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Cover Photo by Anna Psalmond Photography;
Cover models: Sierra (3), Serenity (5), and Kirsten Pflieger

Letter from the Editor: Away We Go

By Kirsten Pflieger



After a travel-filled summer, Kirsten is looking forward to settling down into a new routine, and hoping that drop offs and pick ups at two different schools don't drive her too batty.

One of the biggest decisions we make for our families is where we will live. Most of us will move our children at least once, whether within San Francisco, across the country, or internationally. Moving house is a major life change no matter

[We are all seeking to find our stride.

what your age. Children experience the fear of the unknown and a disruption of their comfort zone. Adults deal with those issues on top of the responsibility for making the decision and the stress of coordinating all the details involved in making the move happen. On page 24, Sallie Hess tells you how to get all your ducks in a row before the big day arrives.

When you read this issue's title, Get Moving!, did you view it as a challenge, an admonishment, or just a reflection of your life? Our lives are constantly in motion. Not only are we moving our bodies through exercise, play, and transportation, we are endlessly reevaluating our schedules and making major life choices.

Commuting, carpooling, and activity-juggling often take up more of our day than we ever imagined. We are lucky to live in a city that has a public transportation system, bike routes, and sidewalks on most streets. I spoke with some GGMG moms who either don't own a car or don't use one the majority of the time on page 28. Our expert on page 8 talks more about public transportation in San Francisco, and introduces a new coloring book for your transportation-loving children. Tara Hardesty reviews planes, trains, and boat adventures all around the Bay Area that your little one will remember for years on page 20.

I read a first draft of Catherine Symon's article, page 16, on movement and learning soon after returning from a walk with my family. By the end of that walk, I was impatient to get home, and I had become frustrated that my daughters wanted to roll down the hill "just one more time." This article really drove home the fact that activities like rolling, twirling, and swinging are important for both of my girls, but especially for my daughter who started kindergarten last month and now has more structured days. It made me glad that I bit my tongue and let them roll.

Autumn is often a time of change, with the start of the school year bringing new schedules and activities. Whether you are implementing a new schedule or just trying to maintain what has been working, we are all seeking to find our stride. Hopefully this issue will help bring clarity and focus to what often seems like movements in chaos.

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.

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: End of summer travel, night-time potty training, Trump-scandals schadenfreude, cashew butter on everything, *Bad Moms*, toddler's first stitches, aging parents, Toblerone, watermelon, toddler humor, unrelenting Karl the Fog, Cape Cod, fiddler crabs, peanut butter

M&Ms, Brexit, procrastination of Olympic proportions, cold brew coffee, Trader Joe's pickle popcorn and early bedtimes.

COMING NEXT: October—Tough Talk; November—Technology

CONTEST: Congratulations to Brandi Hewlett, the winner of the package of three facials from Jennifer Clark Skincare.

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

Letter from the Board: New Beginnings

By Cathy Tran

How is it already fall and the start of another school year? While it was fun to have the kids around a little more for the summer, I, for one, am very glad that we will be getting back into the routine of school and the advent of fall activities, including the annual GGMG Fall Festival. Save the date of October 8 for a fun-filled Halloween spectacular. The event will be held in Sharon Meadow in Golden Gate Park, and we have activities planned for all ages, including Music for Aardvarks, bounce houses, a pumpkin patch, live music, yummy treats (including coffee for adults!), and much, much more. Keep an eye out for the link to RSVP on BigTent.

Speaking of BigTent, the GGMG Board of Directors is incredibly excited to announce that we will be launching a new and improved GGMG website toward the end of the year! We know you have not been happy with BigTent's hosting of our forums and events, so we have been working toward our own full-function website. We will have complete control over the site,

The GGMG Board of Directors is incredibly excited to announce that we will be launching a new and improved GGMG website toward the end of the year!

allowing us to quickly adapt to the organization's needs and requests. You will no longer need to switch between www.gmg.org and BigTent.com; everything will be located at www.gmg.org.

The site will also be mobile-optimized so you can use it easily on your phone. I've been fortunate to get a preview of the site and I think you will be really pleased with how beautiful and easy it is to navigate.

I want to take a moment to thank the hardworking volunteers who gave so much of their time to the website redesign project. A group of dedicated volunteer moms have been meeting weekly with developers to build out the new site. The new website would not be possible without them and I want to extend my deepest gratitude.

And finally, on a very happy note, I want to thank everyone who attended or donated to the GGMG 20th Anniversary Benefit for the Homeless Prenatal Program. Because of your generous support we were able to raise almost \$10,000, which will go toward providing housing and resources for low-income and homeless families. Be sure to check out the GGMG page on Facebook to see photos from the event. It was a fun and inspiring night of laughter and friendship, and the perfect way to celebrate our milestone anniversary.



Cathy Tran has been a volunteer with GGMG since 2012 and currently serves as Board Vice Chair. She is a stay at home mom to two rambunctious boys and wife to an amazing and supportive husband. She lives in the Parkside and enjoys fun girls' nights out, chips and queso, and Bravo TV.

Volunteer of the Month



Congratulations to Sonya Abrams, our September volunteer of the month! Sonya started volunteering with GGMG in 2013 and currently serves as Managing Editor of GGMG Magazine. She and husband Mike are parents to Noah (4), Austin (2), and Keira (1).

WE WANT TO KNOW YOUR FAVORITE...Pastimes: Exploring nature here and abroad, and trash-talking the Real Housewives in my pajamas and fuzzy socks; **Reading Material:** Anything by David Sedaris; **Film:** *Memento*; **Restaurant:** With kids? Padrecito. Without? Benu; **Destination:** New Zealand, South Island; **Parenting Advice:** This too shall pass.

Sonya will enjoy a 60-minute massage at International Orange Spa (2044 Fillmore St.). Book yourself a massage today at www.internationalorange.com.

Transportation Museums

Is your kid obsessed with trains, planes, and automobiles? Take her to one of these transportation hubs to foster a greater appreciation for the big, the old, and the noisy.

By Megan Bushnell

Cable Car Museum

Check out San Francisco’s famed cable cars. View the huge engines, winding wheels, and cable lines in action.

OPEN: Daily (closed holidays)
ADDRESS: 1201 Mason St.
COST: FREE
www.cablecarmuseum.org

SFFD Fire Museum

Nestled in the Presidio, this quaint museum is run entirely by volunteers, so call ahead (415.563.4630) to confirm the schedule; they may close if understaffed. Find lots of cool memorabilia on display, including the first fire engine built in California!

OPEN: Thursday through Sunday (1 to 4 p.m.)
ADDRESS: 655 Presidio Ave.
COST: FREE
www.guardiansofthecity.org

SFO Museum

Did you know that there is a museum inside the airport? Exhibits displaying the history of commercial aviation are scattered throughout SFO’s terminals. Of the 25 gallery sites, only nine are located behind the security checkpoint.

OPEN: Daily (closed holidays)
ADDRESS: San Francisco International Airport (SFO)
COST: FREE
www.flysfo.com/museum

San Francisco Railway Museum

Celebrate San Francisco’s streetcars and trolleys inside this ode to early public transportation. Then hop onto the F-line, an actual “museum in motion,” which stops right outside for a tour down the Embarcadero.

OPEN: Tuesday through Sunday (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
ADDRESS: 77 Steuart St.
COST: FREE
www.streetcar.org/museum

Space Station Museum

Come see U.S. and Soviet space exploration artifacts in an unlikely location: this volunteer-run, privately funded museum is housed in a storefront within a shopping plaza.

OPEN: Friday through Sunday
ADDRESS: 464 Ignacio Blvd., Novato
COST: FREE
www.thespacestationca.org



USS Pampanito and SS Jeremiah O’Brien

At historic Pier 45 you can tour the inside of both a submarine and one of two remaining Liberty warships. Learn about San Francisco’s role in WWII as you imagine what it was like to live and work on these ocean-going vessels decades ago.

OPEN: Daily (closed holidays)
ADDRESS: Pier 45, Fisherman’s Wharf
COST: SS Jeremiah O’Brien – \$20 (children under 4 free); USS Pampanito – \$16 (children under 6 free)
www.ssjeremiahobrien.org
www.maritime.org/pamphome.htm



Megan Bushnell is a former marine biologist who is encouraging her daughter’s dream to become an astronaut. Space ice cream might be involved.

In Search of Adventure

By Shaheen Bilgrami

Escape the back-to-school doldrums this fall by taking your family on an adventure! Here is a selection of both well-known and under-the-radar Bay Area parks and play spaces that will liven up your week (or weekend).

Adventure Playground

Kid-designed play structures make this one of the best and most creative play spaces in the country. Targeted to children aged 7 and above, younger children can play if accompanied by an adult.

ADDRESS: 160 University Ave., Berkeley
COST: Free
www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/adventureplayground

California’s Great America

With its gentler rides, shows, visits from Peanuts characters, and entry into Boomerang Bay water park, there is never a dull moment at this huge theme park.

ADDRESS: 4701 Great America Pkwy., Santa Clara
COST: \$43.99/person (ages 3 and up) when purchased online
www.cagreatamerica.com

Happy Hollow Park and Zoo

This charming little park is perfect for younger children. Highlights include unlimited rides, a petting zoo, playgrounds, and puppet shows. Visitors with SF Zoo membership cards receive a discount.

ADDRESS: 1300 Senter Rd., San Jose
COST: \$14.25 (children under 2 free)
www.hhpz.org

Pixieland Amusement Park

This small, independent theme park is well-suited for ages 8 and under. Attractions include a miniature train, carousel, roller coaster, games, and a duck pond.

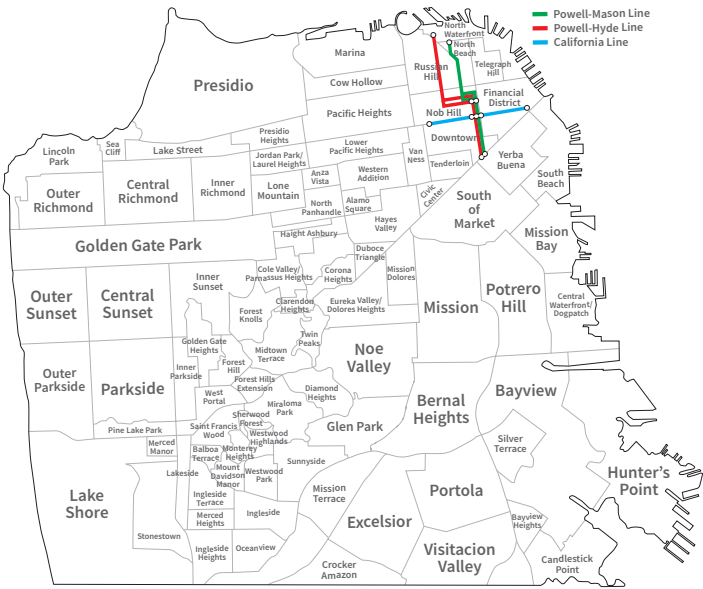
ADDRESS: 2740 E. Olivera Rd., Concord
COST: Free to enter, but individual tickets, discounted ticket books, or an unlimited ride wristband are available for purchase.
www.pixieland.com

Safari West

Take your family on safari to this 400-acre wildlife preserve where you will have a chance to observe some of its inhabitants “in the wild.” With more than 900 mammals and birds including zebras, giraffes, and cheetahs, animal-loving kids and adults alike will enjoy this outing. There are some age restrictions, so check online before setting out.

ADDRESS: 3115 Porter Creek Rd., Santa Rosa
COST: Prices vary depending on time of year
www.safariwest.com

Shaheen Bilgrami is a freelance writer and editor and is a contributor to www.blog.littlelane.com. She is also the mom of an energetic preschooler. Contact her through her website, www.shaheenbilgrami.com.



Li'l Kid, Big City:

The Cable Cars

By Stephanie AuWerter

San Francisco’s three cable car lines have serious kid appeal: steep hills, noisy clanging, and a thrilling lack of seatbelts. They offer fun hop-on/hop-off adventures, provided you’re game for potential lines, crammed cars, and surly conductors—and you are willing to pay \$20 for an all-day pass (children under 5 ride free).

The most touristy lines—**Powell-Hyde** and **Powell-Mason**—start at **Market Street** (at Powell Street) and end near **Fisherman’s Wharf**. Powell-Hyde is arguably more scenic and has several kid-friendly pit stops. You can grab lunch at 1950’s charmer **Lori’s Diner** (500 Sutter St.) and then hit the **Cable Car Museum** (1201 Mason St.). Visit **Swensen’s Ice Cream** (1999 Hyde St.) and work off that sugar buzz at **Helen Wills Playground** (1401 Broadway St.). You’ll end up near **Ghirardelli Square**, where you can refuel at **Le Marais Bakery** (900 North Point St.), and then chase seagulls at **Aquatic Park Beach** (599 Jefferson St.).

To beat the crowds, try the **California Street** cable car line, which starts a few blocks away from the **Ferry Building** and **Sue Bierman Park Playground** (230 Drumm St.). Jump off at **Grant Street** to visit Chinatown’s **Dragon Gate** (400 to 498 Grant Ave.) and then check out the labyrinths at **Grace Cathedral** (1100 California St.); and don’t deny yourselves **Bob’s Donuts** (1621 Polk St.). ♦

Stephanie AuWerter is a freelance writer and editor, who, thanks to her 2-year-old daughter, has ridden more cable cars, puffer trains, and carousel horses than she previously thought possible.

Ask the Expert

Where Can I Take My Transportation-loving Child?

With Candace A. Sue

Do you have a transportation-obsessed kiddo? Download the SFMTA's *San Francisco on the Move! Transportation Activity Book* at www.tinyurl.com/sfmtaactivitybook.



GGMG: Why did the SFMTA publish a transportation activity book for kids?

CS: We are always looking for fun, entertaining ways to engage the communities that we serve. In December 2014, Potrero Kids Preschool asked the SFMTA to conduct a presentation on transit safety for their school children. It was this community-generated request that germinated the idea for the

transportation activity book, which would share important safety messages in a way for kids to enjoy.

GGMG: Why do you think children are so fascinated by cable cars and buses and other things that go?

CS: I think kids love cable cars, trains, and buses for the same reasons adults do—they are fun ways to get around town! Riding San Francisco's cable cars are like taking a ride back in time. They are as iconic to the city as the Golden Gate Bridge, and searched online nearly as often. Built in 1873, cable cars transport 9.7 million people around the city each year. Both big and small kids like to climb very steep hills at 9 miles an hour and take an open air seat along the route. It's fascinating to see the underground cables that pull the cars, hear the distinctive ringing of the cable car bell, and watch the conductor grip and turn the cable car at the turnarounds.



Muni's historic streetcar collection is almost as unique and enthralling as our cable cars. These streetcars are painted in traditional color schemes of great streetcar cities around the world including Milan, Pittsburgh, Zurich, Baltimore, and Melbourne. They run along the Embarcadero from Fisherman's Wharf to the Castro (the F line) and from Fisherman's Wharf to 4th and King streets (E line).

GGMG: Can you recommend the best spots for transportation-loving kids to watch or ride their favorite vehicles?

CS: My 6-year-old daughter loves to ride the two boat cars that often make a special appearance during Muni Heritage Weekend (September 24 to 25). The boat cars are historic, open-top streetcars from Blackpool, England, that were restored by Muni's team of skilled crafts people and put into service for the public to enjoy.

Kids can learn the history of Muni's boat cars and the entire historic streetcar collection by visiting the Market Street Railway Museum (www.streetcar.org), located near the Ferry Building.

I think kids love cable cars, trains, and buses for the same reasons adults do—they are fun ways to get around town!

There's also the Cable Car Museum (www.cablecarmuseum.org), located at the Cable Car Barn at Washington and Mason streets.

For a Friday evening outing, my family rides the new hybrid buses on the 44-O'Shaughnessy line into Golden Gate Park to take part in Friday Nights at the De Young Museum (April 15 through November 25). For an enriching cultural experience, families can also take a red carpet ride on the 14-Mission line to grab a tasty burrito at La Taqueria in San Francisco's Mission District. With so many choices, residents and visitors can take Muni's uniquely diverse fleet of cable cars, streetcars, light rail trains, trolleys and clean, green buses to get to family-friendly destinations across the city. ❖

Candace A. Sue is Director of Communications and Marketing at SFMTA, which manages Muni, parking, traffic, and taxis in the city. A Bay Area native, she and her family reside in San Francisco.

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

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GGMG encourages its members to volunteer with Reading Partners to help a child learn to read. Reading Partners mobilizes communities to provide students with the proven, individualized reading support they need to read at grade level by fourth grade.

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For more information, see the FAQ page at: readingpartners.org. Sign up to volunteer today at: sfbatutorreg.my-trs.com.

There will be an event associated with this drive (date and location TBD). Email drives@ggmg.org with questions or for more information.

Contest

The Perfect Video Keepsake of Your Baby's First Years

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This month, GrandVideo is offering a free Baby GrandVideo Deluxe, a keepsake of your little one valued at \$340. You may also redeem the value on any of GrandVideo's other family video offerings.

GrandVideo will find the first smiles and cutest hiccups, set them to the right music, and produce a one-of-a-kind, cinematic home video. Your finished product will be a perfectly shareable, absolutely adorable, talk-of-the-town compilation delivered via private link, flash drive, and DVD upon request.

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, SEND AN EMAIL WITH "GRANDVIDEO" IN THE SUBJECT LINE TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2016.

All GGMG moms will receive \$20 off any GrandVideo order during September with the promo code GGMG2016 at GrandVideoSF.com.



DADLANDS

Into the Woods

By Vladimir Gusiatsnikov

When I was 12, my PE teacher suggested I join the orienteering club as an extracurricular activity. Orienteering is a sport combining navigation and racing, generally taking place in the woods. It's very popular in Europe and Russia, where I'm from. Participants are given a map with a series of points marked and clues to help them determine which feature—such as a stream junction, boulder, or hilltop—they are looking for. It's up to the individual to choose his route, which is what makes orienteering both a physical and mental challenge, and what has kept me orienteering for over 30 years.

Another sport that I participate in is rogaining¹. Rogainers use a map to navigate to marked points like orienteers, but the rogaie participants choose the order in which they run to the checkpoints in a given amount of time. Whoever gets the most highly valued checkpoints without going over time wins.

I compete in orienteering, rogaining, and trail runs throughout the year, and there are several ways my daughter Beatrice is able to experience these sports with me. My goal is to share with her my love of running, fresh air, forest scenery, and the joys of traveling.

Both orienteering and rogaining can be done solo or as a team. I take Beatrice to local orienteering meets as well as competitions in other states (and even Canada). In some races, I enter us into the family category, and in others I show her the course I just ran.

I want to share with [my daughter] my love of running, fresh air, forest scenery, and the joys of traveling.

She gets very excited about putting the “e-punch” (a finger stick with a chip inside it that records your time at each checkpoint you visit) into the “control” and waiting for the beeping sound—an unsurprisingly enjoyable task for a little one.

Beatrice is now too big for me to carry her comfortably for long, but when she was smaller, I carried her in the Ergo during some of these races. Beatrice spent some of the time awake and alert and

a couple of hours sleeping (did I mention that rogaines can be 6 to 24 hours long? We did the 6-hour-long run).

For most of this year, I've run in a race on Saturday and volunteered at an aid station for a different trail run on Sunday. Volunteering has become great father/daughter time for us.

Beatrice enjoys eating the race treats but also jumps in to help by handing out water. I usually take her on a run at the end of our shift, as she surveys the scene from the comfort of her BOB stroller.

One of the trail-running companies recently started holding children's races, which are about 100 meters long, and every kid gets a racing bib that says “Kids Run for Fun.” Beatrice ran her first race when she was a little over 2 years old.

Since 2012, I've made a habit of running at least 15 minutes a day as training, and Beatrice now accompanies me once or twice a week. At age 3, her endurance is enough for about two kilometers, and when motivated to run, she is only slightly slower than my training pace. Once she becomes tired, I carry her for a bit of extra strength training!

I don't know if Beatrice will become a runner, an orienteer, or a rogainer, but I

know that I have shared with her experiences that many Americans may not—exploration of beautiful forests, running off-trail, and observing interesting natural features. Navigation sports are all about self-reliance, both physical and mental, and at this early age I notice Beatrice has no shortage of confidence.

For anyone interested in trying orienteering as a family, check out Terraloco (www.go-terraloco.blogspot.com) or Bay Area Orienteering Club (www.baoc.org). There are events throughout the year. And look for me and Beatrice! ♦

Vladimir Gusiatsnikov was born in Moscow and moved to the U.S. in 1993 to go to college. He currently designs bacteriological detection instruments for a mid-size biotech.

¹ "Rogaine" was coined from the names of the organizers of a 24 hour hike in 1976, RO(d) GAI(l) NE(il). The hair growth product got its name in 1988, when the name "Regain" was rejected by the FDA.



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Books for Kids Transportation

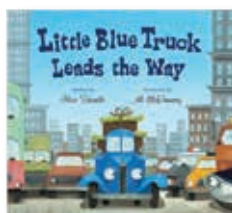
By Laure Latham

From your own imaginary wings to trains and cars in space, transportation is a fun and relatable topic for kids of all ages. Do you have a little train maniac at home? Or perhaps roller-skating tweens? Whatever takes you from point A to B can become an amazing story of grit, engineering, or friendship. There are no shortage of books exploring this diverse topic.



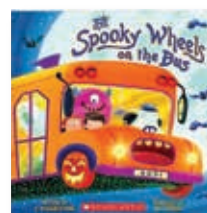
Whizzy Wheels: My First London Taxi

Written and illustrated by Marion Billet
Scones and tea lovers, rejoice! The famous London black cabs take center stage in this taxi-shaped board book that guides young readers around the famous sights of London. If you're planning a trip to the city across the pond, this book can even double as a mini travel guide—Buckingham Palace, Big Ben, and Trafalgar Square are all in there. Note that this book is also sold as a cloth taxi-shaped mini-book that you can strap on to strollers (Buggy Buddies) for reading fun on the go. *Ages: 0 to 2 years*



Little Blue Truck Leads the Way

Written by Alice Schertle, illustrated by Jill McElmurry
Zoom! Make way! The familiar and well-loved Little Blue Truck arrives in the big city and is soon pushed around by all the other vehicles who want to be first. Whether it's buses, police cars, or taxis, everybody is impatient, and their "me first" attitude causes a giant traffic jam. Will Little Blue Truck be able to save the day? This fun rhyming book teaches a valuable lesson about life in society and is a great read to boot. *Ages: 2 to 5 years*



The Spooky Wheels on the Bus

Written by J. Elizabeth Mills, illustrated by Ben Mantle
This Halloween take on the classic nursery song *The Wheels on the Bus* will delight all young bus lovers. Not only is it fun to sing, but each page is chock-full of great details to point out before turning to the next verse. Imagine friendly ghosts driving the bus and silly monsters wiggling and wagging. Wouldn't taking this bus be so much more spooky fun? *Ages: 3 to 5 years*

Away in My Airplane

Written and illustrated by Margaret Wise Brown
"Riding along in my airplane, over the clouds and through the rain...." So begins this lyrical poem by the author of *Goodnight Moon*, which follows the journey of a young pilot in the sky. Soaring through landscapes familiar to children's imaginations, she zooms in and out of clouds, over the city and above fun fairs. This is a perfect bedtime book that begs to be read time and again to fully enjoy both the words and the whimsical illustrations. *Ages: 3 to 5 years*



The Big Blue Thing on the Hill

Written and illustrated by Yuval Zommer
When a VW minibus stops on top of Howling Hill, the local animals are terrified of the Big Blue Thing. It's big and loud and plain scary. How will the animals get rid of it? In turn, all of them try to scare it away by growling and roaring. When none of them succeed, the animals seek out the Wisest Owls. Kids will love the humor and silliness of this book about an iconic vehicle. *Ages: 3 to 7 years*



Circle

Written by Jeannie Baker
Flying is the only way birds can travel, and for migratory birds such as tiny godwits, flying 7,000 miles from Australia to Alaska is a dangerous and thrilling adventure. Viewed from the points of view of a birdwatcher (a boy in a wheelchair) and the birds, the epic journey around the globe is illustrated in beautiful detail and shows how much grit these birds must have to survive in the wild. If you truly want to take the book a step further, check out the Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in the city of Arcata. *Ages: 6 to 8 years*



Trains! A Pop-Up Railroad Book

Written and illustrated by Robert Crowther

Have you ever wondered how a steam engine works? If you have a young train enthusiast at home, this intricate pop-up book is a must-have for your home library. Featuring movable monorails, engines, and lift-the-flap pages, this book is a visual celebration of trains and the story of engineering. This book would be a wonderful complement to a train ride or a train museum visit. *Ages: 6 to 9 years*



California, the Magic Island

Written and illustrated by Doug Hansen

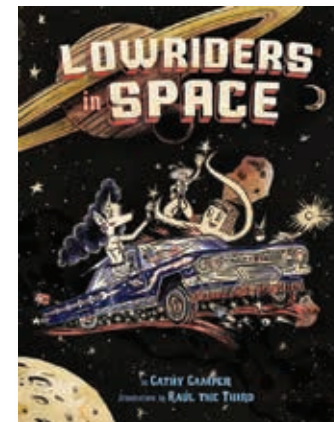
This book tells 26 stories explaining why Queen Calafia, the main character in a 16th-century Spanish romance novel, should accept that California is worthy of her name. Each story is inspired by the history and folklore of California, including "transportation" tales such as that of the Pony Express, the wild horses of Death Valley and the Twenty Mule Team. This wonderful book combines magic, legends, history, and facts for a memorable masterpiece of storytelling and design. *Ages: 8 to 12 years*



War Horse

Written by Michel Morpurgo
This young adult novel follows Joey, a half-thoroughbred farm horse, who gets separated from his 15-year-old owner Albert and taken to France during World War I. Too young to enlist, Albert decides

to join the war to find his horse. Follow the atrocities of war from the point of view of the horse in this wonderful plea for peace that will change the way readers look at horses. This book was made into a movie by Steven Spielberg and is classic historical fiction, for both tweens and adults alike. *Ages: 11+ years*



Lowriders in Space

Written by Cathy Camper, illustrated by Raul the Third

Three friends—Lupe, El Chavo, and Elirio—work together in a garage where they fix cars, and their favorite cars are lowriders. These cars can hip and hop, dip and drop, go low and slow, *bajito y suavecito*. The trio starts working on a special car for a competition with a big cash prize while salvaging spare parts where they can. But little do they know that these abandoned spare parts will propel them into outer space. Peppered with references to Mexican pop culture, this graphic novel is a cool mix of fantasy, space, and funky mechanics with strong characters. *Ages: 9 to 12 years*

The Journey (Guardians of Ga'Hooole, Book 2)

Written by Kathryn Lasky

In this second book of the popular series, Soren and his three owl friends escape the St. Aegolius Academy for Orphaned Owls to look for the fabled Great Ga'Hooole Tree. In the journey to the Island of Hooole, the friends discover wondrous places in the Southern Kingdoms. When they finally find the tree, they must also face their destiny. Main character Soren also worries a lot about his younger sister Eglantine, who had just hatched from her egg when he fell out of the nest. Older kids will love this epic series with lovable characters and an owl world that seems more real than life. *Ages: 9 to 12 years*



Roller Girl

Written by Victoria Jamieson

Girl power and a roller derby make this graphic novel a winner for tweens eager for athletic adventures mixed with tales of friendship. The book follows 12-year-old Astrid as she joins a roller derby camp for the summer. She grows apart from her BFF Nicole for the first time since they were kids—Nicole goes to ballet camp instead. Struggling to find her place in this new world, Astrid learns to navigate through new social circles and a rough-and-tumble sport. Over time, she comes into her own, which is the best message that readers can take away from a great book. *Ages: 9 to 12 years*

Laure is the author of the mommy blog *Frog Mom* (www.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 reach her at info@frogmom.com.

From Womb to World

A Tale of One City and Seven Strollers

By Lynn Perkins

A couple of years ago, our apartment building was going through an inspection and the inspector needed to see the furnace. As the garage door rolled open, he turned to me and said, “Let me guess, you run a daycare center!” I can see where he got that impression. My garage looked like the carousel stroller parking area. We’ve owned seven strollers over the past decade. I know—it’s crazy. But with twins first, followed by a singleton, and friends eager to pass on their gear, we became the used car lot of strollers.

Our first stroller was the stretch limo of strollers, the double snap-and-go¹. When my twins were little, this was the most

convenient stroller to use when going somewhere in the car. They stayed in their car seats, and unlike other strollers, the frame was light and fit into my trunk.

(Tip #1: Make sure you can easily collapse and lift the stroller. Also, make sure it fits in your trunk.) Plus, the storage area underneath it was large enough to fit an entire shopping trip of groceries. **(Tip #2: Get a stroller with adequate storage space.)** However,



when I tried to stroll down the sidewalks of San Francisco, trouble ensued. Uneven sidewalks would cause us to come to a sudden halt, because I couldn’t see over the top. Forget about taking sharp turns, and watching out for cars pulling out of driveways was impossible. **(Tip #3: Test for maneuverability.)**

Once my twins could sit up, I rotated between a top-of-the-line double jogger², a double side-by-side umbrella stroller³, and two (single) umbrella strollers⁴. To be honest, I wasn’t doing a lot of jogging, but man, that fancy jogging stroller was light and had a hand brake, perfect for conquering San Francisco hills. Throw on some workout gear and no one would raise an eyebrow. For me, pushing two 35-pound children, with gear, up Webster between Vallejo and Broadway in any other stroller would have caused a heart attack. **(Tip #4: Keep local terrain in mind, and remember the stroller will get heavier as your children grow.)**

The double side-by-side umbrella stroller was a third generation hand-me-down—the wood-paneled station wagon of the bunch. This was the light, portable stroller I used traveling solo with the kids. I panicked when they had to wipe it down for testing at SFO’s security check: the seats were Petri dishes of germs, smashed raisins, and sticky little hands. Shockingly, we had not created our own biohazard zone, and we passed the test.

And let’s not forget the single umbrella strollers we used to go to different places or maneuver through busy areas. **(Tips #5 & 6: Do not attempt to bring a double-wide stroller to a crowded**

amusement park. An inexpensive umbrella stroller is convenient and compact for travel or for when your child only needs one occasionally.)

Then it happened. One day at the park I spotted my stroller unicorn—a pseudo-jogger all-terrain number with a front/back seating arrangement configurable in multiple ways⁵. It had ample room, but was still compact. It was the crossover SUV of strollers. The mom confided that she, too, was poly-strollerous and this one surpassed all. It had just been released, and I had to special order it. It was like being the first person on the block to buy a graphite-colored Prius: unique at the time, but now you see them

everywhere. **(Tip #7: Scout for potential strollers at parks, Starbucks, and the entrance to the library around storytime. If you see one you like, ask the parent what they think about it. Parents love to share information!)**

Our strollers were starting to get dusty when I found out I was pregnant again (just one baby this time). I had visions of retiring the entire stroller collection and splurging on one of those fancy strollers

that wasn’t an option with twins: the kind that look aerodynamic, have names I can’t pronounce, and come with special cup holders for artisanal coffee drinks. My plans were thwarted when friends told us they were expecting twins, and asked if we wanted to swap our double strollers for their single strollers.

My littlest is now 3 and the crossover is still my go-to favorite. I cruise around city streets, Crissy Field, and the zoo with it. When my friend’s daughter joins us, we pop the second seat back in.

(Tip #8: If you are looking for a stroller that can grow with you, get one with multiple seating options.) And that stroller still looks pretty good. I see newer versions of it with pastel-colored seats and fancy patterns. Mine has black seats, but they’ve worn well. **(Tip #9: Black seats are great for hiding smashed raisins and other foods of indeterminate origin.)**

Soon the day will come when I list my gaggle of strollers on GGMG and Nextdoor. Then the next time the inspector looks at our garage, he will probably ask me if I rent kids’ scooters and bikes for a living. ❖

Lynn Perkins is CEO of UrbanSitter. She enjoys exploring the Bay Area with her husband and three sons.

¹ Baby Trend Snap-N-Go Double Universal stroller

² Bob Revolution Pro Duallie

³ Maclaren double

⁴ Maclaren Quest

⁵ Baby Jogger City Select double stroller

New Arrivals



Randi Saffian Baby Mason Alexander
Janet D. Baby Sophia Ming Kam
Rocio S. Baby Charlotte Maria
Virginie Holive Baby Melody Bay
Ibone S. Baby Erica
Daisy Church Baby Dahlia Lind Poppy
Sarah R. Baby Iva Zipporah

Catherine V. Baby Austin Wilson
Ludmila K. Baby David
Emily H. Baby Caiden Tate
Kaitlin K. Baby Milo Asher
Kelly Kang Baby Brook Akemi

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Congratulations to **Randi Saffian** (August) and **Janet D.** (September)! They will be pampering their little ones with products from Babyganics. These plant-based, tear-free, hypoallergenic cleansers and lotions clean and protect skin from head to toe.

To announce your new arrival in the magazine and for a chance to win a Babyganics gift set, fill out the form at www.ggm.org/community.html.

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Want to Learn? Get Moving!

Physically active play and exploration teach a child's brain about our physical selves; developing these senses early actually frees up the brain to focus on listening and learning.

By Catherine Symon

Photographs by Lindsay Lovier Photography

At my daughter's preschool, the children are taught basic rules: don't hurt people's bodies, don't hurt people's feelings, and walking away from a toy makes it available for others to use. But the most interesting rule to me is one that is not shared explicitly with the kids: there is no time limit on the swings. This may seem like a disaster in the making, but swinging is actually a powerful brain-building and brain-organizing activity that prepares children for play, school, and life. How? It has to do with the information a body in motion sends to the brain.

Our "other" senses

Humans are designed for movement. At birth we have the raw materials we need to run, jump, and play. But because we are born so physically immature (a tradeoff for our ability to walk upright—our narrow pelvises require us to give birth to our babies well before their brains have matured) human newborns aren't ready to do much of anything. In fact, newborns aren't even aware that they have bodies and have no control over their movements.

As soon as a baby is born, she is bombarded with information from the five commonly known senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and hearing. These senses feed her brain information about the external world. But our brains also need to learn about our bodies and how they relate to the external world. Proprioception, kinesthesia, and vestibular sense are lesser-known senses that teach the brain about our physical selves. Unlike more passive senses like sight and hearing, these "other" senses require physical movement to produce and send signals to the brain.

Proprioception is the awareness of your body position in space without having to look at it. It's what allows children to feel secure when they are being carried (they know they're not falling) and older children and adults to know whether they are sitting or standing. Proprioception works even as we sleep, preventing us from falling out of bed. As we move, special sensors in our joints and muscles teach our brains about the makeup of our bodies and our physical size. Every time a child adopts a new position, his brain receives more information. For infants who don't know that they have a body, proprioceptive input is critical in generating a body map. Only after the infant is aware of his body parts can he start to control his physical movements.

Kinesthesia is the sensation of our body parts moving in space without having to look at them. It helps us know how to move our bodies in order to do something. A pianist knows how far to extend his arm to reach the keys he wants to play, just as you know how far to extend your arm to turn on a lamp in a dark room. Young children, on the other hand, are more likely to knock over a cup when they reach for it because their kinesthetic sense is still maturing. Repeated movements help kinesthesia to develop.

Vestibular sense is the awareness of whether and how your entire body is moving in space. It tells you if you are spinning, swinging, moving fast or slow, standing still, etc. Vestibular sense also governs balance and helps us to manage the effects of gravity on our bodies. As your head moves in space, fluid in your inner ear moves and sends signals to your brain about your movements. The gentle tug of gravity on inner ear fluid also relates to the brain which way is "up" or "down." Balance is something we are not born with; we have to learn it. So repeated and varied stimulation of the vestibular sense through full body movement teaches us to stay upright without falling.

Automaticity and school readiness

One of the more interesting things about our "other" senses is how they unlock the brain for learning. The human brain can only focus on one conscious task at a time. So while a child is mastering her physical body, she will have less attention available for higher cognitive functions. According to Gill Connell and Cheryl McCarthy in *A Moving Child Is a Learning Child*, it's not that other areas aren't developing at the same time, but movement is a priority for the brain and takes most of a child's attention. But the brain can perform

was saying and take decent notes at the same time? It's more likely you would get caught up trying to form the letters and miss most of what was said. Similarly, it's hard to fault a child for not being able to listen to the teacher if she is busy thinking about how to hold a pencil properly. Abundant and varied movement builds muscle memory, which makes holding a pencil and taking notes automatic and frees up the brain to listen and learn.

In addition to unlocking the brain for learning, movement helps the brain become more efficient by determining which sensory

processing all of the sensations bombarding it."

What it all means for parents

So what does this mean for us parents? The most important thing for young children is physically active play and exploration from a very early age. In *The Science of Parenting*, Margot Sunderland writes that 90 percent of the brain's growth takes place in the first five years. This is when the brain is the most malleable and receptive to the widest range of information. At about age 7, the rate of growth slows as the maturing brain goes from generalist to specialist. By moving a lot, children feed their brains tremendous amounts of sensory information about their bodies and environments.

One of the biggest impediments to movement is what Connell and McCarthy call "containerization." Many children spend too much time in car seats, backpacks, bouncy seats, slings, jumpers, high chairs, and other "containers" that constrain movement. Infants should ideally have lots of exploratory floor time and experience a wide range of body positions, with help from a caregiver as needed. For older children, it's all about self-directed free play.

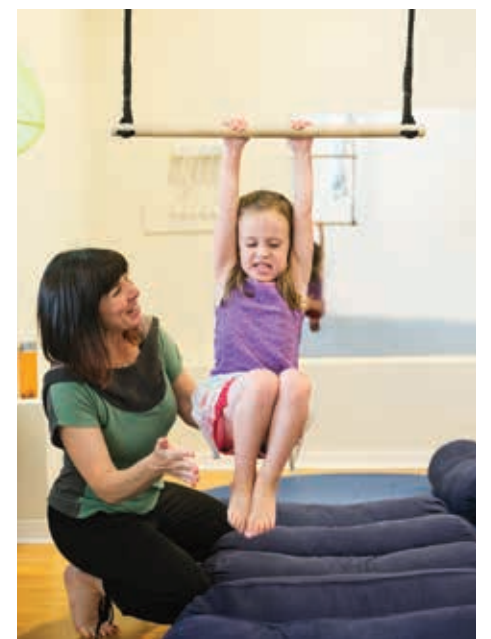
San Francisco-based occupational therapist and co-creator at Connecting Occupational, Aerial and Speech Therapies (COAST), Michelle Kemper, MS, OTR/L, RYT, suggests making movement a family activity:

Many children spend too much time in car seats, backpacks, bouncy seats, slings, jumpers, high chairs, and other "containers" that constrain movement.

one conscious task at the same time as multiple *automatic* tasks. Engaging all of the senses by moving one's body frequently is what makes walking, writing, and even sitting still automatic tasks; this frees up the brain to focus instead on listening and learning.

To get a sense of what young children are challenged with, imagine going to a lecture and being told to take copious notes. Easy, right? Here's the catch: you have to use your non-dominant hand and write the letters in reverse. Could you absorb what the lecturer

inputs need attention and which do not. This helps with focus. In her book *Your Child's Motor Development Story*, Jill Howlett Mays, MS, OTR/L, writes, "stimulation from the [proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and vestibular] senses turns on 'inhibitory neurons' in the brain. These nerve cells act to 'extinguish' or switch off the nerve signals from input entering the brain that is not useful at any given time. The more of these inhibitory nerve cells that are activated, the more efficient and organized the brain becomes in



“Engaging in activities that are intrinsically fun and playful for everyone is a must; children know when adults are feigning enjoyment. So for some families, movement that works is an after-dinner dance party. For others it means a rough-and-tumble game of soccer. I am a strong advocate for ‘gentle rough-housing,’ which is wonderful motor play but also teaches cooperation and fairness.”

When a child needs extra support

For a variety of reasons, some children don’t quite achieve the physical balance, strength, and coordination they need to successfully navigate their environments. These children are often mislabeled as clumsy, extremely shy, lazy, or hyper. In fact, these behaviors may indicate a deficit in certain types of movement that could be hindering the brain’s ability to correctly process information. For many children, occupational therapy (OT) can help by supplying the required movements. The earlier a child takes part in OT, the easier it will be to undo his compensatory habits and strengthen any weak areas. But it is never too late; occupational therapists work with everyone from premature babies to elderly patients.

The goal of OT is to help clients perform daily actions (their “occupations”) to the best

of their abilities. In the case of children, this means helping them build life skills through movement. According to Kemper, “Occupational therapists can support children, parents, and teachers in myriad ways. When a child is having a hard time, we don’t limit our lens to differences in their bodies and minds. We also look at the environments the children participate in, and at the tasks we are asking them to do to create the best fit and feelings of self-efficacy.”

Five more minutes!

All types of movement are important. But when it comes to school readiness, some occupational therapists give vestibular sense extra due. According to Connell and McCarthy’s *A Moving Child is a Learning Child*, “three of the most important elements of school readiness are the abilities to sit still, pay attention, and stay focused. The vestibular system governs all three... [S]itting still is one of the most advanced demonstrations of vestibular maturity... Kids don’t learn to sit still by practicing sitting still. Kids develop their stillness as their vestibular system matures, and that requires moving.”

Swinging, as you’ve probably deduced by now, is a powerful vestibular stimulant. Remember that the next time you’re trying to get your child to leave the playground and he begs for

five more minutes on the swing—say “yes” if you can. His brain will thank you for it. ♦

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: *Scientist in the Crib: Minds, brains, and how children learn* by Alison Gopnik; *The Well* column in *The New York Times* by Gretchen Reynolds; *Why Motor Skills Matter* by Lara Losquadro Liddle, MPT with Laura Yorke

Catherine is a medical writer. As a child she couldn’t get enough of rolling down grassy hills. But now any form of spinning makes her n-a-u-s-e-o-u-s. On many weekends she can be found growing neurons and synapses at her hip hop dance class.



MOVEMENT AND THE ADULT BRAIN

EXERCISE MAKES YOUR BRAIN BIGGER...

Movement isn’t only important for children’s brains. For years, scientists believed people were born with a fixed number of neurons. But research demonstrates that physical exercise increases the level of brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF), a protein that has been called “Miracle-Gro” for the brain. Not only does BDNF stimulate the production of new neurons, it also increases the number of synapses (neuron-to-neuron connections) and strengthens them. This makes your brain more receptive to learning.

...BUT “USE IT OR LOSE IT” STILL APPLIES

Of course, the body doesn’t like to waste energy on maintaining cells that aren’t doing something useful. Unused synapses soon fade away and idle neurons, even newly-grown ones, are killed off. So use them or lose them! Learn a new language, a new instrument, or, better yet, a new sport (more movement!).

SOURCES: *SPARK: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain* by John J. Ratey, MD; *The Brain that Changes Itself* by Norman Doidge, MD

HEALTHY MOVEMENTS FOR KIDS

INFANTS

- Rocking
- Tummy time
- Floor play
- Rolling
- Bouncing

TODDLERS & OLDER CHILDREN

- Swinging
- Running
- Jumping
- Hanging upside down
- Dancing
- Spinning
- Bouncing
- Throwing and catching a ball

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Adventures in Transportation

Rail, boat, and air travel options in the Bay Area can't be beat, offering enjoyment for all ages.

By Tara Hardesty

When I was young, my dad would load our family of five into a royal blue Country Squire wagon for adventures on the open suburban road. He would look for ways to weave excitement into our ride whatever our destination. A family favorite was the nearby Lucky Supermarket loading ramp where there was a big u-shaped dip. He would accelerate the wagon to the top, slip it into neutral, and let the car go up and down repeatedly until it eventually came to a stop at the bottom. We would put our hands up and sway our bodies forward and back, trying to keep the car going. I'm still disappointed that most supermarkets no longer have dipped loading ramps.

Modes of transportation are especially fascinating for children. Trains, boats, buses, and trolleys all render my 2-year-old motionless while he stares with wonder and joy. Luckily, for parents in the Bay Area, there is no shortage of transportation adventures

available. Here are just a few.

Trains, trains, trains

Who doesn't love a train? Muni, BART, Amtrak, steam trains—we have choices of rail travel coming out of our ears. Whether staying in the city for a trip to the Ferry Building or headed to Tilden Park to ride the steam train, there are dozens of rail options to experience within a one-hour drive of San Francisco.

Muni's F Line runs from Fisherman's Wharf to the Castro, with stops along the Embarcadero and Market Street, and is completely aboveground. Turn your trip on the F Line into an education about the car you're traveling on. The city's active streetcars originated in places as far away as Melbourne, Portugal and Italy, so this won't be hard to do with a little background research. Did you know that you can actually charter the antique streetcars and build your own adventure? Rates and information are on the

website. The F line can get packed like a sardine can, so plan accordingly.

www.streetcar.org/streetcars

Something that makes it onto almost every San Francisco "must do" list, the **cable cars** are another fantastic way to see the city. With three lines—the Powell/Hyde, the Powell/Mason, and the California—you can cut through the city over steep hills to several fun attractions. The cable cars get crowded and can be tricky to ride while



standing, so plan your ride at off times to avoid the masses.

www.sfcablecar.com/barn.html

With three stops in San Francisco, **Caltrain** is yet another way to create a day trip by rail with your little one. Mom Sara Werner Costa rode Caltrain regularly with her son to visit family. "I loved taking the train when he was little because I would wear him in the baby carrier and push his stroller with the car seat base clicked on the stroller. It worked really well for overnight trips or weekend trips to see my family. It was so much easier when I was on my own to take the train and not have to worry about a crying baby in the back seat while I drove." There are two types of cars, one with single-file seats upstairs and another with two sets of seats facing each other, which is an ideal option for family travel. Caltrain is perfect for catching a show at SAP Center, to explore Palo Alto, or to connect to some of the great trails on the Peninsula for walking or biking. www.caltrain.com/main.html



If you really want to thrill your child, try an extended trip on **Amtrak**. There are three lines to choose from: the California Zephyr travels east from San Francisco all the way to

Chicago, the Capitol Corridor travels San Jose to Auburn, and the Coast Starlight originates in Seattle and travels south through San Francisco and San Jose to Los Angeles.



Megan Bushnell, a GGMG mom, took a family trip on the Coast Starlight in 2014 and is planning another trip soon. While her oldest is certainly a train fan, her husband not-so-secretly enjoys them too, which was definitely a factor in trip-planning. "We chose to go south from San Jose on the Coast Starlight for two reasons. First, the timing: the train from San Jose departed at 10 a.m. and arrived at our destination at 5 p.m., so we didn't have to sacrifice nighttime sleep to travel. The second reason is the view: there are beautiful coastal views starting southward of San Luis Obispo and into Santa Barbara that you can't experience even by car."

Another benefit of traveling by train is the physical freedom, with space and opportunity to walk around for the duration of the trip. Sleeper/family cabins offer even more space to occupy your little ones with games and toys, though they come at a significantly higher price. "As the mother of two whirling dervishes, I definitely recommend the sleeper

cabin. You get a nice home base to spread out, play iPad games, and do all sorts of things frowned upon in general public," says Megan. The Superliner bedrooms (on the upper floor) also have their own bathroom, a convenient option for potty-trained kids. The family bedrooms are larger than the sleeper cabins, sleep four instead of two, do not have a bathroom, and are on the lower deck.

Moreover, a sleeper or family cabin on the Coast Starlight route includes exclusive access to the Parlour Car for first class passengers. The Parlour Car has an old-fashioned bar, dining area, and even a mini-movie theater downstairs, and offers some of the best views and comfortable seating (plus very average food). "Entering the Parlour Car feels like living in a James Bond movie. Minus your tiny sidekick whining about apple juice, of course," says Megan.

www.amtrak.com/california-train-routes

My family and I recently visited the **Tilden Park Steam Train** and it is one fun ride. The



train is one quarter the scale of an Old West-style steam train. The ride lasts 15 minutes or so, winding through redwoods and canyons, over trestles and through

"Entering the [Amtrak] Parlour Car feels like living in a James Bond movie. Minus your tiny sidekick whining about apple juice, of course."

tunnels, and the staff is friendly and engaged with the children. Perhaps the most economical ride of its type, single tickets are only \$3 each. Hours range from 11 a.m. to around 6 p.m. depending on the time of year. Visit the website for more details. www.redwoodvalleyrailway.com

Established in 1968, **Sonoma TrainTown** is about an hour's drive north. The train rides go through tunnels, over bridges, and make a stop in a miniature town complete with a petting zoo, providing a great addition to a family trip to wine country. www.traintown.com



The combination of animals and a ride on the **Little Puffer steam train** may be the perfect pairing for some kids. The SF Zoo steam train is a short ride, but it takes you near some animal exhibits and through a brightly lit tunnel. However, the Little Puffer isn't always operational so make sure to check with the zoo before making a special trip. www.sfzoo.org/explore/rides.htm

Adventures on the Bay

Watching San Francisco Bay from land is exciting, and being on a boat adds a whole new level of fun. There is no end to the sights that will captivate your family when out on a ferry ride.

Relaxing is not a word I often use to describe traveling with my toddler, but my last trip on a **ferry** from San Francisco to Jack London Square was just that. Buying tickets at the Ferry Building and boarding was easy and quick, and the ride over and back was just the right length. We spent most of the time outside on the back of the boat, appreciating the sights and sounds. The ride



rendered both my son and husband speechless, a momentary joy for any mom. From San Francisco, there are two services—the San Francisco Bay Ferry with routes to Oakland, Alameda, Vallejo and South San Francisco, and the Blue and Gold Fleet, offering trips to the previously mentioned locations as well as Angel Island, Sausalito, and AT&T Park. www.sanfranciscobayferry.com/sfbf-rider-info and www.blueandgoldfleet.com

The **Maritime Historic Park** near Fisherman's Wharf offers tours of historic ships, sailing trips on a national landmark schooner, and a museum to learn about our Bay's rich maritime history. www.nps.gov/safr/index.htm

If you're interested in **kayaking** but looking for something a little quieter for your family, try Stacked Adventures out of Alameda. This group will create a personal kayaking experience for your family or group. Focused on getting people outside in a way that works for them, Stacked Adventures will take families to one of three possible tour locations (Foster City, Alameda Bay Farm Lagoon, or Richardson Bay/Bothin Marsh) that are safely protected for parents and kids ages 4 and older. They bring all necessary gear and offer advice on how to make a good half-day or full-day experience. They also offer private services if desired. www.stackedadventures.com/home.html



Take to the sky

Mention air travel to a parent and most of us imagine commercial flights and survival techniques for traveling with children. But there are other options, for those who may be a little more adventurous.

A **hot air balloon** ride is an exhilarating and beautiful way to take flight for children over the age of 6 (or those tall enough to see over the basket). In wine country, there are several hot air balloon options taking off from multiple locations, all guaranteed to thrill your whole family. www.nvaloft.com



For those who love **airplane** rides, Vintage Aircraft of Sonoma offers 20-minute flights over Sonoma. They also offer a 40-minute flight to Napa, the coast, or Marin with a stunning view of the Golden Gate Bridge and the city skyline. Children 10 and under must ride with an adult and kids must be over 48 inches to fly. www.vintageaircraft.com

Another great way to experience the Bay is by way of a **seaplane**. Taking off from Mill Valley, there are several options for trips, including one over our very own San Francisco Bay. Children as young as 3 can fly with an adult. www.seaplane.com

Living in the Bay Area, we are lucky in so many ways, with myriad transportation options at our fingertips. Whether your child is fascinated by trains, boats, or airplanes, the choices available for a transportation adventure abound. ♦

Tara is a freelance writer and marketing professional. She blogs at TheDailyWrites.com about the things she is passionate about, the hairy underbelly of life, motherhood, and entrepreneurship.

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Packing It In

Planning and preparation are essential for a major move. And don't forget the packing paper!

By Sallie Hess

Photographs by Carolyn Soling Photography

I recently moved from San Francisco to the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C. When I say recently, I mean my movers left Saturday night at 8 p.m., and I am putting the finishing touches on this article the following Thursday morning. The pain is fresh.

This was my 20th move, my third with children, but even though I've been around the block a bunch of times, there is always something new to learn.

Planning your move

There are timing considerations beyond the basics of closing dates and school calendars. Movers charge more at the end of the month. You want to be in your new house before Thanksgiving? So does everyone else. It's just like air travel. So think carefully, get on the calendar, and lock in your estimate before moving companies start blacking out dates; they simply run out of trucks.

Interview movers. Get estimates. Go with a national outfit if you are moving long-distance. This is not the time to take a chance on the little guy. The estimator goes through your house counting your stuff, then enters it all into a program that spits out an estimated weight. That is when you say to yourself, "Game on. I can lose 1,000 pounds in three months, no problem." My estimates ranged from \$14,000 to \$21,000 for about the same weight, and I didn't have them pack for me. And yeah, that's a lot of money, but keep your receipts: at tax time, a long-distance move is deductible.

Moving in San Francisco will require special parking signs, which some outfits will get for you, but you can get them by calling 311. You will also likely need a "shuttle" (small truck) within the city, which costs extra. My guys showed up with a shipping container on an 18-wheeler semi-truck and could not get into our new driveway, so they spent the day shuttling back and forth. That means my stuff was moved at least four times: house to shuttle, shuttle to semi, semi to shuttle, shuttle to house. Check to see if the shuttle at destination is included or not. If you suspect you might need one, let movers know in advance. Pack well, and get the good insurance.

Lastly, think about your cars if you are

moving far away. We donated one and shipped one. Neither is complicated but both require planning. That also meant that we needed a car for two weeks while we waited for the shipped car, so we bought a car on the East Coast upon arrival.

Long distance or local?

There are differences between an in-town move and a long-distance move. First, and most simply, moving companies charge by weight for long-distance moves and by the hour for local moves. So if you are moving far away, think about whether you really need those old economics textbooks.

When you are moving locally, you can carry stuff back and forth in your car, you can supervise painting and closet outfitting, you can look at that bottle of hazelnut oil and say, "You will live to fight another day." Of course, that means there is a lot of schlepping across town.

Kids, though, make "quick errands" twice as long and twice as frustrating. What if your painter needs more paint? Maybe it's time for prayers at the mosque across the street from the paint store, so you can't get a parking spot for love or money, and your 2-year-old announces he needs to poop while you are circling the block for the seventh time. I have dozens of these stories from my last in-town move.

When you are moving across the country, though, you callously pour out the open bottles of hazelnut oil. Stop buying toiletries and use up the samples. Start sacrificing maraschino cherries and chickpea flour while there is still space in the compost. Invite your friends over to drink down the bar and eat all those olives. Otherwise, your recycling bin will look like some bizarre hand soap, olive, and Midori party happened at your house in the last week. Or worse, there is no more room in the bins.

Speaking of packing...

People will tell you to get packers. It is, indeed, easier—sort of. They will pack the trash if you aren't watching, and they don't give a tinker's damn about your grandmother's teapot. I have unpacked things with my heart in my throat and a curse in my mouth. Know whether you are more



comfortable blaming yourself or somebody else if something breaks.

You can always do a hybrid and pack everything but the kitchen and the breakables. I have unpacked professional packing so I know how to pack a china barrel, and I am confident in my ability to do it well,



If you want to pack, there are some things to know. Rule number one: you will need three times as much paper as you think you do. Paper is for more than just wrapping up china to make sure it doesn't break. You can crumple it up to cushion the bottoms and sides of a box of electronics, and wrap up

You need to push through your own exhaustion and find the nightlights and towels and sheets because your babies need a warm bath and their own soft beds.

but not everyone is. Again, there is a difference between long-distance and local movers on this. Most local movers charge by the hour for packing, while long-distance movers charge by the box.

I chose to pack myself this time because I'm a masochist. Just kidding. I chose to do it myself because I had time (both kids were in school), and because I wanted to touch everything and reassess its value to me. I made six full carloads of donations in the months before my move. I sold things on Craigslist. I lost that thousand pounds. Last but not least, I saved us a few thousand dollars by investing sweat equity.

your cooking utensils in groups so they don't clang around in the boxes.

Movers will charge you more for boxes and delivery than it will cost to get boxes yourself. Your moving estimate is your shopping list; call up Box Brothers and ask for a delivery of the number and type of boxes your estimator thought you would need. They are located on Geary Avenue and you will need to know this because you won't order enough paper the first time.

If you are moving long-distance, and if there is a chance your stuff will require shuttling more than once, definitely get new boxes instead of used ones. My boxes look like



they have been through a war and they were new just a few weeks ago.

Unpacking

If you are moving locally, bring an emergency kit in the car. If not, buy essentials when you arrive. If there is something you need on a daily basis, don't pack it in a box. Make sure that you have several box cutters, because you will lose a couple.

Unpack the kitchen first. Use post-it notes to move around on the cabinet doors until you find the best configuration. Don't let anyone rush you on the kitchen. It's better to do it well now.

As you start unpacking, you will accumulate a huge pile of paper. Remember all that paper we talked about before? Flatten it out. It's an extra step, but if you crumple it up, you will be filling up your recycling and compost bins until doomsday.

What about the children?!

I was lucky in that my kids were in school for most of the time I was packing. If you don't have a formal plan for the kids, hire babysitters and take your friends up on offers for help.

The last week in our house was a bit of a nightmare. I had to pack the kitchen, my kids were out of school, and my husband was called to New York. The kids watched a lot of TV and I hired babysitters. I was running on

fumes and couldn't blow off the packing to take them to the zoo one last time.

If you move during the summer like I did, try to find day camps in your new locale. Again, I lucked out that our new school in Virginia has a summer camp so I didn't have to do research. Just make sure that you get your health forms and birth certificates all sorted out in advance and bring them with you in your suitcase, even if you mailed copies. You don't want any hiccups in this; what if the truck is late and your documents are on it?

We were in limbo for two weeks, staying with friends and family. We had just a few books and the kids grew tired of the same bedtime stories. I grew tired of entertaining them in someone else's house. They watched a lot of TV. We made forays to Target for new games and toys. It was hard on them living out of a suitcase. They didn't believe me at first when we got to our new house.

Anything else?

My last weeks in San Francisco felt a lot like college exam time. There was a lot of takeout and not enough hours in the day. I had a decade's worth of friends to say goodbye to. I hired a dozen babysitters in the last three weeks alone. I had so many loose ends to tie up. I had a legal pad covered in lists. I had to hand over volunteer commitments. I had a business to close. I had to call and cancel and

start services and utilities in both places. The kids didn't have summer clothes. There were large-item pickups to schedule with Recology and donations to deliver.

Then, poof, just like after college graduation, we scattered. We got on a plane. I stopped caring about the recycling being so full or whether the new owners would know what to do with my garden. It was over. But it wasn't.

Now that we are here, I am still going. I spent 90 minutes Sunday morning at the grocery store because we had nothing to eat but granola bars and peanuts and no laundry or dish soap. I spent two days in big box retail getting things like shower curtains and trash cans.

While you are at it, buy yourself some extra underwear. Mom's clothes will be unpacked last, because the ultimate lesson in moving with kids is that the buck stops here. You can't eat tuna out of the can and push off unpacking the kitchen; kids need familiar meals. You need to push through your own exhaustion and find the nightlights and towels and sheets because your babies need a warm bath and their own soft beds. But if you played your cards right, kids are in camp, and you can unpack in peace. ♦

Sallie Hess has retired to the Virginia countryside, where her children are slowly acclimating to thunderstorms and wildlife. She is probably still unpacking.

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Dana is a member of GGMG. Dana is the founder and lead organizer of Dao Living, LLC. She lives in the Miraloma Park neighborhood of San Francisco with her husband, two boys and their dog Mizzie. Dana has been organizing and re-configuring interior spaces since childhood. This evolved into meaningful work with others as she established strong connections between physical order and mental calm within her own space. Dana feels honored to support clients as they make similar discoveries along the path to simplicity and ease.

Dana A. Olsborg
Founder and Professional Organizer



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Leave Your Car Behind

Outside-the-box thinking and a little research into car-free alternatives create opportunities for new adventures, healthier lifestyles, and saving money.

By Kirsten Pflieger Photographs by Aviva Roller Photography

Moms without cars: they do exist! Some by necessity, some by choice. Last fall, Addie Bjornsen realized that she only drove her car nine miles a week. She sold her car, uses City Car Share or Uber when she needs a vehicle, and saves almost \$500 per month. Adele Salierno and her husband own a condo that doesn't have parking. By avoiding the headaches intrinsic to street parking, they take pride in their car-free existence. Jessie Wesoky has a car, but her husband drives to Foster City for work every day. Although he usually drops their daughter off at preschool, Jessie and her young son manage afternoon pickup and the rest of their schedule without a vehicle.

San Francisco's mild climate, well-developed neighborhoods, and accessible public transportation make getting around without a car fairly easy and generally enjoyable. Route-planning apps like Google Maps allow intrepid travelers to optimize for alternative transportation.

Walking

Walking is a great way for you to de-stress and for children of all ages to familiarize themselves with their surroundings.

When my children were small, I preferred to wear them in a baby carrier. This enabled me to return home without disturbing a sleeping child, but it can be harder on your

body and does not facilitate carrying many supplies or picking up shopping along the way. Finding the carrier that works for you and your child is important. Some stores, like Natural Resources in the Mission, offer rental programs so that you can try out various models before purchasing.

When you need to put your child down or just need more carrying capacity, a stroller is essential. Finding the right one can be a process. The stroller that works well for your newborn may not be the one that you need for an older child, or when you are juggling two or more older children. Don't be afraid to upgrade as your children and your family grow. For Jessie, mother of a 4.5-year-old and

a 2-year-old, having a double stroller makes walking possible. Having the option to push both means that she can anticipate how long it will take to get places.

As your child gets older, you may want to incorporate scooters, balance bikes, and pedal bikes into your walking excursions. Start small and consider how you will get everyone home if your child decides she is done. I often bring our stroller even when my girls are biking two blocks to the playground, because I know that my 3-year-old's desire is often greater than her stamina.

Public transportation

When you are ready to get out of your immediate neighborhood, San Francisco's buses and trains provide an easy exit. They are also a wonderful source of cheap entertainment—my older daughter and I spent countless mornings riding the bus without a destination in mind when she was younger.

Children 0 to 4 are free on all Muni and BART lines. Once your child reaches his fifth birthday, he has to pay \$1 on Muni and \$.70 for BART within San Francisco. You can pay cash on the buses and aboveground trains, purchase single-ride tickets from station vending machines, or carry a Youth Clipper Card (tinyurl.com/Youth-Clipper).

Strollers are allowed on all buses and trains. You are not required to collapse your stroller or remove your child, but the stroller brakes should be locked and she should be strapped in. Position yourself and your stroller so that other passengers' movement is not obstructed, and the area to secure a wheelchair is available if needed. You can request use of the lift to get on and off of the bus. Dilek Barlow, mom to 22-month-old Zeki, recommends waiting for the less crowded local buses, especially during rush hour. Adele found a lightweight stroller indispensable, allowing her to lift the stroller with her daughter in it onto the bus.

When riding trains with a stroller, you can use the wheelchair access ramps at the aboveground stations, but not all stations are accessible. For a list of accessible stops, visit tinyurl.com/Accessible-Muni-Stops. All below ground stations have elevator access. Signs posted on the concourse level direct you to

the elevator that will take you to the platform. When Muni and BART share a station, there is one shared elevator from the concourse to platform levels. You must pay before entering these elevators.

Biking

Biking is faster than walking, not beholden to schedules or route lines, and parking is a breeze. If you are already comfortable biking in the city and your child is at least 12 months old, getting started can be as easy as selecting an appropriate child seat or trailer set up.

If you are new to urban biking, you might want some training before setting out. When Dilek moved to San Francisco four years ago, she took an urban biking 101 course offered through the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition (SFBC). When her son was 12 months, she and her husband added rear seats to their individual bikes, purchased a well-fitting bike helmet for Zeki, and they were good to go. The SFBC continues to offer

Whether you choose to go car-free or just to leave your car at home more often, embrace the opportunity to explore our beautiful city at a slower pace.

free bicycle safety courses for the whole family. For information on upcoming classes and a copy of their extensive *Family Biking Guide*, visit www.sfbike.org/resources.

As your child gets older (and heavier), or you envision toting multiple children at once, you may want to consider a cargo bike or a tandem system. Cargo bikes include front loaders that hold up to four children and rear loaders that can hold two to three children, or the occasional adult. These bicycles are heavier than regular bicycles and carry greater loads, so many families in our hilly city add a pedal assist or electric motor. Bay Area stores that offer test rides include the New Wheel (www.newwheel.net), VieBikes (www.viebikes.com), and Blue Heron Bikes (www.blueheronbikesberkeley.com).

Taxis and ridesharing

Safety is the biggest difficulty when riding in cars that you don't own. A car seat or booster seat is legally required for all children

ages 8 and under, and many children should be using a booster until age 12. When Dilek was researching car seat options, she discovered that rear-facing car seats with the European belt path (tinyurl.com/zwfu6fv) are easier to install safely and quickly when not using a base. Addie now has three booster seats for her 5-year-old, depending on where they are going—an inflatable one that fits easily into her purse, a backless one she uses when she has storage at her destination, and a high-back version for longer trips. The Car Seat Lady (tinyurl.com/Taxi-Car-Seats) offers suggestions on the best car seats for taxis and ridesharing.

Know how to install your seat quickly, and make sure that your driver knows you need to install a car seat before you are ready to go. Unless there is a safety concern, leave your door open as a signal until your child is properly restrained, so that the driver won't just start driving.

If you are heading to the airport and don't need to bring your car seat for the trip, www.airporttaxicabservices.com

will pick you up at home or at the airport with the appropriate type of car seat installed.

The number one reason many San Francisco moms choose to not drive is to avoid parking headaches. As most of us have experienced, much of the time savings gained by driving can be lost circling in an ever increasing radius around your destination, looking for a place to park. For families who forego car ownership completely, the cost savings can be dramatic. And don't overlook the environmental or health benefits—you can decrease your carbon footprint and stress level, while saving money to boot. Whether you choose to go car-free or just to leave your car at home more often, embrace the opportunity to explore our beautiful city at a slower pace. ♦

Kirsten Pflieger moved to San Francisco without a car in 2003. She enjoyed getting to know the city via bike and public transportation. Although she gained a car when she got married, both she and her husband continue to navigate the city by alternative means.



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Living in California or anywhere Mother Nature unleashes her wrath, it's extremely important to **be prepared**. This year why not consider giving the gift of an **Emergency Kit** or give yourself peace of mind with **your own custom kits**. We can help!

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NEIGHBORHOOD MEETUPS: Richmond

The **Richmond Neighborhood Meetup** subgroup is ramping up activities in 2016, thanks to several new volunteers who have joined the team. In March, we took over a small restaurant for a sushi + sake dinner. In April, we joined forces with the NOPA Neighborhood Meetup subgroup for a spring event for little ones to do messy art and play games. In July, we had a movie outing just for moms.

We now have a weekly playgroup in Golden Gate Park! We meet at the "blue playground" on Fulton (at 8th Ave.) on Mondays from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Additionally, we have a regular book club that meets every six to eight weeks, plus other spontaneous events for moms and families. Check BigTent for more information and updates.

If you are looking for fun family outings, some of the neighborhood favorites include paddle boating on Stow Lake, going for a hike at Land's End, and dancing alongside the roller skaters at Skatin' Place in Golden Gate Park. If you live in the Richmond or one of the surrounding

neighborhoods, please join us at one of our events. You can also find many of us on Facebook by joining the group called "Richmond Playgroup."

The Richmond Neighborhood Meetup volunteers are Grace, Karen, Stacey, and Shelley. We are always looking for new volunteers to join our group and help plan fun events in the neighborhood. Contact recruiting@ggm.org if you are interested in learning more. We hope to see you around!

GET CONNECTED

Connect with other moms in your neighborhood by joining your Neighborhood Meetup subgroup on BigTent. From wine nights to playgroups, there are 11 neighborhoods hosting events every week! Contact Tracy at andreassen.tracy@gmail.com for more information on what's happening in your neighborhood.



KIDS ACTIVITIES

Evening Play Date at Recess

Need a night out? Your little one will enjoy the run of the entire playspace, have dinner with his buddies, and even participate in an art project! Our friendly, knowledgeable staff will provide child care so you can enjoy yourself. Accepting children 2- to 7-years-old.

DATE: Friday, September 23
TIME: 5 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: Special GGMG rate \$30/child (+\$15 siblings)

REGISTRATION: [Email info@recess-sf.com](mailto:info@recess-sf.com).

Make Potions with Tinkergarten at Peacock Meadows in Golden Gate Park

Tinkergarten is thrilled to team up with GGMG Kids Activities to make potions—a timeless pursuit, and for good reason. Making potions engages a child's senses and fosters creativity. Stirring, mixing, and mashing ingredients activate universal behavior patterns that promote brain and body development. It's tinkering at its best. Snacks and supplies will be provided. Appropriate for ages 18 months to 5 years.

DATE: Tuesday, September 6
TIME: 10 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 240 John F. Kennedy Dr.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/98111328

Toy and Book Swap at Sue Bierman Playground

Meet some new playmates for your little one and bring gently used books or toys to trade or donate. Any leftover toys/books will be donated to the Homeless Prenatal Program. We will also have snacks and water. Looking forward to seeing you there!

DATE: Friday, September 30
TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: 253 Washington St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/home/calendar/event/98257118

Smart Play at Creperie Saint Germain

Moms, come relax and mingle while kids play smarter...the French way! Blue Orange invites kids 3 to 10 to play with the game makers outside Creperie Saint Germain at The Yard at Mission Rock. Kids will learn memory, strategy, and dexterity, while moms can enjoy the comfortable al fresco lounge with crepes, wine, and champagne.

DATE: Friday, September 23
TIME: 3 to 5 p.m.
PLACE: 100 Terry A Francois St.
COST: FREE (plus cost of food & drinks)

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/98268687

PARENT EDUCATION

Webinar on Cultivating the Bilingual and Multilingual Child

What are effective formal and informal methods to improve your child's foreign language skills? How can you as a parent help keep the learning process going outside of school even if you don't speak the language? Tune in to discover tools and techniques that will keep your child interested and on the path to mastering a language beyond English. Registered attendees will receive a free interactive "Intro to Spanish" children's eBook, compliments of Language Tree!

DATE: Tuesday, September 13
TIME: noon to 1:15 p.m.
PLACE: Webinar
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.tinyurl.com/ParentEdWebinar

Get Ready for Preschool Applications

Irene Byrne, director of Phoebe Hearst Preschool, will provide an overview and advice on navigating the preschool process. Bring your questions!

DATE: Tuesday, September 20
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 1111 Gough St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: see BigTent for more information

Infant, Child, and Adult CPR

CPR is one skill we should ALL have in our repertoire. This 2.5-hour class will give you the skills to save lives. Join a CPR instructor (a registered nurse) to get hands-on practice with mannequins and develop muscle memory of what to do should your child or partner choke or stop breathing. A two-year certification is included.

DATE: Tuesday, September 27
TIME: 7:30 to 10 p.m.
PLACE: Recess, 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$75

REGISTRATION: www.recess-sf.com/workshops

JUST FOR MOMS

Mommy's Play Date

Put down the diaper bag and call the sitter! We're gathering in a moms-only space to talk about sex and pleasure at Good Vibrations. Join staff sexologist Carol Queen, PhD for a fun mixer for mothers who want to put the spice back in their sex lives. Get a special store tour to learn more about pleasure products, learn tips for thriving sexually, and get support for overcoming the barriers that keep so many moms undersexed and over-stressed.

DATE: Thursday, September 22
TIME: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1620 Polk St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/98160532

MEMBERSHIP

Moms-Only Evening Picnic at Off the Grid

Grab your blanket, hit up the food trucks, and join GGMG for a moms-only evening picnic. Come with old friends and meet new ones!

DATE: Thursday, September 29
TIME: 5 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: Presidio Main Post (Montgomery St. at Sheridan Ave.)
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/98250273

PLAYGROUP/ NEW MEMBER

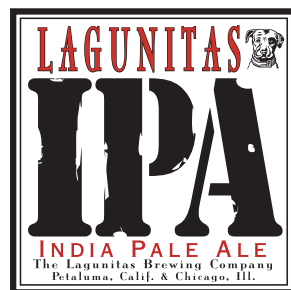
Playgroup Formation Event at Play Haven

Playgroups...more than play and much more than just a group. Playgroups are about forging new connections, finding an outlet to share and grow, and exploring kid-friendly spots. Most importantly, it's about building a support network. Come meet moms with similarly-aged children and learn how to launch your own playgroup. We'll also be sharing information about member benefits, neighborhood meetups, and other activities available through GGMG.

DATE: Tuesday, September 27
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 254 Laguna Honda Blvd.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: www.bigtent.com/group/calendar/event/97347507

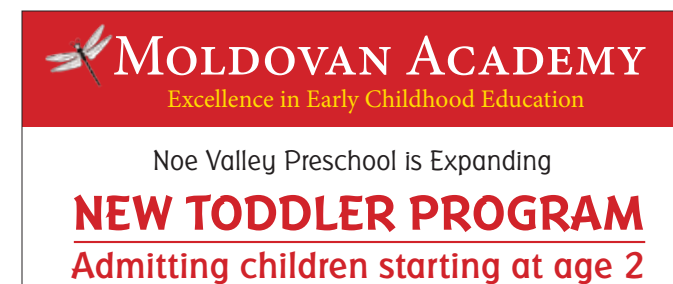
GGMG would like to thank the generous sponsors and donors of our 20th Anniversary party to benefit the Homeless Prenatal Program.



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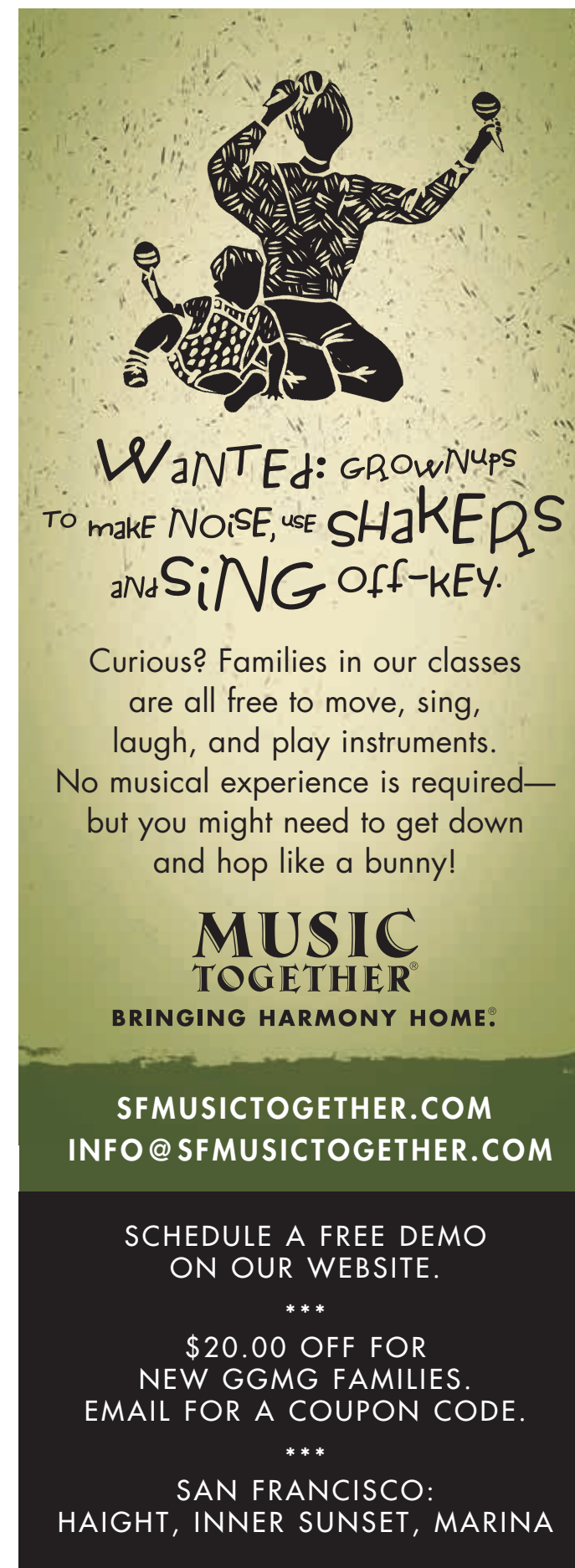


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Committee Spotlight: Kids Activities

Describe the personality of your committee.
Our committee is full of volunteers with creative ideas on how to entertain kids of all ages.

Why do you do what you do? What has been an unexpected benefit of being involved with the Kids Activities Committee?
We organize fun events for kids because this is what we want for our own kids. The unexpected benefit of being involved with the KA Committee is the same—our kids can join in on the fun that we organize and we find new things to do in and around the city!

What types of activities or projects to you undertake?
We've organized a fun Earth Day event and a visit to a local farm. We have really exciting future events planned too, including apple picking and a pumpkin patch visit in the fall, as well as a holiday event in the winter. We have also started regular playgroups in different neighborhoods where members can bring lightly used toys and books to trade with other members; unclaimed items are donated to the Homeless Prenatal Program.

How do you know when you are making a difference?
When we have members come to our events and tell us that we

deliver more than they expected through fun giveaways and activities.

Who are your current volunteers?
Our amazing crew consists of dedicated moms who want to add some extra cheer to our children's everyday schedules and create lasting memories. Volunteers include Emily Beaven, Mariana Gava Black, Lianne Chan, Carol Chen, Emily Jenks, Sabrina Luh Kaburaki, AJ Selfe, Justine Simpson, and Brooke Spillberg.

What's next for the Kids Activities Committee?
We plan to continue to organize events that make members want to come back to year after year.

How can interested GGMG members get involved in the Kids Activities Committee?
We are always looking for creative activities for events, so members can send us ideas they have at activities@ggm.org. We will try to make them happen. Aside from that, just come check out our events and have fun!

Moms Supporting Moms

At GGMG's 20th anniversary event, co-founder Faith Anaya described the founding years of our organization and its original goal: to create a community for San Francisco moms. What brought moms together 20 years ago continues to bring us together today: the intricacies of sleep, diapers, potty training, schools, and the eternal juggling of priorities as a mom.

We can choose to divide ourselves by our differences, or we can choose to unite behind our fellow moms. Of late, we've debated racial, financial, and family differences in our online forum and sometimes come out angry. Our forums have long been a place for diversity in the face of controversial decisions, and discussions can become heated, especially when debating topics like vaccines, circumcision, and sleep training.

Yet we've also seen our community come together to support moms in need, whether due to financial hardship, cancer, death, a crappy boss, a fight with our partner, or simply a bad day. What keeps many of us coming back to GGMG is this incredible strength of community which binds us together despite our differences. GGMG established the Member Support Committee precisely to organize ourselves and provide support for moms in need.

The GGMG community is at its best when members support fellow GGMG moms that are otherwise complete strangers. The Member Support volunteers choose to participate in the forums to witness and facilitate these acts of random kindness. At heart, we are all moms doing our best to raise our children. GGMG is our community, and we hope to see more community building as we continue to grow over the next 20 years.

GGMG's Annual Fall Festival

Kick off the fall season at Sharon Meadows in Golden Gate Park on October 8 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Looking for a fun way to meet other great moms and to be part of GGMG's largest event? All volunteers will receive a Starbucks gift card and be entered to win a volunteer raffle prize! Please email rspv@ggm.org if you're interested. Keep on eye on BigTent for more details and to RSVP!

Is It Time to Renew Your GGMG Membership?

They say that raising children takes a village, and without members like you, we would not have such a wonderful and supportive organization.

No longer living in San Francisco? That's OK, you can still renew and maintain access to the forums, receive the magazine, and attend GGMG events. GGMG has also raised the age limit to include moms who have a child 11 years old or younger.

Have friends moving to SF? They can now join prior to moving to get access to GGMG forums and all GGMG perks and benefits. Relocating members must provide a local residential address within six months of joining.

New this year renew your GGMG membership and be automatically entered into a monthly raffle for an Amazon gift card!

To renew your membership up to 60 days before it expires, simply log into BigTent and click the "Continue Enrollment" link. If you don't see that link, it may mean your membership has already expired, but you can easily re-apply online at www.ggm.org/join.html. If you have any questions, please reach out to us at membership@ggm.org.

Summer's Over, and It's Back to School!

Now that your kids are headed back into the classroom, are you finding yourself with a little more time on your hands? Come volunteer with GGMG! With volunteering comes a great opportunity to meet other moms and make new friends. It's also an easy way to build your resume, and volunteers receive additional GGMG member benefits. There are many different types of positions available, with a wide variety of time commitments and responsibilities.

If you are interested, please contact the GGMG Volunteer Recruiting Committee at volunteer@ggm.org.

Examples of currently open positions:

- Partnerships:** Co-chair, Volunteer
- Parent Education:** Volunteer
- Membership:** Volunteer
- Magazine:** Writer, Photographer, Graphic Designer
- Playgroups:** Volunteers
- Neighborhood Meetups:** Volunteers
- PR/Marketing/Branding:** Volunteer (PR)
- Recruiting:** Co-chair

If You Love This Magazine, Come Work with Us!

The GGMG magazine staff is looking for talented, enthusiastic moms who want to contribute to one of the best parts of GGMG. Like all of GGMG, the magazine staff is made up entirely of volunteers.

Staff Writer: Writers contribute at least eight 2,000-word feature articles per year, plus various smaller memoir or list-style articles, and collaborate with editorial staff at monthly meetings. Professional journalism experience desired but not required.

Photographer: Photographers are responsible for shooting photos for feature articles and/or covers for each issue of the GGMG magazine. You will be responsible for all stages of production including: scouting locations, securing models, providing creative direction to models,

executing shoot, and all post-processing workflow using Lightroom or Photoshop. Photographers are also responsible for collaborating with editorial staff at monthly meetings.

Graphic Designer: Designers craft the visual layout of the magazine and are expected to answer to tight timelines. Designers are also responsible for collaborating with editorial staff at monthly meetings. Experience with InDesign required.

If you are interested, please send samples of your work and a CV to editor@ggm.org.



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I ♥ Mom

Dreams of Flight

By Sandy Woo

My first flight, at 3 months old, left no impression on me. My parents decided that a fifth floor Manhattan walk-up they shared with a friend was no place for an infant, so they bundled me up and sent me on a plane to Taiwan where my paternal grandmother (*nai nai*) would care for me. I was the baby girl my dad's mother never had, and she adored me. When *nai nai* returned me to mom and dad at 2 years old, I clung to her, suspicious of the pair.

When I was 3 years old, my mother whisked me away again to Taiwan, this time to my maternal grandparents' home. I remember the events surrounding this flight well. Sick of my father's philandering, mom picked me up from preschool with a few hastily packed prized possessions. We boarded the plane, only to deboard minutes later when there was a mechanical problem with the aircraft. I'll never forget my mother's eyelid unnaturally twitching from stress and anticipation. We finally took off, much to her relief. The rest of that trip was a complete blur for me, but it foreshadowed a life in transit and an oftentimes turbulent existence.

I was eventually reunited with my father. But the "abduction" took a toll on me. Sleep became synonymous with *Night of the Walking Child* as I aimlessly haunted our hallways after bedtime. Not long after, my mother, either antsy or fed up with the physical spats with my father, gave me a choice one night—to leave with her for good, or stay. I blame my favorite show "The Incredible Hulk" (which I was watching alone that night) for my choice. Moving away with her was far more terrifying than passively sitting on the couch watching that angry green monster, so I stayed. I couldn't comprehend what was being asked of me that night, only that mom was interrupting my show.

As I grew up, planes became my ally. At 5, I started taking flights by myself to see my mother. At that time, it was more unusual to be a girl living with her dad and *nai nai* in suburbia than to be flying alone to see my mom in Los Angeles. Oddly, my parents' separation fostered a closer bond between mom and me. I couldn't wait to see her.

My father and I kept moving, about every two years for a while. His peripatetic ways had nothing to do with the military and everything to do with wanting to start over; his was the age-old tale of seeking opportunity, yet unable to settle for one. A rolling stone gathers no moss, my stepmother would say with an air of

resignation. Movement provided escape, an avoidance of our problems, an excuse to be a commitment-phobe. My escape always involved an airplane ride, and over the years, I began to pine for those trips.

As a mother now, I wonder if there can be too much movement too soon. I want to go back and self-righteously scold my parents. *How disruptive! So much movement, so little stability.*

Yet, here I am all grown up and possibly addicted to movement myself. I have my parents' antsiness, that inability to commit. I watch TV while reading the newspaper, and check the GILT app

for sales while doing yoga stretches. Focus is not my forte, and wanderlust is part of my DNA. I fantasize about my next adventure when our bags are barely unpacked. My husband admonishes both our son and me to sit still. For me, being still is akin to stagnation, something I irrationally fear. I must constantly remind myself that my son needs a stable mother, and that stability does not automatically equal stagnation.

Movement has always held a dichotomous meaning for me—the roar of jet engines has meant both disruption and discovery. Through their haphazard movements in my formative years, my parents inadvertently taught me about resilience, the importance of journeys, and self-discovery. I have come to realize that they did the best they could with

what they had. Sometimes, we all need a little disruption to grow and change.

My husband and I are experimenting with the right mix of disruption for our son. Perhaps we take his comfort (and ours, for that matter) a bit too lightly; we never want him to get too comfortable. We imposed disruption and adventure on him at an early age, and it has often been a bumpy ride. At 3, my son has already traveled to six countries. Initially, the crying banshee we experienced on our flights was enough to consider curtailing travelling. Now, he asks for plane rides and is obsessed with them. Jet lag has evolved into a late-night bidding for mama to sleep with him, an ephemeral sweetness I cherish. I wonder if he'll look kindly upon his mother's flights of fancy for him. I can dream. ♦

Sandy Woo is a genetics geek by day and a wanderer by night, dreaming of the next destination to whisk her 3.5-year-old and husband off to.





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