa HB Photography
Cover models: Angela and Keira (12 months)

Little Dippers: Bay Area Options for Summer Splashing

By Sonya Abrams

When Fogust descends upon San Francisco, it's time to grab goggles and sunscreen and head out of town to some of the region's best places to get wet and wild.

Del Valle Regional Park

The centerpiece of the popular Livermore landmark is a large lake with two lifeguard-staffed swimming beaches, concession stands, picnic tables, boat rentals, and lake tours. www.ebparks.org/parks/del_valle



Francis Ford Coppola Winery Pools and Cabines

This Geyserville winery offers two large pools and 4-person cabine rentals with private showers and a bottle of bubbly. Cabines don't come cheap, but worry not, individual pool passes are also available. www.francisfordcoppolawinery.com/en/visit/pools-and-cabines



Hamilton Pool

Set your coordinates for Novato and enjoy a dip in this community pool, which has a water play structure with a slide, perfect for younger splashers. tinyurl.com/HamPoolNovato



Silliman Aquatic Center

Take aim at the deep East Bay and hightail it to this Newark-based indoor aquatic masterpiece, with multiple slides, a lazy river, and enough water play areas to keep your kids entertained all day. tinyurl.com/newarkpool



Sonya is a photographer and mom to three little water wigglers who are just hitting the "Mom, watch me do this awesome cannonball!" stage of swimming..

Bass Lake

Earn your dip with a three-mile hike to this remote lake in Bolinas. Best for older kids, this Point Reyes favorite lacks a proper beach or lifeguards but has a rope swing for lakeside fun. tinyurl.com/basslakemagic

Rinconada Pool

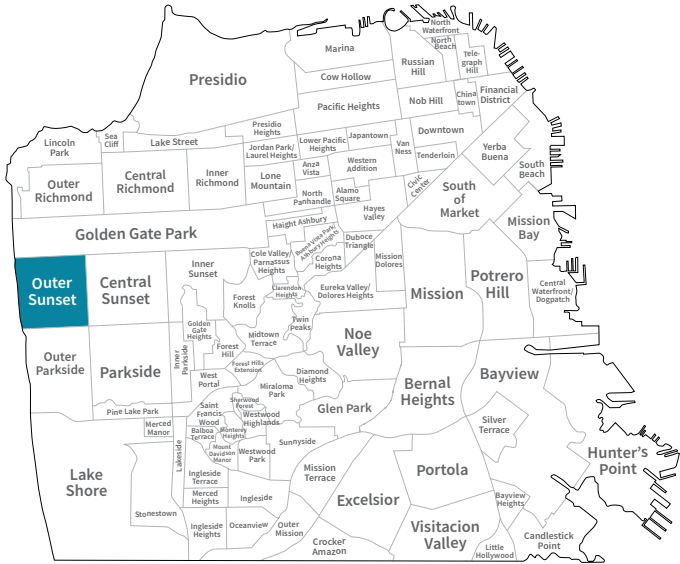
This Palo Alto hotspot boasts a pristine lap pool and a massive shallow pool with fountains and play structures galore, perfect for safe toddler fun. paloaltoswim.com

Johnson's Beach

Enjoy one of Russian River's most family-friendly spots at this Guerneville institution, which features a roped-off kiddie area, kayak rentals, umbrellas, and food options. johnsonsbeach.com/beach

Temescal Regional Recreation Area

Nestled near the beautiful Oakland hills is a tranquil park and lake with a sandy lifeguard-staffed beach. Check the website before heading over, as toxic algae is known for closing the water facilities. <https://www.ebparks.org/parks/temescal>



Li'l Kid, Big City: Outer Sunset

By Jessica Perry

On the western edge of San Francisco, often shrouded in fog, lies the family-friendly Outer Sunset neighborhood. Home to young families, avid surfers, and hipsters alike, this eclectic part of the city has quirky stores, lots of nature to explore, critically acclaimed restaurants, and spots for good old family fun. Having a lazy weekend morning? Check out **Devil's Teeth Bakery** for a yummy breakfast sandwich, or book a spot at **Outerlands** for a swanky brunch, and drop by **Andytown Coffee Roasters** on the way home. Kids getting antsy and need to run around? Drop by **Sunset Playground** or the **45th & Lincoln Blue Boat Playground**, which was recently renovated and is a neighborhood favorite. If you're looking for greenery, take a stroll through **Golden Gate Park** past the **South (Murphy) Windmill**, which was built in 1908 and was once the biggest in the world. Finally, wind your way through the eucalyptus trees down to **Ocean Beach**, which runs down the coast from the Outer Richmond to Daly City. Be sure to pack a sweater if it's foggy or reserve a fire pit for a beach BBQ in warmer weather. ❖

Jessica is a Marin native who has spent the better part of the last two decades living in the Outer Richmond and Sunset Districts. You can often find her out and about at new restaurants, going to yoga, biking, or exploring new places in San Francisco with her husband and two daughters..

Sing-Alongs and Musical Experiences

By Veronica Reilly-Granich

What better way to find your voice than at a sing-along? Jump right in and join the fun! San Francisco is full of great opportunities for the whole family to hit a high note together.

Alphabet Rockers: This dynamic hip hop duo performs interactive shows geared towards families. They empower kids with positive, age-appropriate language addressing racial justice and the gender continuum. www.alphabetrockers.com

Samba Samba Kids: Kids can sing and dance along to the rhythms of the African Diaspora with master percussionist and local treasure, James Henry. Participants of all ages can travel around the world through music and become infused with joy. www.sambasamba.com

Charity and the JAMband/JAMboodas: Bringing music, movement, and mindfulness together for families. Charity Kahn offers family concerts and regular classes in and around San Francisco. It's engaging for the whole family, and you can celebrate a child's birthday at some concerts as well! www.jamjamjam.com

Chantey Sing: All hands on deck for a night of singing and cider drinking under the stars on a historical ship at the San Francisco Maritime National Historic Park. The first Saturday of every month at 8 p.m. www.nps.gov/safr

Community Music Center: A San Francisco institution offering music for everyone since 1921, there are options for kids of all ages to join in and raise their voices! Try Musical Storytime, CMC Chiquitos, or the Children's Chorus for ages 8 and up. www.sfcmc.org

Breakfast with Enzo: Local musician Enzo Garcia enchants and involves young and old alike in a sing-along accompanied by diverse instruments such as the accordion, guitar, banjo, jaw harp, ocarina, percussion, and musical saw. Thursday and Friday mornings at the Sports Basement in the Presidio. www.enzogarcia.com

Veronica is an educator living with a musician husband and two young girls in San Francisco. They have regular dance parties and sing-alongs at home

Ask the Expert

Addressing Speech and Language Delay with Annick Tumolo, MS CCC-SLP



Annick is a speech language pathologist and founder of Naturally Speaking San Francisco, a home-based speech and language service (www.naturallyspeakingssf.com), and is a speech pathologist for the San Carlos School District with 16 years of experience.

What are signs of a speech and language delay?

The most common signs include not speaking and/or using at least 15 words by 18 months and/or not regularly using new words and word combinations by age two. Some other red flags of a delay include a lack of eye contact, joint attention, not responding to one's name, and unusual repetitive movements with one's body or objects. Additionally, multiple cases of ear infection put a child at risk for both speech and language delay. It's important to seek an audiological evaluation to rule out hearing loss that may be causing an overall communication delay.

Is there anything parents can do to prevent the delayed development of speech and language?

The most important thing you can do is talk to and read to your child as if he/she understands from the day of birth. Talking to a child consistently through the day builds attachment and trust. It's amazing how quickly a baby will start to take a turn by cooing as early as two months old. As your child grows, encourage imitation whether through gestures, facial expressions, or words. Encourage play because so much speech, language, and learning occurs through play! Have fun with play routines such as peekaboo and hide-and-seek, which serve as a great time to interact and take turns. Last, but not least, sing to your child and play child-friendly music often. There are children's nursery rhyme books that come with music to play along.

When should a child begin speech and language therapy?

Early intervention is key. Don't wait and see, and don't settle for a waitlist of 3 to 6 months (if possible). Get help now! Research shows that the earlier intervention takes place, the better the results.

What can parents do to help their child with delayed speech and language development learn to talk faster?

Ways that parents can work with their child include:

- Arrange the home environment to promote communication (e.g., put preferred objects in sight, but out of reach).
- Offer choices (e.g., Do you want the blue cup or the red cup?)

- Build on enjoyable, familiar routines and give your child a turn within those routines (e.g., sing and pause, "Row, row, row your ____" and wait for your child to say or attempt to say "boat").
- Follow your child's lead (e.g., play what your child wants to play).
- Use "expectant waiting"—instead of prompting your child to say something, wait for your child to initiate (don't anticipate your child's needs) and give your child time to respond.
- Expand your child's utterance (e.g., child says: "more", parent says: "more banana?").
- Interpret your child's message and then respond.
- Repeat what you say and do.
- Reward your child's communication with natural results (e.g., provide access to a toy he/she pointed to and/or tried to say).
- Talk about the here and now.

Keep in mind that communication should be fun and rewarding. Your child will not be motivated if he or she consistently experiences frustration.

Does growing up in a bilingual household affect speech and language development?

Yes, as a child will have two words for the same object instead of a larger variety of words due to a monolingual upbringing. Although bilinguals may not have as wide a vocabulary at the age of two, they likely will have two words for dog, grandma, etc. Learning two languages will not cause language impairment. In fact, research indicates that teaching a child a second language has many benefits for cognitive growth and development.

Talking to a child consistently through the day builds attachment and trust.

Can using baby sign language delay actual speech?

No, research suggests it actually facilitates speech. Sign language teaches babies that communication is meaningful. They learn to communicate. The more gestures they have, the more words they will acquire.

Why does speech and language delay occur?

This is not always an easy question to answer. Every child's speech and language development is unique. Some common causes are hearing loss and/or chronic ear infections, mouth malformations such as a cleft palate, difficulty with moving the articulators to make the target sounds, genetic and developmental disorders. ❖

GGMG VILLAGE CORNER

Community Outreach

Teaching Kids About Taking Care of the Environment

Climate change and pollution are increasingly on the minds of many people, and you may be wondering how to teach your children to understand the importance of caring for the environment. In Europe, a growing movement, headed by 16-year-old Greta Thunberg from Sweden, is urging leaders to take climate action. She challenged world leaders by getting children to demonstrate in front of government buildings. While your child may not be marching in the streets, your family can show its commitment to prevent climate change and pollution in many other ways:



Visit organizations that are helping combat climate change

Visit the Marine Mammal Center, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, or the California Academy of Sciences and learn how animals see trash as food and how plastics are problematic.

Volunteer at an environmental project

Organizations like Save the Bay and others have environmental cleanup days all year long that your family can get involved in. During these projects, kids see others taking care of the environment as well.

Join us at the Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 21 at 10 a.m. There will be an after-party at Park Chalet at 11:30 a.m. Look for it on the online GGMG calendar!

Choose reusable materials

Be a good role model by choosing reusable materials and saying "no" to single-use plastics. Take part in recycling, composting, and picking up litter. Make kids see that even small actions can add up.

Show your children the beauty of nature

Take a hike, enjoy a day at the beach, go camping. Spending time in nature can change your child's view on the rest of the world.

Contest

Getaway



Escape with (or without) the kids on an overnight stay at Sonoma's beautiful El Pueblo Inn. This prime location is walking distance from Sonoma's historic plaza—home to wine tasting rooms, boutique shopping, a children's play area, and multiple restaurants, bakeries, cafes, and ice cream shops. Nearby are many award-winning wineries for tasting the day away. Or simply relax at El Pueblo's lushly planted grounds, pool, and jacuzzi, open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Your overnight stay includes a double room with balcony, free on-site parking, and continental breakfast. The total prize package is valued at \$275. Dates subject to availability. Winner will reserve date directly with El Pueblo Inn.

Enter the contest by emailing contest@ggm.org with "Getaway" in the subject line by August 31, 2019. Winner selected at random. Thank you to our generous prize donor, family-owned-and-operated El Pueblo Inn, Sonoma, California. Find it at www.elpuebloinn.com.

Congratulations to **Christine Grenfell**, winner of the June contest prize, \$300 of non-surgical services from Pacific Heights Plastic Surgery in San Francisco.

Finding Teagan's Voice By Ryan Flinn

Blame the souvlaki stands. Those sizzling spits of meat, glistening with melting fat, lured me at each corner further and further into the heart of Athens' ancient alleyways. As a 19-year-old, less than 24 hours into my first trip overseas for what would be a semester in Greece, I had wandered deep into a city where I spoke neither the language nor had any sense of place. Soon I was lost. My attempts to ask for help were met with silence or ignorance. Alone and helpless, I felt a sudden sense of panic and frustration. Eventually, I made it back to my apartment. But for a few minutes, the sheer terror of not being able to communicate a basic need was overwhelming.

Nearly two decades and a lifetime later, I use that experience to explain to strangers what my daughter is probably feeling most of the time. Teagan was diagnosed as "severely autistic" at 18 months old. Now 12, Teagan is lanky, energetic, full of personality, and she doesn't speak beyond a few simple words, like "go" or "done."



Imagine asking someone for a glass of water and, instead, someone hands you a bagel.

Imagine asking someone for a glass of water and, instead, someone hands you a bagel. Or you want to know where the bathroom is and instead someone points you to an elevator. That is what she experiences on a daily basis. And these are basic requests for needs—communicating her "wants" is where it gets complicated. She hasn't found a way to tell me if she's feeling sick, if something is bothering her at school, or if she has a particular interest in something new.

Over the years, we have tried several approaches to augmenting her communication skills, from speech therapy to sign language to a velcro board with pictures of things, and—for the past several years—an iPad with a special app to vocalize images and words she can tap. But she hasn't fully embraced any of these.

Teagan is what I call a "multi-modal communicator," because she uses a variety of techniques to request things from us. Sometimes she will grab my hand, drag me to the kitchen, and push me toward something she wants. Other times she'll go to her iPad and work through her TouchChat app until she finds a button for what she wants. Most of the time, she'll just get things herself. At home, this is generally OK. But it can cause some issues in public, like when she wants chips and walks up

to a stranger at a park and takes theirs. When those around her can't properly grasp what she wants, Teagan gets understandably frustrated. And like with many autistic kids, this can lead to self-injurious behavior. At times, Teagan will hit herself on the leg or head with her fists. Thankfully, we've been able to reduce

these incidents over the years, through better awareness of her sensitivities. But, they still occur and leave bruises.

I worry about how this will change as she moves into her teenage years. Like any other teen, I expect her to act aloof, to deal with hormones and a wave of new feelings she hasn't experienced before. She probably won't want to tell me what she feels or is thinking, even if she could. But I still need to act as her interpreter during this time.

While Teagan hasn't found a reliable way to communicate, many other autistic people have been speaking out on their feelings, experiences, and views of the world. Two books by non-verbal autistic kids, *Carly's Voice: Breaking Through Autism* and *Ido in Autismland*, explain some of the daily

frustrations with parents, caregivers, and teachers, and has been eye-opening. Another great source of info is the #ActuallyAutistic movement on Twitter. There you can read what many autistic people around the world are thinking or feeling about different situations. Getting the insider view has been so insightful for our family.

As we navigate these challenges, I always try to remind myself—and others—that Teagan's actions aren't irrational. Her emotions, from exuberant elation at small things like playing with lotion to angry outbursts at seemingly simple requests like asking her to stop putting silverware in the trash can, make sense to her. How she responds to the world around her may seem odd to us, but she is an intelligent person who deserves to be treated like a capable human being. I hope that by explaining her perspective, I can help others begin to appreciate how so-called non-neurotypical people like Teagan see the world, and destigmatize autism.

Ryan is a former journalist now working in healthcare communications. He's crossed the bridge to Oakland, where he lives with his wife and three children.

MEMBER PROFILE: Phyllis Timoll

Photo by Marie Hamonic Photography

Since becoming a mother, GGMG member Phyllis Timoll has found her voice in unexpected ways. After the birth of her first child, she took a leap of faith and said goodbye to her secure, high-paying sales job to begin her wellness business, Well Woman. Through individual sessions and group events, Phyllis helps mothers cultivate physical and emotional wellness by teaching them about clean eating, the mind/body connection, and the importance of self-care. Juli Fraga spoke with Phyllis about how motherhood catapulted her career in new and unforeseen ways, which helped her grow, both personally and professionally.

HOW HAS MOTHERHOOD EMPOWERED YOU AND HELPED YOU FIND YOUR VOICE?

Nothing tests you more than becoming a mom. Kids are a reflection of us by revealing our strengths, weaknesses, fears, challenges, and values. Because of this, motherhood has made me reevaluate the critical things in my life, helped me find joy in the little things, and inspired me to get my stuff together. It's a juggling act—one that's exhausting—but also joyful when you step out of the role of self-critic and become a learner by letting your kids be your most prominent teacher.

YOU'RE A SUCCESSFUL ENTREPRENEUR. WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO START YOUR OWN BUSINESS AFTER BECOMING A MOM?

When it comes to fertility and pregnancy, there's an abundance of resources to support women, but once you become a mom, the lens shifts, and it becomes about breastfeeding, changing diapers, and caring for the baby. After the birth of my daughter, I didn't feel supported as a woman anymore. And in addition to the normal stressors, I had postpartum depression and health concerns. I needed support, but I had no idea where to find help.

During this time, I reevaluated my life. Even though I enjoyed my corporate job, it didn't seem compatible with parenthood. Finally, I listened to my gut feeling and left my job, went back to school to study nutrition, and in the process, I learned how to heal myself. I also studied coaching and started my business, Well Woman, which I created for moms.

WHAT HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE CHALLENGES?

Like every new entrepreneur, I failed several times, but I saw each experience as an opportunity to create something different and better for the next time. And as an extrovert, it can be lonely working as an entrepreneur. Even in a vibrant community like San Francisco, it's still isolating, which has its ups and downs.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR SUCCESSES?

I've always loved that quote, "If you build it, they will come." I followed my passion and built a business based on a need I had in new motherhood—to be the best, healthiest version of myself I could be and to find holistic support. Little did I know that many other women want and need similar guidance. Creating a space for moms to receive similar support is one of my biggest joys.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU'RE CONTINUING TO FIND YOUR VOICE?

I find my most significant insights when I listen to my inner voice. My strength comes from being in nature, unplugged from electronic devices and the constant beep of the phone. In this space, my thoughts connect with the rest of my life, and I have moments of real clarity.

ADVICE FOR OTHER NEW MOMS?

Embrace your fears, let go of worries about judgment from others, find your tribe, and remember, the most excellent teacher is the little human you're raising.

Know a mom you want to spotlight in the next issue? Email editor@gmg.org with her name, email, and a few sentences about what makes her an awesome mom for our next Member Profile.



BOOKS for Kids Finding Your Voice

By Laure Latham

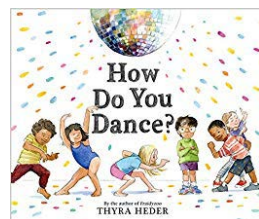
Becoming your own person and finding your voice are part of growing up and finding your place in the world. It can be tricky, but it's the magic of human nature. Feelings, emotions, secrets, and fears are all part of us and these books all explore a different aspect of how we discover ourselves.



Ha-Ha! Made You Laugh

Written by Stéphanie Babin, illustrated by Vincent Mathy

Giggles and goofy illustrations invite young ones to interact with the book by sticking out their tongues, blowing kisses, and lifting flaps to reveal surprises. Using silly and expressive animal characters, the book is a fun way to discover the world of jokes and gentle teasing. *Ages: 0 to 3 years*



How Do You Dance?

Written and illustrated by Thyra Heder

Dancing lets us express our feelings and most children irresistibly react to music and beats by dancing while a few are intimidated or reluctant. To answer the question 'How do you dance?', the book illustrates various moves, emphasizing that there is no single way to dance. We all dance like we want to and there's no better way to dance. *Ages: 3 to 6 years*



Breathe and Be: A Book of Mindfulness Poems

Written by Kate Coombs, illustrated by Anna Laitinen

Gentle and soothing, each poem in this book is illustrated with ethnically diverse children interacting with a landscape and imagining themselves as various flora and fauna. Perfect for a yoga class or circle time, this book makes meditation accessible to all. Kids who struggle with harmful or disturbing thoughts and feelings will hopefully be reassured and find inner peace. *Ages: 4 to 8 years*



The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea: The Story of Annaliese Easterling & Throckmorton, Her Simply Remarkable Sock Monkey

Written and illustrated by Eileen Beha

Told by a sock monkey, this book tells the story of 9-year-old Annaliese who lives in a crumbling mansion by the sea with her father and siblings. Her mother is long dead and her father has forbidden any mention of Annaliese's mother. Yet when a party invitation arrives from 90-year-old great-grandmother Easterling, Annaliese and her sock monkey start learning hidden family secrets. What's more, the party will feature a sock monkey parade to celebrate each baby born in the family—that's forty-nine sock monkeys invited to attend along with their human keepers. Old-fashioned in a good way, this book will become an instant classic in your family. *Ages: 7 to 11 years*



The Beckoning Shadow

Written by Katharyn Blair

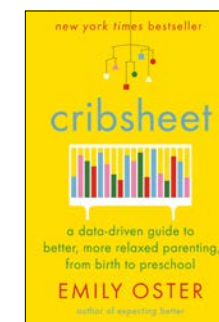
What better way to find your voice than to rewrite the past? Or, as teenage runaway Vesper Montgomery discovers, rewriting the past can be a way to right previous wrongs done to loved ones. Set in San Francisco, this quick-paced dystopian story follows the training of young, magically-gifted Vesper for a tournament for which the prize is \$1 million. A gripping novel of how our actions impact others and what you would be ready to sacrifice to change the past. *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.

BOOKS for Parents

By Gail Cornwall

Two women recently released very different books on finding your voice after becoming a parent.



Cribsheet: A Data-Driven Guide to Better, More Relaxed Parenting, from Birth to Preschool

by Emily Oster

Parents these days are inundated with advice on everything from breastfeeding to sleep training, from childcare to screen time, almost all of it purportedly evidence-based. Who better to

sort the wheat from the chaff than Oster, an economist who distinguishes "the good studies from the less-good ones" for a living? She did just that in *Expecting Better*, her book about pregnancy that, like *Cribsheet*, leads with the following premise: No expert, not even Oster, can tell you what's right for your family in most instances. Instead, she summarizes what high-quality science reveals about the risks and rewards of any given choice and describes a way of weighing those pros and cons in combination with your own preferences. "The data is the same for us all, but the decisions are yours alone," she stresses.

That might leave you thinking *Cribsheet* is exceptionally dry, and it is, but not in a bad way. Oster writes with precision and an almost British wit—a style that delights once you get used to it: "In the first days and weeks after your baby arrives, you will experience a wave of hormones. Most women find they are emotionally sensitive during this period. This is not, for example, the time to watch the first fourteen minutes of the movie *Up*." The wryness is perfect for a wonky professor addressing the masses. "There is another type of evidence, one that you see a lot on the internet," she writes. "I'd refer to this as... 'it happened once to my friend' evidence. You know: 'My friend didn't vaccinate, and her kid is super healthy!' Here is what we learn from this: nothing."

Cribsheet is also exceedingly well-organized, complete with a stark "Bottom Line" synopsis at the end of each chapter (e.g., "On nipple confusion: Not supported in the data."). The book isn't flawless, and you can find my nit-picking online, but it's pretty darn close to the exact thing needed in this historical moment to quell new parents' anxiety and give them back their say-so.

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

Women's Work: A Reckoning with Work and Home

by Megan K. Stack

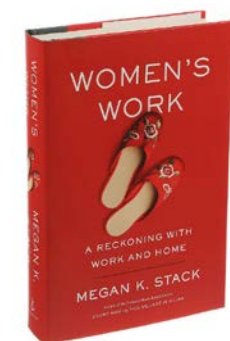
The private problems Megan Stack grapples with "are no doubt duplicated in households all over our planet. And yet housework is seldom considered as a serious subject for study, or even discussion." This, writes the Betty Friedan of our generation, "is an injustice on a grand scale."

But *Women's Work* isn't just about housework. Equal parts memoir and manifesto, the book uses the stories of four women who each "stumbled through a house that was also a job site...liv[ing] together in the space left by men who were temporarily elsewhere" to tackle motherhood, marriage, and other tidy, manageable topics like exploitation, gender, and the human condition.

It is a beautiful, horrifying reflection of domesticity rendered in prose that's just the right amount of stark and ornate in turn: "Imagine you are so tired your face feels like permanent putty and you cry at the slightest provocation and, in general, you are about as raw and crumbly as the flesh of a pale white mushroom with its skin rubbed away," Stack writes, putting words to my first months of parenthood.

I recognized myself in her writing, despite never having hired full-time help. My family too slipped into a troubling status quo: "It began with biology—I'd been pregnant, then breastfeeding. I'd been a physical necessity, which had been a role of exquisite privilege and total destruction. And somehow my rarified status stayed unchanged even as the babies grew. The habits we'd all adopted—my centrality, the children's dependence, [my husband's] slight remove—had stuck."

Women's Work lost a little steam near the end, and Stack's self-awareness occasionally faltered, but these minor criticisms are offered in the manner of a diamond jeweler whose job it is to find flaws amid brilliance. Not many people can write like Stack. Not many can step outside themselves and think like her. The two strengths produce a must-read not just for mothers, but for all those who have a household or benefit from another leaving theirs—which is to say, everyone.



How Conscious Parenting Can Strengthen the Whole Family Foundation

with Molly Craft



Molly is a certified conscious parenting coach working with moms who crave a deeper connection with their children while cultivating their own brand of badassery in their parent-space. A longtime resident of San Francisco, Molly lives in the Mission District with her 14-year-old son and their dog, Lollypops. Find her online at badassmomcoach.com

What is conscious parenting and what is the “badassery” component of your work?

Conscious parenting is about shifting the pervasive parenting paradigm. The parenting style that most of us grew up with is the ‘dominant’ style of parenting—attempting to have control over the child. Punishments, consequences, and time-outs are all examples of this style. The ‘conscious’ style of parenting offers a peaceful alternative. In this paradigm, the parent’s goal is to develop a deep connection with the child in order to create and sustain a deep understanding of feelings, empathy, needs, and family values. The badassery is the added component of identifying your own needs and getting them met. It’s the put-on-your-own-oxygen-mask before-assisting-a-child scenario. If your needs aren’t really clear, begin taking five minutes a day, every day, to begin identifying them. Small steps lead to big changes. Point blank: If you feel good, you are more relaxed, and you are more likely to have a strong center and less likely to find fault with others (i.e., your kids). Peaceful badass moms make awesome role models.

So what does this look like in real life?

I will never forget the first time I used conscious parenting in a situation. My son was nine at the time and was late getting out

the door for the school bus (again), and I was getting nervous about the meetings and calls that I had to make. I could smell the impending doom; we were both so anxious! The internal chorus about not being enough was at full volume: “You should have had his lunch ready by now,” “Those lace-ups take too long to put on, you should have bought the Vans” “Why didn’t you wake up earlier,” etc. As that garbage swirled around in my head I had the awareness, *Man, this is so hard*. And with that sliver of self-empathy, I took a look with ‘soft eyes’ at my son, looking so upset, struggling with his shoes, and I said out loud, ‘This is SO hard and it feels awful and I don’t know what to do right now.’ The look on his face was unforgettable, as I had just said what he was also feeling. We sat on the bench in the hallway for a good 20 minutes and talked and talked. He was late for school that day and I had to reschedule several meetings, but I didn’t care. We connected in a way that was profound and healing for us both. The shift in our relationship, at that moment, was truly transformative. It was a much-needed game changer.

Why would a parent hire a coach, and what can they hope to gain from sessions?

Many reasons: they feel they are getting lost in the day-to-day grind of parenthood; they are exhausted by the same struggles

on a weekly basis; they see that consequences and time-outs are not changing behaviors; they want a deeper connection; they want peace of mind.

Finding your voice and brand of badassery in your parenting is the key. Parenting is very personal.

Most of us have unresolved issues from how we were parented, and that stuff surfaces with a vengeance when you become a parent. Also, we may have lots of well-meaning advice from family and friends which can further disconnect us from our own wisdom and personal power. Parent coaching sessions provide a safe space to work through the issues that are bothering you so you can find your own answers and begin to create systems that work for you and your family. ❖

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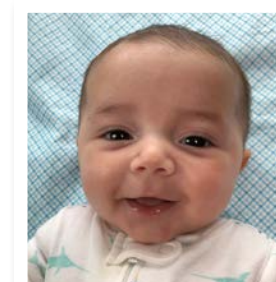
New Arrivals



Karen Brein **Baby Nina Alivia**



Ida E. **Baby Lea Claire**



Abby Erskine **Baby Chandler David**



Janet H. **Baby Liam Paul**

Jessika Johnson **Baby Heidi Clare**

Anna N. **Baby C P**

Elyse Petrie **Baby Luke Robert**

Jenny T. **Baby Earl J**



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Congratulations to **Abby Erskine!** 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.



Good to Know

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“The practice of democracy is not passed down through the gene pool. It must be taught and learned anew by each generation of citizens.”

—Justice Sandra Day O’Connor

Photo by Lynn Friedman via Flickr



O Say Can You See?

Instilling civic responsibility starts early

By Jessica Williams

Quick! What are the three branches of government? If you answered judicial, legislative, and executive, you are part of a slim group: only 32 percent of Americans surveyed by the Annenberg Public Policy Center in 2018 have this knowledge. Do you know the Senate, but not the House of Representatives, confirms a judicial nominee to the Supreme Court? If so, you know more than 41 percent of those surveyed.

With these stats in mind, it probably comes as no surprise that only 23 percent of eighth graders demonstrated solid academic performance and competency in civics, according to the most recent National

Assessment of Educational Progress report. It can be downright sobering to realize how little Americans know about our government, especially since our government relies on educated, committed, and informed citizens to function. We must have a basic understanding of how democracy works in order to recognize the importance of voting, the significance of a fair and impartial judiciary, and even when and how to hold elected officials accountable.

As a result of burgeoning student activism and the 2016 election, a groundswell of attention has focused on America’s civic education—or lack thereof. In fact, as I write this, students and parents are suing the state

of Rhode Island, which does not require any civics education for high school graduation, for failing to properly prepare students to function in civic life. California, by comparison, does require civics for graduation, but there’s a lot more parents can do to help nurture civic-mindedness in our children well before high school.

Civic education in schools

Research shows that civic habits and values are more easily influenced in youth. As children, we learn about being part of a community in our family and part of a democracy in school. In fact, a main purpose of the first public schools, or “common

schools,” in 1830s Massachusetts was to educate students in good citizenship, democratic participation, and promote civic engagement. Often called the Father of the Common School, Horace Mann, who was also a lawyer, legislator, and secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, declared, “A republican form of government, without intelligence in the people, must be, on a vast scale, what a mad-house, without superintendent or keepers, would be on a small one.”

Civic education is incredibly important, beginning when children are old enough to be aware of the world around them, says Liz Sarles, a high school social studies teacher formerly at Drew School in San Francisco and currently at Colorado Academy in Denver and a mother of three. “Civic education pushes kids to care about other people, the world around them, and how they can effect change. You have to teach kids to do something, to care about doing something, and to know what to do.”

The role schools play in educating youth



students pass a civics exam to graduate; however, critics argue that such an exam creates another obstacle to graduation.

California Content Standards provide for students in California public schools to begin learning about citizenry in kindergarten with lessons on national and state symbols such as the national and state flags, the bald eagle, and the Statue of Liberty, and good citizenship. In third grade, lessons involve learning honesty, courage, determination,

Lifelong civic education

While deliberate civic education is delegated to our schools, “civic education” is really a lifelong process. As adults, we continue learning civics through various sources, such as the media and even religious institutions. As children, we begin learning civics at home. While topics like the electoral college, checks and balances, and executive orders are certainly beyond the reach of young ones, civics for children is about teaching the importance of community and active participation in your community. Even

preschoolers are not too young to learn this.

The early years are foundational in how children see themselves in relation to the world, loved ones, and other members in a community, says Rebecca Walsh, founder and director of San Francisco-based Early Childhood Matters and a mother of three. Any experience before a child reaches the milestone “age of reason”—around age seven, when children become more capable of rational thought, impulse control, and

A renewed focus on civic education in America is gaining steam, and we can all do our part. Regardless of political leanings, we can likely all agree our country deserves our attention to this matter.

to be informed, participatory citizens is crucial. Forty states, including California, and the District of Columbia require completion of a civics course for high school graduation, according to the Center for American Progress. Like the majority of these states, California only requires a half-year of civics instruction. Comparatively, nine states and the District of Columbia require a full year of U.S. government or civics, and the District of Columbia and Maryland are the only parts of the country that require community service for graduation. Seventeen states require a civics exam to graduate high school, but not California. In fact, one policy initiative gaining traction nationwide is to require that

individual responsibility, and patriotism in American history. And in eighth grade, students learn about the founding of the United States and the development of American constitutional democracy.

Under California law, private schools are also required to include instruction, for grades 1 to 6, on the development and government of California and the United States. For grades 7 to 12, they are required to include further instruction on that topic in addition to instruction on the American legal system, the operation of the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems, and the rights and duties of citizens under the criminal and civil law and the state and federal Constitutions.

have internalized a conscience, according to Dana Dorfman, Ph.D., in “A Milestone Developmental Stage: The Age of Reason”—will impact that child’s understanding of her world for the rest of her life, she says. “Kids’ hearts are so open at this young age.”

Here are some ways parents can nurture civic-mindedness in their children, from preschool through middle school years:

- **Model openness.** As parents, we often underestimate the importance of our interactions with others. Kids are constantly reading our body language— even when we are doing something mundane like standing in line at the grocery store—and will pick up on how we interact with our neighbors, passersby, the homeless. Being



mindful of having an open heart and open mind when engaging with others can help teach our kids to do the same.

- **Engage with your community.** We foster community by engaging with our own community, says Walsh. Consider baking and delivering cookies or banana bread to local firefighters or an elderly neighbor. Older children can offer to do chores, like sweeping the porch or weeding a garden, for an elderly neighbor. “Simple acts can be meaningful,” she says, adding she often keeps extra energy bars or socks in her car to give to the homeless in her community.
- **Take part in community service.** Organized opportunities for volunteering are plentiful. Taking part in a coastal cleanup, such as the monthly Baker Beach cleanup or Ocean Beach cleanup through the Surfrider Foundation (sf.surfrider.org) or Coastal Cleanup Day through the California Coastal Commission (www.coastal.ca.gov), and planting trees and weeding at a neighborhood park through the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Volunteer Program (sfrecpark.org/support-your-parks/volunteer-program/) are just a few ideas. Can’t make it to an organized cleanup? Simply pick up trash around your neighborhood block, says Sarles, who invested in a few trash grabbers (available on Amazon) so her kids can help clean up their street.

- **Learn about your community and government.** A visit to San Francisco City Hall to admire the dome—307 feet high and taller than the dome of the United States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C.—can engender a discussion about city government and a child’s different communities: family, neighborhood, school, city, state, country. Visiting a local San Francisco firehouse, which allows scheduled, chaperoned group visits for children at least five years old (<https://sf-fire.org/schedule-group-fire-station-tour>), can lead to a discussion about city services. For older kids, a tour of a local courthouse can spur a discussion about federal, state, and local government and the three branches of government within each level. With its Day in Court Program, the Bar Association of San Francisco helps organize tours of the San Francisco Superior Court for children, and judges meet with students to answer questions they may have about the judicial system. Local judges have also penned a resource for students, teachers, and citizens titled “What’s Your Weirdest Case? Judges Answer Questions on the Courts” (available online) based on real questions they have received from students during these visits. The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, located in the James R. Browning U.S. Courthouse at the corner of Seventh and Mission Streets, also offers

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Civic engagement includes community service, national service, and environmentalism as well as paid and unpaid forms of political activism, according to *youth.gov*. And the Bay Area has a wealth of opportunities to get involved. Here are just a few.

Compass Family Shelter provides a “Compass Family Services Kids’ Volunteer Toolkit” to help children organize fundraising events or host a drive for toiletries, clothing, toys, and books for those in need. Families can also participate in the Adopt-a-Family program and serve meals on Sundays. www.compass-sf.org/volunteer

Glide Church welcomes children ages 9 and older to help bag lunches for the homeless. Visit its website to sign up in advance. www.glide.org/volunteer

Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy organizes numerous volunteer opportunities including beach cleanups, habitat restoration, and maintaining and planting historic gardens. www.parksconservancy.org/volunteer

Meals on Wheels welcomes volunteer families to deliver food or make cards for seniors. www.mowsf.org

SF-Marin Food Bank accepts volunteers ages 4 and older on Sundays and ages 8 and older on Saturdays. Be sure to sign up well ahead of time. www.sfmfoodbank.org

The Presidio Trust hosts family volunteer events on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Activities include planting, watering, weeding, or spreading mulch. www.presidio.gov/volunteer/presidio-habitat-stewards

free docent-led public tours of the historic courthouse on certain Tuesdays throughout the year.

- **Read books on civics and citizenry.** *What Can a Citizen Do?*, written by Bay Area author Dave Eggers and illustrated by Shawn Harris, is a picture book suitable for preschoolers and can introduce the concept of citizenry and community, says Sarles. *Grace for President* is one for elementary school-aged kids and teaches about the executive branch and electoral college (and the glaring omission of a female president in the White House). The organization “Start With a Book” (startwithabook.org) provides a “Civics and Our Government” summer reading list divided by ages (beginning with age 3), and the United States Senate provides lists of books and websites, organized by subject (for example, “Congress,” “Constitution,” “The Flag”) and age range, about the U.S. Government (www.senate.gov/reference/bibliography/kids/kids.shtml). The booklet “Helping Your Child Become a Responsible

Citizen,” (www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/citizen/citizen.pdf) produced by the U.S. Department of Education, offers an extensive reading list, divided by ages and subjects like honesty, responsibility, good judgment, citizenship, and respect for others.

- **Talk about community and the importance of listening.** Talking to your kids about being kind neighbors, about homelessness, graffiti, protests, and voting are all ways to engrain civic-mindedness, says Sarles. “I believe very strongly in open discussion,” she says, adding that she will take her kids to protests and marches, not for participation, but to help them gain an understanding of what people can do. Sarles also stresses the importance of teaching kids to listen and recognize differing opinions. “Part of being a citizen is active discourse. Listening is a key component of a civics education. And really listen.”

Which of the following documents describes the powers of the President of the United States?*

- A. The Declaration of Independence
- B. The Mayflower Compact
- C. The Constitution
- D. The Articles of Confederation

*This is a sample question from the 2018 NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) assessment on civics for eighth-grade students.

A renewed focus on civic education in America is gaining steam, and we can all do our part. Regardless of political leanings, we can likely all agree our country deserves our attention to this matter. ♦

Jessica is a freelance writer. She was a teacher and practicing attorney before her daughter was born.



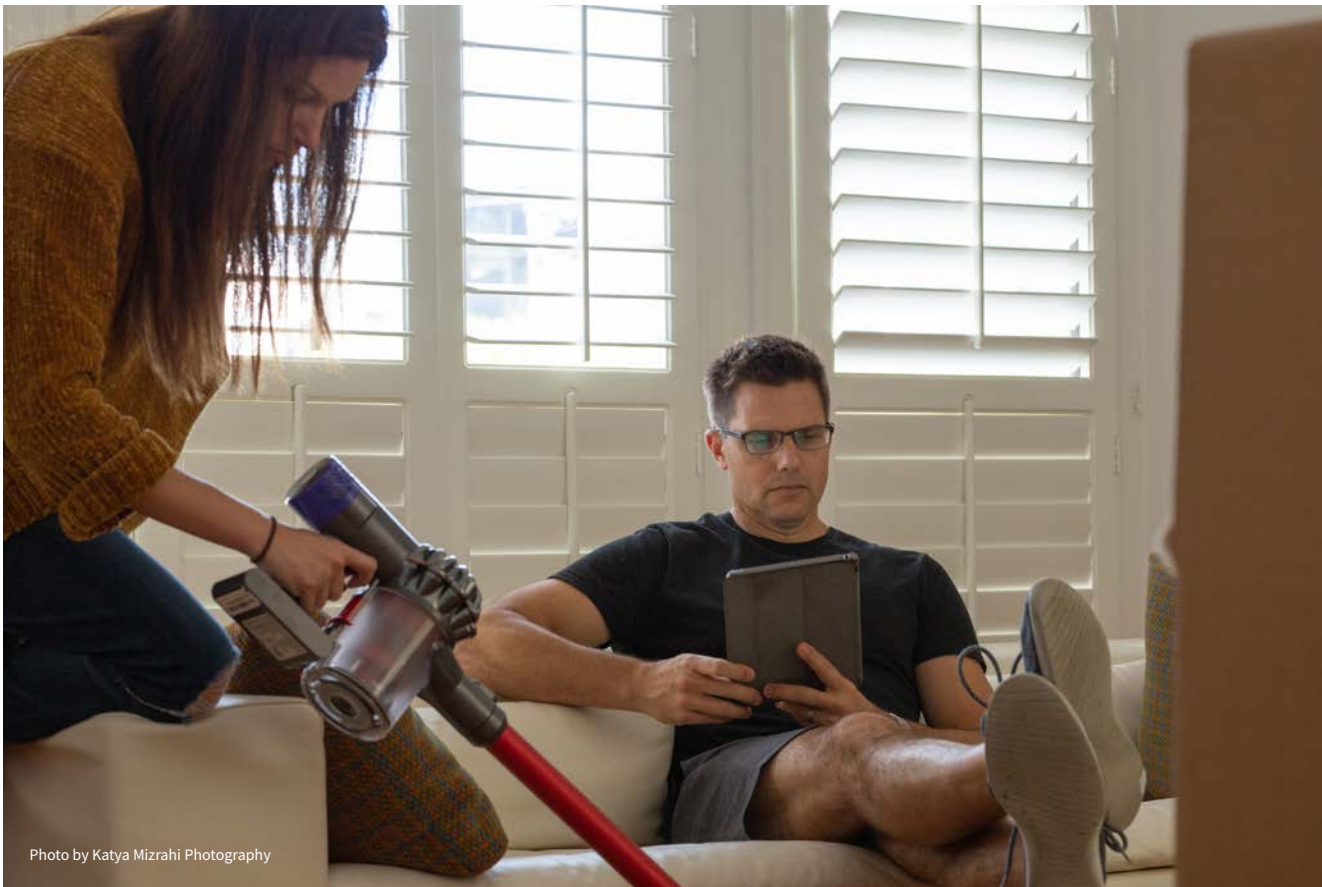
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Finding Your Voice in Your Partnership

How a woman’s inner lioness discovered the path to deeper partnership and communication

By Jennifer Kuhr Butterfoss



There’s nothing like moving homes, switching schools, and changing jobs all in the span of a few months to test the communication waters of marriage. My husband and I have traditionally enjoyed a more tranquil relationship. We rarely fight, voices stay pretty calm and neutral, and we exchange more pleases and thank yous than necessary. So when our lives went into complete upheaval towards the end of 2018, the communication issues that previously lay dormant under the sleepy steadiness of routine and predictability suddenly became raw and exposed. Somewhere in the midst of moving boxes, school enrollment paperwork, and interview outfits, I found a deeper voice emerging. The voice was asking for more in our marriage: more communication, more partnership, and more involvement. I always thought of myself as very satisfied and almost smug in our marriage, so *where were all these asks coming from?*

Communication vs. satisfaction

A 2016 study of 400 heterosexual couples in Los Angeles published in the *Journal of Marriage and Family* showed that marital satisfaction was a stronger predictor of communication, as opposed to communication predicting satisfaction. So, if you find yourself happily married, you and your spouse are more likely to have better communication all around. Simply having strong communication however does not necessarily mean you will be satisfied in your marriage. Major life upheavals or crisis can upend normal communication patterns and require a more intensive and thoughtful approach.

“One of the most common reasons couples say they come to me, or our courses, for support is for help with ‘communication.’ But that tends to be a catchall for all sorts of things going on in the marriage,” states psychologist Morgan Cutlip. She is also the creative content developer for *My Love Thinks*, a

website for online and live relationship courses. Cutlip went on to expand on the research-backed phenomenon of women serving as the primary “relationship manager” in a partnership. A more popular term for this has been the burden of holding the “mental load” or running a household. This includes the invisible work of managing all there is that needs to get done to run a household effectively, as opposed to the actual tasks themselves.

The term became mainstream after a comic by French illustrator Emma Clit went viral in 2017 that perfectly captures this burden. In it, she recalls being invited to a friend’s house for dinner. The dad is happily chatting her up in the living room, while the mom is frantically trying to feed a crying baby while a boiling pot spills over, making a giant mess. When the dad pops into the kitchen and asks accusingly, “What did you do?!” the mom answers, exasperated, “I did everything!” His response? “But, you should’ve asked! I would have helped.”

It’s this idea that women have to be the delegators, the managers, the askers, that constitute the invisible work in a household, to which the hours are long but credit is non-existent. Therein lies the heart of so many late-night arguments, seething and deep sighs. When the work is invisible, it rarely gets acknowledged. Women disproportionately take on more and more of this invisible, unacknowledged work at home, leaving us little time or energy for our own needs, wants, or desires. Hence, our voices shrink and everything remains fine and dandy until major life transitions or just a general fed-up-ness poke the sleeping lioness and suddenly...she roars.

Relationship and logistics management

Women are still lifting far more of their share of the mental load than men. Those who serve as the primary breadwinners in their families are also three times more likely than breadwinning fathers to be the keepers of their children’s schedules, balancing pick up and drops off from school, extracurricular, play dates, sports practice and tutoring, according to a 2017 study commissioned by Bright Horizons.

In a research study funded by the National Institute of Health and Authentic Connections, surveys of more than 350 women showed that, after controlling for things like physical intimacy and finances, a disproportionate amount of responsibility for household management and childcare

Our voices shrink and everything remains fine and dandy until major life transitions or just a general fed-up-ness poke the sleeping lioness and suddenly...she roars.

correlated strongly with overall marriage satisfaction for new mothers.

Researchers Suniya Luthar and Lucia Cicciola of Arizona State University conducted a survey of 2,000 well-educated mothers around their personal sense of well being. They found that being solely responsible for a child’s emotional development was negatively related to women’s well being and satisfaction with their relationship.

Emma Clit reflects on the mainstreaming of her cartoon in her blog, “I was shocked when I realized that every article on the [mental load] was aimed at women instead of men. And not only were they aimed at women, but they also suggested that they were the ones responsible for the unequal repartition of the mental load in their relationships!”

Instead of simply learning how to let go,

delegate more and lower expectations, Clit states, “I think the first step is for our partners to realize they have to take on their share of the mental load...It requires humility from them and patience from us. This is the parental model our kids will grow up with. I think that’s worth the effort.”

Sharing the load

Parenting expert and writer Julia Pelly takes Emma Clit’s ideas a step further in her 2017 *mother.ly* article by urging moms to “stop delegating and start specializing.” In this piece, she breaks down the exact sequence of five steps in reducing the mental load. This includes a simple system of listing out all the tasks needing attention in your household, having each partner choose strategically the tasks they feel most passionate or skilled in, following through on these commitments, empowering one another by not stepping on one another’s toes, and giving in to the other one’s tasks when they don’t get done. The final step is recognizing the tasks that call for a true partnership. These tasks often include ownership over your children’s education or making big financial decisions. Delegation makes up the bulk of the mental load, specialization ensures not just the tasks themselves are divvied up, but all the thinking and preparation that goes with their execution falls under the sole owner of that task.

Speaking up

Cutlip states that the main thing holding women back from speaking up in marriage includes not wanting to disturb the peace and the fear of being considered “a nag.”

Stop delegating and start specializing. Divvy up household tasks and their management with your partner. Some of these include:

- Meal planning, prep, and execution
- Ongoing kitchen cleaning and maintenance
- Laundry and clothing management
- Clutter control
- Household cleaning: vacuuming, dusting, mopping
- Kid extracurriculars and appointments
- Finances, bill payments, and record keeping
- Family social calendar, planning fun activities
- Ongoing communication with school, childcare
- Household repairs and upgrades





Photo by Katya Mizrahi Photography

“Unfortunately, the stereotype of a nagging wife still exists and can mess with women’s heads and even men’s perception of their wives when they speak their minds. I think that the desire to seem or even be “easy going” and not too demanding can often play a part in how often or strongly women speak up in marriage,” states Cutlip.

The reference evokes an image of the “Cool Girl” described so eloquently in Gillian Flynn’s famous psychological thriller *Gone Girl*. “Cool Girls never get angry,” she writes. “They only smile in a chagrined, loving manner and let their men do whatever they want.”

Huddles

To overcome this Cool Girl Complex, Cutlip urges couples everywhere that “discussing the mental load or management of the relationship should be an ongoing conversation.”

In both the live course, Couple LINKS, and her online couples course, Rock Solid Marriage, the organization My Love Thinks refers to the mental load born by most women as “being the relationship manager.” Her primary tip for helping women speak up in their relationship is to schedule “marriage meetings” that they call *huddles*. In the online course Rock Solid Marriage, they teach an exact sequence of how to run these effectively and include a five-step process.

Huddles create a regular time and space to discuss what is going on in the relationship so that women are not the sole relationship managers, carrying the burden for always having to bring things up in the relationship. These also help couples to check in with one another, to talk about deficits in the relationship, to discuss what’s been going well and to schedule things like date nights, quality time together, trips, projects, etc.

“The more couples do these meetings,” according to Cutlip, “The more it normalizes this concept that relationships require regular work. Talking about the status and function of a relationship is *normal* and a regular part of being in a relationship.”

Attending couples counseling

Many women prefer to have some outside help in being able to work through relationship dynamics and find their true voice to articulate things that may not be going well. This is where couples counseling can come in.

When asked about how women can get their partners on board, Cutlip responded, “Attending couples counseling is ideally a great topic to discuss before the relationship is in trouble. For example, you can ask during a casual conversation if the two of you were ever having marital difficulties, if they would be on board going to see a professional. This doesn’t necessarily guarantee buy-in but it lays the groundwork.”

Another approach she suggested is to involve your partner in the process of choosing the therapist. This can help alleviate

some anxieties about who the professional will be as well as allow your partner to have some ownership in the process. Finally, a less than ideal, but sometimes necessary, way to get a partner on board is to let them know that it is a non negotiable.

“Some couples in crisis need to involve a professional for their marriage to really have a fair shot at surviving. In these circumstances, professional counseling, may have to be presented as a requirement for staying in the relationship,” states Cutlip.

With all our moving boxes finally unpacked, a string of play dates and birthday parties lined up with our new school friends, and the drama of job uncertainty starting to die down, I’m happy to report the safe layers of stability and predictability are starting to melt away our underlying communication woes once more. A year ago, I would never have brought up taking an online course or holding a marriage “huddle” to my mostly reserved, quiet and relationship-talk-averse husband. However, these recent life transitions have shown me how important such proactive steps are to sustain us for the long haul. Beyond that, I’ve shed my Cool Girl complex and awakened my inner lioness, whose voice demands to be heard not just in print to the Bay Area mom community, but squarely in front of me, in the home front, where it matters most. ❖

Jennifer is a former Cool Girl turned lioness and mother of two adorable children, Lilly and James Duke. When she’s not barking at everyone to wake up, brush their teeth, eat breakfast and get out the door, you can find her researching online courses to reduce her mental load.



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Photo by Mini Anna Photography

For the Love of Reading

Ignite your child’s passion for reading

By Tara Hardesty

I’ve recently traveled with my two boys to a busy construction site with talking front loaders and excavators. We’ve met a moose with a frustrating level of facial hair and have journeyed to the land of Thomas as he navigates how to be a good engine. All from the comfort of our sofa. With a book in hand, we can go on wild and exciting adventures, meet monsters or LEGO people or turtles that talk. Our bookshelves hold hundreds of stories that can whisk us away wherever we like.

At two and five years old, my boys love to listen to stories and look through books on their own. But I wonder, as they get older and engage in more activities and have more distractions, how do I continue to foster this interest in books and reading? How do I continually expand this foundation we’ve built?

Why reading to children matters

As parents, we know that reading aloud to our children is beneficial. Reading time requires parents to focus entirely on their child, giving them our undivided attention, which is hard to come by in our digital world. But the impact of time spent reading Dr. Seuss or the *Pout Pout Fish* goes far deeper. I scoured multiple credible sources including *PBS.org* and found a multitude of benefits including:

- Reading to young children helps with cognitive development and the ability to think and understand the world around them.
- Reading from an early age supports language acquisition and literacy skills by stimulating the part of a child’s brain that processes language.

- Reading creates an opportunity for communication between parent and child, and studies show that the more words that are in a child’s world, the stronger their language skills will be when they reach kindergarten.
- A regular reading time can increase concentration and improve imagination and creativity.

Insights from an educator

Nancy Hawkins has dedicated her career to children and literacy and is a passionate advocate for instilling the joy of reading in children. She spent years as an educator and in the dropout prevention program, teaching grades K-3 at Alvarado Elementary School in San Francisco and counseling children in need of additional support.

When it comes to the best way to encourage reading and stoke curiosity, Hawkins suggests that parents read to their children and then take it a step further to talk about what they are reading. This works toward reading comprehension, knowing how to read and process and understand what is read at a deeper level. Nancy’s ideas on how to talk about books are:

- While you are reading, go slow enough to give your child time to think about what is happening. Then, ask them to talk about what they remember. A simple exercise is to hold up one hand and ask a child to use their fingers to talk about different things that happened, and see how many things they can remember.
- Ask specific questions about the book. On what page did they learn that Ben is going to find his teddy bear? When did the character realize that in fact, he does like green eggs and ham? Was it at the beginning or end of the story?
- Ask questions about the text. Can your child find a page to show when the writer talked about the size of the whale? How big is a whale compared to another animal?
- Talk about things beyond the text. Did you ever lose a teddy bear? Can you tell me about it?

Hawkins suggests that parents seek out books that are at a child’s developmental

level or slightly above, and books that the child shows interest in. “The best way to create a love of reading in children is to read with them and find books that are motivating to them. When I was at Alvarado, we used Rigby Books in reading groups. The artwork was beautiful, the pictures were sensitively done, the writing was a high caliber.”

With a book in hand, we can go on wild and exciting adventures...

Some of Nancy’s favorites books and publishing groups include:

- *Frog and Toad* by Arnold Lobel (Ages 4–8/ Grades K–3)
- *Jenny and the Cat Club* books by Esther Averill (Ages 5–9/Grades K–4)
- *The Tale of Despereaux* Series by Kate DiCamillo (Ages 7–10/Grades 2–5)
- *Danny and the Champion of the World* and other Roald Dahl books (Ages 8–12/ Grades 3–7)
- *Jack Plank Tells Tales* by Natalie Babbitt (Ages 8–12/Grades 3–7)
- *The Wizards of Once* by Cressida Cowell (Ages 9–12/Grades 3–7)
- *The Moffats* by Eleanor Estes (Ages 10–12/ Grades 5–7)

- *Rigby Books* (Multiple Age/Grade Levels)
- *I Can Read Books* (Multiple Age/Grade Levels)

Publishing Groups:

- Pioneer Valley Press
- Scholastic Books
- Ruth Mae Books
- DK Books

The mothership–The San Francisco Public Library

My mother was an avid reader, and she passed that love of reading to all five of her children. I asked her many times how she was able to help us learn the joy of reading. She said she started young and always had more books than toys in our house. She regularly took us to the library, let us pick out books, and read to us every chance she got. As we got older, she read with us, sitting in the same room while whoever was around read their respective books.

To this day, I can vividly remember spending time in the Anaheim Public Library, browsing and imagining. Perhaps this is why I am so enthusiastically positive about our public library system.

The San Francisco Public Library (SFPL) is incredible. It is well-run, with an online interface that makes reserving books and movies in multiple formats a breeze. And there are 29 branches in the city, plus an Early Literacy Bookmobile. Most libraries



Photo by Mini Anna Photography

have scheduled story and play times, giving options for children to learn from an early age that reading is fun.

Alternative ways to read

The magic of stories can also come from sources other than physical books. These days, there are numerous options for digital or visual streaming of stories.

- **Hoopla:** If you are a San Francisco Public Library card holder, Hoopla is a great free option for gaining access to eBooks. To use

Hoopla you need a tablet, smartphone, computer, or TV with streaming capabilities, your library card number, and an email and password.

- **Libro.fm:** An independent bookstore for audiobooks, Libro.fm is the first audiobook company to allow you to buy directly through your local bookstore.
- **Audible:** Amazon’s audiobook arm has an enormous selection of stories. ❖



MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Magazine subscriptions are a great way to add to your library with the bonus of a new issue arriving several times a year.

Highlights has been producing engaging children’s magazines since 1946. **Hello** (ages 0–2), **High Five** (ages 2–6) and **Highlights** (ages 6–12) are filled with age appropriate games, activities, and stories. Parents will get a dose of nostalgia for the **Highlights Magazine** of yore, making it fun for grown ups and kids alike. \$30/year.

Chop Chop was created by nonprofits with the aim of educating children about healthy eating. This magazine engages young chefs early about food choices and creating dishes. Ages 6+. \$17/year.

Chickadee covers a wide range of topics such as people, animal profiles, brain games, and comics and is a smaller format magazine for easier transport. Ages 6–9. \$35/year.

National Geographic Little Kids is filled with facts about places, nature, and animals. Visual enough for a child to peruse alone or with grown ups, this magazine is a great option for little explorers. Ages 3–6. \$15/year.

Muse puts a cool spin on STEM education and is filled with art and science stories for tweens, including think pieces written by kids. Ages 9–14. \$34/year

Bazoof is the “spacy, goofy, healthy, fun” magazine for kids. Think silly with a side of clean-living information; a Goop for kids with a much less poised spokesperson. Ages 8–12. \$12/year.

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 two- and five-year-old sons, she enjoys writing freelance about things she is passionate about—the hairy underbelly of life, motherhood, and entrepreneurship.

READING RESOURCE: BENJAMIN COHEN

Benjamin Cohen has been with the SFPL for 13 years, currently working as the Youth Services Director for the Merced Branch. He shared some thoughts related to visiting the library with your child and reading.

How do you instill a love of reading?

It sounds counterintuitive, but it all comes down to getting out of the child’s way. Everyone has their own ideas of how the child can reach their goals. It is often hard to let a child come in and pick a book. I’ve seen it time and time again, you hold up two books in front of a child and they know which one they want. The why is something beyond our knowing, but the kid knows she wants that book. It is a crucial moment—let them have the book they want.

Ultimately, trust your child. They know where their interests lie, and where the lack of interest is. Many of us discover what is happening in the world through stories, it’s a safe place to work it out. Parents may be worried about reading about difficult topics, but it can be a good way for a child to learn and gain understanding and perspective. It may be sad or terrifying, but it is part of life, and you can engage with what’s happening in the world safely.

Why is reading important?

I can’t remember ever not being a reader. My earliest memories are of books. My parents gave me Dr. Seuss. I have a really strong memory of *Green Eggs and Ham*. I remember it so well because each book was a completely different world. And I wanted to see different worlds. Once you start, reading takes on a life of its own.



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COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

What has been an unexpected benefit of being involved with D&I?

We were all drawn to the D&I Committee because of a personal connection to its mission to build a safe and supportive atmosphere for all GGMG members but feel lucky to find ourselves growing new friendships with our teammates while doing this work together.



How do you know when you are making a difference?

This year, we have enjoyed several opportunities to work with other committees. Among these were the South of Golden Gate Park and South of Glen Park and Bernal moms night out “Flip & Sip” Usborne Book Party in April, which benefitted Homeless Prenatal Program; the Kids Activities Pride crafting event in June; and the

LUNAFEST film festival, which we hosted in collaboration with Just for Moms in July. Finding these synergies has really helped us to increase our visibility and impact for more GGMG members.

What types of activities or projects do you undertake?

We focus on educational offerings and community outreach in collaboration with some wonderful partner organizations. Recent events include a panel discussion on “how to talk to kids about homelessness,” co-hosted with Homeless Prenatal Program, and workshops on “how to talk to kids about race.” Additionally, we make contributions to the forums to highlight local events, education opportunities, and resources that support diversity and inclusion and celebrate the many perspectives and experiences of our members.

How can interested GGMG members get involved with Diversity & Inclusion?

If you are interested in our mission, please contact us at diversity@ggm.org.

Pride and Beyond

June is a time when we may feel especially lucky to live in San Francisco, where the LGBTQ+ community is such a vibrant and important thread in our city’s fabric. To help support family participation, GGMG’s Diversity & Inclusion and Kids Activities committees teamed up to offer a fun crafting event for families to create their own Pride-wear in the form of t-shirts, signs, and jewelry.

Attending events is a great way to show outward support and engagement, but integrating diverse issues and view-points in our discussions with children is most important. Children’s books, such as *And Tango Makes Three* by Justin Richardso; *Heather Has Two Mommies and Daddy, Papa and Me* by Leslea Newman; *A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo* by Jill Twiss; *I am Jazz* by Jazz Jennings, Jessica Herthel, and Shelagh McNichols; *10,000 Dresses* by Marcus Ewart; and *47,000 Beads* by Koja Adeyoha are all excellent ways to begin conversations with little ones.

Whether you are a member of the LGBTQ community or an ally, Our Family Coalition, a GGMG partner, has resources to support and guide you, and GGMG has its own LGBTQ group as well. If you’d like to share resources, learn more, or partner with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, please reach out to diversity@ggm.org.



MEMBER SUPPORT

Extending a Lifeline



Suicide. It’s a heavy word that can evoke deep feelings of sadness, grief, fear, disgust, or confusion, depending on your experience. The mere mention of the word is taboo in some circles for fear that thoughts of suicide will increase if discussed. As parents, we sometimes shield our children from discussing these heavy topics for as long as possible.

However, with the alarming rise of suicide among adolescents* and women,** we need to educate ourselves and our children about the signs of someone considering suicide. It’s our duty to provide an empathetic medium for our own children if they are showing signs of depression or suicidal thoughts.

We sometimes view technology as a distraction for our children’s developing minds. However, many apps and resources are available to help us open the conversation about depression and suicide, potentially saving lives. A few resources include the AnxietyHelper app, afsp.org, and www.alexproject.org. Facebook also has a feature that allows you to flag posts that seem suicidal or express self-harm. Finally, it may be a good idea to save the number for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800.273.8255.

For additional resources or to get support for you or a loved one, please reach out to member.support@ggm.org.


*Carroll, Linda. *Reuters*, May 21, 2019.
** Chatterjee, Rhitu. *NPR (Morning Edition)*, June 14, 2018.

PARTNERSHIPS

Join our Team!

Are you looking for a way to give back to the GGMG community? Consider joining the GGMG Partnerships Committee! Our team of amazing women works with a wide variety of local businesses to bring exclusive deals to our members. Through our Partners Program, the Partnership Committee works closely with GGMG partners such as JCCSF, UrbanSitter, and Recess Collective, to name a few, to obtain strategic benefits for all GGMG members as well as additional benefits for GGMG volunteers. Through our Friends Program, we work with various local companies to obtain substantial promotions and discounts for GGMG members on either a limited or ongoing basis. With more than 3,000 members, we use the power of our community to gain exclusive deals on everything from child care to adult fitness classes to professional services.

If you are interested in joining our committee, please contact our Director of Partnerships, Erin Cahill, at partnerships@ggm.org.

 DISCOUNTS AND BENEFITS are listed in the “member perks” section of our website: www.ggm.org/member-perks/friends (Friends Program) and www.ggm.org/member-perks/partners (Partners Program). Look for our monthly GGMG Member Perks email highlighting many of these great deals!

SOCIAL MEDIA

Check us out on Twitter

The Social Media Committee is excited to welcome its newest member, Amy Sabol. Amy is a senior client partner at Twitter. Among other things, Amy will be taking over...wait for it...GGMG’s Twitter account, @GGMGSF!

Our engagement on all forms of social media has been steadily increasing. We have over 1,000 followers on Instagram and 5,500-plus people on Facebook. If you’re on Twitter, make sure to give us a follow.

A reminder to all GGMG volunteers that requests for publicity on social media should be submitted to socialmedia@ggm.org at least one week before the event to be promoted. All requests should include the exact wording to be used for the brief description, any images to be used, the name of the event, date, times, location, and any link to the GGMG calendar, Eventbrite, etc. All of this will help us help you. We’ll make sure your post is taken

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

SOCIAL EVENTS

Save the Date: Fall Festival is October 5

Our biggest event of the year is back at SFF Soccer in Mission Bay on Saturday, October 5, with extended hours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Help Make Fall Festival a Success

With planning for this event going full steam ahead, we’re looking for awesome volunteers to help make this event an even greater success. If you’re interested in helping with any of the following, we’d appreciate any assistance we can get: bag stuffing, checking in vendors and guests, helping with set-up or break-down, pumpkin patch, bounce house stations, or just anything.

Fall Festival is one of the largest events of the year, and with an annual turnout of about 1,000 guests, it really does take a village to help make this event a success.

Volunteers will be entered into a special “volunteers only” raffle and will receive a thank you gift. Please email rsvp@ggmng.org with the subject “Fall Festival Volunteer,” and we’ll be in touch with next steps.



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Mondays PREP 1: 4 pm–4:45 pm at Kanbar and EBGIS
PREP 2: 5 pm–5:45 pm at Kanbar and EBGIS
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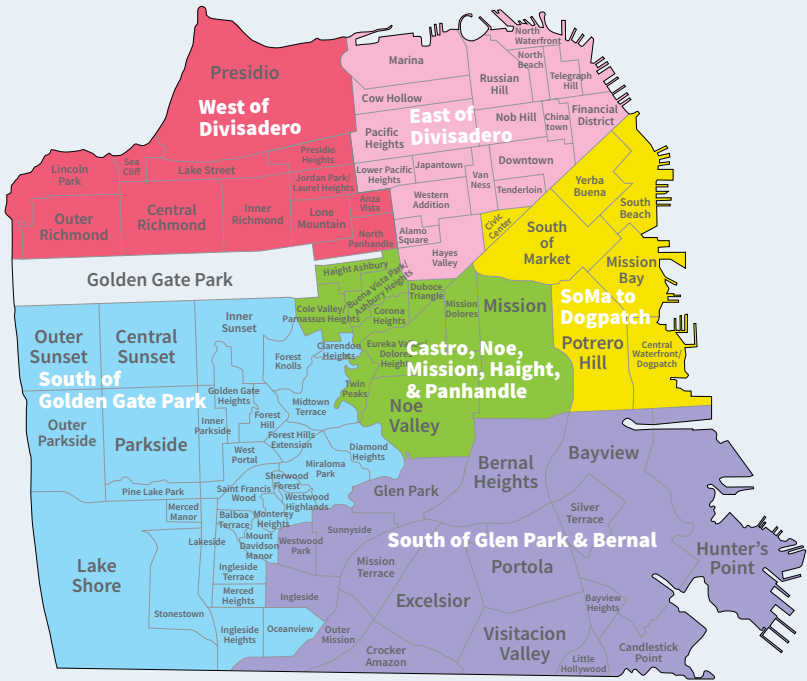
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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS



Coffee + Stroller Walks

Would you like to meet neighborhood moms, grab a coffee, and enjoy a stroller walk together? The Neighborhood Meetups committee is organizing a stroller walk for you! Please visit the main GGMG calendar to RSVP and select your location so we can put you in touch with other neighborhood moms before the walk.

Marina Green Stroller Walk:

DATE: Third Tuesday of the month
PLACE: Peet’s Coffee, 2080 Chestnut St.

Golden Gate Park Stroller Walk:

DATE: Third Wednesday of the month
PLACE: Rise & Grind, 785 8th Ave.

Baker Beach Stroller Walk:

DATE: Third Wednesday of the month
PLACE: Bazaar Cafe, 5927 California St.

Nopa Stroller Walk:

DATE: Second Tuesday of the month
PLACE: The Mill, 736 Divisadero St.

Mission Stroller Walk:

DATE: Second Tuesday of the month
PLACE: Dolores Park Cafe, 501 Dolores St.

Noe Stroller Walk:

DATE: First Monday of the month
PLACE: 3966 24th St.

Bernal Stroller Walk:

DATE: First Monday of the month
PLACE: Precita Park Cafe & Grill, 500 Precita Ave.

Curious George Goes to the Fillmore

Join us as we kick off our collaboration with the YMCA’s Western Addition Family Resource Center and expand GGMG’s reach in the heart of the Fillmore District. Learn more about our new Fillmore District Toddler Playgroup series while enjoying a beautiful summer day filled with Curious George costumes, arts and crafts, and read-aloud story time. There will also be a special visit from the SFFD with photo ops around the fire truck.

DATE: Saturday, August 3
TIME: 1 p.m. to 3 pm
PLACE: Hamilton Rec Center, 1900 Geary Blvd.
COST: Free

We are pleased to announce that we have new names for neighborhood groups. Neighborhoods now have intuitive names, not codes, to make it easier for members to know which neighborhood announcements pertain to them.

East of Divisadero (formerly N1)

Marina, Cow Hollow, Fisherman’s Wharf, Russian Hill, Nob Hill, North Beach, Chinatown, Cathedral Hill, Fillmore, Japantown, Western Addition and Hayes Valley, and surrounding neighborhoods

West of Divisadero (formerly N2)

NoPa, Laurel Heights, Pacific Heights, Lower Pacific Heights, Presidio, Richmond, Sea Cliff, and surrounding neighborhoods

SOMA to Dogpatch (formerly N4)

Civic Center, South Beach, SoMa, Rincon Hill, Mission Bay, Potrero Hill, Dogpatch, and surrounding neighborhoods

Castro, Noe, Mission, Haight, & Panhandle (formerly N5)

Castro, Noe, Mission, Duboce Triangle, Lower Haight, Haight Ashbury, Cole Valley, Panhandle, Twin Peaks, and surrounding neighborhoods

South of Golden Gate Park (formerly N6)

Balboa Terrace, Forest Hill, Laguna Honda, Lakeshore, Inner/Central/Outer Sunset, St. Francis Wood, Miraloma Park, Parkside, West Portal, Clarendon Heights, Golden Gate Heights, Midtown Terrace, and surrounding neighborhoods

South of Glen Park & Bernal (formerly N7)

Bernal Heights, Glen Park, Excelsior, Outer Mission, Mission Terrace, Ingleside, Sunnyside, Westwood, Visitacion Valley, Bayview, Portola, Crocker-Amazon, and surrounding neighborhoods

Weekly Fillmore District Toddler Playgroup

GGMG has teamed up with the YMCA’s Western Addition Family Resource Center to offer weekly parent/toddler play groups in the heart of the Fillmore District. Targeting toddlers ages 18 months to 3 years, these playgroups are led by YMCA staff to provide parents and caretakers with a supportive and inclusive community space to foster bonding, nurturing, and a healthy attachment with their child while boosting early literacy, pre-math, and social-emotional development with arts and crafts, musical instruments, reading, and more!

Materials and snacks are provided and included in the fee. All proceeds will 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. You can read more about this nonprofit here: www.thevillageprojectsf.org.

DATE: Weekly starting on Friday, August 9
TIME: 10 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: TBD
COST: \$36 for 6-class series

Book Clubs

We look forward to meeting even more GGMG book lovers! Please feel free to attend even if you haven’t read the entire book. Come enjoy special drink discounts and appetizers compliments of GGMG.

We’ll be reading *A Gentleman in Moscow*, a novel by Amor Towles, author of *Rules of Civility*. Some reviews of the novel include:

“The novel buzzes with the energy of numerous adventures, love affairs, twists of fate and silly antics.”
—*The Wall Street Journal*

“The perfect book to curl up with while the world goes by outside your window.”
—*Refinery29*

Choose from one of the dates below.

DATE: Monday, August 26
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: Belle Cora, 565 Green St.

DATE: Wednesday, August 28
TIME: 7 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: Internos Wine Bar, 3240 Geary Blvd.

Afternoon Playdates

Mommy Baby & Toddler Playdate at Play Haven SF

Come meet fellow GGMG moms and babies and enjoy a playdate at Play Haven SF at a hugely discounted rate. All children from infants to toddlers are welcome (as well as older siblings). Coffee, tea and, snacks are provided by GGMG. Parking is free at the Forest Hill Church lot next door. Must RSVP and prepay as limited spots are available.

DATE: Monthly on every 3rd Wednesday
TIME: 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
PLACE: 254 Laguna Honda Blvd.
COST: \$5 per kid (regularly \$16); infants 6 months and under are free; parents/caretakers are free

Little Oceanauts Playdate

Need something to do in the afternoon after school? Come enjoy a playdate and meet fellow GGMG moms at a hugely discounted rate. All babies, toddlers, and older siblings are welcome. Snacks are provided by GGMG. Must RSVP and prepay as spots are limited.

DATE: check GGMG calendar
TIME: 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1917 Ocean Ave.
COST: \$5 per child (regularly \$15); infants 6 months and under and parents/caretakers are free

Imagination Playhouse Playdate

Calling all Richmond mamas! Do you need a place for your little one to burn off all that energy? GGMG has just the place for you! Come meet fellow GGMG families and enjoy a playdate at Imagination Playhouse at a hugely discounted rate (with snacks!). This will be a reoccurring event happening every second Wednesday. Must RSVP and prepay as limited spots are available. We hope to see you there!

DATE: check GGMG calendar
TIME: 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.
PLACE: 5628 Geary Blvd.
COST: \$5 per child; infants (pre-crawlers) and parents/caretakers are free

Sunset Wine Night

Join us for some wine, meet new moms, and have stimulating conversation. GGMG will provide light appetizers and some wine.

Mark your calendars for some boozy adult time and meet other moms in your neighborhood. Please do your best to keep your RSVP current so we have an accurate headcount. Looking forward to seeing you all!

DATE: 2nd Tuesday of the month
TIME: 7 to 10 p.m.
PLACE: TBD, check GGMG calendar



KIDS ACTIVITIES

Summer Bash Play Date at Blue Boat Playground

Kids Activities will be hosting a summer bash/back-to-school playdate out by the beach. We’ll have the picnic tables reserved and will provide snacks and drinks. In addition, we’ll have some fun toys to share like beach balls, sand toys, bubbles, and hula hoops. Come join us for some fun in the sun at this fabulous playground and meet some new families!

DATE: Saturday, September 7
TIME: 2 to 5 p.m.
PLACE: 4414 Lincoln Way
COST: FREE

PARENT EDUCATION

How to Help Your Child Have Healthy Teeth and Love Going to the Dentist!

With Dr. Jay Golinveaux, a Board-Certified Pediatric Dentist

Are you expecting? Do you have a toddler who doesn’t like brushing? Or do you just have some questions for a pediatric dentist? Spend an evening with a pediatric dentist who’s ready to help you successfully navigate your child’s teeth! The fun and knowledgeable Dr. Jay, known for working magic with his young dental patients, will focus on a few important topics and is happy to answer any questions, including the following: Why are baby teeth important? How do I prevent cavities? Why is it important to go to the dentist early? How can you help your child be more comfortable at the dentist? Will you ever want or need to see an orthodontist, and when?

DATE: Monday, August 12
TIME: 6 to 6:45 p.m.
PLACE: 200 Brannan St. (Community Room)
COST: FREE, but please RSVP to reserve your spot as space is limited and your name needs to be provided to enter the building

REGISTER FOR EVENTS AT GGMG.ORG/CALENDAR UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED



GGMG's Preschool Preview Night



Meet and talk with dozens of local preschools!

Get the answers you need to questions about philosophies, costs, schedules, pre-admission visits, and more from preschools and pre-k schools.

Meet family-focused organizations and learn about their programs and products.

Thursday, September 19, 2019

Time: 6 to 8 p.m. **Location:** County Fair Building, Golden Gate Park

Cost: \$20/person, \$25 at the door; \$5 for GGMG Members, \$10 at the door

Registration: tinyurl.com/ggmgpreschoolnite19



DECK THE HALL

FAMILY HOLIDAY CONCERT

Sunday, December 8 • Davies Symphony Hall

11AM & 3PM Performances

Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser conductor

San Francisco Symphony

San Francisco Boys Chorus, San Francisco Ballet Trainee Program,
Young Women's Choral Projects of San Francisco

VIP package purchasers receive premium concert seating and an exclusive invitation to the festive pre-concert VIP Reception which includes early entry into Davies Symphony Hall, treats, holiday games, arts and crafts, a special keepsake photo with Santa, and parking.

For questions and tickets call 415-503-5500 or visit www.sfsymphony.org/deck

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Proceeds from this event support Deck the Hall Community Day, which invites 4,000 children from public programs to this holiday concert free of charge, providing many of them with their first opportunity to visit a concert hall and hear a live orchestral performance, as well as the San Francisco Symphony's education and community programs.

Ticket exchange and group discount not available.



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I ♥ Mom

Teaching Children to Find Their Voice

By Christine Chen

As the first born in a Chinese immigrant family, I was an early talker. My mother, who was pre-law in Taiwan before she immigrated to the U.S., raised me to always speak up for myself and let my opinions be known. As a teenager, this advice backfired, as our similar headstrong personalities resulted in many mother-daughter fights. When I graduated from college, her encouragement gave me the confidence to believe in myself, never take “no” for an answer, and not be intimidated in a room full of older men when I started my career on Wall Street.

In second grade, I showed my friend Julie the Snoopy drawings my friend Betty made me. The next day, these drawings were somehow at Julie’s house, and Julie’s story was that I had given them to her—which I most definitely had not! I went home to my mother in tears, who advised: “If you know you are right and they are yours, then do not let her take advantage of you. Go speak up for yourself and reclaim them.” Simple advice neither obvious nor easy to execute for a 7-year-old, but I did just that, and after this defining moment, I resolved to never let anyone take advantage of me again.

Now as the mother of a headstrong “threenager” which my husband calls payback, I constantly struggle between secretly applauding her determination and being frustrated that she is always testing boundaries. Although she is the baby, I worry less since no one will be taking advantage of her! My 5.5-year-old son and 3.5-year-old daughter have very different temperaments, and it is important to me to impart what I learned from my mother to both kids: that confidence overcomes most obstacles.

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With my son, who initially had speech delay, teaching him to find his voice was easy. Speech therapy, combined with constant encouragement to speak up and advocate for himself was the obvious path. Now he is extremely verbal and doesn’t hesitate to ask for what he wants—sometimes even speaking for his sister—and will talk to anyone who will engage with him. (Careful what you wish for!) We laugh when we remember he only said the same eight words at age 3 that he did at 9 months.

Like me, my daughter talked early, and is always ready to take charge of any situation. Finding her voice has not been an issue as she never hesitates to communicate what she wants (sometimes repeatedly at the top of her lungs). As a result, I see history



repeating itself as she will stand her ground just to make a point despite her very young age. I am told by her preschool that she is extremely well-behaved and agreeable at school (which is common behavior for children), which means some of this behavior is likely attributed to being the second child clamoring for attention and resources. The last thing I want to is to squash her spirit and perseverance, but I need her to listen to me, mostly to keep her safe. She thinks she can do anything her brother can do—which I applaud—until she hurts her fearless self. I keep reminding myself that, while I now have my desperately desired mini-me, I need to find a balance between nurturing the traits that will serve her well in life in the long-run and my threshold for near-term pain when she tests my patience, and I find myself turning into my mother.

When I left for college, my relationship with my mother changed. I was overjoyed to finally be on my own and get to do things MY way. My mother, who I had never seen cry, was in tears the day my parents left my new dorm room at Berkeley. At that moment, it occurred to me that all those years of hearing my mother’s encouragement prepared me well for any challenge the world threw at me. I have spent the rest of my life making up for my teenage years to her. Now that I am a mother, I appreciate how difficult the backtalk and questioning everything must have been for her as I became more opinionated and independent—things she encouraged when I was younger. I can only hope that my daughter will have the same realization when she leaves home, which is, thankfully, not anytime soon! ♦

Christine is the mother to a 5.5-year-old son who now has a ridiculous vocabulary and has definitely found his voice and a 3.5-year-old daughter whose never hesitates to use hers.



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