

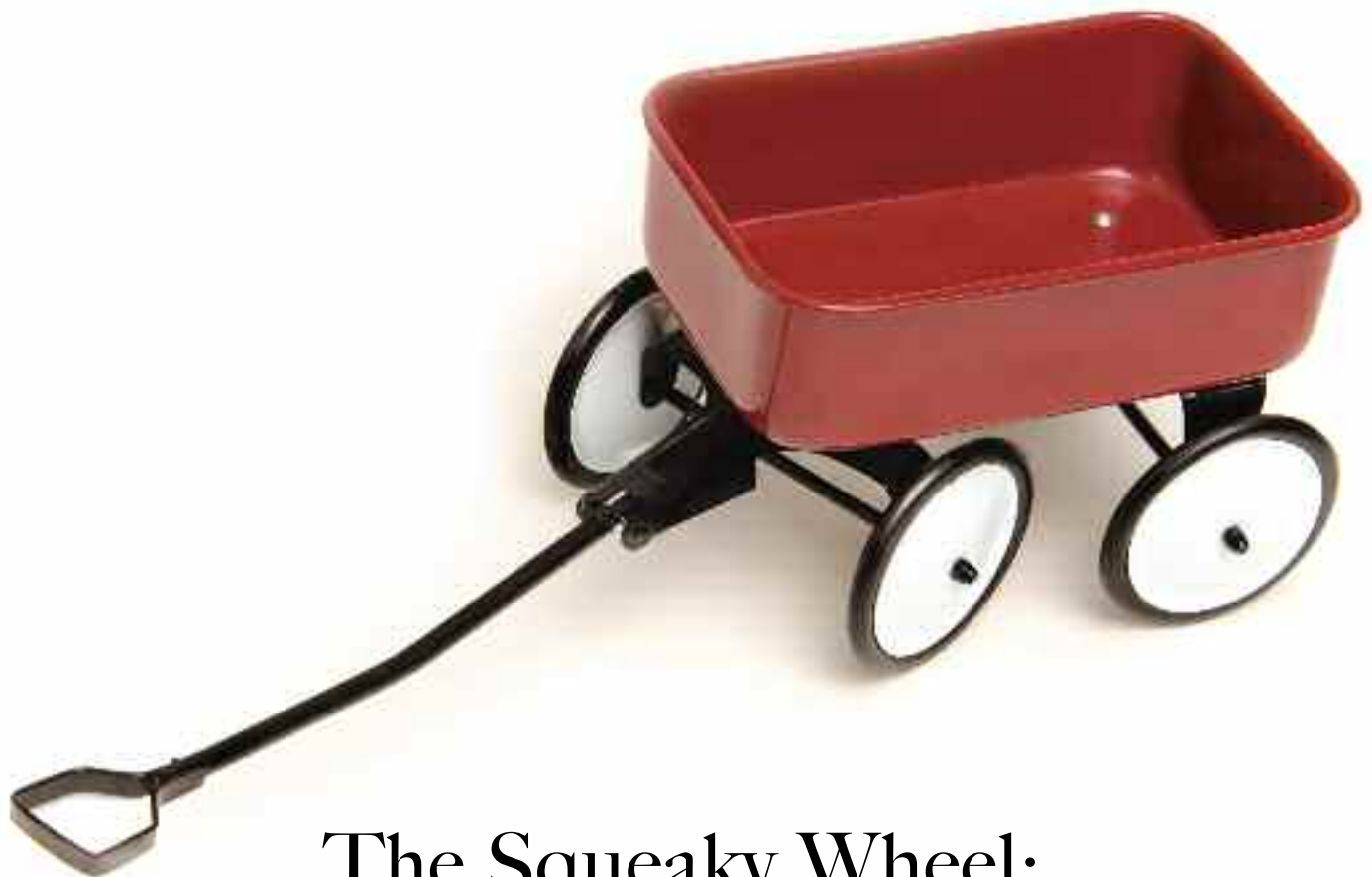
# Parent: Wise

A U S T I N

Vol. VII, Issue V

*Priceless!*

August 2010



## The Squeaky Wheel:

The Challenges of Advocating for Your Kids in School

**AUSTIN'S LARGEST FAMILY CALENDAR!**

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## from the editor:

At long last, this year marks my complete immersion in the public school system. That's because my youngest is starting kindergarten, so I will no longer have one foot calmly rooted in private preschool while the other tries to dance through the intricacies of public school.

Not that our experience with public school has been negative. It's just that there's a lot more going on in the vast public school system than there is in the sweetly small confines of a preschool.

Few of us realize this when we send our kids to kindergarten at the school down the street. We naively assume that all eyes will be focused on the academic, social and emotional development of our beloved offspring; that every teacher will be as passionate as we are about ensuring that our child gets whatever he or she needs to make his academic career a success.

That's not reality.

Public school teachers these days are overwhelmed with the hellish task of making sure every single kid who walks in their doors can perform sufficiently on the high-stakes tests mandated by the state. If they don't, their schools get sanctioned, or even closed.

What this means is that teachers have to teach to the vast middle of the academic spectrum, paying closer attention to children who are below the curve so that they can perform better on the tests that are the lifeblood of school districts. As a result, some kids—notably, those who are gifted or have learning disabilities—can get left behind, despite the so-called No Child Left Behind Act (which now is called the Elementary and Secondary Education Act).

Of course, there are programs and even laws in place that spell out what these kids should receive in school. But in these tight-budget times, schools simply cannot afford to provide every mandated service to every kid who needs it. They won't tell you this, but it's a fact nonetheless — just ask attorneys who advocate for the academic needs of kids with disabilities.

That's where parental advocacy comes in.

It's our job as parents to push schools to provide the services our kids need. Sadly, too many of us just don't know how to do this.

You'd think that, as the editor of a parenting magazine with access to both school and government officials, I'd have some sort of inside knowledge on how to advocate successfully for my own kids. But I don't—something that became painfully obvious when I tried to advocate for my own child. The fact is, each of us is an island when it comes to school advocacy: we're out in the middle of nowhere, without directions or a map, and nobody in sight to help us figure out how to get where we want to go.

There's a reason for this lone-wolf scenario: school districts know that, by making parents feel like they're the only ones asking for special services, parents will probably back down. And all too many do exactly that.

This does not serve our children well.

Our government mandates a free and appropriate education for all children. Yes, *all* children—including those with expensive special needs. It is patently wrong that education officials hire attorneys and lobbyists to fight, rather than provide, this basic right. In researching this month's cover story on school advocacy, I was astounded to learn that the Texas Education Agency spends tens of millions of dollars a year on private attorneys, some of whom are being used right this very minute to prevent parents from weighing in on the proposed revisions to Texas Administrative Code governing special education services.

Let me be very clear: your child has a right to the best education possible, and you have a right to advocate for it.

Doing so begins with your child's teacher. She's your partner in your child's education—but she's also likely overworked, underpaid, and exhausted. So it's up to you to make her understand that you want to assist her in helping your child. You can do this through polite emails and telephone calls, offering to volunteer in the classroom, and face-to-face meetings.

If your teacher cannot, or will not, provide the assistance your child needs, then you need to move up the food chain—beginning with the principal and continuing up as far as you need to go to get what you need for your child. A professional education advocate can help you navigate the way. If your child is in the Austin Independent School District, you also should contact the ombudsman and enlist her help, too—bearing in mind, though, that she's paid by the district and, as she says in this month's cover story, she "cannot wave a magic wand and give people what they want".

And that, I think, is the hardest thing for most of us parents to grasp: that despite all of the policies, laws and advocacy, we may not get what our kids need to be successful in school.

For that very reason, more of us need to be squeaky wheels. We cannot back down when schools tell us we're the "only" ones with a particular problem or concern. There is strength in numbers. And as parents—and taxpayers—we have the numbers; we just haven't massed our strength yet. But if enough of us speak up, we'll be harder to ignore, brush aside, or fight.

Our children deserve no less.

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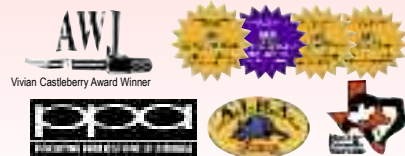
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## In This Issue:

### The Squeaky Wheel:

The Challenges of Advocating  
for your Child in School

If your child needs special services in school, do you know how to go about getting them? In this month's cover story, we explore the tactics and pitfalls of advocating on behalf of your kids in school. Story begins on page 6.

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## Quotes:

"If a school is making promises to a parent, the parent cannot just sit back and wait for something to happen. That's because we have a one-year statute of limitations in Texas... so if you're going to sit around for two or three years waiting for the school to fulfill their promises, you need to be very wary of that situation because the clock is ticking on that statute of limitations.

— Myrna Silver, Special Education Attorney

"There is a need for an ombudsman in all districts. Society has changed to the point where it is no longer a place where parents will just take the word of a teacher. They will question and teachers aren't used to that, for one thing."

— Beverly Reeves, AISD Ombudsman  
(the only school ombudsman in Texas)

"You have to understand that you're not an anomaly. You are not alone."

— Diana Pharr,  
Professional Education Advocate

# News Notes:

## AISD Transfer Deadline is August 10

If you'd like to transfer your child to another school within the Austin Independent School District, you have until August 10 to make the change.

You can obtain a transfer request at the Office of Student Services (1111 West Sixth St.); you may also obtain a high school transfer request form at any AISD high school. Request forms are due to the Office of Student Services no later than 4:45 p.m. on August 10.

Bear in mind that transfer requests are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and that several schools and/or grades are closed to transfers. The closed schools are:

**High Schools** - Akins, Anderson, Austin, Bowie, and McCallum.

**Middle Schools** - Kealing, Murchison, and O. Henry.

**Elementary Schools** - Baranoff, Barrington, Blazier, Bryker Woods (except 4th grade), Casis, Cook, Doss, Harris, Hart, Highland Park, Jordan, Kiker, Langford, Lee, Linder, McBee, Mills, Oak Hill, Overton, Perez, Rodriguez and Wooldridge.

If you have any questions about the transfer process, please call 414-1726 Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:45 a.m. and 4:45 p.m.

## Round Rock Teacher Testifies Before Congress

Canyon Vista Middle School Principal Barbara-Jane Paris had to take a break from her vacation in England this summer—to speak before Congress about cyberbullying.

Ms. Paris joined TV talk show host Dr. Phil McGraw in speaking before the House Subcommittee on Healthy Families and Communities about the rising safety concerns associated with students using the Internet, social networks and other interactive technology. The hearing discussed the role schools, students, parents and communities must play in keeping students safe.

Ms. Paris feels strongly that schools must take the lead in this discussion, since what happens outside of class directly affects what happens inside.

"School leaders must understand that cyberbullying is an aggressive and prevalent threat to the learning environment," she told House members, "and that even if it did not happen at school or on a school computer, it can directly affect the educational process and the school environment and must be taken seriously."

Ms. Paris pointed out that Texas received a grade of C- from BullyPolice USA for its laws protecting kids in cyberspace. Ms. Paris has worked with State Rep. Mark Strama (D-Austin) and the Texas SafeSchools Coalition to improve these laws, but she called on the federal

government also to get involved.

"At the federal level, we need the government to stop passing the buck to the state," she said in a press statement. "As they look at reauthorizing Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), formerly No Child Left Behind, we want to see money put back in the Safe Schools pot to allow schools to develop effective protocols to manage this issue."

Ms. Paris sits on the Board of Directors for the National Association Secondary School Principals, which flew her from England to Washington, D.C. for the day so that she could testify before the subcommittee on the group's behalf.

If you would like to read Ms. Paris' entire statement, please visit [ParentWiseAustin.com](http://ParentWiseAustin.com).

## Highland Park Elementary Teacher Wins National Honor

Sally Hunter's hard work with kids has drawn national attention: the National Council for the Social Studies named her its Outstanding Elementary Social Studies Teacher of the Year!

The award comes with a check for \$2,500 and a trip to Denver, Colo. in November for an awards banquet.

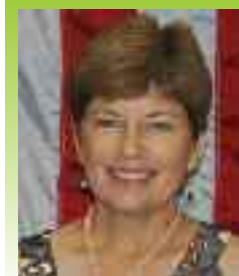
The NCSS Teacher of the Year award recognizes exceptional classroom social studies teachers in grades K-12. Both AISD and Ms. Hunter consider the award a major honor.

"I'm happy and excited to be recognized, but I can't take full credit: I have been fortunate to have a family who emphasized the importance of connecting with the past, and so many mentors and colleagues who have shared their expertise," Ms. Hunter tells *ParentWise*. "My hope is that all stake holders in public education would understand the importance of immersing students in activities that help them connect with the past, participate in the present, and plan for the future."

Founded in 1921, National Council for the Social Studies has members from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 69 foreign countries.

## Help Provide School Supplies to Needy Kids!

The Round Rock Partners in Education Foundation is looking for some enthusiastic kids and their parents to help purchase, organize and



Highland Park Elementary School social studies teacher Sally Hunter is the National Council for the Social Studies teacher of the year.

Photo courtesy:  
Sally Hunter



Aubrey Kintzle and teacher Stephanie Guilbeaux collected teddy bears for abused and neglected kids at The Children's Center of Austin's Teddy Bear Picnic.

*Photo courtesy: The Children's Center of Austin*

distribute school supplies to needy kids.

Some 12,000 students in the Round Rock independent school district are eligible for free school supplies. Last year, the Foundation distributed supplies to more than 5,400 kids; this year, it would like to increase that to 7,000 kids.

To do that, the Foundation is calling on folks to participate in the "Support-A-Student-Program." A \$10 donation to the program will provide one child with school supplies. For those who are able, the Foundation also offers an opportunity to sponsor an entire campus in need. To donate online via PayPal, log on to [www.roundrockisd.org/educationfoundation/donate](http://www.roundrockisd.org/educationfoundation/donate).

The group also needs people to help out during its annual school supply drive, held Aug. 12-14 at Stony Point High School. This is when school supplies will be given to kids who need them. To sign up to volunteer, go to <http://schools.roundrockisd.org/educationfoundation/schoolsupplies/volunteer2010.asp>.

### New Grant Aims to Reach Kids With Poor Vision

One quarter of kids in kindergarten through sixth grades have vision problems that are severe enough to impede their learning, according to the American Public Health Association. Problem is, parents often don't know their kids aren't seeing properly.

To commemorate National Children's Vision and Learning Month, The Optometry Center for Vision Therapy is offering a Vision and Learning Grant. The grant, which is valued at \$60,000, will provide free vision therapy evaluations and treatment to 10 needy students.

For more information or to apply for the grant, go to [www.ovct.info](http://www.ovct.info).

The Vision Council of America estimates that 80% of children identified as having a learning disability actually have an undiagnosed vision problem. For this reason, optometrists urge parents to have their children's eyes tested regularly. Further screening by a doctor skilled in vision therapy is warranted if a child has a learning disability. For more information about how vision therapy can help children overcome learning difficulties, or to find a doctor near you, log on to [www.covd.org](http://www.covd.org).

### Preschoolers Collect Teddy Bears for Abused and Neglected Children

Everyone knows a teddy bear can be a kid's best friend. But for children who have been removed from their homes as a result of abuse or neglect, it also can offer security during a scary time.

So in June, the kids at The Children's Center of Austin held a teddy bear picnic to collect stuffed toys for little ones at The Settlement Home for Children. The picnic, held concurrently at three different parks, resulted in the donation of 78 teddy bears to the local nonprofit.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for the children to experience charitable giving firsthand," said Julie Keen, the regional director of The Children's Center of Austin, in a press statement. "We are so proud to be able to donate these teddy bears to The Settlement Home for Children and we look forward to making this an annual community event."

In exchange for their donations, the preschoolers received muffins and juice and got to listen to some live music.

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By Samantha McDermott

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# The Squeaky Wheel:

by Kim Pleticha

## The Challenges of Advocating for your Child in School

When Susan and her husband saw their son's first report card, they were shocked: a string of Bs and Cs littered the page. Perhaps this wouldn't have been remarkable if he'd been taking advanced placement calculus, but their son was in first grade. Granted, he did have an auditory processing disability, but he'd always enjoyed school and kept up with his peers. At the first parent-teacher conference of the year, the two asked the teacher why their son seemed to be struggling.

"She said 'You should just be happy that he's doing as well as he is' and we said, 'hey we have a smart kid here,'" Susan recalls. "[The teacher] just kind of laughed. I didn't know it at the time, but she thought I was poor and deluded."

That's because, as Susan later discovered, her son had been administered a verbal IQ test by the school, which pegged him as having below-average intelligence. Not only had Susan and her husband not approved the test, its findings were suspect: a child with an auditory processing disorder cannot be given an oral exam—especially one in which the questions may be asked only once—because his disability will negatively skew the results.

Both Susan and her husband protested the test results, chiefly because they were being used to determine their son's academic potential.

"I went ballistic; I don't usually lose my temper, but I did that day," Susan admits. "We knew our child was not retarded, and we were determined that he not be labeled as such and parked on a shelf."

It was her first serious step into advocacy, and she charged in with a vengeance.

Susan, like all of the parents interviewed for this article, asked that her real name not be used. Although her request is, on the one hand, designed to protect her child's identity, the over-arching reason is that schools don't necessarily take kindly to parents who push them too hard.

"When teachers and schools think about parental involvement, they're usually thinking about the support parents give their children at home," says Dr. Chrys Doherty, a senior research scientist with the National Center for Educational Achievement in Austin and the author of several books, including *Asking the Right Questions About Schools: A Parent's Guide*. "Schools often are not expecting parents to say 'my child needs more than what you're giving.'"

### HIGH EXPECTATIONS

Nearly all parents approach their child's educational experience with high hopes and perhaps naïve expectations of what a public school can, and will, do to help their child reach his or her academic potential. Few peruse the Texas education code before sending their children to school, and even those who do would be hard-pressed to decipher the legalese that governs their child's rights. Instead, most assume schools will do their level best to educate all children, and provide the necessary services to ensure academic achievement.

For parents whose children fall in the middle of the academic spectrum, this assumption holds true. But for those whose kids require special educational services—be they remedial or accelerated—they quickly learn that schools aren't always forthcoming in the offering.

This was a surprising revelation to Lisa, whose son has Asperger's syndrome, an autism spectrum disorder. When her son began kindergarten at an

Austin school, both the principal and the special education liaison assured her that her son's needs would be met. Yet several months into the school year, her son continued to experience extreme distress in the classroom. Lisa spent more and more time at the school, meeting with the teacher, the special education liaison, and the principal to figure out some way to improve her son's educational experience. Frustrated, she began researching schools that might be a better fit. When she learned that a school in the Plano, Texas school district offered advanced services for children like her son, she and her husband moved there. At first, the school seemed to work. But as her son grew and required additional services, the school found reasons not to provide them.

"I continued to advocate for him whilst being super PTA mom and volunteer helper," she says. "I got along with the school staff very well, but I had to continue to push for services and for them to follow his Individual Education Plan."

The more she advocated, the more the district made her feel like she was the only parent unhappy with its educational offerings, she says. This type of alienation is not uncommon, say those who work with parents to obtain services for their children: providing specialized educational services costs a lot of money—often more than the district is willing to spend, despite both federal and state laws that mandate a free and appropriate education for all children—so schools sometimes try to find ways around doing it.

"Parents don't alienate the school; they're already alienated," says Diana Pharr, an educational advocate who works with parents in requesting services for their children. "If you don't have any issues with the school it's easy to believe that the system is there for the children. But if you have a problem,

*"The Squeaky Wheel"* continues on page 8...



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## How To Talk To Your Child's Teacher

by Sharon Nolfi, M.A.

A meeting between you and your child's teacher can be a powerful tool for helping your child succeed in school. Whether scheduled by the school, requested by you, or suggested by the teacher, such a meeting gives you a platform to learn about your child and to assert her needs. Remember: children learn best when home and school are in agreement on expectations and goals.

Follow these nine guidelines for more productive (and even enjoyable) parent-teacher conferences:

**Have a Goal in Mind.** Ask yourself ahead of time what a successful outcome for you and your child would be, then plan and work toward that goal.

**Come Prepared.** Write down your questions ahead of time. Take samples of your child's work that demonstrate problem areas and/or strengths. Keep track of problem behaviors at home that may be repeating themselves in the classroom.

**Listen! Then Respond.** Let the teacher speak first, and listen carefully. Take notes on points for which you need clarification or with which you disagree. Respond to the teacher's concerns, then introduce topics you want to cover.

**Ask For Specifics.** What is the teacher's concern? If it is a behavioral problem, at what times and how frequently is it occurring? Ask what an acceptable behavior would look like. If it is an academic concern, ask to see examples of your child's in-class work.

**Request Special Services.** Many services are available for children with special needs. Ask for an evaluation if you suspect your child has a learning disability.

**Be Firm, but Don't Threaten.** You have a right to assert your point of view, but do so with respect and courtesy. Most teachers care about your child's success. Politely ask to bring the principal into the discussion if you want, but don't raise your voice or threaten to have the teacher fired. Being nasty will only distract from your point of view and make it harder to work with the school in the long run.

**Avoid Discussion of Other Children.** Teachers have legal and ethical reasons why they can't discuss other children. Information about your child should be kept confidential as well. Respect these practices for everyone's benefit.

**Be Willing to Follow-Up.** Ask what you can do at home to supplement what is going on in the classroom, and then do it.

**Ask for More Time if Needed.** You are entitled to a full discussion and understanding of your child's progress at school. If the teacher can't continue right then, set up another appointment at a convenient time. (It may be wise to take a professional advocate with you to the next meeting if you are requesting special services for your child.)

*Sharon Nolfi is a school psychologist and mother of grown children whose writing has appeared in publications across North America.*

## "The Squeaky Wheel"

continued from page 6

you quickly discover that the system is set up for the administrators."

### KNOW THE LAW

That's why it's important for parents to know what the law actually provides for when it comes to special services in public education.

The Austin Independent School District's website has a searchable database of all Texas education policies (<http://www.tasb.org/policy/pol/private/227901/>): simply type in a keyword or two and the system disgorges every match found in both the district's and the state's educational codes. Searching the system should be the first stop for parents who are wondering what, exactly, the district or the state is required to do for their child.

The federal government further codifies special education services in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The IDEA website ([idea.ed.gov](http://idea.ed.gov)) provides a wealth of information about what the government expects from states and local school districts when it comes to educating children with special needs that stem from specific disabilities. Once parents are familiar with IDEA, their next stop should be [WrightsLaw.com](http://WrightsLaw.com), which contains a plethora of real-world legal advice for parents navigating IDEA.



In reading through these websites, it's easy for parents to become excited about the array of opportunities available to, and even mandated for, their children—in theory, that is. Because in practice, many school districts do everything they can to skirt the law.

"I can tell you from personal experience that school districts outright lie to parents about what their children are entitled to," says Myrna Silver, one of 12 attorneys in Texas who specializes in special education law. "The TEA [Texas Education Agency] contracts with law firms to train teachers and administrators as to what the law is and basically to train them what they can probably get away with."

If that sounds outrageous, consider this: a Freedom of Information request filed by educational advocate Diana Pharr revealed that the TEA spends some \$60 million in private attorneys' fees per year. Some of that money now is being used to pay attorneys to meet with districts throughout the state to discuss the proposed changes to Chapter 19 of the Texas Administrative Code, which governs special educational services; this chap-

## Meet Jessica

Jessica is described as a very loving and helpful child who has a lot of potential. She is creative, with a great imagination. She is also very friendly, child-like and eager to please. Jessica also enjoys reading. Jessica is involved in sports at school and loves animals, recently raising a rabbit through Future Farmers of America. Jessica would like a family that lives in the country and prefers to be an only child. Jessica needs to have a family to love her unconditionally; make her feel secure and encourage her and help her become more self-confident.

## Everyone needs someone.

For information on Jessica and other amazing children looking for a forever family, contact the Adoption Coalition of Texas at 512-687-3208.



Photo Courtesy: The Adoption Coalition of Texas



ter is up for reauthorization in 2011. The district meetings discussing the reauthorization are closed to parents. Recently, Ms. Silver and the 11 other special education attorneys in Texas filed a motion to open those meetings to the public. The motion was denied—something that didn't surprise Ms. Silver, who says the system is set up to make it difficult for parents to prevail when advocating for their children.

"School districts have lobbyists running around the Texas Education Agency and parents don't," she says. "That's the simple truth."

### ADVOCACY 101

This doesn't mean parents should be hesitant about advocating for their child's needs. In fact, parents should demonstrate to the school that they are involved in their child's education and are willing to work with the school to help the child do as well as possible.

Approaching the teacher with a concern can be tricky, though. Too many parents make the mistake of assuming any problem their child has in school is directly related to the competence of the teacher. This results in parents putting the teacher on the defense—not a good way to establish mutual accord for solving a problem.

Professional education advocates recommend that parents meet with their child's teacher early in the year if they have a concern; waiting until the first parent-teacher conference is too late. During the meeting, parents should be clear that they want to solve the problem in collaboration with the teacher.

This is precisely what Natasha did when her gifted daughter began kindergarten in Cedar Park. She knew that her daughter was too advanced for kindergarten, so she met with the teacher the first week of school to discuss her daughter's abilities, making it clear that she not only wanted but respected the teacher's opinion. To demonstrate her willingness to work with the school, Natasha volunteered in the classroom as much as possible, making herself available whenever the teacher needed her. Within two months, the teacher recommended that Natasha's daughter be moved to the first grade; the girl now is happily involved in the school's gifted and talented program. Natasha admits that she "played nice" to get the school to move her daughter into a more appropriate educational setting, but she recognized that being overly aggressive would simply alienate both the teacher and the principal and not deliver the desired results.

"I wanted her teacher and the school to know that I was also an involved partner in my child's education," she says. "I understood that they were the experts, but I wanted them to understand that I was the one who would be

shepherding my child's education, far beyond elementary school."

Clearly, not all parents have the ability to spend hours at the school volunteering in an effort to demonstrate their commitment to their child's education. That's OK: email and telephone conversations with the teacher demonstrate the same thing—as long as they're not overdone. That's the second mistake many parents make: inundating a teacher with requests for updates about their child and not being respectful of the teacher's time. Linda, who has taught second grade for nearly 30 years, says the number of parents who want daily updates about their children has increased markedly in recent years. Last year, one parent walked her child to school every morning and buttonholed Linda into a conversation about the child's performance. The morning "meetings" angered Linda because they distracted her from her primary responsibility, which was greeting all of the children and settling them into the classroom to begin the day.

"It's not that I don't like talking with parents—I do," says Linda, who asked that her real name not be used so that she wouldn't face reprisal at work. "It's just that I have 20-plus other children in the class who need my attention in the morning; I don't have time to chat with parents at that time."

Most teachers send out an information sheet at the beginning of the year that details the hours they're available to speak with parents and the best means of communicating with them. For purposes of advocacy, email is better than telephone calls because it provides you with a written history of what you've discussed with the teacher. Even if you speak with the teacher via telephone or meet with her in person, always follow-up with an email thanking her for her time and reiterating the substance of the conversation and what action you have agreed upon.

Above all, try to engage the teacher as an ally, not an adversary: successful advocacy at this level can mitigate the need for further action.

"The challenge that the parent faces is making clear they are not sitting in judgment of the teacher's performance," says Dr. Dougherty, "but [instead] simply trying to work in partnership with the teacher to solve a puzzle."

### BE PREPARED— AND SEEK PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE

Solving that puzzle is a lot easier if parents have concrete information they can reference to demonstrate their child's abilities or special needs. That's where independent testing comes into play.

*"The Squeaky Wheel" continues on the next page...*



Most school districts offer a battery of tests to help determine children’s academic abilities or special needs. However, given the cost of providing special services, it’s not always in a school’s best interest to identify every single child who may need gifted and talented differentiation or special education services.

For this reason, it really is wise for parents to arrange for independent testing if they suspect their child may require special services. Not all districts will accept independent tests—indeed, most accept only those tests administered by district professionals—but the independent tests give parents an idea of what kinds of services they should request for their child.

Once parents know what kinds of services would benefit their child, and what the law says the school should provide, they’re in a better position to advocate.

Still, even the most prepared and committed parent-advocates can strike out. That’s why it’s a good idea to enlist the help of a professional education advocate the moment you realize your child may require special services.

Professional education advocates may be attorneys, but most are simply parents who have advocated on behalf of their own children and have learned both the ins-and-outs of education law and how to work with school districts. Education advocates attend all school meetings with the parents and take detailed notes so that they can advise parents on the best steps to take to achieve their goals. When hiring a professional education advocate who is not a lawyer, parents should ensure that the person has a strong relationship with a licensed attorney. This is important should the need arise for legal advice or litigation.

For parents whose children attend a school in the Austin Independent School District, another alternative is to call the district’s ombudsman, Beverly Reeves. Austin is the only district in the state, and one of just a few in the country, that employs a professional ombudsman to work as a sort of mediator between parents and the district. Ms. Reeves’ sole job is to help parents navigate the maze of education policies and procedures so that parents are satisfied with the services their child is receiving. Although Ms. Reeves estimates that 85% of parents who work with her are satisfied with

the outcome, she is clear that she cannot solve all problems.

“I cannot wave a magic wand and give people what they want,” she cautions. “[But] once I explain the realities of what can and cannot be done, there is a better understanding [on the part of parents].”

**DON’T GIVE UP—BUT BE REALISTIC**

One thing many parents don’t understand is that the clock is ticking when it comes to advocating for their kids.

“I’ve read that one year of having a sub-par teacher can take a child three years to get over,” says Jeff, a bilingual education teacher in the Georgetown Independent School District who requested that his name not be used because of district policy governing speaking with the media. Given the effect a poor classroom environment can have on children, he urges parents to take action early rather than late.

This advice is even more important for parents of children with disabilities because Texas special education law has a one-year statute of limitations. What this means is, if your child’s school promises you something—such as a paraprofessional or a specialized education program—but never fulfills that promise, you have only one year to address the issue at a due process hearing (a binding legal proceeding designed to resolve special education disputes).

“That one year statute of limitations is a killer and the school districts know it so they drag their feet,” says Ms. Silver.

The longer they drag their feet, the less likely the child is to receive the services he needs and to which he is entitled—and the more likely he is to slip further behind and develop other problems.

That is precisely what Lisa, the mother whose son has Asperberg’s syndrome, learned. After spending years trying to persuade the Plano school district to provide services to improve her son’s school experience—including attending meetings and seminars, hiring professional advocates, and even presenting the district with turnkey solutions recommended by experts in educating children with Asperberg’s syndrome—her son began harming himself at school and threatening suicide. Alarmed, Lisa removed him from school and began homeschooling. She says the move originally felt like defeat, but she now realizes it was the best thing for him. Still, she is angry that her child’s legally mandated right to a free and appropriate education was foiled: although the law provides for private education if a public school cannot meet a child’s needs, getting a district to pay for private school—even if the district admits it cannot educate the child—is extremely difficult.

And therein lies another key to successful advocating: being realistic about whether your child is well served by his school and having a back-up plan if he isn’t. If a school cannot, or will not, provide a specific service for your child, it may not be in your child’s best interest to launch a full-scale battle to demand the service—even if the law provides for it.

Susan didn’t know this when she “went ballistic” about the IQ test the school had administered to her son. Lucky for her, though, the special education liaison was in the room and agreed that the district’s handling of the case was flawed.

“In the end, once we had the explosion, we had another meeting,” she says. “I really didn’t want to leave everyone angry, but I was because my son had lost valuable time. Still, I wanted to make sure that we remedied the situation.”

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## Education Advocacy Resources on the Web

### Counsel of Parent Attorneys and Advocates

[www.copaa.org](http://www.copaa.org)

This website brings together parents, professional education advocates, and attorneys who practice special education law. It's a good place to look for reputable education advocates.

### Hogies Gifted

[www.hogiesgifted.org/advocacy.htm](http://www.hogiesgifted.org/advocacy.htm)

Aimed at parents of gifted children, this site features a stunning array of information, from advocacy resources to education options.

### Individuals with Disabilities Act

[www.IDEA.gov](http://www.IDEA.gov)

This website provides a plethora of information about federal education mandates for special needs children.

### Keep Eanes Informed

[www.KeepEanesInformed.com/ada\\_advocacy.htm](http://www.KeepEanesInformed.com/ada_advocacy.htm)

Education advocate Diana Pharr runs this site, which keeps close tabs on the Eanes Independent School District, including a section on advocating for gifted kids and those with disabilities.

### The Davidson Institute for Talent Development

[www.DavidsonGifted.org](http://www.DavidsonGifted.org)

"How to Advocate for Your Gifted Child" article. The Davidson Institute supports profoundly gifted children and their parents. However, all parents of academically advanced children would do well to read the organization's excellent tips on how to advocate for academic enrichment.

### WrightsLaw

[www.WrightsLaw](http://www.WrightsLaw)

Pete and Pam Wright, adjunct professors at the College of William and Mary Law School, run this detailed site, which features in depth explorations of special education law as well as blogs, newsletters, seminars and much more.

That remedy included a new series of tests and a new Individual Education Plan for her son, one that addressed the specific concerns Susan and her husband had about their son's academic achievement. The plan has to be revisited each year, because her son's needs change, but so far so good.

"It's never solved long term; we still have to be in there advocating," she says. "We always have to say, 'how can we make this year a positive experience for our child?'"

And that really is the bottom line: children have a right to a safe, academically challenging and positive experience in school—and parents have a right to ensure that their children receive it. That's where advocating comes in, and parents shouldn't be afraid or ashamed to do it.

"Education is a huge part of our children's lives," says Ms. Pharr. "If they don't have a good experience and they're not well served in their school district, then it permeates the rest of their lives."

*Kim Pleticha is the editor of Parent:Wise magazine.*



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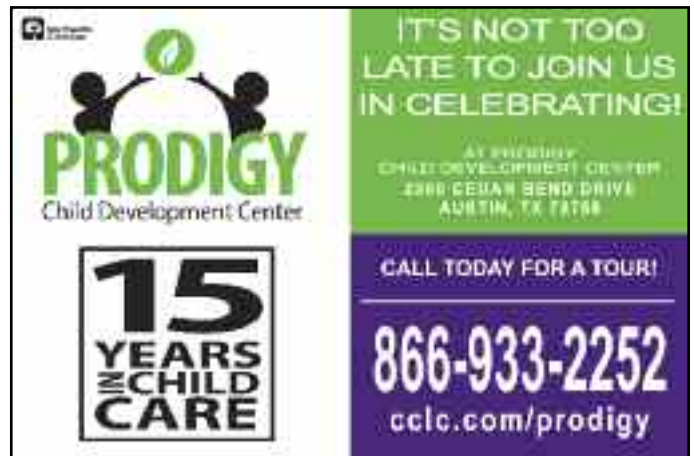
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# Recommended:

## Off Like the Wind!: The First Ride of the Pony Express

by Michael P. Spradlin

The untamed West holds a great fascination for many children and adults and few icons of the era have the cache of the Pony Express. A single brave rider heads out from St. Joseph, Missouri on a fast horse on April 3, 1860, while a single rider leaves Sacramento at the same time. Thus begins a brief but glorious time in American history. Readers of this non-fiction picture book, targeted for younger elementary grades, will discover that the Pony Express marked the first time mail could be delivered by hand from the East to the West and that it cost \$5 to send a letter (\$110 in today's dollars). The value of the Pony Express was that the mail could make it from Missouri to California in just eleven days instead of several months. While the story is short—the Pony Express lasted only 18 months, ending when the transcontinental telegraph line was completed in October 1861—it demonstrates the “can do” spirit of American ingenuity. This beautiful book, illustrated by Houstonian Layne Johnson, recounts the day-by-day experiences of the first riders who faced bad weather, hostile Indians, skittish animals, and loneliness and fatigue to keep the mail moving. This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Pony Express.



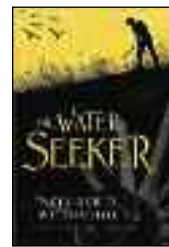
monologue that is almost poetic in style, a young boy, named Clemente by his self-described “greatest fan” father, shares bits about the life, fame, and athleticism of the Puerto Rican player. What sets this slightly fictionalized biography apart from others is the magnificent illustrations by award-winning illustrator Bryan Collier. The watercolor and collage drawings are kaleidoscopic, frequently showing motion and emotion that bring out the energy and enthusiasm of a life cut short by tragedy. The text is brief enough, and the pictures intricate enough, for reading aloud to preschoolers but also sophisticated enough for children in elementary grades looking to hit a home run in reading.



## The Water Seeker

by Kimberly Willis Holt

Amos' father, Jake, was a dowser, a person with a sixth-sense for finding water. This was a profitable skill to have where water was scarce on America's frontier. But that talent also proves to be something of a curse for a man filled with wanderlust. Returning home to find that his wife has died while giving birth to Amos, Jake gives his son away to childless relatives and spends 13 years wandering the prairie. Amos feels that his mother is watching over him and realizes that he has inherited his father's mystical powers, powers that he wants to deny lest their burden takes him away from the family he longs to have. When an epidemic takes his second family, Amos is reunited with his father, comes to terms with his gift, and sets out to make a life for himself on the Oregon Trail. Teen readers will find that Holt, the author of many popular books including *My Louisiana Sky*, tells a touching and inspiring story filled with history, magical realism, romance, and adventure that captures the spirit of the Westward expansion.



— Jeanette Larson, Books Editor, teaches children's literature for the School of Library & Information Studies at Texas Woman's University

## Zapato Power: Freddie Ramos Takes Off

by Jacqueline Jules

What's a kid to do when a pair of purple sneakers with silver wings appear on his doorstep? Put them on, of course! It turns out that these sneakers have magical powers that turn Freddie, a lonely boy with an overworked mom and an absentee father, into a superhero. The shoes change Freddie's life and he uses the Zapato power, the super speed, they give him to make his urban community a better place to live. A few Spanish words and his last name identify Freddie as Hispanic, a plus for a simple chapter book that features a child who is building self-determination, but he could be any second or third grader. Simple cartoonish line drawings and short, episodic chapters add to the readability. In the sequel, *Freddie Ramos Springs into Action*, Freddie meets the inventor of his shoes and tries to get an on/off switch to harness his new-found powers.



## Clemente!

by Willie Perdomo

Just in time for the end of baseball season and the start of the World Series comes this illustrated picture book about Roberto Clemente, the first Latin American player to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Through first person

Have your own list to recommend?

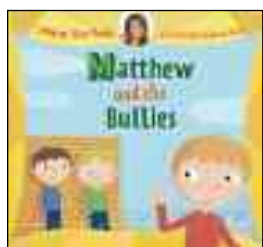
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**Emily's First Day of School;  
Ashley Learns About Strangers;  
Michael and His New Baby Brother;  
Matthew and the Bullies**

by Sara, the Duchess of York

One has to wonder whether the children of Sara, the Duchess of York, have to worry about strangers, dealing with bullies, or jitters on the first day of school. But even if they don't, their mother writes simply and convincingly about these concerns in this foursome of books aimed at preschoolers. With

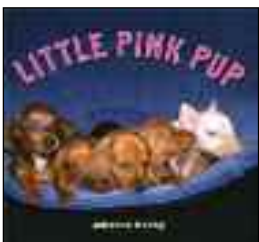


simple text and basic color illustrations, the books highlight typical problems kids face and present straightforward solutions. At the back of each book, a "Helpful Hints" section offers parents suggestions by experts on how to handle the situation discussed in the book. If parents can put aside their disbelief about Fergie's authority to write books like this, their kids probably will enjoy them.

**Little Pink Pup**

by Johanna Kerby

On a cold night in a small barn, a mother pig has a litter of piglets, one of whom is so small and weak that the other piglets push him aside when it comes time to eat. The piglet certainly would have died had it not been for the love of a dachshund, who had just given birth to one puppy and agreed to nurse the piglet as one of her own. This lovely book features simple words in large print next to photos of the real piglet (named "Pink") and dachshund (named "Tink"). Young children will enjoy watching how the mother dog adopts the piglet—as well as how the piglet grows into a massive hog many times bigger than his adoptive mother! A wonderful read for preschoolers and even young elementary children, who will understand the underlying theme of how important it is to care for each other and why looks shouldn't matter when it comes to being kind.



—Kim Pleticha, Editor

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# Cool or Crummy:

## COOL:

### The Official Blitz Ball

www.collegehillgames.com — \$12 (set of 4 balls)

The packaging calls this thing the fastest ball on the planet and that it very well may be. Lightweight and textured, and about the size of a baseball, the Blitz Ball is super easy even for the smallest of hands to grip. And man, does it fly! Neither of the kids who tested this thing are super coordinated, but after just a few minutes of tossing it around, they were able to make accurate and fast throws, hitting their targets almost every time—and the texturing made it easier to catch (another thing these kids aren't great at). Make no mistake, getting hit in the face with this ball does sting a bit, but we had lots of fun making it fly!



## KINDA:

### Pop Pals Ice Pop Holders

pop-pals.com — \$5 (set of 2)

The idea behind Pop Pals is to eliminate the paper-towel wrap sometimes necessary for frozen tube pops. And it does that. It also helps push-up the pop, so Mom doesn't have to do it for the child. And while it also is supposed to help eliminate the sticky mess associated with frozen treats, our 7-year-old tester kid managed to find a way around that, slathering melted pop all over himself (as usual). While the Pop Pals are sort of cool, they really made us ask the question: do we really *need* them? The answer: No, we really don't need another PVC-free, BPA-free, dishwasher safe gadget-type thingy in our kitchens. While we appreciate the effort the inventor-mom went through, the item is completely unnecessary, given that it's easier (and usually smarter) to ask that messy frozen pops be eaten outside in the Texas heat. Maybe the Pop Pals would be good for a birthday party... but unless you're



**Please Note:** The items we review in this section are sent to us by PR agencies and product representatives; we do not purchase them. We just test 'em and give you our honest opinion—no holds barred. We don't receive any kick-backs for reviewing these products, although folks do take us to task for our opinions! If you'd like to join the fray, or send us a product for possible review, email [Editor@ParentWiseAustin.com](mailto:Editor@ParentWiseAustin.com).

planning on feeding a dozen kids frozen treats on your white berber carpet, you can probably live without them.

### Beamz Music Creator

www.thebeamz.com — \$200-300 (depending on model; not Macintosh-compatible)

This is one of those things that's so cool, you just can't wait to get your hands on it. At least, that's how the tester dads and kids felt when it dropped on our doorstep.



The Beamz Music Creator uses lasers as musical "keys": by breaking the connection between the lasers, you can create a symphony in your living room. The set-up is simple, the hardware high-quality, the selection of musical genres (20) and instruments (100) impressive, and the packaging suitable for easy storage. Then again, it should be all of these things and more—because at \$200 (or \$300 for the "professional" model), this is no simple toy: it's a serious piece of technology that perhaps shouldn't be left out for little hands to explore at will—not only because it must be hooked up to your computer, where it gobbles up 3 GB of hard drive space, but also because laser beams just aren't safe for young kids who can't, or won't, remember to keep their heads out of them! While we all were impressed with the quality of music everyone produced with the lasers, we were dismayed that the product did not come with any popular tunes (it arrives with 30 pre-programmed "Beamz Songs"); popular music must be purchased and downloaded. Bottom line: while the Beamz Music Creator is terribly cool, we have to stick it in the Kinda column because it's just too spendy to be called a toy, and not informative enough to justify the expense as an educational tool.

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# Essay:

by Joy Nicholas

## My Turn



They're the two little magic words my two older daughters use all the time to get my attention, whether it's an impromptu dance performance or a re-cap of something hilarious that happened at school. But I've never heard Lilly, my youngest, say them until now. We're eating dinner together, and there's a delightful cacophony of half-shouted, half-giggled anecdotes and jokes. Not one to be left out, Lilly puts her hand on my arm and says it: "Mommy, Mommy! My turn."

I look at her and blink in surprise. "Okay, quiet everybody," I say, raising my hand for silence. "Lilly has the floor."

I don't quite understand all of what Lilly says—none of us do. Some of it's just talking as fast as she can. But as she rattles on for the next few minutes, I watch as, for the first time, a certain light comes on inside her, like when a prima ballerina takes center stage. It's a performance for everyone at the table, but most of all, it's a performance for me. She keeps looking to make sure I'm watching.

And I smile because I know exactly how she feels.

When I was growing up, I loved having my mother's undivided attention. Whether it was short moments of cuddles and stories and songs, or longer moments of talking over a lunch out—even just shopping without my sisters—the smiles and words she shared with only me made me feel like I was playing a crucial part in the life of the woman who kept my world spinning.

It's funny how some things never change.

"Remember Kasem's?" Mom asked me recently. It was a grocery store in Chiang Mai, where we lived when I was in my early teens, and Mom and I used to walk miles out of our way every Saturday because they had the most heavenly little bakery. "Do you know, I found it when your dad and I were there last summer?"

"No!" I said. "It's still there? I always wondered about that. Gosh, they had the best cream puffs!"

"They did!" she agreed, laughing, and I felt ridiculously happy about the fact that this was one of those things only Mom and I shared. But that's what "my turn" moments are about—sharing something with Mom that's just for the two of us.

Last fall, while my mom was visiting for a few weeks, I became ill with a severe infection. I remember the happy surprise I felt when I looked up from my hospital bed and saw Mom walking in.

"Matt didn't want to come?" I asked.

"Oh," she answered, "he just thought it would be better if he stayed home with the kids. Everyone's kind of been through a lot. Besides," her soft brown eyes became a little watery here, "I just needed to take care of you. I don't get

to do that a lot." Suddenly, I felt so special, like the star player had decided to come and play on my team.

As much as I still love Mom's attention, what she said that day in the hospital made me realize that giving "My turn" moments to my daughters is a special treat. I remember holding each of my newborns and thinking I didn't want them to love anyone as much as they loved me. It was an unabashedly selfish thought, and now as they vie for my attention, I tend to feel pulled a thousand different directions. I catch myself wishing for a few extra clones of me—or, if I must have just one body, then six eyes and ears, and a dozen or so arms. But then again I know there will be a day when they aren't as close as they are right now, maybe even thousands of miles apart like my mother and I.

So it's my turn. It's my turn to listen and watch closely, my turn to empathize as only a mother can. It's my turn to get angry at the injustices facing my children, and to fight the battles that they are too young to wage alone. It's my turn to cry when I see them hurting and to lose sleep at night worrying about them. It's my turn to laugh at the silly jokes they make up. It's my turn to cheer—whether at a dance recital or a backyard circus or a race they are running—and hang their artwork proudly on my refrigerator.

Because these days, whether my kids know it or not, "My turn" moments keep my world spinning.

*Joy Nicholas likes books, music, sewing and traveling, but most of all, she likes her family. You can read more of her writing at [caspara.blogspot.com](http://caspara.blogspot.com).*

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# YOUNG LAUREATES

## My American Dream by Sanjana Aluru, age 8

An American Dream is happiness, success, prosperity, helping people, and having equal opportunities.

My American Dream is to have prosperity and I want to succeed in life so that I will grow up to be a doctor, saving peoples' lives.

I want to be happy and will achieve that by helping people, giving them new clothes, good food, volunteering to help their community by being kind and doing helpful things.

I want to volunteer for my community, too.

I also want everyone to be treated fairly and equally so we can have world peace.

I would like to share my American Dream with others so that they will understand my goals and dreams.

I want other people to know about world peace.

I would like to ask everyone to join me in volunteering services at senior homes and children shelters and make the World a better place to live in.

This is my American Dream!



Send us your child's Poem or artwork!  
Monthly winners receive a check for \$25, a Parent:Wise T-shirt, and coupons for free dinner and games at Gatti\*Town, which graciously sponsors the Young Laureates section!



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# Sizzle Sights:

## A Perfect Day in Wimberley

by Hannah Diller

Wimberley is one of those towns whose considerable charms keep unfolding, and taking the time to uncover those charms makes for the perfect weekend or day trip. In fact, the town has been featured in this column before, but further exploration has only caused us to fall more under its spell. Here are a few of our favorite stops, arranged as a proposed itinerary for the final not-so-lazy days of summer.

A particularly bracing way to start the day would be with Wimberley Zipline Adventures. Ziplines, increasingly popular in more exotic tourist destinations but now available quite close to home, aren't for the acrophobic and don't come cheaply, but for those who want to live a bit on the edge and see the hill coun-

gent cold-pressed olive oil.

If all that oil-tasting whets your appetite, The Leaning Pear restaurant in town offers healthy gourmet fare—or if your family's taste tends more toward downhome cooking, eating establishments in the town center can satisfy your appetite as well. Of course, the virtues of the candy shop and its ice cream counter are not to be overlooked as treat for small sweet-eaters. Perhaps you will even be spared a jaunt through the neighboring Blue Bacon Toys. Or perhaps not.

The afternoon, by all rights, should belong to Blue Hole. Although this spot has been voted one of the top swimming holes by *Texas Monthly* magazine, the response I consistently get when recommending this place is, "Huh? Where is that exactly?" Local folks may not appreciate additional crowds (and I imagine there's stiff competition for shady spots on the weekend), but the beauty of the creek, and the sweeping trees that hug its banks, will lure you in. Take inner tubes for those who like to float; the more daring will want to give one of the rope



try from a new angle, this may be just the ticket. Starting in the morning, before peak heat time, is probably wise since the tour lasts up to two hours.

As an alternative, consider visiting Bella Vista Ranch, home of the First Texas Olive Oil Company. Only recently have olive orchards taken root in Texas, despite its Mediterranean-like climate. The Ranch offers \$10 tours of the olive pressing room, orchard, winery and gardens on the weekends, but during the week you can drop by during business hours, as we did, and one of the friendly family members may treat you to a tasting in the frantoio and an informative chat about the history and science of olive cultivation. I dare you to leave without a bottle of their pun-

swings a try.

Later, you could head out of town toward San Marcos and stop to ogle the glass-blowers and their work at Wimberley Glass Works (Air-conditioning! An observation gallery!). Or, you could return to Austin by way of Driftwood, where I recommend a stop at Duchman Family Winery (formerly Mandola Estate) on FM 150. It's perfect for a picnic on the grounds or dinner at the on-site restaurant, possibly followed by a tasting for the older crowd. Bon Appétit!

*Hannah Diller lives and explores with her family in Central Austin. She can be found on the web at <http://dillerhome.blogspot.com> or at [dillerh@gmail.com](mailto:dillerh@gmail.com).*

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# Share the Passion

2011 "Share the Passion" Red Carpet Gala

Saturday, September 11

5:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. FREE!

La Paloma Event Center in Lakeway

For info: [www.DSACT.com](http://www.DSACT.com) 323-0808

ParentWise Austin is proud to sponsor this community event!



Photos taken by: Mark Gajner  
with Gajner Photography

Announcing the arrival of the 2011 "Share the Passion" Calendar, featuring photos of local and national celebrities posing with children and adults who have Down syndrome. Order yours online or plan to attend the Gala!

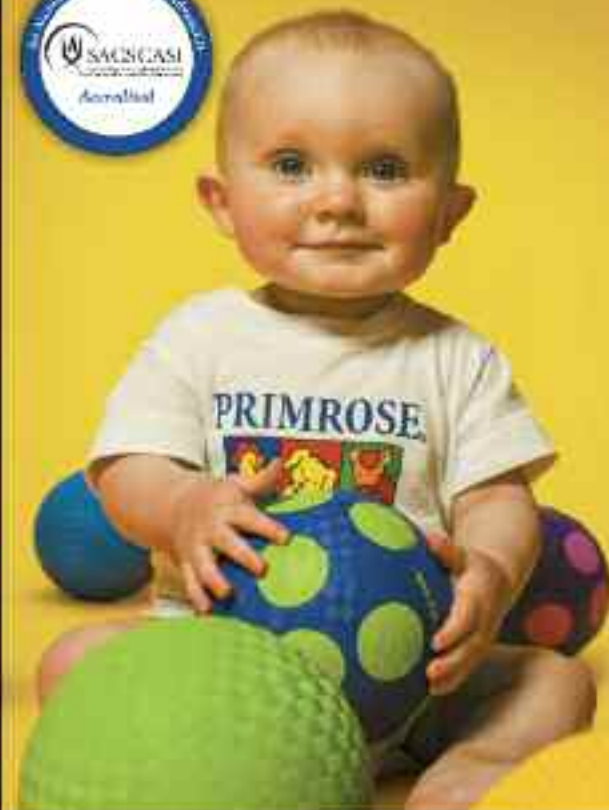
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# the August Calendar:

For events that happen weekly, see the August-at-a-Glance Calendar on Page 20. If you spot an incorrect listing, please email us at [Editor@ParentWiseAustin.com](mailto:Editor@ParentWiseAustin.com) or call us at 877-MAMA-304. To list your event in the Calendar, enter it at [ParentWiseAustin.com/Calendar/Calendar.shtml](http://ParentWiseAustin.com/Calendar/Calendar.shtml) (deadline: the 10th of the month previous to month in which the event happens). Have a GREAT Month!

## 1 SUNDAY

**Breastfeeding Flash Mob:** 1 p.m. Join folks from throughout Central Texas for this unique event to show support for breastfeeding (and yeah: you keep your clothes on — no breastfeeding required!). Take the whole family and get ready for an impromptu dance! Meet in front of the Barton Springs Pool just before 1 p.m. It's going to be a blast! **FREE!** 2101 Barton Springs Rd. [austinworldbreastfeedingday@gmail.com](mailto:austinworldbreastfeedingday@gmail.com) [www.hmhbcentx.net/](http://www.hmhbcentx.net/) 547-9980

**Altered Books:** 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Kids will learn how to make an old book into some new art. **FREE!** Recycled Reads, 5335 Burnet 323-5123

## 2 MONDAY

**Covenant MoMs (Mothers of Munchkins):** 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Expecting, new and experienced moms of all faiths invited to share conversation and support. Free childcare (please RSVP 48-hours in advance). **FREE!** Covenant Presbyterian Church, 3003 Northland Dr. 454-5231 [texas@mwells.org](mailto:texas@mwells.org) [covenant.org/studies-education/MoMs](http://covenant.org/studies-education/MoMs)

**MOMS Club Austin-South:** 10 a.m.-Noon. Looking for other moms in South Austin? This group is a sure-fire way to meet them. **FREE!** Westoak Woods Baptist Church (the group is not church affiliated) at 2900 W. Slaughter Lane. 291-1850 [austinmomclub@yahoo.com](mailto:austinmomclub@yahoo.com) [www.geocities.com/momsclubaustinsth/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/momsclubaustinsth/index.html)

**Toddler Travels:** Noon. Ages 18-36 months travel through books, songs, activities, and crafts. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. 989-3188 [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org)

**Storytime:** 1 p.m. Suitable for ages birth to 5. **FREE!** Faulk Central Library, 800 Guadalupe 974-7400

**Elementary Express:** 4 p.m. Program for elementary school-aged kids. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org) 989-3188

**Adoption Search Assistance Meeting:** 7 p.m. This group supports adults who are searching for their birth parents. **FREE!** Westover Hills Church, 8332 Mesa Dr. [aka@adoptionknowledge.org](mailto:aka@adoptionknowledge.org) [www.adoptionknowledge.org](http://www.adoptionknowledge.org) 442-8252

**Grief Group for Teens:** 7 p.m.-9 p.m. This group helps teens (ages 13-19) understand grief, process it and learn coping skills that are effective for dealing with teen grief. (Parent groups also available.) **FREE!** For the Love of Christi, 2306 Hancock Dr. 467-2600 [info@ChristiCenter.com](mailto:info@ChristiCenter.com) [fortheLoveofChristi.com](http://fortheLoveofChristi.com)

## 3 TUESDAY

**La Leche League-Central Austin:** 10 a.m. **FREE!** Call for location. [www.lllaustin.org](http://www.lllaustin.org) 452-2048

**La Leche League-South Austin I:** 10 a.m. **FREE!** Christ's Workshop, 212 E. Monroe [www.lllaustin.org/](http://www.lllaustin.org/) 644-1208

**Kid-tivity Summer Craft Time:** 10:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Kids will make an Enviro Shopping Bag. \$7 Kaleidoscope Toys 1601 IH-35 South, Round Rock [kstoys@austin.rr.com](mailto:kstoys@austin.rr.com) [www.kstoy.com](http://www.kstoy.com) 388-5048

**Crafty Monday:** 2 p.m.-3 p.m. Kids in elementary school make crafts they can take home **FREE!** Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700 and Ruiz Branch Library, 1600 Grove Blvd. 974-7500

**Chess for Everyone!:** 5 p.m.-6 p.m. Kids (and parents) of all ages learn chess techniques in a fun, hands-on environment. No experience necessary. **FREE!** Wells Branch Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [staff@wblibrary.org](mailto:staff@wblibrary.org) [wblibrary.org/](http://wblibrary.org/) 989-3188

**Preschool Passport:** 5:30 p.m. Ages 3-6 learn about different people, places, and cultures through books and crafts. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org) 989-3188

**Teen Tuesday:** 6:30 p.m. Mario Kart Tournament for ages 11-18. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. 989-3188 [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org)

## 4 WEDNESDAY

**MOPS-Spicewood Meeting:** 9:30 a.m. Meet other mothers of preschool children. Childcare provided; reservations required. First meeting **FREE!** Pedernales River Fellowship, 22800 Highway 71 West, Spicewood 264-1794

**Cinemagic:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Enjoy a family movie at the library! **FREE!** Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700

**Read-In:** 2 p.m.-3 p.m. **FREE!** Windsor Park Branch Library, 5833 Westminster Dr. 974-9840

**Recycled Crafts for Teens:** 4 p.m.-6 p.m. Learn how to reuse and recycle everyday materials into awesome things to wear and decorate your room, including blue jean pillows, CD disco balls and photo frames, recycled paper bracelets, and playing card purses! **FREE!** Milwood Branch Library, 12500 Amherst Dr. 974-9880

**Wacky Science:** 5 p.m. Fun and messy science experiments and demonstrations for kids ages 8+. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. 989-3188 [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org)

**Clearview Sudbury School Information Session:** 7 p.m.-8 p.m. Tour this democratic community for students ages 5-19 who wish to learn and grow in a place of freedom, trust, respect, & responsibility. **FREE!** 1507 Wilshire Blvd. 524-0085 [clearviewsudburyschool@gmail.com](mailto:clearviewsudburyschool@gmail.com) [www.clearviewsudburyschool.org](http://www.clearviewsudburyschool.org)

## 5 THURSDAY

**Khabele Open House:** 8:45 a.m.-9:45 a.m. Tour this historic downtown campus and view the robust academic, arts and music programs. A few spots remain for the 2010-11 school year in both the middle school and high school! **FREE!** 801 Rio Grande [moya@khabele.org](mailto:moya@khabele.org) [khabele.org](http://khabele.org) 480 8142

**MOMS Club - Southwest Oaks:** 9:15 a.m. Support for Stay-at-Home Mothers. **FREE!** Oak Hill United Methodist Church, 7815 Hwy 290 West, Rm A206 [momsclubswswoaks@gmail.com](mailto:momsclubswswoaks@gmail.com)

**North Austin Mother's Club Meeting:** 10 a.m. Socializing, food & fun. (Reservations required for nursery). **FREE!** Pond Springs Church of Christ, 13300 Pond Springs Rd. [info@northaustinmothersclub.org](mailto:info@northaustinmothersclub.org) [www.northaustinmothersclub.org/](http://www.northaustinmothersclub.org/) 450-4519

**La Leche League Suburban North Austin Morning:** 10 a.m. **FREE!** North Austin Medical Center, 12221 Mopac, Classroom 2B [emilya-page@gmail.com](mailto:emilya-page@gmail.com) [www.lllaustin.org/](http://www.lllaustin.org/) 947-6644

**Fairytales Threads Fall Children's Consignment Event:** 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Run by moms, for moms, all items are checked for quality and organized for a great shopping experience. **FREE** admission with the donation of at least one canned food item. 3300 Palm Valley Blvd, Round Rock. 850-3280 [manager@fairytalesthreads.com](mailto:manager@fairytalesthreads.com) [www.fairytalesthreads.com](http://www.fairytalesthreads.com)

**Summer Gaming Tournament:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Super Smash Bros. Brawl tournament for ages 10-17. **FREE!** Hampton Branch Library, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. 974-9900

## 6 FRIDAY

**MOPS-Georgetown:** 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Go as you are and be encouraged, equipped and developed as a woman, mother and leader at this Christian-based mothers' meeting. First meeting is **FREE!** Georgetown Church of the Nazarene, 4051 E Hwy 29, Georgetown [info@gcnmops.org](mailto:info@gcnmops.org) [gcnmops.org](http://gcnmops.org) 310-7194

**Attachment Parenting International General Meeting (Central Chapter):** 10 a.m.-Noon. Parental support for those who practice, or are interested in, attachment parenting. **FREE!** North Village Branch Library, 2139 W. Anderson Ln. [www.centralaustinapi.com](http://www.centralaustinapi.com) 695-4965

**Fairytales Threads Fall Children's Consignment Event:** See Aug. 5

**MOMS Club of Leander General Meeting:** 10:30 a.m. **FREE!** Crystal Lake Baptist Church 1901 S. Hwy 183 Leander (group is not church affiliated) [momsclubleander@yahoo.com](mailto:momsclubleander@yahoo.com) [www.freewebs.com/leandermoms](http://www.freewebs.com/leandermoms) 260-1450

**MOMS Club-Round Rock South:** 10:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. **FREE!** Horizon Bay Retirement Center, 8005 Cornerwood Dr. Round Rock [yulia\\_yahin@yahoo.com](mailto:yulia_yahin@yahoo.com) 244-9690

PLEASE NOTE: Sometimes events change time or get cancelled after we go to press so its a good idea to CALL OR EMAIL BEFORE ATTENDING ANY EVENT!

**Train Time:** 12:30 p.m. A free-play time with wooden train sets for kids ages 3-6. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. kids@wblibrary.org www.wblibrary.org 989-3188

**Gaming @ the Library:** 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Kids will play a variety of programs to invigorate their synapses, test their motor skills, and make a friend or two. **FREE!** Yarborough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208

**B-Scene:** 6 p.m.-11 p.m. Happening night of art features libations and live music. \$10. The Blanton Museum of Art, Martin Luther King at Congress Ave. info@blantonmuseum.org blantonmuseum.org 471-7324

**Teen Book Club:** 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Ages 11-18 read & discuss books. Call the library for title. **FREE!** University Hills Branch Library, 4721 Loyola Ln. 974-9940

**Kid-tivity:** 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. Bonzo Crunch, Fool at Large will perform. **FREE** admission with a donation of one non-perishable food item per person. Kaleidoscope Toys 1601 IH-35 S., Round Rock. kstoy@austin.rr.com www.kstoy.com 388-5048

**First Friday Contra Dance:** 7:30 p.m. Family-friendly community dance. Dances taught at the beginning of class. \$6-8. Carpenter's Hall, 400 Josephine 970-4919

**Moonlighting:** 8:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Austin Astronomical Society has telescopes! \$5 adults, \$3 kids ages 5-12 Wild Basin Wilderness Preserve, 805 N. Capital of Texas Hwy. 327-7622 hike@wildbasin.org www.wildbasin.org

## 7 SATURDAY

**Kyle Market Days:** 9 a.m.-2 p.m. Enjoy live local music, artists, craftsmen, and farmers' market. **FREE!** 100 S. Burtleson, Kyle. 262-3939 parks@cityofkyle.com www.cityofkyle.com/kylemarketdays.php

**Sensory Friendly Movie:** 10 a.m.-Noon. This presentation of *Despicable Me* is for children with sensory issues. (Check the Autism Society website before you go!) \$5. AMC Barton Creek 14, 2901 Capital of Texas Hwy. 479-4199 ann-hart@austin.rr.com www.austinautismsociety.org

**Fairytale Threads Fall Children's Consignment Event:** 10 a.m.-7 p.m. See Aug. 5

**ICAN of Austin Meeting:** 10:30 a.m.-Noon. Support for women striving to heal from or prevent cesarean sections, and support VBAC. **FREE!** Carver Library Meeting Room 1161 Angelina St. icanofaustin@gmail.com 203-6097

**Sign Language Storytime:** 11 a.m. Kids of all ages learn new signs through stories, crafts, and activities. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. kids@wblibrary.org www.wblibrary.org 989-3188

**Little Lounge Lizards:** 1 p.m.-4 p.m. A family dance club party for children 10 and younger with DJ Syko spinning classic dance hits and a live shark tank dance floor. \$9-\$10.50 Qua, 213 W. 4th St. 291-0714 suzannchili@sbcglobal.net www.Littleloungeizards.com

**Sculptor To Be:** 1:30 p.m.-3 p.m. Ages 7-11 create their own artistic masterpieces with help. \$12, pre-registration required. Umlauf Sculpture Garden, 605 Robert E Lee Rd. tours@umlaufsculpture.org www.umlaufsculpture.org 445-5582 ext 101

**TEXplorations Family Day:** 2 p.m.-6 p.m. The museum opens to families with all kinds of activities, including a family storytime from 2-4 p.m. **FREE!** Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. contactus@thestoryoftexas.com www.thestoryoftexas.com 936-8746

**Clearview Sudbury School Open House:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Tour this democratic community for students ages 5-19 who wish to learn and grow in a place of freedom, trust, respect, & responsibility. **FREE!** 1507 Wilshire Blvd. 524-0085 clearview-sudburyschool@gmail.com www.clearviewsudburyschool.org

**Read-In:** 2 p.m. **FREE!** Windsor Park Branch Library, 5833 Westminster Dr. 974-9840

**Recycled Crafts for Teens:** 4 p.m.-6 p.m. Learn how to reuse and recycle everyday materials into awesome things to wear and decorate your room, including blue jean pillows, cd disco balls and photo frames, recycled paper bracelets, and playing card purses! **FREE!** Terrazas Branch Library, 1105 E. Cesar Chavez St. 974-3625

## 8 SUNDAY

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. Children at Austin's only certified organic farm preschool will be selling the herbs they've grown and giving tours of the gardens they've cultivated. **FREE** admission. Ronda's Montessori Garden, 4300 Mt. Vernon Dr. www.rondasgarden.net 707-8635

**Family Nature Hike:** 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Kids 7+ will enjoy this free-mile hike in rugged terrain. **FREE!** Bright Leaf Nature Preserve, Creek Mountain Road (just off of 2222) www.brightleaf.org 459-7269

Calendar continues on page 23...

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# EDUCATION station

## the education enrichment guide

We've gathered some cool educational resources in this convenient directory listing. Find the ad you are interested in by simply going to the page listed. Check out more information on these participants online at ParentWiseAustin.com

PG.	NAME	WEBSITE	PHONE
5	<b>ACE Academy</b>	austingifted.org	<b>206-4070</b>
24	<b>Armstrong Music School</b>	austinelyricopera.org	<b>474-2331</b>
27	<b>Art School at Austin Museum of Art</b>	amoa.org	<b>495-9224</b>
29	<b>Austin City Ballet</b>	austin-conservatory-arts.com	<b>989-3363</b>
30	<b>Austin Community College</b>	austincc.edu	<b>223-4000</b>
17	<b>Austin Girls' Choir</b>	austin.girlschoir.com	<b>453-0884</b>
13	<b>Austin Waldorf</b>	austinwaldorf.org	<b>288-5942</b>
24	<b>Childbloom Guitar</b>	childbloom.com	<b>452-8765</b>
14	<b>The Children's Center of Austin</b>	childrenscenterofaustin.com	<b>329-6633</b>
24	<b>Dia de los Ninos</b>	diadelosninos.org	<b>567-1321</b>
16	<b>Dance Discovery</b>	austin-dance.org	<b>419-7611</b>
29	<b>Dougherty Arts School</b>	ci.austin.tx.us/dougherty/school.htm	<b>941-4032</b>
25	<b>Extand-A-Care for Kids</b>	eackids.org	<b>472-9402</b>
17	<b>The Girls' School of Austin</b>	thegirlsschool.org	<b>478-STAR</b>
19	<b>The Good Earth Day School</b>	goodearthschool.com	<b>259-3922</b>
27	<b>The Greenwood School</b>	greenwoodschoo.net	<b>394-9171</b>
28	<b>Heartsong Music</b>	heartsongmusictogether.com	<b>371-9506</b>
12	<b>Khabele School</b>	khabele.org	<b>480-8142</b>
15	<b>Kumon</b>	kumon.com	<b>877-586-6673</b>
31	<b>Magellan International School</b>	magellanschool.org	<b>961-5329</b>
24	<b>Music Together Music Forever</b>	musicforeverMT.com	<b>358-4278</b>
25	<b>My Gym</b>	mygym.com	<b>444-6496</b>
7	<b>Parmer Children's Montessori Academy</b>	parmerchildrensmontessori.com	<b>836-7262</b>
19	<b>Primrose Schools</b>	primroseschools.com	<b>800-774-6767</b>
11	<b>Prodigy Child Development Center</b>	cclc.com	<b>835-2443</b>
18	<b>Promiseland Learning Center</b>	promiselandchurch.net	<b>220-6381</b>
25	<b>Rise School of Austin</b>	riseschoolaustin.org	<b>891-1680</b>
11	<b>St. Mark Children's Day Out</b>		<b>836-9073</b>
17	<b>Sri Atmananda</b>	samschool.org	<b>451-7044</b>
10	<b>Synergy Dance Studio</b>	synergydancestudio.com	<b>327-4130</b>

SCHOOLS, ACADEMIES, EDUCATORS: Be listed in ParentWise Austin's Education Station Section! Contact us today! 877-MAMA-304 Advertising@ParentWiseAustin.com

# EDUCATION station

## the education enrichment guide

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Austin Public Libraries do not hold regular storytimes in August. However, some Austin Public Library branches do host children's events throughout the month, which we've listed in our Calendar. For more information about events happening at Austin Public Library branches in August, please call 974-9820.

**Austin Children's Museum:**

201 Colorado St., 472-2499  
SUN: 1 p.m., 3 p.m.; 4 p.m. Sueños Realizados  
TUES-SAT: 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.  
WED: 6 p.m. Sueños Realizados

**Carver Branch:**

1161 Angelina, 974-1010

**Cedar Park:**

550 Discovery Blvd. in Cedar Park, 259-5353  
TUES, WED, THUR: 9:45 a.m. Lapsit;  
10:30 a.m. Toddler;  
11 a.m. Pre K;

**Faulk Central:**

800 Guadalupe St. 974-7400

**Hampton Branch:**

5125 Convict Hill Rd. 974-9900

**Kyle:** 409 W. Blanco St. 268-7411

WED: 10:30 a.m. & Noon All ages;  
FRI: 10:30 a.m. Bilingual/Spanish

# Storytimes Around Town:

**Lake Travis:**

2300 Lohman's Spur, Suite 100. 263-2885  
MON: 10:30 a.m. Pre K;  
TUES: 10:30 a.m. Toddlers;  
WED: 10:30 a.m. Babies

**Little Walnut Creek Branch:**

835 W. Rundberg Ln. 974-9860

**Manchaca Branch:**

5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700

**Milwood Branch:**

12500 Amherst. 974-9880

**North Village Branch:**

2505 Steck Ave. 974-9960

**Old Quarry Branch:**

7051 Village Center Dr. 345-4435

**Pleasant Hill Branch:**

211 E. William Cannon. 974-3940

**Ruiz Branch:**

1600 Grove Blvd. 974-7500

**Southeast Austin Community Branch:**

5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. 462-1452

**San Marcos Community Library:**

625 E. Hopkins St. in San Marcos, 393-8200  
TUES, FRI: 10:15 a.m. Toddlers;  
11 a.m. Pre K

**Spicewood Springs Branch:**

8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. 974-3800

**Terrazas Branch:**

1105 E. Cesar Chavez. 974-3625

**Wells Branch Community:**

15001 Wells Port Dr. 989-3188. wblibrary.org  
MON: 10:45 a.m. Monkey in the Middle;  
FRI: 10 a.m. Baby Bookworms;  
10:45 a.m. Toddler;  
11:30 a.m. Pre K

**Yarborough Branch:**

2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208



# August at a Glance:

**PLEASE NOTE!** The events below repeat on the same day and same time every week. For descriptions, locations and costs for the events below, see our online Calendar at: [www.ParentWiseAustin.com](http://www.ParentWiseAustin.com).

## MONDAYS

- 9 a.m. Baby Bloomers—Austin Children's Museum  
Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen
- 6 p.m. Children's Chronic Illness Group—Wonders & Worries

## TUESDAYS

- 9 a.m. Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen  
Family Literacy Class—Any Baby Can  
Open Petting Farm—The Good Earth School
- 10:30 a.m. Building Healthy Lifestyles for Young Children—Any Baby Can
- 1 p.m. Family Ties "Circle of Security" Support Group—Any Baby Can
- 2:30 p.m. Drop-In Playtime—Dell Jewish Comm. Ctr.
- 5:30 p.m. Building Emotional Understanding—North Park YMCA  
Parent & Youth Support Group—Starry/Children at Heart Foundation
- 6:15 p.m. Chess Club—NW Recreation Center
- 7 p.m. Parent Empowerment Class—Any Baby Can

## WEDNESDAYS

- 9 a.m. Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen  
Family Literacy Class—Any Baby Can

- Open Petting Farm—The Good Earth School
- 10 a.m. Naturalist Workshop Trade Counter—Austin Nature & Science Ctr.  
You're Worth It Mama—East West Health Center
- 11 a.m. Just for Me! Teen Parent Support Group—Any Baby Can
- 4 p.m. Austin Farmers' Market—Triangle
- 5 p.m. Community Night—Austin Children's Museum
- 6 p.m. Be Ready for Baby—Any Baby Can  
Chronic Illness Parenting Class—Wonders & Worries

## THURSDAYS

- All Day Free Day at The Blanton
- 9 a.m. Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen  
Family Literacy Class—Any Baby Can  
Open Doors Coffee—Sri Atmananda  
Open Petting Farm—The Good Earth School
- 10 a.m. Baby Blues Postpartum Support Group—Any Baby Can  
Family Discovery Hour—The Good Earth School  
Naturalist Workshop Trade Counter—Austin Nature & Science Ctr.
- 11 a.m. Mocha Moms Meeting

- Noon Noonday Concert—Central Presbyterian Church
- 6 p.m. Family Forward Group—Starry/Children at Heart Foundation
- 7 p.m. Parent Empowerment Class—Any Baby Can
- 7:30 p.m. Summer in the Park Concert—San Marcos Plaza Park

## FRIDAYS

- 9 a.m. Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen  
Family Literacy Class—Any Baby Can  
Open Petting Farm—The Good Earth School
- 10 a.m. Drop-In Playtime—Dell Jewish Comm. Ctr.  
Naturalist Workshop Trade Counter—Austin Nature & Science Ctr.  
Tot Shabbat—Dell Jewish Community Center
- Noon Family Friday—Green Gate Farms
- Afternoon Baby Day—Alamo Drafthouse
- 6:30 p.m. Live Music At Central Market

## SATURDAYS

- 9 a.m. Austin Farmers' Market—Republic Square  
Family Dinner Prep—Studio Kitchen  
Open Petting Farm—The Good Earth School
- 9:15 a.m. Pro Family—Any Baby Can

- 10 a.m. Building Emotional Understanding—North Park YMCA  
Family Nature Hike—Westcave Preserve  
Kids Yoga—Ruta Maya  
Naturalist Workshop Trade Counter—Austin Nature & Science Ctr.  
Westlake Farmers' Market—Tony Burger Center

## Noon

- Free ice-skating lesson—Chaparral ice (IH-35 and Northcross)
- Proactive Dads—North Park YMCA
- 12:30 p.m. Giant Chess—Wooldridge Square
- 2 p.m. Public Art Tour—AMOA Downtown
- 3 p.m. Baby College—Any Baby Can
- 3:15 p.m. Wild Cave Tour—Longhorn Cavern
- 6:30 p.m. Live Music At Central Market
- 7:30 p.m. Austin International Folk Dancers—Hancock Rec. Ctr.  
Ballroom Dancing—Austin Recreation Center

## SUNDAYS

- 10 a.m. Family Nature Hike—Westcave Preserve
- 10:30 a.m. Kids' Show—Ruta Maya

**DON'T FORGET** — The descriptions for these listings are on our website: [www.ParentWiseAustin.com](http://www.ParentWiseAustin.com) in our interactive calendar. See the magazine's calendar listings beginning on Page 18 for other monthly events.

# Calendar

continued from page 21...

**Capital Confectioners' Day of Sharing:** 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Learn cake decorating from the experts — includes lunch and snacks. \$40. Wingate by Wyndham Hotel & Conference Center, 1209 N. IH-35, Round Rock. [capital\\_confectioners@yahoo.com](mailto:capital_confectioners@yahoo.com) [dos.capitalconfectioners.com/371-3401](http://dos.capitalconfectioners.com/371-3401)

**Single Parent's Resource Network General Meeting:** 11:30 a.m. Meet other single parents, lessen isolation, and co-create community by sharing resourceful information. **FREE!** Ruta Maya, 3601 S. Congress [www.SPRN.org](http://www.SPRN.org) 694-5272

**Summer Gaming Tournament:** Noon-4 p.m. Super Smash Bros. Brawl tournament for ages 10-17. **FREE!** Carver Branch Library, 1161 Angelina 974-1010

**Open Doors Coffee:** 3 p.m.-4 p.m. Learn about Austin's KPM School during this casual coffee. **FREE!** Sri Atmananda Memorial School, 4100 Red River St. [melissagrahamlamure@kpm.institute.org](mailto:melissagrahamlamure@kpm.institute.org) [www.sam-school.org](http://www.sam-school.org) 451-7044

## 9 MONDAY

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. See Aug. 8

**MOPS Meeting:** 9 a.m.-11:30 This Christian-based group supports at-home mothers. Childcare provided. \$24.95 per year. Westoak Woods Baptist Church, 2900 Slaughter Ln. 301-7760 [sculver@austin.rr.com](mailto:sculver@austin.rr.com) [www.mopsinternational.org](http://www.mopsinternational.org)

**Toddler Travels:** Noon. See Aug. 2

**Elementary Express:** 4 p.m. See Aug. 2

**Profound Parenting:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Join Language of Listening founder, Love & Logic facilitators, and parents for a solution-oriented discussion about the challenges and successes involved in raising children. The focus is on how to help our children see and express their inner greatness. **FREE!** Unity Church of the Hills, 9905 Anderson Mill Rd. [childcare@unityhills.org](mailto:childcare@unityhills.org) [www.unityhills.org](http://www.unityhills.org) 335-4449

## 10 TUESDAY

**Attachment Parenting International (South Chapter):** 10 a.m. Support for those who practice, or are interested in, attachment parenting. **FREE!** Manchaca Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. [melissacramer@austin.rr.com](mailto:melissacramer@austin.rr.com) [www.southaustinapi.org](http://www.southaustinapi.org)

August 8 - 11

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. See Aug. 8

**Kid-tivity Summer Craft Time:** 10:30 a.m. & 11:30 a.m. This is a "My 1st Sticky Mosaics" craft class. \$6. Kaleidoscope Toys 1601 IH-35 S., Round Rock [kstoy@austin.rr.com](mailto:kstoy@austin.rr.com) [www.kstoy.com](http://www.kstoy.com) 388-5048

**Crafty Monday:** 2 p.m.-3 p.m. Kids in elementary school make crafts they can take home. **FREE!** Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700

**Preschool Passport:** 5:30 p.m. See Aug. 3

**Fantasy Book Club:** 6:30 p.m. Kids (ages 7-12) chat about fantasy, science fiction, and mythology books. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library 15001 Wells Port Dr. 989-3188 [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org)

**Family Support Cooperative:** 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. These monthly meetings inform and support families who have children with disabilities. **FREE!** (plus free childcare and pizza) but please RSVP for childcare. Rosedale School, 2117 West 49th St. 414-2049 [ralexan2@austinisd.org](mailto:ralexan2@austinisd.org) [www.austinisd.org/academics/special\\_educ](http://www.austinisd.org/academics/special_educ)

**Fantasy Book Club:** 6:30 p.m. Kids ages 11-18 discuss *Shiver* by Maggie Stiefvater. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) [www.wblibrary.org](http://www.wblibrary.org) 989-3188

## 11 WEDNESDAY

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. See Aug. 8

**Sculpture Tales:** 10:30 a.m.-11:15 a.m. Ages 3-5 listen to folk tales in the garden, then make their own sculpture! Parents must attend with child. Reservations requested. \$5 Umlauf Sculpture Garden, 605 Robert E Lee Rd. 445-5582 ext 101 [education@umlaufsculpture.org](mailto:education@umlaufsculpture.org) [www.umlaufsculpture.org](http://www.umlaufsculpture.org)

**ACE Academy Information Session:** 1 p.m. ACE is the only school in Austin for gifted learners. This session describes the ACE programs for Pre-K-8th grade, as well as testing. **FREE!** 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd. [info@AustinGifted.org](mailto:info@AustinGifted.org) [www.AustinGifted.org](http://www.AustinGifted.org) 206-4070

**Cinemagic:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Enjoy a family movie at the library! **FREE!** Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700

**Wacky Science:** 5 p.m. See Aug. 4

*Calendar continues on the next page...*

# CONTESTS, SIGN-UPS, SCHOLARSHIPS & VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES:

**2010 Trash To Treasure Competition:** PBS Kids Go challenges kids ages 5-19 to recycle, reuse and re-engineer everyday materials into new inventions. Complete instructions and entry form available at [PBSKIDSGO.org/designsquad/contest](http://PBSKIDSGO.org/designsquad/contest). Deadline is Sept. 5.

**American Pet Products Association Poetry Contest:** Kids in 3rd through 5th grades may enter this contest by writing a poem about their pet or any other animal they love. Poems must be uploaded to [www.petsaddlife.org](http://www.petsaddlife.org) or mailed to Pets Add Life, 45 Winter Street, Reno, NV 89503. Two students from each grade level will win a \$250 gift certificate for pet products, and have their poem published in a nationally circulated publication. Additionally, the six winning students' classrooms will each receive a \$1,000 scholarship to spend on pet related education. Deadline: January 31, 2011 at 5:00pm EST.

**Austin Girls' Choir Auditions:** Girls ages 8-to-18 are invited to audition for one of the best treble choirs in the country. Partial financial aid available. For more information, call Choir Director Sara Burden-McClure at 453-0884 or visit [austin.girlschoir.com](http://austin.girlschoir.com).

**Austin Museum Partnership Program:** This program encourages families to visit local museums — visit 7 of them and receive a free pizza! For more information, log on to [www.austin-museums.org/index/passport](http://www.austin-museums.org/index/passport)

**Duke TIP 7th Grade Talent Search:** This talent search helps academically talented young people become inspired to learn through exciting educational opportunities (including above-level testing). Kids are formally recognized, praised for their performance, and sent a clear message that continuing to develop their intelligence can be fun and fulfilling. \$20-74. For more information, log on to [www.tip.duke.edu](http://www.tip.duke.edu). You may also email [tguidry@tip.duke.edu](mailto:tguidry@tip.duke.edu) or call 473-8400.

**IHOP's "Kids Eat Free" Dinner Promotion:** Throughout August, kids ages 12 and younger eat free (from the children's menu) at all IHOP restaurants from 4-10 p.m. For more information or to find a location near you, log on to [www.ihop.com](http://www.ihop.com).

**Kids Summer Reading Club:** Kids ages 10 and younger have until Aug. 14 to turn in their reading logs to win prizes based on the number of hours they read this Summer. Sponsored by the Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. For more information, email [kids@wblibrary.org](mailto:kids@wblibrary.org) or call 989-3188.

**Saturday STEM Academy:** Kids in 9th-12th grades are invited to apply for this unique series of science & engineering workshops in which they'll learn robotics and much more. Academy is FREE for all students accepted to the program! Huston-Tillotson University, 900 Chicon St. [ablofters@htu.edu](mailto:ablofters@htu.edu) or 505-3163

**YES Waiver Program:** Austin Travis County Integral Care has been chosen as one of two sites to pilot the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) waiver program, which provides intensive community-based services and supports for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances. Families interested in participating in the YES program should call (512) 804-3191 or visit [www.integralcare.org](http://www.integralcare.org).

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# Calendar Calendar

continued from previous page...

**Mother-Daughter Book Club:** 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Girls ages 7-12 and their mothers discuss books. Call the library for title. **FREE!** Twin Oaks Branch Library, 2301 S. Congress, No. 7 442-4664

**Kids Who Kare:** 7 p.m. Kids-only support for ages 5-12 who have lost a loved one. Incorporates storytelling, art, music drama and movement into a curriculum-based grief program. Parent group also meets. **FREE!** Christi Center, 2306 Hancock Dr. info@ChristiCenter.com fortheloveofchristi.org 467-2600

## 12 THURSDAY

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. See Aug. 8

**Khabele Open House:** 8:45 a.m.-9:45 a.m. See Aug. 5

**Joe McDermott Concert:** 9:30 a.m.-Noon. Enjoy a morning with one of Austin's favorite children's musicians, plus a super slide, fire truck & raffle. Free goodie bags for the first 200 people. \$5 per person ages 2+. 10205 Ranch Road 620 North ambarnitz@yahoo.com 301-580-3765

**La Leche League-Oak Hill:** 10 a.m. **FREE!** Oak Hill United Methodist Church, 7815 Hwy 290 West, Room A206 www.lllaustin.org 301-1170

**Open Doors Coffee:** 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. Learn about Austin's KPM School during this casual coffee. **FREE!** Sri Atmananda Memorial School, 4100 Red River St. melissagrahamlamure@kpm-institute.org www.samschool.org 451-7044

**Fertility, Pre & Post-Natal Class:** 6:30 p.m.-8 p.m. **FREE!** Central Family Practice, 801 W. 34th St. #102 968-2605 sadie@ReproductiveAcupuncture.com www.ReproductiveAcupuncture.com

**Support Group for Parents of Children with Dyslexia:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. **FREE!** Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, 12871 N. U.S. Hwy. 183 JSmith@scottishritelearningcenter.org www.scottishritelearningcenter.org 472-1231

**Clearview Sudbury School Information Session:** 7 p.m.-8 p.m. See Aug. 4

**Mother-Daughter Book Club:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. This is an informal discussion for girls ages 7-12 and their mothers. **FREE!** Manchaca Road Branch Library, 5500 Manchaca Rd. 974-8700

## 13 FRIDAY

**Children's Basilfest:** Call for times. See Aug. 8

**Train Time:** 12:30 p.m. See Aug. 6

**Mother-Daughter Book Club:** 6 p.m.-8 p.m. This is an informal discussion for girls ages 7-12 and their mothers. **FREE!** Milwood Branch Library, 12500 Amherst Dr. 974-9880

**Teen Book Club:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Kids ages 11-18 read and discuss books. Call the library for title. **FREE!** Yarborough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208

**Stargazing at the Roughs:** 9:30 p.m.-11 p.m. An astronomer will tell stories about the constellations and point out other wonders as they appear. Take a lawn chair or a blanket on which to sit. Please call before 5 p.m. to ensure the event hasn't been cancelled due to the weather. **FREE!** LCRA-McKinney Roughs Nature Park, 1884 State Hwy 71 West, Cedar Creek outdoorprograms@lcra.org www.lcra.org/mckinneyroughs 512-303-5073 or 1-800-776-5272, ext. 8021

## 14 SATURDAY

**What Women Need to Know About Divorce:** 8 a.m.-Noon. This workshop deals with the legal, financial, family and personal issues of divorce. Professionally led, participants gain greater understanding of the confusing divorce process. \$45. Please see web site for location. www.austindivorceworkshop.com 732-1244

**FREE Sports Physicals:** 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Dell Children's Medical Center and the Central Texas Alliance of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners will offer these sport physicals. No appointment needed. Athlete must be accompanied by a parent/guardian for permission to participate. **FREE!** Texas A&M Health Science Center, 3950 North A.W. Grimes Boulevard, Suite N201, Round Rock. ctanp@gmail.com www.dellchildrens.net 628-1920

**Family Nature Hike:** 9 a.m.-11 a.m. See Aug. 8

**New Worlds For Newborns:** 9 a.m.-11 a.m. Experts from a variety of fields will share holistic approaches to nurturing your infant. **FREE!** 1414 Kramer Lane 821-9900 lisa@hmskids.com www.hmskids.com

# Calendar

August 11 - 18

**Tot Shabbat:** 9:30 a.m. Clergy-led Reform Shabbat program, age appropriate for children birth to age 5 (all ages are welcome). Snack and topic-related craft follow. **FREE!** Congregation Beth Israel, 3901 Shoal Creek Blvd www.bethisrael.org/ 454-6806

**Holistic Childbirth Preparation:** 9:30 a.m.-Noon. Learn the physiology of late pregnancy, birth and immediate postpartum, as well as ways to enhance your experience and enjoy a more comfortable labor. Call for cost. Birthwise, 2500 Manor Rd. april@birthwisetx.com www.birthwisetx.com 374-9592

**Interpretive Family Nature Hike:** 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. This 1.5 hour hike is suitable for all ages. **FREE!** McKinney Falls, 5808 McKinney Falls Pkwy. jecawilson@yahoo.com www.mckinneyfalls.org

**Family Nature Quest:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. This one-hour hike is designed just for families and ends with a nature craft for kids. **FREE!** but pre-registration is recommended! LCRA-McKinney Roughs Nature Park, 1884 State Hwy 71 West, Cedar Creek outdoorprograms@lcra.org www.lcra.org/mckinneyroughs 512-303-5073

**Austin Ice Cream Festival:** 10 a.m.-7 p.m. Loads of ice cream, plus an ice cream eating contest, popsicle stick sculpture contest, homemade ice cream contest, and yes—a screaming contest! \$5 general admission, free for kids ages 8 and younger. Waterloo Park 403 E 15th St www.icecreamfestival.org

**Bilingual Storytime:** 11 a.m. Kids of all ages learn Spanish and English vocabulary through stories, crafts, and activities. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. kids@wblibrary.org www.wblibrary.org 989-3188

**Family Day at AMOA:** Noon-4 p.m. Today you can discover an eco-friendly way to make art by painting with ice cubes, plus a yoga class at 1 p.m.! \$7 per family Austin Museum of Art Downtown, 823 Congress Ave www.amoa.org 495-9224

**Summer Reading Finale:** Staci Gray Concert: 2 p.m. Celebrate a summer of reading at this fun family concert. Seating is limited, so arrive early! **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. kids@wblibrary.org www.wblibrary.org 989-3188

**Anime Club:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Kids ages 11+ who love anime will enjoy this lively discussion! **FREE!** St. John Branch Library, 7500 Blessing Ave. 974-7570

**Healthy Eating For Kids:** 4 p.m.-5 p.m. Nutrition Therapist Suzi Simmons provides insight into why kids eat the way they do and gives parents practical tips to get healthy foods (like vegetables!) into your kids. **FREE!** Sassy Pea Market, 10820 East Crystal Falls Pkwy., Leander goodearth-school@gmail.com www.sassy-peamarket.com 259-4122

## 15 SUNDAY

**Clearview Sudbury School Open House:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. See Aug. 7

**Keep Austin Beautiful Fashion Show:** 2 p.m. Local designers transform recycled materials into wearable works of art. AMOA-Downtown, 823 Congress Avenue at 9th St. www.AMOA.org 495-9224

## 16 MONDAY

**Covenant MoMs (Mothers of Munchkins):** 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. See Aug. 2

**Grief Group for Teens:** 7 p.m.-9 p.m. See Aug. 2

## 17 TUESDAY

**Car Seat Safety Inspection:** 9 a.m.-Noon. Have your child's car seat inspected by a certified child passenger safety technician. **FREE!** but you must have an appointment. 4477 S. Lamar www.texansinmotion.net 899-8444

**TEXplorations Toddler/Preschool Storytime:** 10 a.m. Also at 11 a.m. Special storytime for kids ages 2-4 that corresponds with the museum's current exhibit. \$4-7 Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 N. Congress Ave. contactus@thestoryoftexas.com www.thestoryoftexas.com 936-8746

**La Leche League Suburban North Austin Evening:** 7 p.m. **FREE!** Seton Williamson County, 201 Seton Parkway, Round Rock (Go to Room 3) 663-2263 lnattinger@gmail.com www.lilaustin.org/

**Pajama Storytime:** 7 p.m. Suitable for ages birth to 5. **FREE!** Yarborough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208

## 18 WEDNESDAY

**MOPS-Spicewood Meeting:** 9:30 a.m. See Aug. 4

*Calendar continues on the next page...*

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# Calendar Calendar

*continued from previous page...*

**La Leche League-West Austin Toddler Group:** 10 a.m. **FREE!** Riverbend Church, 4214 Capital of TX Hwy N. [www.lllaustin.org/](http://www.lllaustin.org/) 301-1170

**Wacky Science:** 5 p.m. See Aug. 4

**Teen Book Club:** 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Kids ages 11-18 read and discuss books. Call the library for this month's selection. **FREE!** Spicewood Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. 974-3800

**Austin Holistic Moms Network:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Support group for moms (and dads) with an interest in natural health and mindful parenting. **FREE!** Brighton Gardens Senior Center (main area), 4401 Spicewood Springs Rd. [stephana@stephana.net](mailto:stephana@stephana.net) [www.holisticmoms.org](http://www.holisticmoms.org) 689-6121

## 19 THURSDAY

**La Leche League-West Austin:** 7 p.m. **FREE!** Riverbend Church, 4214 Capital of TX Hwy N. [www.lllaustin.org/](http://www.lllaustin.org/) 478-8355

## 20 FRIDAY

**MOPS-Georgetown:** 9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. See Aug. 6

**La Leche League-South Austin II:** 10:15 a.m. **FREE!** Hampton Branch Library, 5125 Convict Hill Rd. [www.lllaustin.org/](http://www.lllaustin.org/) 301-4775

**MOMS Club of Pflugerville:** 10:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Support for at home mothers! **FREE!** Call or email for location. [momclubpfw@yahoo.com](mailto:momclubpfw@yahoo.com) [www.geocities.com/momclubpfw/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/momclubpfw/index.html) 670-0953

**Keep Austin Breastfeeding World Breastfeeding Month Celebration:** 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Join Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies for free t-shirts and ice cream to support breastfeeding! **FREE!** Austin City Hall 301 W. Second St [austinworldbreastfeedingday@gmail.com](http://austinworldbreastfeedingday@gmail.com) [www.hmhb-centx.net](http://www.hmhb-centx.net) 512-719-3010

**Anime Club:** 4 p.m. **FREE!** Southeast Austin Community Branch Library, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. 462-1452

**Gaming @ the Library:** 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Games are oodles of fun! Kid will play a variety of programs to invigorate their synapses, test their motor skills, and make a friend or two. **FREE!** Yarborough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208

## 21 SATURDAY

**CPR Class:** 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Sponsored by Nanny Poppinz, this class will teach parents how to do CPR. St. Michael's Episcopal Church, 1500 N. Capitol of Texas Hwy. 924-8188

**Intuitive Energy Healing:** 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Energetic healing & chakra clearing to unblock stagnant energies and increase the natural flow of healthy energy. Healings for domestic animals from 1-2 p.m. **FREE!** but donations accepted. First Spiritualist Church of Austin, 4200 Ave. D [my.spirit.journey@gmail.com](mailto:my.spirit.journey@gmail.com) [www.fscoa.org](http://www.fscoa.org) 458-3987

**Sign Language Storytime:** 11 a.m. See Aug. 7

**6th Annual Bat Fest:** 1 p.m.-Midnight. Arts & crafts, live music, kids activities, and plenty of bat-watching at this uniquely Austin event! **FREE!** Congress Avenue Bridge, downtown Austin. [www.roadwayevents.com/RoadStar/Events-cat.asp?media1Id=1323](http://www.roadwayevents.com/RoadStar/Events-cat.asp?media1Id=1323)

**Anime Club:** 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Kids ages 11+ who love anime will enjoy this lively discussion! **FREE!** Southeast Austin Community Branch Library, 5803 Nuckols Crossing Rd. 462-1452

## 22 SUNDAY

*For events that happen every Sunday around town, please see our August-At-A-Glance Calendar on page 22 or go online: [www.ParentWiseAustin.com/](http://www.ParentWiseAustin.com/)*

## 23 MONDAY

**MOPS Meeting:** 9 a.m.-11:30 See Aug. 9

**Grief Group for Teens:** 7 p.m.-9 p.m. See Aug. 2

## 24 TUESDAY

**Texas Outdoors-Woman Network:** 6 p.m. Enjoy fishing, kayaking and other outdoor sports? Meet women who share your interests at this monthly meeting. **FREE!** 3601 Lake Austin Blvd., Rm 225 [www.townaustin.org](http://www.townaustin.org)

**Birth Circle:** 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m. The Central Texas Birth Network hosts this free monthly event for expectant families to learn more about birth and make connections with other families. **FREE!** Birthwise Birth Center., 2500 Manor Road. 633-5449 [info@centexbirthnetwork.org](mailto:info@centexbirthnetwork.org) [centexbirthnetwork.org/birth\\_circle.aspx](http://centexbirthnetwork.org/birth_circle.aspx)

# Calendar

August 18 - 31

## 25 WEDNESDAY

### MOMS Club-Round Rock North:

10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. Social & support group for stay-at-home moms and their children. **FREE!** Email for location. RRNorthMOMSClub@gmail.com www.meetup.com/sahm-2930/

### MOMS Club of Austin-NW:

10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Social and support group for at-home moms and their children. Meet new friends for activities and fun, plus listen to a guest speaker. **FREE!** Email for location. www.meetup.com/MOMSClubAustinNW/

### Sew What Teen Sewing Night:

6 p.m.-8 p.m. Basic sewing techniques and quick projects for ages 12-17. Materials provided. **FREE!** Yarborough Branch Library, 2200 Hancock Dr. 454-7208

### HypnoBirthing:

6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. This 5-week course teaches how to create a peaceful, respectful birth through Hypnosis. Call for cost. Birthwise, 2500 Manor Rd. april@birthwisetx.com www.birthwisetx.com 374-9592

**Kids Who Kare:** 7 p.m. See Aug. 11

### Pajama Storytime:

7 p.m. Suitable for kids ages birth to 5. **FREE!** Spicewood Springs Branch Library, 8637 Spicewood Springs Rd. 974-3800

## 26 THURSDAY

### La Leche League-San Marcos:

10 a.m. **FREE!** Call or email for location. 512-878-0792 or 512-268-6862

## 27 FRIDAY

### Informal Massage Class:

7 p.m.-8 p.m. Learn a simple but effective routine for massaging forearm, wrist and hand. Ideal for beginners! **FREE!** Lauterstein-Conway Massage School, 4701-B Burnet Road info@TLCschool.com www.tlc-school.com/courses-upcoming-events?utm\_campaign=IMC&utm\_source=ParentWiseCal 374-9222

## 28 SATURDAY

**Tot Shabbat:** 9:30 a.m. See Aug. 14

### Interpretive Family Nature Hike:

10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. See Aug. 14

### Texas Bamboo Festival:

10 a.m.-6 p.m. Educational presentations, a live plant auction, and bamboo plants, poles and crafts for sale. **FREE!** (parking \$3) Zilker Botanical Garden, 2220 Barton Springs Rd. bamboo@bamboocentral.net www.bamboocentral.net 929-9565

**Bilingual Storytime:** 11 a.m. See Aug. 14

### Saturday Morning Film Club:

Noon. Watch a classic kids' movie while enjoying free games and prizes. Be sure to call and verify time! **FREE!** Alamo South Lamar - 1120 S. Lamar Blvd. www.origionalalamo.com 476-1320

### Family Dance Party:

6 p.m.-8 p.m. Kid and parents dance to the high-energy Zimbabwean music of Rattletree Marimba. \$7. adults, **FREE!** for kids. Ruta Maya, 3601 S. Congress www.rattletree.com

## 29 SUNDAY

**Texas Bamboo Festival:** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. See Aug. 28

### 20th Annual Austin Chronicle Hot Sauce Festival:

11 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Local music, a heated hot sauce competition and a Sizzlin' Raffle for great prizes. Admission is **FREE!** with the donation of 3 healthy, non-perishable food items. Waterloo Park 403 E 15th St www.austinchronicle.com/gyrobase/Market/HotSauce

### Identification Day:

1 p.m.-4:45 p.m. Scientists and experts will identify natural objects (fossils, rocks, arrowheads, etc.) kids have found and provide more information about them. **FREE!** Texas Memorial Museum, 2400 Trinity St. www.TexasMemorialMuseum.org 471-1604

## 30 MONDAY

### Austin Mothers of Multiples:

6:30 p.m.-9 p.m. Support group for mothers of twins, triplets, quads and more. **FREE!** St. George's Episcopal Church, Kleberg Hall, 4301 N. IH 35 (Near Airport Blvd.) jleonard82@gmail.com www.austinmoms.org 703-6174

## 31 TUESDAY

### MOMS Club of Pflugerville-SE Meeting:

10:30 a.m. Meet and share stories and ideas (and have fun!) with other stay-at-home moms. **FREE!** Pflugerville Recreation Center, 400 Immanuel Rd. 535-4192 momsclub-pflugervillesoutheast@yahoo.com www.geocities.com/mom-sclubpville

### Mother-Daughter Book Club:

6:30 p.m. Girls ages 7-12 and their mothers discuss *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo. **FREE!** Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Dr. kids@wblibrary.org www.wblibrary.org 989-3188

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# Family Theater, Movies & Exhibits:



**Odysseus' trip home from the Trojan War comes to life in *The Odyssey: A Rock Musical* Aug. 13 through Sept. 4 at the Dougherty Arts Center Theatre.**

*Photo courtesy: Freddy Carnes Productions*

**Aladdin:** Through Aug. 5. The Scottish Rite Children's Theatre presents this classic tale suitable for kids ages 3-10. \$10 adults, \$8 kids (ages 1-12), \$4 infants 12 months and younger. Scottish Rite Theatre, 207 West 18th. [www.srct.org](http://www.srct.org) or 472-5436

**Los Adaes – 18th-Century Spanish Capital of Texas:** This online exhibit is a fun way to spend the afternoon learning about Texas history. The site also features archeology, history, art and science activities for kids in grades K-12. [www.texasbeyondhistory.net/adaes/](http://www.texasbeyondhistory.net/adaes/)

**Texas Sculptor Society Exhibit:** Through Aug. 29. View beautiful sculptures amid the flora and fauna of The Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center. \$8 adults, \$3 kid ages 5-12, free for children younger than 5. 4801 La Crosse Ave. 232-0100 [www.wildflower.org/exhibits](http://www.wildflower.org/exhibits).

**The Odyssey: A Rock Musical:** Opens Aug. 13 and runs through Sept. 4. A live rock band provides background music for this epic story of Odysseus and his remarkable journey home after the Trojan War. \$7.50-15 Dougherty Arts Center Theatre, 1110 Barton Springs Rd. [freddycarnes@yahoo.com](mailto:freddycarnes@yahoo.com), 891-8387

**The Tinkerer's Workshop:** This permanent exhibit is designed to inspire children to investigate engineering concepts, tinker and build things, observe materials and tell someone about it. \$3.50-\$5.50, kids under 12 months free. Austin Children's Museum, 201 Colorado St. [www.austinkids.org](http://www.austinkids.org) or 472-2499

**Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center Nature Photography and Pottery Exhibit:** Through Aug. 21. Kids will be fascinated by these vivid photos of things like pollen-covered bees harvesting nectar or a spider's intricate web, while parents will appreciate the masterful pottery. \$8 adults, \$3 kid ages 5-12, free for children younger than 5. 4801 La Crosse Ave. [www.wildflower.org/exhibits](http://www.wildflower.org/exhibits) or 232-0100.

**Texas: The Big Picture:** Give the kids an overview of what our big state looks like. This film is suitable for young children, who will enjoy the huge screen, neat pictures, and music. \$7 for adults, \$6 for seniors, \$5 for ages 3 to 18 and free for ages 2 and younger. IMAX Theatre at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, 1800 N. Congress. [www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com) or 936-8746

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The project is funded and supported in part by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division and by a grant from the Social Commission of the Arts and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which we would like to gratefully acknowledge.

photos by: Ansel Nash  
dancer: Amanda D'Avella  
Soprano Fairy 2009

# My Life as a Parent: Meets Menopause:

The Hair Edition — by Michele Ranard

Last week I chatted with our 17-year old son, whom we'll call Deathmetal, and his friend C-Squirrel in the kitchen after school. Deathmetal and C-Squirrel play electric guitar for a screamo band named for French pirates, and the band practices regularly in our basement. Ever had the pleasure of hearing emo screamo in person? Allow this midlife mama to enlighten.

Imagine: an absence of melody, volume which induces ears and spleens to bleed, repetitive vomiting sounds, machine gun fire percussion, and incoherent vocals beckoning brain hemorrhages. This genre definitely does not tingle my jingles, but then again, it wouldn't be cool if it did. All of us here at Emo Central have grown accustomed to quaking upstairs during practices. (Almost all of us...several neighbors have relocated).

We're happy these hormonal teens can express themselves and release pent-up energy via music. After all, I'm hormonal, too, so I truly 'get' emo. My kids are happy I have prescriptions to balance the emo elements of peri-menopause (which is essentially a second adolescence).

But back to C-Squirrel. I guess my chemically-induced stable mood had to be wrecked eventually...

*Très important background information:* my teen son is not a licensed cosmetologist.

**DEATHMETAL:** I'm gonna give C-SQUIRREL a haircut.

**ME:** Okay. (Like I said, I was feeling a groovy groovy pharmaceutical calm.) 30 minutes later.

**C-SQUIRREL:** How do I look?

**ME** (*overenthusiastic and with genuine relief, as C-Squirrel required no First Aid*): GREAT!

Oddly, C-Squirrel announces he needs to hop in the shower. Hmmmm. So his hair was dirty and dry for the cut?

I retreat to the kitchen to grill pork chops for dinner. At which point I discover two things:

(A.) Blunt tiny school scissors on the counter used by Death to cut off his friend's mop—and—

(B.) an evilicious three foot diameter nest of dark hair in a heap upon

the kitchen floor.

Have I mentioned my OCD? My inner Bitchy Von Bitchy? Eff NOOOOOOOO! They did *not* just cut hair near my kitchen! This is not happening! Why dearlord did I get the idiot son?

Deep cleansing breath. It's too late. We did our best. College is soooo right around the corner. Yes. We. Can. Make the nest. Disappear.

I proceed to sweep. Something through French doors catches my eye—is it more hair on the screen porch floor? Utterly terrified, it becomes clear every friggin inch of the porch and the wraparound deck is littered with dirty hair.

**INNER-BITCHY VON BITCHY:** Sweet mother, hair

is evvvvverywhere! How is this possible? There is no undoing this crappiest of messes! Both parties must die! They know I can't stomach crapstorms! I have problems. I have problems! Why do they hate

me? What would Jackie O do? Who am I kidding? John-John would never have made crapshackle of Jackie's veranda. That kid loved his mama. Hair! All that hair! Those slackers should be out here, BUT THEY'D NEVER GET IT CLEAN.

I spend the next 75 nauseating minutes trembling, quietly cursing, and sweeping dirty hair. When I regained a modicum of maternal composure, I demanded the boys sweep for another half hour. The following day I spoke calmly with Death on the phone.

**ME:** You cannot give another haircut in our home again.

**DEATH:** It was a HAIRCUT, mom. No big deal. I didn't know you'd be THAT bothered.

**ME:** You used school scissors and plastered our porch and deck—and my kitchen!—with hair. I have problems. Didn't I tell you about my problems?

**DEATH:** Yeah. But I didn't think they were that bad.

**ME:** They are.

*They are.*

*Michele Ranard loves her crazycool teens. She is a freelancer with a blog at [www.mommyfails.com](http://www.mommyfails.com).*

*Aaron Romo is our award-winning Illustrator-at-Large. Read his blog: [aaronromo.blogspot.com](http://aaronromo.blogspot.com)*



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BIG THANKS & HUGS TO  
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MAKING THE FRIDGE PAGE POSSIBLE!

# AUGUST