

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

OCTOBER 2023
VOLUME 25 ISSUE 10

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AS
CANDY**

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Stepping into Dance

DETERMINING THE PERFECT AGE TO BEGIN DANCE CLASSES

The ideal age for children to start dance classes can vary depending on the child's individual development and readiness. Generally, most dance studios offer classes for children as young as two or three years old. However, it's important to consider the following factors:

1. Motor skills and coordination: Children should have a basic level of motor skills and coordination to participate in dance classes. This typically develops around the age of three or four.
2. Attention span: Children should be able to follow instructions and have a sufficient attention span to engage in dance classes. Generally, by the age of three or four, children can start to focus and follow directions more effectively.
3. Interest and enthusiasm: Children who show an interest in music, movement, and

dance may be ready to start classes at a younger age. If your child expresses a desire to dance or shows an inclination towards rhythmic activities, it might be a good time to explore dance classes.

Remember that each child develops at their own pace, so it's essential to consider their individual readiness and preferences. It's also beneficial to consult with dance instructors or studios in your area, as they can provide specific guidelines and recommendations based on their expertise and the programs they offer.

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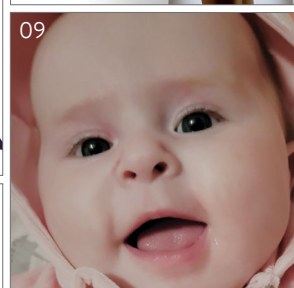
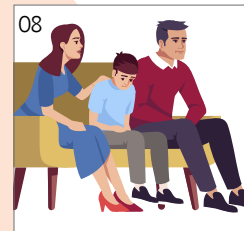
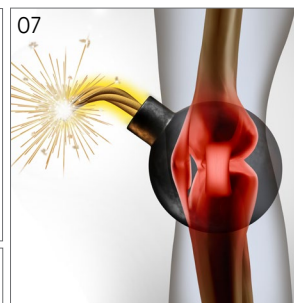
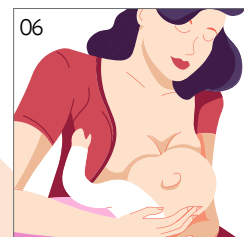
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COVER

Anastasia was so quiet and calm at her photo shoot. Our pro-swaddler/photographer, Cynthia, obviously worked her magic! Thanks to mom who sourced candy corn in April, and who drove to Hamilton to pick up this cute candy corn hat a friend knit.

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WE HAVE THE **KNACK** FOR HACKS!

I truly adore October – I love fall sweater-weather, the gratitude of Thanksgiving, and of course, Halloween, a chance to dress up and let loose. The other things we adore here at The Mom & Caregiver are hacks – we love helping parents get things done efficiently! So here are some of my October holiday faves:

THANKSGIVING

- 1 Print out Thanksgiving recipes and tape them at eye level all along your kitchen cabinets.
- 2 Keep mashed potatoes warm in a slow cooker.
- 3 Boil cinnamon sticks, apple peels, orange rinds and whole cloves for a festive smelling home.
- 4 Cover the kids' table with craft paper and set out crayons to keep them entertained. Heck, cover the adults' table in craft paper too so guests can leave messages of thankfulness.
- 5 Cook stuffing in muffin tins for easy serving and yummy crispy edges.
- 6 Make pumpkin pie bites from a store bought pie (can you say Costco?) using a round biscuit cutter and top with spray can whipped cream.
- 7 Triple line the trash in advance so when you haul out a full garbage, a new bag awaits.

HALLOWEEN

- 1 Make a spooky wreath by hot gluing ping pong balls onto a wreath form, then gluing a googly eye to each one.
- 2 Add gummy worms before freezing ice cubes to make a spooky drink – if they stick out of the cube, that's even creepier!
- 3 Add bug confetti (find it at the dollar store) to hand soap to gross out your family.
- 4 Use a drill to make a fun and easy jack o' lantern. Want even easier? Stuff it with Christmas lights instead of a lit candle.
- 5 Spray paint an old Christmas village black. Cover in cobwebs and tiny paper bats to make a spooky scene.
- 6 Dye pantyhose with KoolAid to get green, blue or pink legs for a costume.
- 7 Use spare sheets draped over furniture to give your house a deserted, eerie look for a Halloween party.

Wishing you all a blessed Thanksgiving and a fun-filled Halloween!

Sabrina



For More Details and Events Visit

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OCTOBER 2023 & EVENTS

02ND The Wiggles!
Ready, Steady, Wiggle Tour,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

07TH Phantom of the Opera,
Grand Theatre High School Project,
www.grandtheatre.com

09TH Happy
Thanksgiving!

14TH Oxford Renaissance Festival,
Dorchester Fairgrounds,
www.faires.ca

17TH Kim's Convenience,
Grand Theatre,
www.grandtheatre.com

20TH London Beatlemania,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

31ST Happy
Halloween!

06TH London Knights vs. North Bay,
Budweiser Gardens,
www.chl.ca/ohl-knights

08TH Multicultural Sundays at the Market,
Covent Garden Market,
www.coventmarket.com

09TH Turkey Trot, Springbank Park,
www.londonroadraces.ca/springbank-relays.php

15TH Free Spider Web Weaving,
East Lions Community Centre,
www.london.ca/living-london/parks-facilities/community-centres/east-lions-community-centre

19TH Moon Market,
Duck & Dodo,
www.duckanddodo.ca

28TH Halloween in the Village,
Wortley Village,
www.facebook.com/wortleyhalloween

*Editorial photography
by Cynthia Moore.*



Thanksgiving Handprint Poem

*"I made a little turkey,
as you can plainly see.*

*This turkey is extra special
since it holds a piece of me.
I used my hand to make it,
and pressed it on my own.*

*So you will always remember
years later when I'm grown."*



“ *There is a child in every one of us who is still a
trick-or-treater looking for a brightly-lit front porch.* **”**

- Robert Brault

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MOM & CAREGIVER

ENABLE BREASTFEEDING - MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Canadian Breastfeeding Week is celebrated from October 1 to 7 each year. The week is set aside to raise awareness about the critical role breastfeeding plays for the nutrition, immunologic protection, growth and development of young children.

This year, the theme Enabling Breastfeeding – Making a Difference for Working Parents is meant to focus attention on breastfeeding and its benefits not just to the parent, child and family, but to the work place and broader economy as well.

IMPORTANCE TO THE FAMILY

Exclusive breastfeeding (baby getting only breastmilk) is recommended for the first six months, with continued breastfeeding along with solid foods for up to two years and beyond.

- Breastmilk is perfectly designed for a child's nutritional needs and helps to prevent infections.
- Breastfeeding supports parent and child attachment, provides food security to infants, and ensures the breastfeeding parent and child have the opportunity to be healthy.
- Breastfeeding is important for the breastfeeding parent's health as it decreases the risk of developing breast and ovarian cancer, depression, type 2 diabetes and weak bones.

IMPORTANCE TO THE ECONOMY

Breastfed babies are healthier babies which reduces time off for working parents needing to care for sick children. Breastfeeding also reduces healthcare costs and nurtures economic growth by increasing the overall well-being of the population.

Employers benefit from not just reduced employee absenteeism, but when workplace breastfeeding policies are in place, it can increase employee satisfaction, loyalty, productivity and retention.

BREASTFEEDING-FRIENDLY WORKPLACES

The Ontario Human Rights Code has a policy that provides a strong rationale for implementing policies that support the breastfeeding parent in the workplace. Ways to do this include flexible work schedules, on-site childcare, virtual work and part-time work. Environmental support would include designating a clean, comfortable and private space within the workplace for employees to feed or express breastmilk. The space could include a comfortable chair, electrical outlet, baby changing station, hand washing facilities and signage to ensure privacy.

If you are interested in developing a workplace breastfeeding policy, check out our website for further information: <https://www.healthunit.com/workplace-breastfeeding>.

We ALL play a critical role in empowering families and sustaining breastfeeding friendly environments. How can you help?

- Be a supportive colleague for flexible work arrangements
- Learn about the importance of breastfeeding
- Support the implementation of an organizational breastfeeding policy

To learn more about breastfeeding and local support, check out Middlesex-London Health Unit

www.healthunit.com/breastfeeding

or call 519-663-5317. 📞

REFERENCES

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World Health Organization. (2023). World breastfeeding week 2023 key messages. www.who.int/campaigns/world-breastfeeding-week/2023/key-messages



MAKE NO BONES ABOUT IT!

In October, skeletons adorn many doorways in anticipation of Halloween. Have you given thought to your own skeleton? It is a hidden star that is the architectural framework for your body. We take it for granted that it will always hold us up.

We lose bone mass over the years and are prone to breaking bones as we get older. Osteoporosis is a condition of brittle bones or weaker bones. Osteopenia is the initial stage of lower bone mass that has not reached the point of osteoporosis. Both men and women can be susceptible to loss of bone. Women tend to be more at risk and lose bone strength most rapidly after menopause.

How can we prevent loss of bone over the years? There are simple recommendations that can help us to decrease bone loss:

Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men and proud grandmother of three! She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 30 years on the job!

1 Get enough calcium in your diet. Calcium is best absorbed through food rather than through supplements. The osteoporosis society of Canada has a great resource that outlines food sources of calcium. Take stock to see if you are getting enough.

www.osteoporosis.ca/?gad=1

2 Take a vitamin D supplement. We don't get enough vitamin D, especially in the dark winter months. Using 2000 IU a day throughout the year or at least from Thanksgiving to Easter will help you to get this bone important vitamin.

3 Exercise!! Weight bearing exercise can prevent bone loss.

4 Focus on improving your balance. Even if you do have bone loss, doing some form of exercise to decrease falls - think tai chi or yoga - is important to lessen fractures.

5 Check with your primary care provider whether you might need to get a bone density test to know where you are at.



Talk to your family doctor especially if you have risks such as age over 65, kidney disease, a family history of osteoporosis, have been on steroids or have had a broken bone with little trauma.

Osteoporosis is scary because it can lead to major fractures such as hip or spine. Make your skeleton healthy enough to display on Halloween! 🎃



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READER DISCRETION IS ADVISED

Now that I have your attention, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Daniel Burdis and I'm a 40 year old un-statused Indigenous man with a larger side British ancestry (hence the un-statused). I'm a licensed Tool Maker working as a General Manager of a machine shop (or as my 9 year old son would say, "generally managing").

My stories will include love, fear, faith, adventure, lust, tragedy (a tribute to my love of *The Princess Bride*) as we ride through the rollercoaster of my life. Here's a brief synopsis:

- My unexpected arrival was in London, Ontario to a 16 year old, well-rounded, great decision-making mother and father.
- Day 1 - put up for adoption... but after some consideration, I was brought back home to take my place as the first-born illegitimate bastard.
- At 7, I became a big brother to a brother. At 10, I became a big brother to a sister. Our family was forming nicely until, to my surprise, at around 12, my parents separated. I moved in with my Dad until our constant conflict pushed us apart and we didn't speak for a year, and then he died in a boating accident. That was the catalyst that started years of loss... it seems many deaths followed in his place (uncles, cousins, friends and grandparents).
- Fast forward a few years later, I joined the high school drama team as the lead actor and met the love of my life, Lindsay, as the stage manager that helped me to learn my lines... and some other things (wink wink).
- This is where my life gets on track. I head to college, graduate with a full-time job, put a ring on it, get married, buy the house! In 2014, my son was born. In 2017, we welcomed our daughter. Life is good, very good.
- 2019 - tragedy strikes again. Our family is in a car accident heading back from a summer vacation down south. My daughter as I knew her, a neurotypical one year old, is gone. This begins a new chapter in my life... learning to be a father of a child with very special needs.

In upcoming months, I will break down certain events in detail (with my potty mouth and very unorthodox ways). So bare with me... 🙄

Daniel Burdis is a father of two and husband of one, who always strives to put family first. He will share tales of adventures throughout his life, but his main goal is to be the relatable father who makes questionable decisions!





ANASTASIA'S STORY


The year 2014 was supposed to be the second greatest year next to 2013 when we said our "I Dos". I was pregnant! I had gone in for my ultrasound that morning. The baby was doing great, the heartbeat was strong and everything was going as planned. I was so excited. But on my way home, I was rear ended by a vehicle and put into oncoming traffic. All I can remember saying was "I'm pregnant, I'm pregnant." I was told three weeks later that the baby had died upon impact, but because I had sustained so much trauma, the health care professionals and my family thought it was best not to tell me immediately.

As months and years went by, my husband and I could not conceive on our own. We decided to start rounds of IUI treatments. I was successful for two of them, but oddly enough I would always miscarry around the anniversary date of the accident. We were sent off to specialists in Toronto to run tests and everything came back normal with both

my husband and I. We were told that the recurrent miscarriages were unexplainable but may have been partly caused by PTSD I had been suffering since the accident. The last thing we decided to try was IVF. We both agreed that this would be the final thing as it was just too much for me. IVF was another disappointment. They were confident at this point that I would not be able to have any children and my hopes and dreams of becoming a mother were shattered.

Fast forward to the year 2022, when I found out I was pregnant! I was in disbelief. I had so many mixed emotions but most of all, I was scared. I did not want to go through another miscarriage after finally accepting everything that could not be.

I struggled through the whole pregnancy.

My husband and family were my number one supporters and helped me get through it all. We had many scares along the way, but baby was definitely a fighter. On February 3, 2023, weighing 6lbs 11oz, we welcomed our miracle baby, Anastasia Valentina. My heart and soul have never felt so complete. 

*Written by Evelyn Pavlakidis-Soares,
mom of our cover kid, Anastasia*




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SCREEN TIME IS SCARY

This year, we've been on a journey that has taken us part way through language development, mostly from infancy to toddlerhood. There are amazing things happening in our brains during these formative years. But I wanted to take a pause this month to talk about something not so good that can happen. Something I and many others like me have seen happening in households around the world that is quite alarming and easily preventable.

Screen time affects children's development negatively. There's really no other way to say it. It started happening way before the pandemic with the advent of smart phones and tablets. The more screen time a child has access to, the higher the chance their development in several domains is going to be affected negatively.

First, it was the study out of Sick Kids. Then, more recently, it's a study out of Japan with a

staggering number of participants (over 7000 families!) that showed a scary connection between screen time and kids' communication and global development at ages two and four. These studies prove what we Speech-Pathologists have suspected all along and see on a daily basis when we assess toddlers: More likely than not, the toddler we see for speech delay is receiving screen time that is more than what is recommended for their age. Alarmingly more.

We can make a pretty educated guess as to how screen time affects children's development: Screen time takes away from opportunities for kids to interact with people. In previous articles, we discussed

how important it is that we interact with our babies to optimize their development. Screen time takes away from that interaction.

But it's not just kids' screen time that affects them... parent and caregiver screen time also affects their kids' development. Stay tuned for next month's thoughts, as your Friendly Neighbourhood Speech Pathologist talks more about this very important topic and how to find ways for everyone to safely enjoy screens for the sake of their children's development. 🧠



Mohamed (Mo) Oshalla, MHSc.Speech-Language Pathologist
& Executive Director, Ontario Speech & Language Services





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MEET **ADI AND LANDER!**

What are you really good at?

What do you want to learn to do better?

Adi: I am really good at biking. I would like to be able to do cart wheels better.

Lander: I'm really good at video games. I want to play soccer better.

What do you find annoying?

Adi: It's annoying when my brother keeps on poking me and I tell him to stop.

Lander: When I am in a video game and my sister bothers me, that's annoying!

What has someone taught you that you'll never forget?

Adi: My mom and dad taught me how to be kind.

Lander: It's always important to remember how to be kind.

What do you think your grown-up life will be like?

Adi: I will be strong, have blonde hair and have cute kids!

Lander: I will be a lawyer. 🥰



Meet our new Kid Zone writers, 10 and 6 year old siblings,

Lander and Adi! *Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.*



PROUDLY PRESENTED BY DANCE EXTREME INC.



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I DARE YOU TO FAIL

The graffitied tracks hidden beneath the canopy of trees is an amazing feast for the eyes - a railroad bridge that has welcomed many courageous and somewhat foolish young men, including my own son! Two arrived to put their testosterone to the test. No sooner had one expertly made it to the middle, 50 ft. above ground, than the other froze with fear. "I can't move!" he stammered. He was in panic mode. He crawled on all fours, muttering something about physics and the more space covered by his hands and knees, the better. Did he fail? No! He was alive, he tried, found a solution, swallowed his pride, pivoted and carried on.

Failure is about perspective. "Fear of failure" messes with women's minds and holds us back from greatness. Fear of failure is foolishness. Failure is code for "pivot and try again, head held high!" Accept failure as necessary, helpful and sometimes even protective.

The greater loss is never failing, never pivoting, never seeing how purposeful shifting is. Failing is required to stretch, grow, change, feel badass and live a full and purposeful life! Failure is part of the "living not surviving" lifestyle.

Today, I pray you step out, by faith, and try something really hard because you know you want to, you need to. I pray you let go of the fear of failure and embrace pivoting. I pray you find freedom from your fears and face your giants with renewed strength, fervor and determination. &

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Marcy Demelo is an Entrepreneur, Career Coach and Educator, teaching you how to reinvent yourself to live out your passion. Find her on Instagram at [waymaker_inc](https://www.waymakerinc.ca) and at www.waymakerinc.ca.

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THIS DIETITIAN'S APPROACH TO HALLOWEEN

Time flies and it's already Halloween again! The influx of candy, chocolate and chips can make some parents feel anxious. As parents, we want our kids to experience all the fun, like carving pumpkins and dressing up, but it's normal to feel uncomfortable or not sure about how to handle all the candy that will be entering the home. You're not alone!

My philosophy and approach to sugars is in line with the Division of Responsibility, created by Ellyn Satter. I set realistic expectations. Too much of something (like sugars) can be harmful, but to expect ourselves and our kids to completely abstain from all added sugars is completely unrealistic. By forming our own healthy relationships with food and modelling these healthy behaviours, we can avoid over-consumption of foods (and sugar) becoming a "problem".

The goal of Ellyn Satter's approach is to raise kids who can eat intuitively, making decisions about how much to eat that align with their body and needs. This helps build skills that kids will use for the rest of their lives, fostering healthy eating and a healthy relationship with food.

Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. Visit www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca for more information.

HOW TO APPLY THIS APPROACH FOR HALLOWEEN

This year, I plan to offer Halloween candy with meals and/or with snacks throughout the entire month of November. A little bit each day or a few times a week takes the novelty out of these foods and often results in kids just having a couple on Halloween night. It may be surprising to hear, but kids with the least food rules often don't even eat all the Halloween candy they bring home! It ends up sitting in a bowl in the cupboard for months on end.

When your kids come home with pillowcases full of candy, try to take the focus off the candy and talk about the costumes they saw while they were out, what their favorite house was to visit and why, who had the best costume, did they see friends, etc.

At the same time, if the kids seem very excited about the candy, don't try to divert that convo. Engage with them and get inquisitive – ask them which one they will try first, which one is their favorite, show them which one is your fav, etc. A healthy conversation can go a long way.

If Halloween candy has been an issue and a constant battle in the past, or like us, this is only your first or second time taking your little one out trick-or-treating and you're nervous about what to expect, give this approach a try!

Happy Halloween! 🍬



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TO PLAY OR NOT TO PLAY?

Hands up - how many of you have been asked to play hide and seek, or have a tea party for the millionth time? Playing the same games over and over can be tedious as a parent especially while trying to balance working, maintaining our homes and our sanity. Parenting is no easy task these days and can lead to us spending less time enjoying our children, but did you ever consider YOUR benefits when playing with your kids?

We all know there are lots of benefits for our kids when we play with them, from boosting their self-esteem to improving emotional regulation. But no one really talks about how beneficial play is for parents. One of the biggest benefits is oxytocin, a hormone that is released in our bodies when we engage with our children and it:

- 1 Reduces our blood pressure
- 2 Decreases our heart rate
- 3 Reduces cortisol levels (cortisol is a stress hormone)
- 4 Increases pain threshold (so when your child jumps on your back, it will hurt less)
- 5 Has an anxiolytic-like effect (reduces anxiety, increases calmness and relaxation)
- 6 Promotes healing (so when your child jumps on your back, you will heal faster)

Another lifelong benefit when we play with our kids is strengthening our relationship with them. Children feel loved and supported when they know that the most important person in their world plays with them. Play is commonly used in therapy as it allows children to open up and share about problems they

have a hard time communicating. This is translated into less emotional outburst and less stress in the family.

So the next time your child wants another round of hide and seek, remember it's as good for you as it is for them! 🧘

Becky Morrison is a Nurse Practitioner based out of Calgary who has specialized in mental health for over a decade. She is finally, after years of infertility, a mother of two busy little boys, and doting fur mom of her gentle giant, Stella. She is, and always will be, a strong advocate for mental wellness at all ages.



STRATHCRAFT AWARDS

From our
Family
to yours



Each month we introduce you to a business that offers families in London and the surrounding area services or products you won't want to miss. 🍷

Established in 1918, StrathCraft Awards, located in London, Ontario, has been creating custom products for distinguished organizations across Canada and the USA. With partnerships with the RCMP, Thames Valley District School Board, Police Fire EMS and Military, they offer exclusive lines of award products tailored to their client requests. Lynne Ryckman, the Managing Partner, envisions taking the company's expertise to a broader market, aiming to provide people with the pleasure of owning unique, handmade niche products to enjoy in your home. "There isn't really anything StrathCraft cannot make or engrave onto," says Ryckman.

Building on 100 years of manufacturing success with crests, badges and medallions, StrathCraft capitalized on the Yeti engraving market which helped sustain the company during the COVID-19 pandemic. Volumes were so high, this led to the purchase of a second laser engraving machine to keep up with the demand. More requests for engraving on charcuterie boards, a variety of tumblers, and customer-supplied items like Swiss Army knives and leather patches for hats and clothing came in. This has led to a much requested line of nursery room décor on sustainable wood materials for your home.

The pandemic was a great reset for StrathCraft. It led to new staffing, processes and procedures that reinvigorated the company. StrathCraft took the opportunity to employ many new Canadians to capitalize on their expertise and education obtained in their own country. "It is a pleasure to come to work every day and be part of a wonderful team of such hardworking individuals," says Ryckman of her staff. "Staff contribute new ideas, products and designs almost daily for consideration. Our skilled graphic designers work with the laser and casting departments to produce quality products". With their dedication to craftsmanship and innovation, StrathCraft ensures their products mark moments of accomplishment and become cherished keepsakes for years to come.

For more information visit www.strathcraft.com.




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UNLOCK THE POWER OF GRATITUDE!

There's an antidote to help you and your children boost emotional and mental well-being. It's called GRATITUDE. Research has shown that practicing gratitude can reduce stress, enhance relationships and contribute to overall well-being and emotional development.

Here are 3 activities that are a fun way to practice and express gratitude.

1. VISUAL DISPLAY

To help your child develop a positive and appreciative outlook, have them create a banner, a board or a collage. Each day, encourage them to write one aspect of their life that they are grateful for, and the reason for being grateful, then have them place it on their display. It could be an experience, a person, an object or even a feeling. If they are struggling to think of something, prompt them by having them say out loud, 'I am grateful for ____.' This will trigger their brain to think of an answer.

2. JOURNALING

Journaling creates a practice of connecting to gratitude and helps with their writing skills. Daily entries in their own private journal about the people, events and things for which they are grateful help them with emotional resilience and self-esteem. For those who may say, like my son, 'I can't think of anything', here are some helpful hints:

- *What did you do today that was fun?*
- *What makes you happy?*
- *What do you look forward to when you wake up?*
- *What's something you learned today?*
- *Who or what makes you smile?*
- *Who was kind to you today?*

3. CREATE A JAR OF JOY

Begin by providing a jar large enough to hold daily gratitude notes. Then personalize the jar with decorations using ribbons, stickers, pompoms, sparkles and markers.



After decorating the jar, it's time to add the notes they have written about people, places or things. They can also add photos or cut out images from magazines that depict their gratefulness. Whenever they are having a challenging moment where they need a joyful lift, encourage them to take a gratitude note from their jar and have a brief discussion about it. Remind them that even on challenging days, there's always something for which to be grateful.

Modelling to your child(ren) what gratitude looks like, by mentioning what you are grateful for during your day, shows them that this practice is valuable for all ages. Until next time... &

Sara Westbrook is a professional speaker and creator of UPower Inc, offering keynotes, presentations and workshops on 'Emotions Change Choices' to audiences ages 4 -100. She can be found at sarawestbrook.com or on Instagram @iamsarawestbrook.



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AUTUMN EXPLORATION

These cooler temperatures and changing colours are warming our hearts. As the leaves don their vibrant new shades, and the fresh air adds a rosy glow to our little ones' cheeks, a profound love for this season stirs within many of us.

For me, autumn is a time to connect with nature - the perfect weather for pulling on our favourite cozy sweaters, grabbing that pumpkin spice latte, and taking a long walk outside. Taking our little ones with us through nature this time of year is such an incredible opportunity to learn so much, as well as create slow, mindful moments, taking in all the new sights, sounds and smells.

Amongst some of our favourite outdoor activities, bird watching this time of year can be both exciting and educational, as many birds are migrating or preparing for the long winter ahead. Watching them forage for insects and berries, collect materials for their homes, or loudly singing on those sunny cool days makes for great bird-watching. Our

favourite must-haves on these hikes include a fabric bag/tote or basket for collecting interesting items, and our new NOCS monocular (or binoculars). Being able to get a close up look at forest life in the treetops is a really magical experience for kids (for us all, really), and the microscope attachment is such a great idea, allowing us to see the tiniest of details up close.

Collecting a variety of colourful fallen leaves, twigs, nuts and more to bring home while exploring is a fun activity. This is the perfect opportunity to fill our basket and stock up on items for crafting over the winter

months. Pinterest and Instagram have many sources of inspiration for nature themed crafts using foraged materials, but one of our absolute favourites is the incredible @woodlark (woodlarkblog.com).

Happy fall all! 🍂

Ashley Satchell, owner, Featherfields



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SAY NO #LIKEAMOM

Attention my fellow parents, supermoms, mom-preneurs, master jugglers, over-committers, multi-taskers, over-achievers and CHOs (Chief Household Officers)! Life as a mom can be a real circus, and mastering the art of saying “no” will not only save you stress and anxiety but is a significant act of self-respect. Think of the word NO as the feather duster used to sweep away the unnecessary dust bunnies that clutter your life.

Imagine you're a plate juggler at the circus, and each plate represents a part of your life—family, business, sanity, you name it! To keep those plates from crashing, you've got to decide which are your finest China and which are just Royal Chinette.

Identify all of the stuff that keeps you busy. How much time are you spending on paper plates? Your fine China should be your biggest priorities, like self-care, family time, career, friends, volunteering, etc. These should be

the things that bring you joy, health, wealth, and more time. Now consider all of the other monkeys at your circus. Are they paper plates, or do they deserve a fine plate at your table?

Here are three things to consider the next time someone asks you to do something:

1 The next time someone tries to add a plate to your juggling act, if it does not serve your purpose, a simple “I’m trying to prioritize [enter your priority] right now. It would be counter-productive to that goal.”

2 Remember, when you say “yes” to something, you are saying “no” to something else, and it’s usually one of those dishes that are priceless heirlooms. By honestly replying with an explanation that your plate is full, most people will understand that you are declining the invitation, not your relationship.

3 Leaders learn the art of delegation. By delegating tasks to others, you are allowing them new opportunities to grow. Find others who can perform those high-wire acts for you.

Once you start saying no, you will soon master saying “NO” like a mom. 🍷



Janet Smith is a proud single-mom of one daughter and a marketing professional who is grateful for her rural roots in the London area. She is a big believer in connecting with people through laughter



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HOLDING SPACE FOR YOUR EX

The complexities of co-parenting can present themselves in layers as you enter into this world without a lot of context. I had no idea what it would feel like to only have my kids every other week, to decide which household gets primary access during holidays, or what anchoring into a single income would mean. It's a new lifestyle.

As seasons change and things settle though, there will be opportunities for you to (maybe) choose to experience new colours in your co-parenting relationship. The most tangible tool I have found to support the dynamic is to learn how to have a conversation with your co-parent without attachment, reactivity or a good old fashioned "I told you so."

Ever heard of the concept of "holding the space" for someone? This means you create a container within a conversation whereby you listen, validate and let go. It's a way to "hold space" that supports the regulation of the other person's experience and emotionality to help them process and release in order to move on. And when they process, release and move on, new clarity, decision making power and ideas can surface that help them grow and evolve too. This full circle helps your relationship with them and your kids.

To practice this technique, you must consciously remind yourself that you aren't responsible to solve their problem, own their emotions or turn it around to be about

you - just listen. After their "share", validate their experience by acknowledging what they said, and remind them they are doing a good job, will be okay and can figure it out. Period. Please stop talking and just let them walk away without receiving your two bits, Betty.

Giving your ex the space to be heard can go the distance when it comes to building a new foundation of trust in the relationship. And as you begin to build trust, the effectiveness of moving through future challenges together becomes a whole lot easier as you figure out how to support your kids. Because, that's what the co-parenting lifestyle is all about, right? 🧘

Lyndsay Campbell is a Mom of two boys, and the Branch Sales Manager at IS2 Workforce Solutions.



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN ORTHOTIST

What is an Orthotist?

Our profession gets this question a lot, and that is because our field is so small in a large medical and rehabilitation world. Orthotists are healthcare professionals who specialize in designing, fabricating and fitting a variety of assistive devices for a body part that is not functioning optimally. The body part may become weakened or deformed by injury, disease or a nerve, muscle or bone disorder resulting in the body part needing extra support.


When someone first walks through our door, they are evaluated for the assistive device their physician has prescribed. The patient's past medical history, functional ability, current limitations and functional goals are all assessed. Depending on the device, a negative mould of the body part will be taken. Next, the mould is filled with plaster to create a positive

mould which can then be modified for the specific device. Next, an Orthotist will work with their technical team to design the device; specific components and materials will be chosen for fabrication. Once the device has been fabricated, the patient will return for a fitting appointment and to be taught how to use it.

We might start our day evaluating an infant with plagiocephaly for a cranial remodeling orthosis. Our next patient may have chronic foot ulcers and peripheral neuropathy needing an offloading Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) to "unweight" the bottom of their foot to promote ulcer healing. This appointment might be followed by AFO fitting appointments for someone who recently had a stroke or a child who walks on their toes secondary to an underlying neuromuscular condition.

The afternoon may start with a follow up appointment for a recently delivered AFO where we learn that

it is helping our patient with their activities of daily living. Then we may assess an adolescent for a scoliosis back brace. In addition to providing care for people with mobility concerns, we also treat people with bony deformities and joint contractures.

As you can see, we meet and treat a wide array of individuals with a variety of medical concerns. Our job is extremely rewarding and full of interesting individuals and stories. For more information on our profession, feel free to contact our office or visit the Orthotics and Prosthetics Canada website. 



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AUTUMN *FROM A* DOG'S PERSPECTIVE

The click of a key in the lock of the front door breaks through my afternoon slumber. I smell the dried mud and school bus diesel before I even see my tiny humans. With a great commotion, several pairs of little running shoes clamber into the kitchen. They drop backpacks, scarves and homework behind them like autumn leaves.

Sticky hands pat my fur and I can't help but to greet them with a kiss. I've spent all day awaiting their arrival (and a six-hour school day is forty-two hours in dog years, after all) but I take some comfort in the routine that the new school year brings.

I know that soon, it will be time for my big human to let me out in the backyard. I'll sniff out the squirrel's secret stashes and re-trace their zig zagging paths from throughout the day. Maybe if I'm lucky I'll see a skunk; they love to explore this time of year, just like me!

Then, we'll cook dinner as a family. My job is to clean up any crumbs that fall to the floor, but sometimes I'll go the extra mile for my family and clean up the turkey carcass and corn cobs in the garbage too! Last autumn, I helped by eating the discarded fat trimmings. My big humans were so happy with me, they let me have a sleepover with my friends at the vet for a couple of days!

After dinner, my whole family will go for a walk. I can't wait! The fallen leaves trap all the best scents. Under each one lays a special message left just for me. I'll sniff and sniff until my brain is tired from all the information. This time of year can be a little spooky on walks, though. At the end of October, humans like to borrow other humans' faces and go around ringing doorbells. Once, when I was just a puppy, I was so scared that I ran away from my family. Fortunately, my microchip helped me get home again.

Eventually, the cold, white, crunchy water will coat everything and I won't get to go outside as much. But until then, I'll enjoy all the adventures with my family that fall has to bring! 🍂



Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com. Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.



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