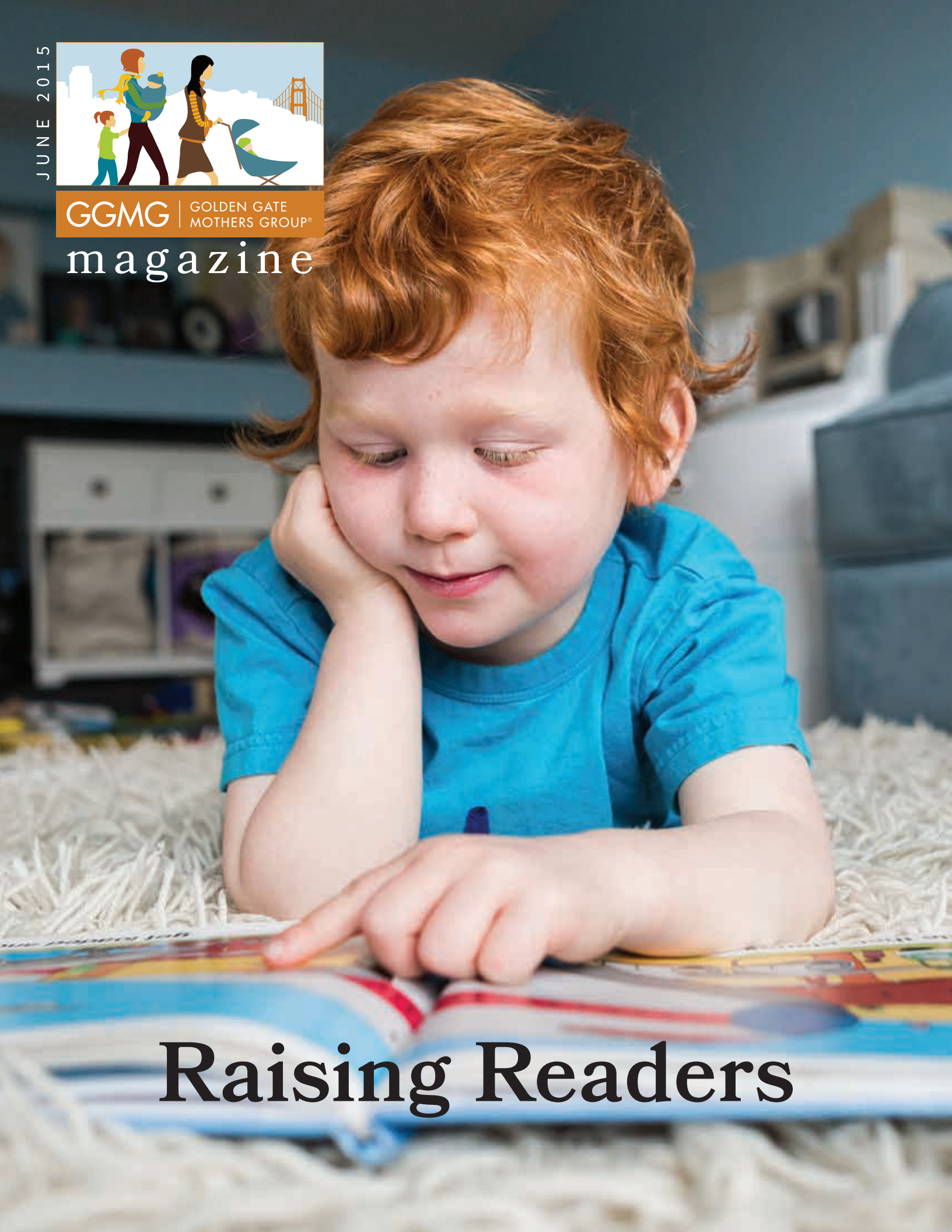


JUNE 2015



GGMG | GOLDEN GATE
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magazine



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Letter from the Editor: Passing on a Love of Books

By Kirsten Pflieger



Kirsten Pflieger lives in the Castro with her husband, Karl, and their two daughters, Serenity and Sierra. The Eureka Valley library and Paxton Gate's Curiosities for Kids are their favorite book browsing sites.

I love to read. It is my favorite escape. When I was a kid, I remember curling up on the back seat of our van, ignoring my brothers and sisters, and reading the hours away as we road tripped across the country. More recently, the My Brest Friend nursing pillow and my Kindle were my greatest support in the early months of constant nursing.

When I was pregnant with my first daughter, my friends threw me a book baby shower. Instead of baby gear, guests gave us a book they loved when they were younger, one their children were currently obsessed with, or

The books spanned the ages, from Goodnight Gorilla, which we started reading immediately, to A Wrinkle in Time, one of the two books that sparked my love of the fantasy genre.

one that sparked their adult interest while perusing the children's section of a bookstore for the first time in decades. It was fun to see what our friends had read as children, to remember titles we had forgotten, and to discover new favorites. The books spanned the ages, from *Goodnight Gorilla*, which we started reading

immediately, to *A Wrinkle in Time*, one of the two books that sparked my love of the fantasy genre. I can't wait to introduce it to Serenity and Sierra.

Despite my love of books and of introducing my daughters to reading, there are times when it is hard to stifle the groan when asked to read the same book for the millionth time. On page 16, Katrina and Helen remind us why reading aloud is important, and they give us tips for making it more interesting, both for us and our little ones. Stef talks about why oral storytelling is important and how we can expand on this natural tendency on page 24. One genre that I do not recall a strong attachment to in my childhood, and that I have shied away from in my parenting, is fairy tales. The originals felt like too much, and the sanitized versions felt like not enough. After reading Gail's piece on page 20, I went out and bought *The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* and began reading them to my daughter. She loves them. She asks questions and thinks some parts are silly, but she does not appear traumatized

by the harshness of the world the characters live in. I am excited to explore this genre more in the years to come.

Reading and storytelling are some of the greatest gifts we can give our children. It is so much fun to think about all of the great books I can introduce to my girls, and to wonder which ones they will find on their own. What books are you looking forward to your children discovering? Let us know at editor@ggmg.org.

KPflieger

Housekeeping

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

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

THIS ISSUE MADE POSSIBLE BY: Family visits, potty training, the return of the margarita, vodka, Marie Kondo, sluggo, Whole Foods two-bite chocolate bite brownies, good neighbors, antibiotics, not cleaning my house, Mother's Day confusion and madness, and pack n play in hotel bathroom AKA toddler bedroom.

COMING NEXT: July/August—Water; September—Back to School

CONTEST: Congratulations to Valerie Escobar and Bri Liv. Both members will enjoy a deluxe, in-home massage with her partner and her very own massage table, courtesy of Zeel.

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

Letter from the Board: Making GGGMG Even Better

By Laurel Kellam

I don't get to spend too much time on the forums these days, but when I do venture in I'm so thankful for this community. From posts about preschools, friends, nannies, and recipes to shopping, apps, and everything else under the sun, our network of moms provides all the answers and support a parent could want. GGGMG forums have 100-plus new messages per day, an enormous number for a local parenting group.

Occasionally a post will turn up from a member who has an innovative idea for GGGMG. Or someone who has thoughts on how we can improve a GGGMG event. Or they hope GGGMG can do something differently. Though forum posts can be effective, I'd like to offer additional ways to make changes and share feedback within the organization.

As you may have heard, GGGMG has created an ongoing post-event survey. For every GGGMG event you attend, we'd like to gather your feedback—what worked well or how we can improve. Volunteers put on events for our members, so it's our members' opinions we really want. To that end, we're offering one survey respondent **each month a \$50**

Amazon gift card. Share your thoughts on an event at www.surveymonkey.com/r/GGGMGevent.

GGGMG is an evolving organization. We are always looking to implement new ideas and learn what our members like. To ensure we don't miss your forum post with the great idea, please email it to us. We have an email account for this exact situation: feedback@ggmg.org.

Finally, as you have been reminded (over and over and over again!), GGGMG is a 100 percent volunteer-run organization. Every event, every magazine, every email is put on, created, or answered by a volunteer. If you have a great idea or want to start a new committee, join us! We have volunteer positions to fit any schedule and lifestyle, whether you prefer in-person or online volunteer work. I promise you we are a fun group of



Laurel is a mom to three kids, wife to an amazing husband, and sales rep for a financial software company. When not managing all that (plus volunteering with GGGMG) she enjoys wine, running, reading, and sunshine (assuming the temperature doesn't go over 73).

GGGMG is an evolving organization. We are always looking to implement new ideas and learn what our members like.

moms...and we even have our own forum.

P.S.: We have just launched new partnership programs that we are excited about. Details can be found on www.ggmg.org and on page 33 of this issue. To utilize new member benefits, you'll need to provide proof of membership by showing your BigTent GGGMG homepage on your smartphone or by showing your name and address on a recent copy of GGGMG Magazine.

Laurel Kellam

Volunteer of the Month



Congratulations to **Gail Elise Cornwall**, who earned her place as volunteer of the month by referring the most friends to be GGGMG volunteers! Gail started volunteering with GGGMG in November 2013 and currently serves as both the Mission/Castro Toddler Meetups director and a magazine staff writer. She was formerly a teacher and lawyer and is now a SAHM, dipping her toes into freelance writing. Gail and her husband, Ian, have three children: Vivienne (5), Stuart (3), and Josephine (8 months).

Favorite... Pastime: My words: reading, writing, and swallowing **Book:** Paranormal romance, YA, and nonfiction **Film:** Sandra Bullock romantic comedies **Restaurant:** West of Pecos **Destination:** The Rack, Marshalls, Hawaii **Parenting advice:** Take credit where credit is due

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

Storytimes Outside the Library

By Jessica Bernstein-Wax

Everyone loves storytime at the San Francisco Public Library, but here are some other venues where your child can enjoy a great tale.

Asian Art Museum
200 Larkin St.
www.asianart.org

Enjoy folk tales and explore the museum's current exhibits.
First and third Sundays, 10:30 to 11 a.m.
Ages 3 to 6
Free for children younger than 12, adults free with museum admission (first Sundays free for all visitors)

Bay Area Discovery Museum
557 McReynolds Rd., Sausalito
www.baykidsmuseum.org

Museum staffers handpick books each day for the interactive story time at this beloved institution.
Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.
Ages 6 months to 8 years
Free with museum admission

Books Inc. Laurel Village
3515 California St.
www.booksinc.net/SFLaurel

First Wednesdays pj party story time.
August thru May, 6 p.m.
Ages 3 to 6 Free
Beginning readers storytime.
Thursdays, 3:30 p.m.
Ages 6 to 8 Free
Coming soon: Storytime
Wednesdays, 11 a.m.
Ages 0 to 3 Free

Contemporary Jewish Museum
736 Mission St.
www.thecjm.org

Preschool Super Fun Sundays feature a storytime and art projects.
Sundays, September through April, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Ages 2 to 5, but all ages welcome
Free for children 18 and younger, adults free with museum admission

Diesel, a Bookstore
2419 Larkspur Landing Circle, Larkspur
www.dieselbookstore.com

Local authors read their own books at the Friday evening pajama party.
First Fridays, 6 p.m.
Ages 4 to 8
Thursdays, 10:30 a.m.
Ages 5 and younger
Free

Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture
San Francisco Botanical Garden, Golden Gate Park
www.sfbotanicalgarden.org

Cozy up to the stuffed animals in the children's book nook and tour the garden.
First and third Sunday, 10:30 a.m.
Ages 4 to 8
Free (library admission is free to all; the garden is free to San Francisco residents)

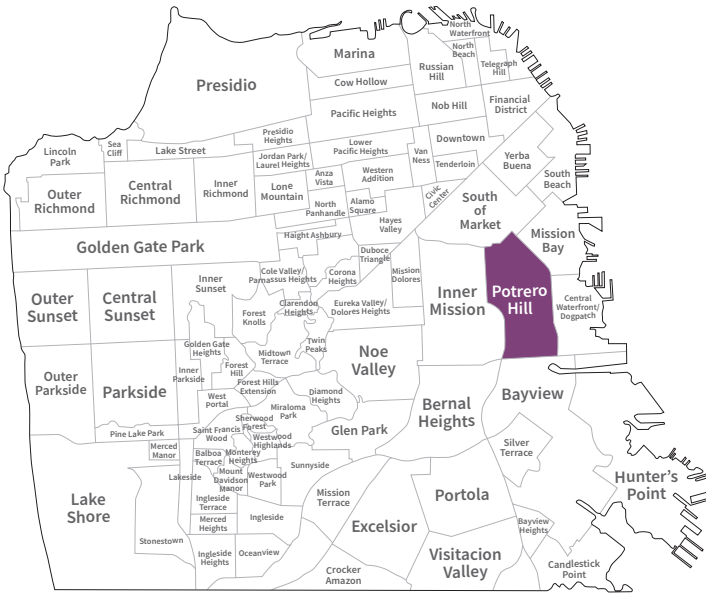
The Reading Bug
785 Laurel St., San Carlos
www.thereadingbug.com

The Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoon storytimes at this Peninsula bookstore include arts and crafts.
Tuesday through Sunday, 11 a.m.
Ages vary by day
Wednesdays, 3 p.m.
Ages 5 and up
Free

Sprout San Francisco
1828 Union St.
www.sproutsanfrancisco.com

This storytime for babies and toddlers features puppets, songs, and dance.
Mondays, 5 to 5:30 p.m.
Ages 2 and younger
Mondays, 4:15 to 4:45 p.m.
Ages 2 to 4
\$10 per family

Jessica Bernstein-Wax is a former newspaper reporter who works as a Web editor for UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital. She grew up in the Richmond District but defected across the park to the Sunset, where she lives with her husband and son.



Lil' Kid, Big City: Potrero Hill

By Anna Gracia

Potrero Hill has some of the best weather in San Francisco, so come soak up the sunshine and wander the hills on a literary adventure.

Start with storytime on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. at the **Potrero Branch** library (1616 20th St.). There is a large children's area with puzzles and magnets for kids who may not be able to sit through an entire book just yet. Check out a stack and take them down the hill to enjoy in the community garden on the corner of **18th and Pennsylvania streets**.

If you're looking to add to your little one's permanent collection, head to **Christopher's Books** (1400 18th St.). This shop has toys on hand to help occupy the kiddos while you browse the stacks. Across the street, the **Post and Parcel** (1459 18th St.) is the perfect place to stock up on beautiful greeting cards.

For lunch, make a stop at **Goat Hill Pizza** (300 Connecticut St.), where ample highchairs and crayons on the table make the locally owned restaurant a neighborhood favorite among families.

Finish your scholarly day at the bottom of the hill at **San Francisco Center for the Book** (375 Rhode Island St.). They offer book art exhibitions and workshops on everything from letterpress to calligraphy to bookbinding. ❖

Despite all the warmth and sunshine in Potrero, Anna spends most of her time indoors, watching movies and writing about them at SnarkyMovieReviews.blogspot.com.

Love Our Bookstores

By Tara Hardesty

The local bookstore is a thing of magic. For both moms and little ones, the bookstore can be a sanctuary, a world of new discovery, or an outing to stimulate the developing brain. In San Francisco, bookstore choices abound, some with children's book clubs and readings, others with comfy spaces to read and explore.

Bird & Beckett
653 Chenery St.
www.birdbeckett.com
A favorite of Glen Park parents, this bookstore has a wide selection of new and used children's books.

Book Passage
1 Ferry Bldg.
www.bookpassage.com
The children's section has an exciting selection of puppets, making it a perfect stop when visiting the Ferry Building.

Books Inc.
Various locations
www.booksinc.net
The Laurel Village location has storytimes and book clubs like the Wild Girls Mother/Daughter book club and Book Bites: Tasty Tales in Twenty for kids age 6 to 8. The Marina location hosts a Baby's 1st Book Club.

Bookshop West Portal
80 West Portal Ave.
www.bookshopwestportal.com
Contains a robust children's and young adults section and very helpful staff.

The Booksmith
1644 Haight St.
www.booksmith.com
This Haight-Ashbury gem has a wonderful children's section with a wide range of titles.

Tara is a freelance writer and marketing professional. She writes about the hairy underbelly of life, urban mommyhood and about living in San Francisco in her blog, TheDailyWrites.com.

Chronicle Books
Various locations
www.chroniclebooks.com
The SOMA location is the largest, and where the children's events are held, but all of their stores are filled with unique books.

City Lights Books
261 Columbus Ave.
www.citylights.com
This classic spot oozes history and has a great selection of children's books.

Folio Books
3957 24th St.
www.foliosf.com
Boasts a full calendar of events, for both children and parents.

Green Apple Books
Inner Richmond, Inner Sunset
www.greenapplebooks.com
Both locations have children's sections and are a great spot to explore and read.



Ask the Expert

Reading 101

By Dianne Craft



What are some common learning blocks a child can have?

Visual Processing Issues

If a child is still consistently reversing letters (big = dig) or whole words (on/no, was/saw) when reading at the age of 7, he may have visual processing issues. These

reversals show that the left-right eye tracking process has not become automatic and that the child has to work too hard. Even with these issues, an older child can frequently read on level, but it is very labored so he may avoid reading for himself because of the level of frustration. In my experience, this problem can generally be taken care of at home, with some easy visual exercises that cross the midline of the body, along with the short-term use of colored reading transparencies and fish oil to feed the retina of the eye.*

Auditory Processing Issues

Children who often need to sound out the same word over and over again while reading tend to be “word guessers” and traditional phonics programs don’t seem to help them. They cannot easily remember the “code” (phonics) for reading and consequently, try to sound out all sight words. Without interventions, this child usually continues to struggle in reading, and often will test below grade level. Children with these issues respond wonderfully to a whole different method of teaching, called “right brain embedding strategies.”

Tell us about the children you work with, and what are some of the tools you teach them?

Struggling Learners

For the past 17 years, I have had a consultation practice in Denver, working with bright, hard-working children and teens who work too hard to learn. I love to use these specialized teaching tools to help make learning easier for each of them. Their eyes light up as they see how easy it can be to learn.

Unblocking Learning Gates

I use a combination of corrective midline exercises called Brain Integration Therapy and Right Brain Teaching Strategies. The specific midline exercises eliminate the reading and writing reversals some of these students experience. These are also very effective in increasing the brain connections that help the child hear sounds in reading and speaking. I have found daily midline exercises and once-a-week Brain Trainings (that anyone can

do) to be an incredible force in removing learning blocks.*

Any advice for parents on how to support and encourage their child’s reading development during the toddler years?

In considering ways that parents can support their very young child’s reading development, it is best to focus on reading as both a physical as well as a cognitive activity.

Immersion in the Medium

Much has been written about immersing toddlers, and even our babies, in a rich reading environment. This can be done by having children’s books all around the house, frequently reading aloud, visiting libraries, and having your child observe her parents read. Modeling is one of the most powerful teaching tool parents possess.

Encourage Brain Development

With the ever burgeoning knowledge of neuroplasticity, we are very aware of the brain-body connection in learning. We know that easy reading requires the seamless transference of information from the left hemisphere to the right hemisphere. Parents can encourage good brain connections between the left and right hemisphere with a few simple activities:

- Specific movements that cross the midline of the brain/body. Make sure your baby crawls. If he is reluctant, or wants to walk right away, then do the crawling motion to stimulate the crossing the midline connections. Parents can do this during the daily diaper changing by touching the baby’s right hand to her left knee, then touching the left hand to her right knee. Do this alternate movement for about one minute several times a day.
- Gymnastics and swimming are both brain-body midline rich, in addition to enhancing the vestibular system for spatial development.
- For young children, the more large motor movements the better. Twirling or using the “sit and spin” toy (for lateral brain hemisphere stimulation), bouncing or trampoline activities (bottom-top brain stimulation), and swinging (for back-front brain integration) are all excellent large motor activities. These activities prepare the brain and vestibular system for the intricate tasks of eye tracking, etc., that are involved in the process of reading. ❖

* More detailed information on these particular subjects can be found on my website

Dianne Craft, MA, CNHP, has a Master’s Degree in Reading and Special Education and is a Certified Natural Health Professional. She has developed many unique teaching techniques, such as Right Brain Teaching Strategies that have opened up a whole new world of learning ability for her students. For more information on children and learning visit: www.diannecraft.org. Questions? Email craft@ecentral.com.

GGMG: Helping Others, Treating Yourself

Community Support

Thank you for making the St. Anthony’s Preschool Clothing and HPP/Help a Mother Out Diaper drives huge successes!

During April, GGMG partnered with the JCC to collect school supplies and preschool clothing for St. Anthony’s Back to School Program (www.stanthonysf.org/freeclothingprogram). St Anthony’s was impressed by the seven racks of clothing that were donated and very thankful.

During May, we continued the GGMG tradition of collecting diapers and wipes for local families. We worked with the Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP) and Help a Mother Out to help get these diapers to local moms and their little ones who may not have access to adequate supplies. The GGMG members who donated diapers, wipes, and/or funds have truly made a difference for these families. They are so appreciative for your generosity and support! More information about these wonderful organizations can be found at www.helpamotherout.org and www.homelessprenatal.org.

It’s not too late to donate to the diaper drive!

- Donate diapers and wipes: tinyurl.com/GGMGdiapers
- Donate funds: www.helpamotherout.org/help/donate/
- Please be sure to put GGMG in the “I want my donation to be dedicated” field.
- Please email drives@ggm.org with any questions.



Contest

Chirp Connecting Families and Nannies LLC

Personalized Consultation to Hire the Right Nanny

Hiring a nanny is not a simple task! However, there are predictable steps you can take to ensure you manage the process successfully and hire the right nanny for your child(ren). One lucky winner will receive a free, in-home consultation that will provide you with all the tools needed to make a successful hiring decision (valued at \$400).

You will learn:

- Demographics of the nanny market
- Salaries and benefits
- Legal issues
- Health/safety/background check requirements
- Contracts
- Performance reviews

Our services include:

- In-home evaluation
- Personalized summary report prioritizing expectations and outlining important steps to a successful hire
- Checklists and worksheets to assist with the hiring process
- Resources and information: testing/training and background checks, legal issues, payroll services, emergency checklists, and contracts



Since 1994, Chirp Connecting Families and Nannies LLC has assisted hundreds of San Franciscofamilies through the process of hiring a nanny that fits. Alyce Desrosiers is the founder and managing director of Chirp. She has written two books on the subject and facilitated numerous workshops at GGMG, various mother’s groups, and parenting organizations in the Bay Area. Chirp Connecting Families and Nannies LLC has worked successfully with many GGMG families over the years with positive reviews.

TO ENTER THE CONTEST, SEND AN EMAIL WITH “CHIRP” IN THE SUBJECT LINE TO CONTEST@GGMG.ORG BY JUNE 30.

Accepting His Path, Mr. Ninjago and All

By Ben Lempert

I don't care if my son doesn't make the NBA, never plays piano at Carnegie Hall, or falls short of the Forbes billionaires list. But if he's not a reader? Now that's a different story.

So much of my life has been accompanied by books. I mark life events as much by what I was reading at the time as by what actually happened. The first time I met my wife: Paul Bowles. My honeymoon: Italo Calvino. My son's birth: poet Ed Roberson.

One of my most visceral memories is of reading Faulkner's *Light in August* on a train zipping through the Spanish countryside, the sheer beauty of the author's language leaving my 22-year-old self as breathless as the darkening scenery outside did. Or, on the same trip, sitting alone by the Seine in Paris, drinking red wine from the bottle, Fitzgerald's *Tender Is the Night* opening my eyes to the terrifying vista of real adulthood.

All of this might explain why I ended up getting a Ph.D. in Literature and Philosophy, and why my job is now teaching literature to college students. When life gets complicated, I remind myself that my job is to read, write, and talk about books.

So when Caleb was born, I swore that he'd grow up to be the reader I was, that books would be the source of refuge, freedom, and mystery they've always been for me.

For the first few years, I read to him constantly. Picture books, chapter books, poems serious and silly, whatever. It didn't matter, as long as he associated literature with safety, and comfort, and fun. Turns out it's not so hard. Just make reading an important component of every day.

Watching him come alive to literature—hearing him talk about a book we've read, seeing him laugh uproariously at a story, planning visits to the library—has been a joy, as exciting to me as Caleb's first trip to the zoo, or his first Giants game, or his first sleepover.

But I've had to learn some things too.

My zeal can, apparently, be too much at times. Caleb likes books, but he's not always so interested in talking about them for hours, or probing them for hidden reservoirs of meaning.

His 6-year-old tastes do not always align with mine. I loved *The Phantom Tollbooth* as a kid. I forced my mother to read Kipling's *Just So Stories* to me so many times that simply mentioning the title to her today induces hours of involuntary twitching.

I brought both books home, anticipating hours of shared joy. What happened? A nighttime reading I considered one of my best performances ever, followed by the ego-shattering, "Actually,

Daddy, tomorrow night can we read something else?"

Kindergarten has also warped his sensibilities. Clearly. His shelves used to be filled with beautiful picture and chapter books. Now, they're crammed with Ninjago comics. Have you ever tried to read a Ninjago comic to your kid? It's like translating an alien language, 90 percent of which consists of variations on the phrases "ninja snakes" and "skeleton sword fire army."

But I've learned. I can slip at least one story book into the library stack and it'll be okay. Ninjago comics look daring and exciting, but at home, they never last more than 10 minutes. Take that, Mr. Ninjago!

He still doesn't like poetry. I've tried. Believe me, I've tried. I've searched out children's books by Nikki Giovanni, Gwendolyn Brooks, even Langston Hughes. No dice. Dr. Seuss is okay, and I

can sometimes sneak three or four Shel Silverstein poems into the routine. But for some unfathomable reason he seems less interested in charting the intricacies of poetic rhythm and rhyme with me. I'm hoping he grows into it.

I also have to remember that sometimes other things are more fun than reading, like playing soccer in the park. Or building with Legos. Or just lying around and hanging out, doing nothing important whatsoever.

One year when my sister and I were kids, my mother recorded us reading our favorite books. I still have those cassette tapes, my 8-year-old voice ringing distant and monotonous as if from the bottom of a well, *Blueberries for Sal* in its nerdy, awkward phase.

I'd love for grown-up Caleb to have his own similar mp3 file one day. But I've come to accept that it can't be me who keeps him interested in reading; at some point he'll have to forge that bond himself.

And if he doesn't become a super reader, well, that'll be okay too. I can live with it. I just want him to be happy.

Now, if he tells me that he doesn't want to be a Warriors fan . . . ♦



Ben Lempert grew up in San Francisco, left for a long time, then came back. He lives in Duboce Triangle with his wife Rose and his son Caleb.

Redeem your GGMG Membership Perks!

GYMBOREE PLAY & MUSIC
gymboreeggmg.weebly.com

From January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2015, Gymboree is offering a trial membership for one weekly class to all GGMG members, including current Gymboree members. Email lssfca@gymboreeclasses.com to schedule.

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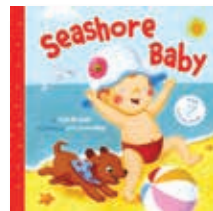
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Books for Kids Travel

By Laure Latham

Travel can mean many different things—a summer visit to the grandparents, attending a family wedding across the country, an airplane ride to distant shores, or even a weekend spent exploring close to home. Each of these books tackles travel from a child's perspective, with the aim to inspire a lifelong love. Jetsetters welcome!



Seashore Baby

Written and illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld and Elise Broach

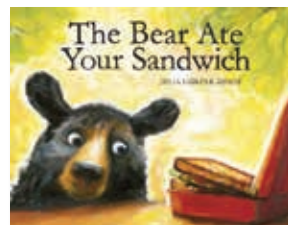
Infants and toddlers will love playing along with baby during a day at the beach with this interactive board book that features lift-the-flaps on each page. Perfect for summer, this book is everything a fun day at the beach should be: warm temperatures, blue sea, stripy balloons, sandcastles, and sneaky crabs. Read it at home or pack it in your

beach bag along with some sand buckets for the real deal. *Ages: 0 to 3 years*

Lately Lily: The Adventures of a Travelling Girl

Illustrated by Micah Player

Where has Lily been lately? Lily is a girl who loves to discover new places and who can tell kids a lot about the essentials for world travel. Camera? Check. Boarding pass? Check. Through an illustrated diary, Lily introduces budding travelers to the places she visits around the world. She rides boats, planes, trains, and even camels! *Ages: 3 to 5 years*



The Bear Ate Your Sandwich

Written and illustrated by Julia Sarcone-Roach

What's a bear to do when lost in a city and longing to return to his forest? Of course, the bear should never have hopped on a truck full of berries, and the bear may be the reason a little girl's sandwich disappeared, but what can a hungry bear do? Kids will love this mischievous bear and adults will appreciate

that the city looks strangely like San Francisco. *Ages: 3 to 6 years*

Angry Birds Explore the World

By National Geographic Kids

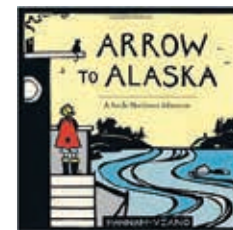
When Angry Birds set out to explore the world, kids can be sure that they're in for a fun ride. Far from a old dusty world atlas, this book offers more than 100 pages of fun facts, games, and maps on each of the continents. Each chapter highlights local facts on animals and must-see places. If you're using this book to plan your future travels, get ready for a very long bucket list! *Ages: 5 to 9 years*



The Copernicus Legacy: The Forbidden Stone

Written by Tony Abbott, illustrated by Bill Perkins

As lovers of the genre know well, mystery novels are the perfect companions to world travel. In this middle-grade series, a teenager receives a coded message that tells him to find 12 relics. Juggling puzzles and riddles, Wade and his family go on a wild chase around the globe to locate hidden parts of a time-traveling astrolabe built in the 16th century by Copernicus. Of course, you too can fly to all the places described in the book—just don't expect the time-travel part! *Ages: 8 to 12 years*



Arrow to Alaska: A Pacific Northwest Adventure

Written and illustrated by Hannah Viano

Six-year-old Arrow lives in Seattle and dreams of seagoing adventures. One day, he receives a yellow letter with scraggly handwriting inviting him to visit his grandfather in Alaska. This book will delight kids who love the outdoors and a bigger-than-life summer adventure. Add to that beautiful woodcut-like illustrations and a recipe for Cast-Iron Skillet Brownies at the end of the book, and you have an invitation to explore the great Pacific Northwest. *Ages: 5 to 8 years*

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From Womb to World

Capturing the Moment

By Juli Fraga

It wasn't long ago when a baby's entry into the world was recorded via camcorder, and photos were taken on a digital camera. With so many advancements in technology today, it's possible to record and photograph your baby's birth and the months that follow with just your smartphone. During pregnancy and beyond, there's plenty to record about this momentous family event. From your baby's entry into the world to her first steps, the first year of life turns any new parent into a novice photographer and filmmaker. Chances are, you'll want to store these photos in a special way that highlights these precious milestones. Below are some of our favorite ways for recording your baby's first year.

Memento Box: Create a snapshot of your baby's world and share it with friends and family by using the app, Memento Box. You can upload videos, photos, dates, details, and other media. Memento Box even gives you prompts if you are looking for some creative inspiration as you write the text to accompany your family's beautiful photos. www.mementobox.co.uk



Peekaboo Moments: If you hope to create an online version of the old-fashioned baby book, Peekaboo moments might be the app for you. This online scrapbook records and displays photos in your baby's life. Like many social media apps, it allows you to invite friends and family to view your photos and includes privacy settings. www.peekaboomoments.com



Pinterest: Many families love Pinterest and the ability to create an adorable pin board recording your baby's first year and the milestones that accompany them. One cute idea for a pin board: at your baby shower or baby blessing, have friends and family bring white onesies with a range of sizes that will fit your baby during the first year of life. Have them decorate twelve onesies, one for each month. You can photograph your baby wearing these onesies at one month, two months, and beyond, and pin them to your pinterest page. www.pinterest.com



Petit Collage Baby Book & Memory Box: If you're an old fashioned gal who still loves paper, this book is for you. Designed by San Francisco-based artist, Lorena Siminiovich, this book has beautifully illustrated pages, photo pages, and a small drawer for storing baby keepsakes. www.petitcollage.com



Shutterfly: If you are like me, you might use your Facebook page as a holding place for all of your family photos. Since many of our relatives and friends don't use Facebook, we upload some of our favorite pictures and create an annual Shutterfly board book. These books make wonderful gifts at the holidays, and are an attractive and cost-efficient way to highlight your family's milestones. While digital apps save paper and space, sometimes you want a physical book of moments to share with friends and family. www.shutterfly.com



Design Child: Design Child makes adorable baby milestone cards with phrases, such as "Today I sat up for the first time" and "Today I took my first step." These beautifully decorated cards are a wonderful visual to accompany your baby's milestone photographs. www.designchild.com.au



Juli Fraga is a psychologist, writer, and mom. Her essays about motherhood & parenting have appeared in The Washington Post, The New York Times Motherlode, and The Huffington Post.

New Arrivals



Sung Y. **Baby Augie Moses**
Tina L. **Baby Jacob Philip**
Elissya B. **Baby Jacob Levi Golob**
Livier Sandoval Canepa **Baby Alexander Seamus**
Rebecca H. **Baby Willa Rae**
Jenise W. **Baby Ryla Brienne**
Cristina Kiernan **Baby Quinn Elliott**
Angie Q. **Baby Brody Thomas**
Jennifer M. **Baby Dylan Kennedy**
Emily S. **Baby Charles Early**

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7/11: Foga Na Roupa Brazilian Carnaval Ensemble
8/1: Hot Buttered Rum String Band

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Being exposed to so many new words gives children larger vocabularies and a richer understanding of the world and their place in it...

Regularly reading aloud together demonstrates that reading is fun and important. If you establish a daily routine of reading aloud, your children will come to enjoy story time and look forward to it every day. They will see reading as fun. Children who have been read to regularly are excited about learning to read.

The first three years of life are critically important for brain development. A long-term study detailed in the 1995 book *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children* showed that the greater the number of words a child heard before the age of three, the higher her IQ and the better she did in school. If you read three books a day for the first five years, your child will have heard 5,475 books by the time she enters kindergarten. Being exposed to so many new words gives children larger vocabularies and a richer understanding of the world and their place in it—a distinct advantage over peers who have not been read to regularly.

In fact, every time you read aloud, you are reinforcing important literacy skills. Listening to the sounds of language and playing with rhymes is a natural form of phonic instruction. Every time you hold a book and turn the pages, your child learns how books work. He begins to understand that there are words printed on the page and these words represent ideas. If you glide your finger along the line of text as you read, your child will eventually learn that we read from left to right. It will be clear that books can tell a story, give information and entertain. Each story you read aloud shows your child that books have a beginning, middle, and end, and that books lead to learning. And if you regularly read to your child and talk about what you read, his reading comprehension grows and develops significantly.

Reading together also introduces general knowledge and understanding. When your child sees familiar objects and situations in the books, she begins to make important connections. Simply making statements

such as, “This reminds me of...” will help your child begin to make connections between the book and her own life. When you read concept books and nonfiction, your child learns more about the world around her. When your child hears folklore, fairy tales, and other stories, she learns about kindness, compassion, humor, and many of the values we hold dear.

The golden rules

The key to reading aloud well is to match your vocal expression with what you are reading. In her bestselling book, *Reading Magic: Why Reading Aloud to Our Children Will Change Their Lives*, Mem Fox says, “You can do at least seven things with your voices to keep children engaged during read-alouds. Six of these seven vocal gymnastics are contrasts: loud and soft, fast and slow, and high and low. And you can p-a-u-s-e. The words on the page will tell you which to choose. You don’t need speech training.”

For example, when reading *Caps For Sale* by Esphyr Slobodkina, you can use your voice to show the mounting frustration of the cap seller as he tries to rescue his caps from the mischievous monkeys. In Michael Rosen’s

We’re Going On A Bear Hunt, speed up your reading pace to match the family’s frantic scramble home after they discover a bear inside the cave. Sandra Boynton books should be read with a fun, jaunty voice focusing on rhyme and rhythm with pauses as needed for giggling, while bedtime stories are generally best read with a calm, soothing voice. When we match our vocal expression to what is happening in the story, we also teach our children how to make sense of what they are reading.

Pre-reading allows you to become familiar with the story before it is shared, giving you time to decide the type of expression that will work with that particular book. It allows you to look at the pictures and be ready to point out new objects or examine details that might go by if your child is at the stage of rapid page-turning. You can think about some talking points and/or important ideas you want to discuss. Pre-reading also gives you a sense of how long it will take to read the book, and if the content is appropriate for your child.

Look for books with rhyme, and read so that the rhyme is obvious to your child. Kids are generally willing to spend a lot of time



Make the Most of Storytime

By Katrina Dirksen and Helen Huber

Photographs by Allison Busch Photography

Most parents know the multiple benefits of reading regularly to their kids, one of which is to begin school ahead of the game. According to the landmark 1985 report *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, reading aloud is “the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading.” This all seems so straightforward until you actually have children. Trying to read a bedtime story with an exhausted toddler or wrestling the iPad away from your preschooler for story time can be much harder than you ever may have imagined before you had children. These challenges can be overcome by engaging your kids in a well-read story.

The benefits

Reading books together is a great way to bond. Cradling a baby on your chest, or an older child on your lap, and cuddling happily to enjoy a book together show your child how much he is loved. Being read to by a loved one is often one of the most comforting memories of childhood.

rhyming and playing with rhyme because it is so much fun. The bonus is that understanding rhyme is an incredibly important skill for beginning readers. Rhyme teaches children about the patterns and structures of language. It gets them in the habit of making predictions when they eventually learn to read. Once a child is familiar with a book such as Janet and Allen Ahlberg's *Each Peach Pear Plum* and has heard it many times, he is frequently able to call out the final words of each page's rhyming couplet.

*"Each peach pear plum
I spy Tom Thumb
Tom Thumb in the cupboard
I spy Mother Hubbard..."*

Consistency is important. If you read books in the same way each time, your child will begin to mimic what she hears. As you read *Goodnight, Goodnight Construction Site* for the hundredth time, leave a pause before completing the final word in each rhyming couplet. This pause allows your child to supply the familiar word that completes the rhyme. After many, many readings, this game may become one of your child's favorite ways of "helping" you read. Because she has heard you read it in the same way so many times, she will most likely say her line with a slow, sleepy voice just like yours. This type of shared reading also holds your child's



attention and makes read-aloud time even more enjoyable.

*"He tucks himself in nice and tight (sigh)
Then cuddles up and says... goodnight."*

Children love the predictability and comfort of hearing their favorite books read time and time again. The repetition of language (the same words, read in the same way each time) helps children memorize their favorite books. As they hear a favorite story, they often begin to think, "I know this part!" They start reading parts of the story from memory and take the first exciting steps towards becoming a reader.

Read aloud to your children for as long as possible. Beginning readers grow and learn when they hear stories read by more able readers. Your child still needs to hear you read because reading and talking about books together lays a foundation for discussing things that matter, such as feelings, friendship, etc. Young children are able to understand more sophisticated stories than

they can read on their own and benefit from hearing and talking about these stories you share together. When you read together, you can share reflections, questions, predictions, and other thoughts that good readers naturally consider while reading.

In short, reading aloud is a great way to bond, enjoy meaningful time with your child, and help prepare him for school and a lifetime of reading. It is never too early or too late to read aloud. Visit GoReaderGo.com for our favorite read-aloud books, cuddle up with a child or two, and share some great books today. ❖

Katrina Dirksen and Helen Huber combined have over forty years teaching experience in the classroom. Their work as a reading specialist and school librarian led them to co-found GoReaderGo.com, a website that offers fresh ideas, book recommendations and expert advice on raising a lifelong reader. When they aren't reading to a variety of small children, they are exploring new ways to share the joy of reading with others. They can be reached at katrina@goreadergo.com or helen@goreadergo.com.





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Greatness in Grimmness:

Fairy Tales and Today's Child

By Gail Cornwall

Photographs by Carmen Dunham Photography

As a lover of books, I thrilled when my first child finally stopped squirming during storytime. Opening *Grimm's Complete Fairy Tales*, I began to read: “I will tell you what, husband,’ [said] the wife; ‘we will take the children...into the forest...and leave them alone; they will never find the way home again, and we shall be quit of them.” *Gah!* I skimmed ahead: “Then Gretel gave her a push... Oh how frightfully she howled! But Gretel ran away, and left the wicked witch to burn miserably.” I snapped the book shut and shoved it under our chair, having no interest in adding the encouragement of separation anxiety or the normalization of violence to our bedtime routine.

Unfortunately, experts say that succumbing to this common protective impulse does our kids a disservice. From a young age, children intuit life’s constant threats of death, abandonment, and maltreatment. When presented in a certain way, traditional fairy tales actually help kids process their fears of physical and emotional tragedy, as well as provide a slew of other developmental benefits.

A brief history of fairy tales

The stories we think of as fairy tales began as folk tales with paranormal elements crafted for an adult audience in the tradition of oral storytelling. Well-known collections produced by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm—as well as the works of Hans Christian Andersen and George MacDonald—are based upon these “fast-paced adventure stories filled with bawdy episodes, violent scenes, and [bathroom] humor,” writes Maria Tatar in *Off with Their Heads!* The goal was to entertain, and there was no need to sugarcoat. In the original “Sleeping Beauty,” for example, the king doesn’t awaken the slumbering princess with a kiss; he rapes her.

In producing their first edition, the Grimms made drastic changes, mixing versions of the tales, filling in plot holes, resolving paradoxes, and eliminating off-color humor.



They also added a Christian sensibility, including moral instruction and happy endings. The resulting tales were still awfully intense. The wicked stepmothers in “Snow White” and “Hansel and Gretel” were biological mothers, Rapunzel got pregnant, and Cinderella’s stepsisters cut off parts of their feet to fit into the glass slipper.

In subsequent editions, the Grimms further “censored...to make the tales more accessible to [middle-class reading audiences] and more

considerate of children as readers and listeners of stories,” explains Jack Zipes by way of introducing *The Original Folk and Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*. They left in the violence, however, and actually added quite a bit of bloodshed to cautionary tales.

Over the last 200 years, countless versions have further modified the original tales. We are left with stories that feature adult themes like love without the sex, subversive plots with abrupt happy endings, and gruesome

violence described in a nonplussed tone.

Why can't our kids get enough of this strange genre?

In almost all versions, the “descriptions are bare; the dialogues, curt; and the action, swift. The storytellers get to the point quickly,” writes Zipes. In *Enchanted Hunters*, Tatar explains that children are drawn in by “wow” moments “that offer up the exquisite, the terrifying, and everything in between.”

Though many tales moralize, quite a few feature excitingly illicit behavior like lying and stealing. Moreover, she tells us, the blood and gore that result when fairy tale characters are disobedient, while “meant to repel children,” can actually prove to be “a source of unending fascination.”

Kids are also attracted to the simplicity of fairy tales. The characters’ problems are ordinary, and the “figures are clearly drawn”; they are “either good or bad, nothing in between,” explains Bruno Bettelheim in his famous Freudian treatise on the subject, *The Uses of Enchantment*. “All characters are typical rather than unique,” he tells us, and as a result they are known only by their roles like “girl,” “stepmother,” or “giant” (when they do have names they tend to be either descriptive, like Cinderella, because she was covered in the grime of cinders, or common, like Gretel was in the Grimms’ Germany).

As a result, the characters are readily relatable. Kids see themselves in exploited Cinderella, who’s forced to do chores, impish Pinocchio, who fails to be good despite multiple attempts, innocent Snow White, who suffers at the whim of a grown-up dealing with her own issues, and impetuous Jack, who is denied the wonderful things that big people have. They see others as well. Archetypes such as kings, queens, and giants stand in for power-wielding adults; wolves, witches, and tricksters represent predators and evil impulses; charming princes, helpful animals, and wise old people personify the forces of good; and fairies, godmothers, and other meddling magical creatures symbolize the vagaries of life outside one’s control.

The transparency and familiarity of fairy tale characters and their woes—in addition to quick plot development, shock value, and repetition—greatly appeal to children.



The benefits of reading fairy tales

Whether we should read the dark tales that so enthrall them is another matter. As it turns out, there are many reasons to do so:

Enable kids to work through fears and conflict

In both literal and symbolic fashion, fairy tales address what Bettelheim calls “the psychological problems of growing up”: issues such as sibling rivalry, transformation, being tested, forbidden fruits, feeling oppressed, powerlessness, and learning to identify those who wish one ill, as well as fears of abandonment, being unloved, and death.

According to Bettelheim, by “project[ing] themselves onto fictional characters, [children] work through real world fears and internal conflict on an imaginary stage.” Under this school of thought, children need “dreadful creatures of the imagination to conserve idealized images of their parents,” Tatar writes. In Bettelheim’s most famous example, the “typical fairy-tale splitting of the mother into a good (usually dead) mother and an evil stepmother” allows kids to feel angry about the small injustices they suffer at the hands of their mothers without threatening that bond. Similarly, he says, “since a giant is an imaginary figure, the child can fantasize...to overpower...him, and still retain real grownup people as protectors.”

When we attempt to hide life’s ugliness, children are left feeling that they alone have destructive impulses. But “these



older tales legitimise the murderous and violent instincts that all children experience, freeing them from...guilt,” British author Tim Lott writes. And when we read them the stories, we tacitly credit the difficulties they face and sanction their stormy internal worlds.

Foster imagination

The fantastical elements of fairy tales—such as supernatural creatures and magical powers—provide children with a framework for their own imaginings. Make-believe play in turn enriches children cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Teach history and promote cultural literacy

Fairy tales offer a springboard for historical discussion (“What is churning, and why is she doing that to the butter?”). Also, since they are part of a shared culture, familiarity with fairy tales means understanding references to things like “the Goldilocks principle” down the line.

Encourage literacy through storytelling

Reading tales aloud leads to compounding literacy growth, since kids who hear stories develop a “sense of story”—a basic understanding of style, setting, narrative voice, character, plot, sequencing, and theme—that makes them more likely to tell stories themselves, and in so doing learn to comprehend, and then relate, more complicated stories. Beginning with “once upon

a time” starts our kids on the path to reading and writing “happily ever after.”

Impart morals

Modern parenting guru Harvey Karp describes “side-door lessons” as a way to “sneak into our children’s minds and plant seeds of kindness and good character without our little ones feeling lectured to.” By relating fantastical struggles with right and wrong, but not explicitly stating morals, fairy tales

as Tatar notes, there is “cultural dissonance generated by telling nineteenth-century stories”—written for children growing up with high mortality rates—to today’s kids. She also highlights the sexism inherent in the originals: “Curiosity and disobedience, along with a variety of other vices, are seen as the besetting sins of both children and women.” Then again, she says, Disneyfication usually only exacerbates the problem; in American versions of “Snow White,” two types of

When presented in a certain way, traditional fairy tales actually help kids process their fears of physical and emotional tragedy, as well as provide a slew of other developmental benefits.

provide one such “gentle, indirect, undemanding, and therefore psychologically more effective way” to convey “the advantages of moral behavior,” writes Bettelheim.

Building problem-solving skills and resilience

In *How Children Succeed*, Paul Tough reports social science data linking character skills like “effort, diligence, and perseverance” with success. We can foster these skills by teaching children that we all face obstacles, and that hard work can make us both smarter and more creative. Fairy tales do just that. Although their specific solutions, like chopping down a beanstalk, rarely apply to our kids’ problems, fairy tales model how the downtrodden and overwhelmed can conquer adversity. Bettelheim tells us that amoral tales—like “‘Puss in Boots,’ who arranges for the hero’s success through trickery”—are particularly good at promoting ingenuity, effort, and tenacity.

How to make the most of fairy tales

These general benefits leave quite a few loose ends. At what age should we start? With which version? Do we allow kids to stew over the story independently or add our own thoughts?

According to Bettelheim, “[t]he simplified and bowdlerized fairy tale loses all value.” Yet,

femininity are contrasted: a power-obsessed, “forbiddingly cold woman” and “a girl who makes her dreams come true through her flirtatious good looks and her effortless ability to keep a house clean.”

Fortunately, “each [generation] creates its own folklore through rereadings as well as retellings,” notes Tatar. “The places where we wince, cower, laugh, comment, whisper, [or] shriek...determine the way the child perceives the story.” We should therefore read the original tales conscientiously, and in tandem with explicit discussion about social mores and violence. Zipes agrees that sanitizing the tales is misguided, even hypocritical. By instead acknowledging the physical and social brutality of the stories, we can teach our children to think critically about their world.

As for age, luckily there are hundreds of well-known tales with varying degrees of complexity and explicitness. In “Choosing Fairy Tales for Different Ages,” Joan Almon provides a handy guide:

- Young threes: Simple nature stories such as “Sweet Porridge”
- Older threes: Sequential, repetitive tales such as “The Turnip”
- Fours and young fives: Stories that are “slightly more complex” but cheerful overall, such as “Three Little Pigs” and “Billy Goats Gruff”

- Fives and sixes: More challenging tales that still “do not weigh too heavily on the soul of the individual” such as “Frog Prince,” “Rumplestiltskin,” and “Hansel and Gretel”
- Older sixes: “Tales in which characters have a personal experience of suffering or sorrow,” such as “Cinderella” and “Rapunzel”

Be brave of heart

In *The Genius of Natural Childhood*, Sally Goddard Blythe writes, “If as parents or society we seek to protect children from all unpleasant events, we do not equip them to deal with the real world.” Having internalized this message, I eschewed helicopter parenting in favor of inculcating independence when exploring the city streets. And yet, I overprotected my kids in the safety of their own bedroom.

Seeking untold emotional and developmental riches, I recently tackled my own fears and stepped into the mean world of fairy tales. After just a few readings, my kindergartener sees herself in “Little Red Riding Hood,” my 3-year-old relates to Jack, and I...well, with a new baby in the house, I deeply identify with all the sleepy characters. ❖

Gail Cornwall is a former public school teacher and recovering lawyer who now works as a stay-at-home mom of three and writes about motherhood. Born in St. Louis and raised in the Bay Area, she’s a serial monogamist of urban living who resided in Berkeley, New York, D.C., Boston, and Seattle before committing to San Francisco. Read more at joidevivi.wordpress.com (maternal musings) and readymommy.wordpress.com (book reviews for moms).



The Art of Storytelling

By Stef Tousignant

Photographs by Lindsay Lovier Photography

Being heard depends on our ability to craft compelling stories. Through storytelling we share our perspectives and search for people who “get us.” We all yearn to express our authentic selves and feel connected.

Connecting through stories helps foster long-lasting social-emotional and cognitive growth in our children. As they learn to craft and share stories, the skills associated with reading and writing emerge and our attention and feedback readies their self esteem for challenges ahead.

As Developmental Psychologist Susan Engel puts it, “Storytelling is perhaps the most powerful way that human beings organize experience. Some have argued that narrative thinking is the optimum form of thinking for learning and expressing what we know about ourselves and about other people.”

Early literacy in action

When we talk about literacy, we focus on reading and writing, but literacy is much more than that; it is the ability to communicate meaning in a way that another person understands. All children want to be seen and heard, and naturally they have so much they are bursting to share. We can help transition their energy and enthusiasm into opportunities to grow their literacy, as well as their creativity and confidence.

Researchers Tracy Masiello and Carol Trivette at The Center for Early Literacy Learning explain that there are three primary influences of literacy: “a child’s interests, instructional practices both structured and informal, and literacy-rich experiences.”

“Instructional practices” translates to things like teaching our babies sign language and labeling animals and making their sounds as we read. “Literacy-rich experiences”

includes singing to them in the bath or pointing out their name on their cup. We offer our children the space to develop interests by noticing what lights them up and offering them the room to make mistakes.

In other words, to aid in future mastery, our children need exposure to early literacy skills in action, the freedom to develop at their own pace (with a little guidance), all boosted by the drive of their passions.

Taking it to the next level

Storytelling provides the opportunity to combine early literacy influences using what children are naturally drawn to—pretend play.

Pretend play looks different at every age. A baby might pretend a spoon is a phone, but as he grows, his pretend play becomes more sophisticated and complex. He can start to model specific behaviors and social interactions. Imaginative play gives children the courage to work through confusing emotions in a safe way and even take on unexpected roles.

At first, simply providing an audience will do. A favorite adult’s presence will change the dynamics of a child’s play. What may have been an inward and personal experience now becomes one that is more reactive and outward facing. Simply sitting next to a toddler while she bangs cups together changes her behavior: she looks to you for facial cues and you clap when she does something clever or new. These are her first experiences “playing” to an audience.

You can engage an older child with open-ended questions. For example, if you notice he is playing with his stuffed tiger and building it a house, establish that you are there to watch and begin to ask him about it: What does the tiger like best about his house? Where does he sleep? You can take it a step further and offer to write down what the tiger



did that day or where the tiger likes to go when it’s not at home. Depending on his age, you could ask for a drawing to add to the written story.

Petra Fraties, an early childhood educator at the Cow Hollow School, describes the documentation of her 3- to 5-year-old

awkward to stop and point out the kitty or the fire truck, or to answer questions on every page of a book? The same is true for storytelling. At first you may feel like you need a plot, setting, and fully developed characters to get started, but the simplest way to tell a story is to tell one from real life.

All children want to be seen and heard, and naturally they have so much they are bursting to share.

students’ stories as rich with early literacy potential: “Anytime we offer the tools and opportunities for writing and drawing to be incorporated into the storytelling experience, it builds skills. We have high expectations of children’s ability to participate in that process, not just when they have mastered their letters.”

Storytelling as a natural art

Storytelling doesn’t have to be a high-pressure experience. Remember when it felt

Stories centered around your child, or even your own childhood memories, are often the stories that children gravitate to because they can connect with them at an emotional level. Tell a story about what happened yesterday at the park or reminisce with her about her last birthday party. You can even use a few photos to start the conversation. These are perfect opportunities to introduce the roles of listener and teller, and to model story structure, tone, and character development.

Stories are just the beginning

Every child is born with a unique voice that should be shared with the world. We have the ability to help him share. Fill his early years with as many opportunities as possible to build future communication skills. Something as simple as what happens at the end of the day at Parks Plus Creation, where each kid tells the group what his biggest challenge and favorite moment had been that day, can help your child build confidence around sharing his experiences.

Fraties finds that engagement leads to more and more masterful child participation. For example, her class uses a story bag filled with a few unrelated objects at their morning meeting. Early in the school year, teachers pull objects from the bag and model storytelling by connecting the objects in some way, but as the year goes on, they transfer that responsibility to the students. She emphasizes, “The more teachers and parents



Incorporate storytelling at home

- **Make a story bag:** Gather four or five unrelated items and place them in a bag. Try modeling the storytelling at first (especially to younger children) and then transition to listening and supporting. Similar off-the-shelf items are Eeboo's Tell me a Story cards and Rory's Story Cubes.
- **Make "playable" story characters** on blocks or popsicle sticks, from stories or family photos, to aid in storytelling.
- **Take a favorite story book and break it down into six main parts** by either photocopying certain pages or drawing them out on cards. Then make a storyboard grid where you reconstruct the book together or—better yet—come up with a new story.
- **Keep a story journal** where kids illustrate their ideas and you caption their work. This is an easy way to incorporate a child's perspective into the broader context of reading and writing. Plus, it provides a moment to sit together and write, similar to the moments you take to sit together and read.
- **Try a simple story told through photos.** Have them gather a few objects and take photos of different scenes they set up. Print them out, paste them into a homemade book, and then ask a few open ended questions about each scene to help with captioning them.
- **Work collaboratively as a family on a book.** Every weekend, add a new page to the story by working together to come up with the next step in the adventure and the illustrations that go along with it. As a bonus, this will be a great way to track your child's writing and drawing progress throughout the year.

demonstrate confidence in a child's competence and their abilities to participate, the more it will instill confidence in them."

There are many skills we can model through storytelling, such as collaboration by our pausing and asking for help, active listening through questioning, and critical thinking by helping delve deeper into a character's backstory or thinking of certain details that may go unsaid.

Our children can also greatly benefit from the variety of activities that storytelling sparks, from making their own books to enacting fantastic plays together as they grow older. These robust experiences, not just reading and writing, bolster the accompanying social-emotional skills that true literacy demands. So share your favorite story today and watch as your child hangs on your every word. ❖

Stef Tousignant is the nanny from AskaNanny.com and the founder of the popular family event, The Great Baby Romp. She lives in the Inner Richmond with her high school sweetheart and two boys (age 3 and 6), who love play air guitar and explore Golden Gate Park.

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BAY MEADOWS

About GGMG Events: Events listed on these pages are either exclusive to GGMG members or are offered to GGMG members at a discount. Generally, registration is required and can be completed by following the REGISTRATION instructions listed under the event details or at www.ggmg.org/events.html (BigTent). Rules and policies vary. GGMG members and their families only.

GGMG volunteers may occasionally take photos during our events for use in this publication or on the GGMG/BigTent website. Please understand these photographs may include images of all attendees (including children).

Vendors who would like to partner with GGMG, please contact the appropriate committee. Email addresses are listed on page 3.

 Indicates events appropriate for infants (0 to 12 months). Many also welcome toddlers and preschoolers (see registration rules for more details).

KIDS ACTIVITIES

Unless otherwise noted, parent participation is required for all Kids Activities events.

 **Mazel Tots, Bagels, and Babies at Congregation Emanu-El**

A weekly playdate to enjoy music, stories, and puppets as we prepare to welcome Shabbat on Fridays and celebrate Havdalah on Mondays.

DATE: Mondays and Fridays in June
TIME: 9:30 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: 2 Lake St.
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Drop in. All ages are welcome.

Active Tots at Recess

If you’ve got a little one who loves to move, this class is for you! Help your little one grow accustomed to teacher-led activities in this high-energy class—parents need not participate! We’ll help your child develop a budding interest in yoga, tumbling, sports, and all around active play. A light snack and cool-down storytime included.

DATE: Monday, June 1
TIME: 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
(class: 11 to 11:45 a.m.; free play: 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.)
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$15/child

REGISTRATION: Ages 18 to 36 months. Register by emailing info@recess-sf.com.

Un Poquito Mas Spanish at seesaw

Spanish storytime, sing along, music, and movement.

DATE: Tuesday, June 2
TIME: 10 to 11 a.m.
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

Le You You Mandarin Music at seesaw

Children will sing songs in Mandarin and enjoy music and movement.

DATE: Tuesday, June 2
TIME: 11 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 600 Octavia St., Suite A
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 6 months to 3 years. Introductory rate. Register at seesawsf.com or email info@seesawsf.com.

 **Baby Boot Camp at Noe Basketball Courts**

Try this innovative stroller fitness program to help regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

DATE: Wednesday, June 3
TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 24th and Douglass streets
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

 **Yoga, Baby + Massage at It’s Yoga Kids**

Enrich your baby’s development with songs, yoga, and infant massage.

DATE: Friday, June 5
TIME: 11 to 11:50 a.m.
PLACE: 569 Ruger St.
COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to pre-crawlers. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com.

 **Intro to Solids and Baby Food Cooking Class at Carmel Blue**

Join in a live and interactive cooking class all about making the best, easiest, and most nutrient-rich foods for your little ones. Ideal for parents of babies 3 to 10 months. Babies are welcome!

DATE: Friday, June 5
TIME: Noon to 1:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$39

REGISTRATION: www.carmelblue.com

 **Playdate at Congregation Sherith Israel**

Enjoy playtime, singing, puppets, bubbles, parachute games, and parent discussion in our large, cozy playroom.

DATE: Monday, June 8
TIME: 10:30 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 2266 California St.
COST: \$3

REGISTRATION: Ages newborn to 4 years.

Crafternoon: Garden Fun at Recess

Join us for a fun-in-the-sun crafternoon! We’ll make bird feeders, paint leaves, and do more gardening activities and art projects down in our garden.

DATE: Tuesday, June 9
TIME: 2 to 4:45 p.m. (free play: 2 to 4 p.m.; class: 4 to 4:45 p.m.)
PLACE: 470 Carolina St.
COST: \$12/child

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 4 years. Register by emailing info@recess-sf.com.

Understanding Your Toddler: Six Week Play-n-Learn Series at Carmel Blue

Learn all about your child’s rapidly developing brain and positive parenting approaches to navigate tantrums, the “No!” stage, and other toddler behaviors.

DATE: Tuesdays, June 9 to July 14
TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$185 for one parent/child

REGISTRATION: Age walkers to 30 months. Register at www.carmelblue.com.

It’s Yoga, Movers at It’s Yoga Kids

Developmentally appropriate yoga movement with song and play for young movers with adult participation.

DATE: Friday, June 12
TIME: 9:30 to 10 a.m. or noon to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: 569 Ruger St.
COST: \$15 cash; \$18 credit card

REGISTRATION: Ages crawlers to 2 years. Introductory rate. Register by emailing info@itsyogakids.com.

 **Music Jiggle Jam at Carmel Blue**

Bring your babies and toddlers and join in the music making fun! There will be plenty of music, movement, and instrument play for children of all ages and their parents/caregivers.

DATE: Friday, June 12
TIME: 4:30 to 5:15 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: GGMG special: \$10 for one parent/one child, \$5 for second parent

REGISTRATION: Registration required, visit www.carmelblue.com.

 **Baby Boot Camp at Crissy Field**

This innovative stroller fitness program helps moms regain or enhance pre-pregnancy fitness levels.

DATE: Wednesday, June 19
TIME: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.
PLACE: 99 Yacht Rd. (meet at the landing to the west of the parking lot)
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Participants must be at least 6 weeks postpartum. Register by emailing kathleen.laipply@babybootcamp.com.

Totshop: Summer Strawberries at Peekadoodle Kidsclub

We will be exploring strawberries by whipping up some strawberry shortcakes and even do some strawberry stamping. It should be a berry, berry sweet morning!

DATE: Wednesday, June 24
TIME: 11:15 a.m. to noon
PLACE: 900 North Point St., Suite F100
COST: FREE

REGISTRATION: Ages 2 to 3 years old. Parent participation required. Space is limited, call 415.440.7335 to reserve your spot.

 **Infant Massage at Carmel Blue**

Join Kari Marble for this great class introducing a deep hands-on bonding experience for parents and babies.

DATE: Sunday, June 28
TIME: 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: Two parents for the price of one (\$65)

REGISTRATION: Ages 4 weeks to pre-crawling. Register at www.carmelblue.com.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Wine Night at The Blues Jean Bar to Benefit Help a Mother Out

Join Community Support and Just for Moms for a fun evening of giving back to our community. At this event, GGMG members will have the opportunity to have a free jean fitting and will receive 20 percent off any purchases. Members are encouraged to bring unused diapers and wipes for the May Diaper Drive to benefit the Homeless Prenatal Program and Help a Mother Out.

DATE: Thursday, June 4
TIME: 7 to 9 p.m.
PLACE: 1827 Union St.
COST: Free

REGISTRATION: RSVP required; check BigTent for registration

Family Volunteer Event – Gardening in the Presidio

Join us for a morning of family fun and volunteering. Teach your little ones about giving back with this family-friendly volunteer event where we will be working in the Presidio. More details to come! Please check BigTent for date, time, and registration.

ED SERIES

Infant Sleep Solutions at Sports Basement Presidio

Sleep expert Lauren Scout, a Certified Postpartum Doula and Lactation Educator Counselor, will help parents understand how to establish good sleep habits and a healthy schedule for their babies and for themselves.

DATE: Tuesday, June 2
TIME: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
PLACE: 610 Old Mason St.
COST: FREE

Meditation for Moms (and Dads) at Carmel Blue

Carmel Blue is proud to host evening meditations as short, guided classes for individuals seeking to reduce stress and anxiety and who want to maintain a level of calm, comfort, and connection to themselves and others.

DATE: Mondays, June 1 and 8
TIME: 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$20/session

RSVP: www.rebootrecharge.com/#!classes/c1t1x

Infant Massage Series at Natural Resources

Massaging your baby contributes tremendously to cultivating love, compassion, and respect through respectful communication and nurturing touch.

DATE: Tuesdays, June 2 through 23
TIME: 1:45 to 3 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: \$150 (Use code NRGGMG10 for 10% discount)

REGISTRATION: *Pre-registration required:* tinyurl.com/Infant-Massage-Series

Meet the Doula Night at Carmel Blue

DATE: Thursday, June 4
TIME: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: FREE

RSVP: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2595

Prenatal Class: Breastfeeding Essentials at Carmel Blue

DATE: Saturday, June 6
TIME: 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
PLACE: 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: \$75 for both parents

RSVP: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2569

LGBTQ Parents Support Circle at Natural Resources

This group is offered for LGBTQ parents and parents-to-be who are awaiting adoption, the birth of their child(ren) through surrogacy, or who are pregnant.

DATE: Monday, June 8
TIME: 6 to 7 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: \$15 (Use code NRGGMG10 for 10% discount). Discount passes available.

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/LGBTQ-Parents-NR

Introducing Solids at Natural Resources

This class will take all of the guesswork out of giving your baby the best nutrition and a healthy relationship with food right from the start.

DATE: Tuesday, June 9
TIME: 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1367 Valencia St.
COST: \$45 (Use code NRGGMG10 for 10% discount)

REGISTRATION: tinyurl.com/Introducing-Solids-NR

New Mommy/Baby Group at Carmel Blue

Join us for this special new moms group for parents of babies 0-3 mos. Share the highs and lows of becoming a new parent. We offer advice and support on common questions of “re-designing” your life (sleep, eat, partnership, and everything in between) with your new baby.

DATE: Wednesday, June 10
TIME: 1 to 2:30 p.m.
PLACE: Carmel Blue, 1418 Grant Ave.
COST: FREE

RSVP: www.carmelblue.com/event-registration/?ee=2963

Introducing the Sibling with Early Childhood Matters at Pacific Primary School

Join Rebecca Walsh, Director of Early Childhood Matters and mother of two, to learn strategies for supporting your child in the transition to a new baby, and laying the foundation for a lifetime of positive sibling relationships. We will also discuss self-care strategies to support both parents in this transition to a bigger family, and activity ideas (other than Elmo!) to keep older sibling engaged while you nurse, swaddle, or maybe even take a shower!

DATE: Tuesday, June 30
TIME: 7 to 8:30 p.m.
PLACE: 1501 Grove St.
COST: \$28 single/\$48 couple

REGISTRATION: www.eventbrite.com/e/introducing-the-sibling-with-early-childhood-matters-tickets-16706893769



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Committee Spotlight: *Magazine*

With Chair Kirsten Pflieger

Describe the personality of your committee.
We are a group of talented, creative women who love to ask hard questions, and then work together to provide answers and share insights in a visually appealing, informative, and user-friendly presentation. We are the largest GGMG volunteer committee, and as such have a very diverse group of women with diverse personalities and opinions. It is also a huge labor of love to get a 40-page magazine out 10 times a year in our free time, and we tend to be perfectionists about our words and images.

Why do you do what you do? What has been an unexpected benefit of being involved with the Magazine Committee?
Having the opportunity to work on a hard-copy product in this digital age is amazing. It is fun being part of our monthly brainstorming sessions and getting to know the other staff members. We are in a unique position of keeping track of the other volunteer committees. Plus, wanting to help GGMG members stay informed and stimulated keeps us going.

Who are your current volunteers?		
Sonya Abrams	Anna Gracia	Molly Parnell
Natasha Babaian	Virginia Green	Laure Latham
Jessica Bernstein-Wax	Juli Fraga	Kate Kirschner
Shaheen Bilgrami	Erin Frank	Lynn Perkins
Allison Busch	Jessica Franklin	Kirsten Pflieger
JoJo Rhee Chevalier	Tara Hardesty	Catherine Symon
Gail Cornwall	Sallie Hess	Lora Tomova
Auburn Daily	Jennifer Hofmann	Stef Tousignant
Emily deGrassi	Lindsay Lovier	Sandy Woo
Carmen Dunham	Laura Kabler	
Vi Dvorak	Debby Oh	



How do you know when you are making a difference?
When we hear from our readers. We love to hear which themes and articles resonated with you, or which ones you disagreed with. Do you have a favorite column or author? Let us know.

What’s next for the Magazine team?
We plan on continuing to produce a high-quality, relevant magazine for our members. We are working hard to plan issues that reflect what the membership is talking about, and to look at the topics from unique angles.

How can interested GGMG members get involved in the Magazine?
Contact us at editor@ggm.org! We are always looking for enthusiastic, creative women, especially those with a knack for copy editing, a flair for photography, or an eye for graphic design.

Membership

The Membership Committee welcomes three new volunteers.

Dawn Gordon is originally from the East Coast but has happily called San Francisco home for the last 20 years. She lives in the Inner Mission with husband Jim, 2-year-old daughter Logan, a dog, and two cats.

Jen Alford is originally from San Diego and graduated from UC Davis with degrees in International Relations and Italian. After graduation, she moved to San Francisco and now spends time with her son, Bennet, who is 21 months old.

Virginia Green grew up in Columbus, Ohio, and moved to San Francisco in 2012. She is a Nutella addict who loves to get out and explore the city with her husband, Alex, and their 1.5-year-old daughter, Eloise.

GGMG’s new Member Engagement team is working hard to increase member satisfaction by helping moms feel more connected via GGMG and maximizing the value of their membership. Interested in being part of the team? Email volunteer@ggm.org today!

Recruiting Committee *New Volunteer Training Session*

After hearing a number of our volunteers ask for more information on how to navigate BigTent, how to learn more about the various groups within GGMG, and how to take advantage of opportunities to meet other volunteers, the Recruiting Committee has created an onboarding lunch designed to capture all of these elements. New volunteers (those who have joined their committees within the past five months) were personally invited to attend this lunch, which was held at Fort Mason at the end of May.

More training sessions will be announced throughout the year to capture future volunteers and those who were unable to attend the spring session. The Recruiting Committee is excited to take on this new endeavor and hopes it will improve the volunteer experience.

Are you experiencing FOMO (fear of missing out)? Email volunteer@ggm.org to learn more about volunteering and how you can give back to GGMG!

Partnerships

GGMG Partnerships Committee manages GGMG’s relationships with the merchants and organizations that provide us our membership perks.

For business owners who would like to work with GGMG, information about our partnership programs, including how to enroll, is now available at www.ggm.org/partnerprograms.html.

GGMG members can find information about current member perks and instructions to redeem on our Member Perks page at www.ggm.org/partnerships.html.

Most GGMG members will be familiar with the Partners of GGMG program. This year, we are working to ensure that all GGMG members receive substantial, ongoing benefits from Partners. For example:

- Peekadoodle and Recess added free play time every week, exclusively for GGMG members.
- JCC will now provide each GGMG member two free fitness passes per year, and more.

In addition, we have just launched two new programs: **Friends of GGMG** and **Neighbors of GGMG**. Friends are companies that provide discounts (or equivalent benefits) that apply equally to all GGMG members. Neighbors are companies that provide limited-term promotions or product samples. A listing of benefits from the Friends program is available on our Member Perks page at www.ggm.org/partnerships.html. Look for promotions from Neighbors of GGMG in the monthly email bulletin, delivered to your inboxes around the 15th of every month.

We are very excited about bringing continuing and new member perks to you! Send us feedback at partnerships@ggm.org.

Member Support *Community Resources*

We can all use extra support from time to time. The Member Support team is here for you and has many resources that we can recommend to support you through a difficult time. Please don’t hesitate to contact us as we would jump at the opportunity to help: member.support@ggm.org

Member Support maintains a support list that includes resources for crisis, abuse, therapy (individual, marriage and child), family illness, fertility, legal consult, PPD, and more. The list can be found under “Community Resources”: www.ggm.org/community.html.

We would like to highlight three community resources that work with moms and families:

Talkline: www.talklineforparents.org, 415.441.KIDS (5437) Offers in-person and 24-hour phone counseling for parents, including childcare, all on a sliding fee scale. They also have classes and respite care.

Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP): www.homelessprenatal.org, 415.546.6756 Not just for the homeless, HPP helps all moms facing poverty or domestic violence. HPP has a huge array of resources for families that are pregnant or with young children.

La Casa de las Madres: www.lacasa.org, 1.877.503.1850 (adult crisis hotline) Provides 24/7 support to families facing domestic violence and offers a huge range of resources, including legal, career training, and prevention education.

Operations

The Operations Committee supports current GGMG volunteers through planning and engagement of the monthly volunteer meetings as well as volunteer appreciation events. In May, Operations put together a GGMG committee chairs appreciation dinner that recognized the amazing effort and dedication this group provides to support GGMG members.



We would like to thank the following vendors for their donations to our committee chairs:



GGMG Spring Social

BAY AREA
DISCOVERY MUSEUM

It was wonderful to see so many of our members and their families and guests enjoy the Spring Social event on May 16! The day would not have been possible without the help of all the GGMG volunteers and committee members who worked tirelessly to pull off a great event! A special thank you to the event sponsors for their generous support—we hope you enjoyed their products and services:

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I ♥ Mom

A Reading Journey

By Shaheen Bilgrami

I come from a family of readers. My dad mostly read newspapers, magazines, and non-fiction, whilst my mom read a wide range of fiction. I used to devour books as a child. I would read instead of doing my homework. I would read with a flashlight under the covers when I was supposed to be sleeping. On our annual vacations to India, my suitcase was mostly filled with the fattest books I could find from the library, all of which I would finish within the first week of the trip!

I started my editorial career in London in my dream job as an Editorial Assistant at Orchard Books, and my last full-time job was as a Senior Editor at Macmillan Children's Books. Early in my career, I heard Wendy Cooling, Children's Book Consultant, talk about an individual's reading path as an adventurous journey in which one moves at different speeds and follows different paths. This image has always remained with me.

A love of books was one of the things that brought my husband and me together which, in turn, brought me to San Francisco. Our first furniture purchases as a couple were bookshelves to house our combined collections! After moving here, I started my freelance writing career. I also volunteered at 826 Valencia, which gave me a chance to share my passion for books with elementary school children. I learned about America, San Francisco, and the Mission through the children and through the books I was reading at the time.

My daughter was born three years later, with a vast, ready-made library of children's books, which continues to grow. The first books I introduced her to were cloth and bath books, quickly followed by classics such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *Each Peach Pear Plum* and several of my own books. Reading my own material to her was, and still is, a very emotional experience.

We established shared reading time as part of the bedtime routine early on, and my daughter started turning pages and mimicking my voice when she was fairly young. When I read familiar books, she would fill in the missing sounds and words well before she was a year old.

In early motherhood, my own reading journey was taking a new path. I was no longer reading for pleasure; I was reading for information and reassurance, mainly on my iPad, whilst nursing.

When she learned to walk, my daughter's interest in books was overtaken with a desire to be perpetually on the move! For a while, even getting her to engage with a bedtime book was a struggle. Although I found this distressing, I let it go. I reassured myself that this was simply a pause in my daughter's own reading journey.

Once the novelty of mobility wore off, she started to engage with books again. We started going to more storytime sessions at our local library, which my daughter loved. She would sit still for pretty much the whole session, completely engaged with the stories being read and the associated activities. I would then select books to check out for her. As time went on, she started showing interest in picking out some of her own books, sometimes selecting old favorites and other times picking out new titles. I was fascinated by what drew her to certain books ("Mama, it's pink!") and what completely put her off others ("No cow!"), and I recalled the amount of absurd analysis and discussion that went into selecting front cover images for picture books!



Starting preschool was overwhelming for my introvert daughter. She loved going, but she also found it exhausting. When volunteering there, early in the fall, I was really shocked to see my book-lover so distracted and disengaged at storytime. I felt concern sweeping over me, but again I remembered the idea of the reading journey. I remembered that she was still enjoying and engaging with books at home and that there were many new things at preschool that she was still trying to understand.

Now, at the age of three and a quarter, my daughter is

I learned about America, San Francisco, and the Mission through the children and through the books I was reading at the time.

fascinated by the written word, in books, in signs, everywhere. She enjoys decoding and identifying letters. She loves to "read" her favorite books out loud, running her fingers under the text as she tells the story, which makes her babysitters, and sometimes me, wonder if she is actually reading (I suspect that she can probably sight-read some common words). I am excited about the next leg of her reading journey that is just about to unfold! My own reading journey has accelerated once again as well, largely through the acquisition of a Kindle, which my daughter refers to as "Mama's book," and partly through having an older, less dependent child. ♦

Shaheen Bilgrami worked in children's publishing in the UK for many years. She is currently a freelance writer and editor and a contributor to blog.littlelane.com. She is also the mom of an energetic preschooler. Contact her through her website, www.shaheenbilgrami.com or her blog, www.girlinfogcity.com.



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