

A FREE  
MAGAZINE

# THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

AUGUST 2024  
VOLUME 26 ISSUE 08

www.themomandcaregiver.com

IF THE  
SHOE  
*Fits...*

FOLLOW US     

LOW COST,  
NO COST AUGUST .... **08**

HOT MAMA  
SUMMER ..... **18**

FEET HURT  
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PREGNANCY - BABY - TODDLER



PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY

# Smooth Moves

## TRANSITIONING BACK TO SCHOOL WITH EASE

As the leisurely pace of summer gives way to the exciting promise of a new school year, parents and children alike may feel a mix of anticipation and anxiety. Here are some proven tips to ease your children back into the school routine.

**1. Re-establish Routines:** Start reintroducing the school-year schedule a few weeks before classes begin. Gradually adjust bedtime and wake-up times to align with the school day. Incorporating a morning or afternoon dance session can make this transition more enjoyable and keep energy levels balanced.

**2. Organize and Prepare:** Encourage your children to help organize their school supplies and plan their outfits a week in advance. This can reduce stress and build excitement for the year ahead.

**3. Set Educational and Personal Goals:** Setting goals can motivate and give children a sense of purpose. Include achievable goals for their

extracurricular activities. If dance is their jam maybe their goal is to learn a new style of dance or improve in specific techniques, which can boost their confidence and excitement.

**4. School Visits:** If there's an opportunity, visit the school with your children before it starts. Walking through the halls and classrooms can alleviate first-day jitters.

**5. Sign Up for Dance:** Summer is an ideal time to enroll in dance classes. Dance provides a structured activity that supports discipline and creativity, offering a healthy outlet for expression and stress relief during the school year.

Following these steps will help your children approach the new school year with confidence, enthusiasm, and a dance step in their stride!

REGISTER NOW AT DANCE EXTREME

*Let's Dance!*



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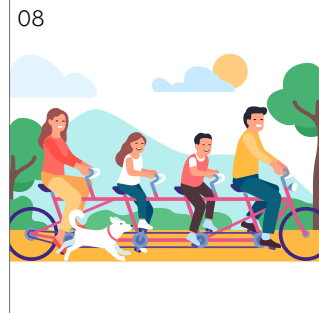
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## ON THE COVER

One year old, *Lucy*, came in timidly to our shoot, but once she saw all the shoes, it was love at first sight! Thank you to Perfectly Fit by Ellen for the shoes, and thank you to Nana and Papa for bringing Lucy to her photo shoot!

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER is published by Anibas Productions Limited, Publications Mail Agreement Number 40834037 PO Box 29118, London, ON N6K 4L9 - [www.themomandcaregiver.com](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com)

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# SUMMER LIVES ON THIS AUGUST!

Authors seem to want to paint August as an end to all that is great about summer. Sylvia Plath describes August as “the best of the summer gone, and the new fall not yet born.” Sara Dessen pens, “If June was the beginning of a hopeful summer, and July the juice middle, August was suddenly feeling like the bitter end.” Lastly, Henry Rollins writes, “August used to be a sad month for me. As the days went on, the thought of school starting weighed heavily upon my young frame.”

But here at The Mom & Caregiver, we find August to be an exciting month. There is still much of summer to enjoy (after all, we still have the Civic Holiday and Labour Day long weekends ahead of us!) plus the “getting back on schedule” of fall to plan for and look forward to.

Let’s talk summer first, of course! Do you know what a LCNC summer is? This term was new to us too, but Dad, Jeremy McCall, explains it’s a Low Cost No Cost August at his house (page 8). From a jumbo box of freezies to counting Cheerios at breakfast, he’s brimming with ideas to save you and the kiddos cash this month.

We’re half way through summer and your feet hurt. Do you know why? Look down at your flip flops and you might get the answer. Our friends at Custom Orthotics give you some better options to get your tootsies back in shape on page 21.

The summer heat isn’t going away anytime soon, so please continue to be safe, especially with your infants and toddlers! Seek air-conditioned buildings, put them in a wide-brimmed hat, and for the most fun, visit a splash pad! Find more tips from the Middlesex London Health Unit on page 6.

That brings us to back-to-school prep! If you’re looking to ease into this transition (which is always a terrific idea!), then you won’t want to miss “Screen Time and Sleep” (page 7) by our favourite family physician, Dr. Bhayana. You’ll also want to catch “Easing Back into Back to School” (page 13) for easy and yummy school lunch ideas.

So families - get out there and enjoy all the awesomeness August has to bring!

*With gratitude,*

*Sabrina*

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR



For More Details and Events Visit

THE MOM & CAREGIVER .COM  
Your Online Parenting Resource

# EVENTS

AUGUST 2024

Culture Walk: Hidden Secrets of Downtown,  
Museum London, **01<sup>ST</sup>**  
[www.museumlondon.ca](http://www.museumlondon.ca)

**05<sup>TH</sup>** Happy  
Long Weekend!

London Children's Museum,  
Rock Pets, **06<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

**09<sup>TH</sup>** London Jerk Fest,  
Covent Garden Market,  
[www.coventmarket.com/event/jerk-fest-2](http://www.coventmarket.com/event/jerk-fest-2)

Family Movie Time,  
Central Library, **12<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.lpl.ca](http://www.lpl.ca)

**14<sup>TH</sup>** Billy Idol: Rebel Yell Canada,  
Budweiser Gardens,  
[www.budweisergardens.com](http://www.budweisergardens.com)

Street Salsa Fridays,  
Market Lane Dundas Street, **16<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.london.ca/living-london/our-core-area/dundas-place](http://www.london.ca/living-london/our-core-area/dundas-place)

**17<sup>TH</sup>** The Puppet Lady,  
Landon Library,  
[www.lpl.ca](http://www.lpl.ca)

London Children's Museum,  
DIY Robot Hand, **21<sup>ST</sup>**  
[www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

**22<sup>ND</sup>** Culture Walk: Murals of Downtown,  
Museum London,  
[www.museumlondon.ca](http://www.museumlondon.ca)

Bob's Yer Funkle,  
Springbank Gardens Concert Series, **25<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.facebook.com/lmaspringbankconcerts/](http://www.facebook.com/lmaspringbankconcerts/)

**27<sup>TH</sup>** London Children's Museum,  
Dancing Ooblek,  
[www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca](http://www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca)

Storybook Gardens,  
Free Admission for Kids (after 5:30pm), **30<sup>TH</sup>**  
[www.london.ca/storybookgardens](http://www.london.ca/storybookgardens)



## Frozen Banana YOGURT POPS

*Nothing says summer  
quite like something  
frozen on a stick!*

### INGREDIENTS (MAKES 6)

- 3 bananas, peeled and cut in half (I like to use less ripe bananas that still have a tinge of green to them)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of your favorite yogurt
- Toppings of your choice (eg. sprinkles, mini chocolate chips, granola, crushed nuts or seeds)

### INSTRUCTIONS

- Peel and halve each banana. Insert a popsicle stick into each half.
- Dip bananas into your favorite yogurt. Make sure each half is coated evenly. You may need to use a spoon for this. Let excess drip off.
- Add the toppings of your choice.
- Place on a plate covered in wax or parchment paper. Freeze for about 3-4 hours, or until the yogurt and banana has hardened through.
- Enjoy!!

Recipe by Jenn Giurgevich

“ Being negative only makes a difficult journey more difficult. You may have been given a cactus, but you don't have to sit on it. ”

- Joyce Meyer

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# EXTREME HEAT & HEAT-RELATED ILLNESSES

**W**e have had some hot days this summer! It is important to remember that extreme heat and heat-related illnesses are especially dangerous for infants and young children.

The Middlesex-London Health Unit issues an extreme weather alert when Environment Canada’s heat warning criteria are met. These criteria are a daytime temperature of 31°C or higher with a nighttime low of 20°C or higher, OR a humidex of 40 or higher, for two or more consecutive days. Due to climate change, there may be an increase in instances of extreme heat and heat-related sickness.

**Heat-related illnesses can present with symptoms such as:**

- Dizziness or fainting
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache
- Rapid breathing and heartbeat
- Extreme thirst (dry mouth or sticky saliva)
- Changes in behaviour (like sleepiness or temper tantrums)
- Decreased urination with unusually dark yellow urine

To help protect your children and yourself, drink water frequently without waiting to feel thirsty. If you don’t have air conditioning in your home, seek air-conditioned buildings in the community to provide comfort during the heat of the day (e.g. cooling centres,

community centres, libraries). When outdoors, wear breathable, light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed hat, and restrict physical activity to the coolest time of the day. Spray/splash pads are available, free of charge, in many neighbourhoods and communities, which inspire summer fun, while providing cooling relief. Don’t forget to apply plenty of sunscreen with SPF 30 or more, labelled ‘broad spectrum’ and ‘water resistant’, and reapply, especially after splashing and towelling. Sunscreen may be used on babies over six months of age; avoid the mouth and eye areas.

**FIND OUT MORE:**

[www.healthunit.com/health-hazards](http://www.healthunit.com/health-hazards)  
[www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/keep-children-cool-extreme-heat.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/publications/healthy-living/keep-children-cool-extreme-heat.html)

*Submitted for the Middlesex-London Health Unit by Jennifer Robinet PHU*





# SCREEN TIME AND SLEEP

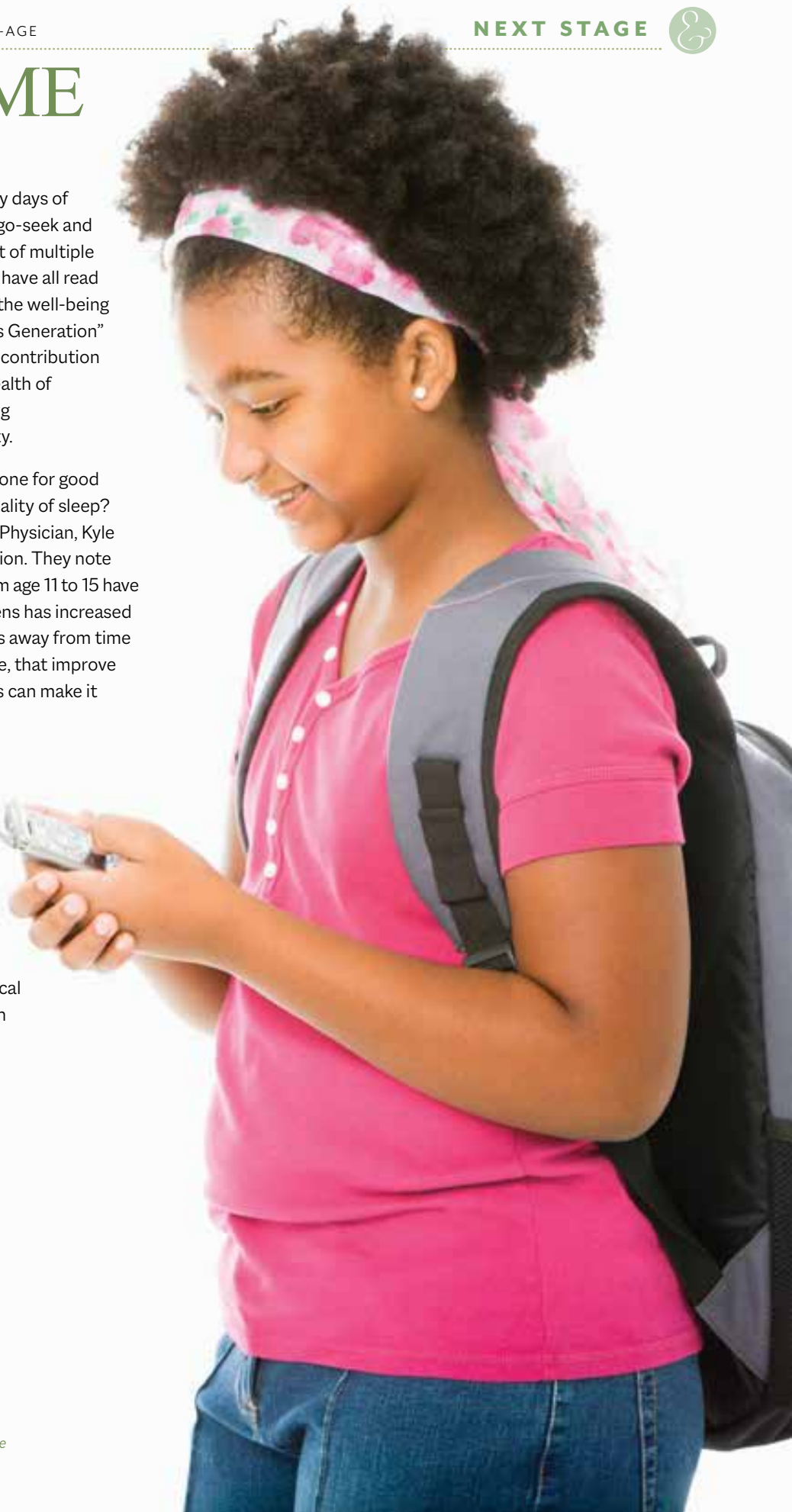
August has long been the time of the lazy, hazy days of summer. Days for children to play hide-and-go-seek and stay out until the streetlights turn on. The advent of multiple screens and the internet changed all of that. We have all read about the effect of screens and social media on the well-being of our children. James Haidt's book "The Anxious Generation" is on the best-seller list with its thesis about the contribution of screen time and social media to the mental health of children. We also know about the effects of being sedentary on the rising rates of childhood obesity.

What about sleep? Adequate sleep is a cornerstone for good health. Does increased screen time affect the quality of sleep? In the June issue of the journal, Canadian Family Physician, Kyle Gomes and Dr. Ryan Goldman answer this question. They note that 38% of Canadian girls and 30 % of boys from age 11 to 15 have social media. The amount of time spent on screens has increased since the pandemic. Time spent on screens takes away from time that could be spent on activities, such as exercise, that improve the quality of sleep. Engaging content on screens can make it difficult to fall asleep.

Studies in Finland and China have shown a decrease in both quantity and quality of sleep when children are engaged in more screen time. This has far-reaching consequences for the health and well-being of our children.

Caregivers have one more argument in the armamentarium to argue against screen time. Not only does more screen time affect our physical and mental health, it also affects our sleep, which in turn, affects all aspects of our health!

*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!*



# A LOW COST NO COST AUGUST

August is here. The heatwaves and torrential downpour of June and July are hopefully done. Summer camps are in full swing. We're all getting inundated by back to school shopping ads, and cringing at how little we can afford even with the ROCK BOTTOM PRICES!!!!

You're halfway to returning to the school routine. I'm back this month with three more tips to get you through to the finish line:

**1** When I was a big brother in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of London & Area program, there was an emphasis on **Low Cost No Cost** when it came to activities. This can translate to parenthood too, with a bit of mindful planning. We all could use a reprieve financially these days. We can LCNC our summer in a few creative ways.

Sign up for the Tourism London e-newsletter on their website for all sorts of free summer events. Pick up a jumbo box of freezies from Costco and save ice cream stores for special occasions. Take advantage of London's nine free wading pools and seventeen spray pads (your tax dollars at work, literally).

**2** **Incorporate movement** into everything. Engage in the quintessential dad experience of teaching bike riding. Make tracking steps each day a fun challenge by setting a goal and rewarding meeting or exceeding it. Try pickleball. It's like tennis, but kids can play it. Pick up a soccer ball, a football and a basketball and teach your kids how to kick, catch, throw, dribble and shoot. Movement helps all of us in so many ways.

**3** **Keep everyone's minds engaged**, even outside of the classroom. Library cards are free, and the library is a great place to learn about new things together. Add and subtract Cheerios over breakfast. Read together every night. There are all sorts of fun kids' trivia websites. Active intellectual stimulation is a wonderful thing.

If you can keep your costs reasonable, you can keep yourself and your kids moving, and you can keep minds engaged and learning. You will create a summer to remember while getting ready to crush September together. You've got this!

*Jeremy McCall is a married father of 3, a social services case manager, and known as "The Dadfather"; being the founder and Past President of Dad Club London.*







# OFF TO COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY THEY GO!

It is sad to think, but summer is coming to an end and many families will be preparing for their kids to head off to college or university. A scary time for all, but an exciting time as well. One thing we do not want you to worry about is insurance for your child's belongings while at school.

It might not have been something you thought about, but there are a few things to consider to make sure your child is protected when they are off to school. We will outline some below:

**Living in an on-campus residence:** As your child embarks on their next journey away at school, although there is not a lot of room in the dorms, they will still have some valuable items with them (laptop, fridge, clothes, books, etc.) and should anything happen, we want to make sure they are protected. If you have your own home insurance, often times, there is coverage for "Students Away At School" already built into the policy. This would be to protect their belongings while

away at school. The amount of coverage does vary between companies, but most companies have this included in their policy at no extra charge.

**Living in an off-campus house:** Often times, your child will make lifelong friends away at school and move into a house with them off-campus. As this happens, the "Students Away At School" coverage may not be enough as their belongings become more valuable (i.e. furniture, appliances, kitchen table, bedroom furniture, etc.). So, if the limit on the policy is not quite enough, you would want to purchase "Tenant Insurance" for your child. This would protect their personal belongings as well as provide liability coverage should anything happen at the house as well. With Tenant Insurance, you can pick the limit of coverage that best suits your situation or need.

**You have purchased a house for them and friends to live in:** We see it all the time



- parents purchase a house for their child and some friends to live in for a few years. It is a great way to have an income property as well as make sure your child has a safe place to live. If you are doing this, you would want to make sure that not only your child's belongings are covered (with a Tenant Insurance Policy), but you would want to make sure the building itself is insured and protected for you. You would want to talk to us about Rental Building Insurance. This protects the building should anything happen and provides liability as well for the property.

Although this next chapter in your child's life may seem daunting for all, it is an exciting time and you can take small steps to provide extra protection and peace of mind for you and your child. Contact our office today to talk about the options for your child going away to school.

.....  
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# ENTRY #7: A BROKEN CUP CAN'T POUR WATER INTO ANOTHER BROKEN CUP

What do you think this quote means? Having a combo of undiagnosed Bipolar, ADHD and PTSD, the world rejected me in every stage of my life. Even into my early 40s, to say that I felt awkward interacting socially, puts it mildly. As I write this (age 49), I'm the happiest that I have been in my entire life. I'm so excited about what the next 50 years will bring. So, what changed? I learned that I am an addict. This addiction ruined my life. You better sit down. This isn't easy to come to terms with. Hint? You can't give what you don't have. Let me explain.

As a Social Service Worker, I learned in school about all forms of abuse. However, when you don't love yourself, you're desperate to be loved at any cost. "Hi. I'm Stephanie. I am a codependent in recovery. I am addicted to being needed and fixing people."

Most of these people don't even ask for my help. I used to insert myself into their lives. The addiction medicates me by keeping myself so busy fixing others, I can completely



ignore fixing me. The high I get from helping people also validates my existence. It's a temporary fix which is NO different to taking a hit of crack to numb out the pain. If reading this makes you angry because you do what I am still capable of (if I don't check my motives for helping), it might be a sign that you are also a codependent. Sorry, not sorry.

If you know me in real life, you know that I shoot straight. Are you ready to stop being used, stop burning out, or to understand why you're on your second divorce with an abusive partner? I bet on my first born that your life can change overnight! How do you become a codependent-in-recovery and create the life of your dreams? You'll have to wait. What? I thought that this was enough to digest. To be continued, my sophisticated readers!

Stephanie Preston creates videos on managing bipolar disorder. She is a Social Service Worker, Health Care Aide and suffers from severe bipolar depression herself. She loves being a grandma and is Crossfit obsessed. Follow her at [www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain](https://www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain) and [www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain](https://www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain).

SCHOOL STARTS SEPTEMBER 3<sup>rd</sup>



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# SUMMER LOVIN'!

## *What are your favourite summer sports?*

**Lander:** Mountain biking and swimming!

**Adi:** Gymnastics and biking!

## *Do your parents have rules about video games/TV in the summer? Why do you think they make these rules?*

**Lander:** My parents do have rules, and I'm happy about that.

**Adi:** Yes. They don't want us watching TV all day - they want us outside.

## *What is your favourite meal that mom or dad make on the BBQ?*

**Lander:** I love BBQ shrimp.

**Adi:** Salmon is the best.

## *If you could fly somewhere in an airplane tomorrow, where would you go?*

**Lander:** I'd go to Italy!

**Adi:** Definitely Disney!



Meet our Kid Zone writers, 11 and 7 year old siblings, **Lander and Adi!** Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.



# ARE YOU BURNT OUT?

The heat of summer brings outdoor fun, more playdates and sports commitments, as well as parental burnout. We strive to give our children everything that we had as kids, and more, but at what expense and is that exactly what they want and need?

## What is Parent Burnout?

There are four stages of parental burnout:

- 1 Experiencing physical and/or emotional exhaustion
- 2 Feeling disconnected from your children
- 3 Feeling overwhelmed as a parent
- 4 Feeling ashamed and/or not as good of a parent as you used to be

As parents, we then find ourselves little time to take care of our own wellbeing. The research shows that over 60% of parents surveyed do not take time for their well-being. When we do take time to care for ourselves, there is a positive impact on our physical and mental health which then helps us managing the juggling act that is parenting.

## Addressing & Stopping Burnout

When you feel that you are stretched so tight that you may break, consider trying the following:

- 1 **Be kind to yourself** - Self-compassion boosts our mental health. It is also a great life lesson for our little ones to be kind to themselves.
- 2 **Self-care** - I say it time and time again that when we prioritize self-care, we are less stressed, less critical and it fosters mental wellness. Self-care is not selfish; it is needed to provide the care you want for your family.

3 **Enjoy the little moments** - The concept of self-care is viewed as indulgent, or special-occasion, like dinner out with friends, but it doesn't have to be. Small, day-to-day moments are just as revitalizing to your well-being. Going for a short walk, reading an extra page of your book, or having another cup of tea are all examples of small day-to-day self-care.

4 **Ask for help** - We vent to our friends about parental burnout, but do we take them up on their offer for help? Reaching out for help is not a sign of weakness, but a sign of good insight into the risk of you burning out.

The more we take care of ourselves the better we can care and provide for our loved ones!



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.

# EASING BACK INTO BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Ah, it's that time of year again! I'm not sure whether to be excited or cry. As we work our way through August, the back-to-school season flies in with a whirlwind of activities. Some may be looking forward to getting back to their routine, while some (if not most of us!) are dreading the meal planning and prep that comes with it. With a bit of organization and creativity, this transition to making lunches and getting dinner on the table can be smooth and stress-free. This month and next, I'll be sharing some of my top tips and tricks for meal planning and making packing lunches a breeze.

## 1 PLAN AHEAD

Dedicate a specific day each week to plan your meals for the week. Create a menu that includes breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for the entire week. This not only saves time but also ensures balanced and nutritious meals. You can email me at

[jenn@sparknutritionandhealth.ca](mailto:jenn@sparknutritionandhealth.ca) for a copy of my meal planning worksheet. Once your meal plan is set, make a detailed grocery list. This prevents last-minute shopping trips and helps you stay focused on buying only what you need.

## 2 PREP IN BATCHES

Prepare large quantities of staples like grains, proteins and vegetables at the beginning of the week. For instance, cook a big pot of quinoa, roast a variety of vegetables, and grill some chicken breasts. These can be mixed and matched to create different meals throughout the week.

Portion out snacks such as nuts, seeds and fruit into small containers or bags. Make a weekly veggie bucket and portion out your dip (tzatziki or hummus). Having these ready to grab saves time during the morning rush and makes the healthy choice the easy choice.

## 3 GET CREATIVE WITH LUNCH

- Bento boxes are a fantastic way to pack a variety of foods in a single container. Include a mix of proteins, carbs and veggies. Think chicken and rice with a side of steamed broccoli and some fruit.
- Create lunch kits inspired by store-bought versions. For example, assemble a mini taco kit with small tortillas, shredded chicken, cheese and a side of salsa.
- Layer ingredients in mason jars for easy, portable salads. Start with the dressing at the bottom, followed by hearty vegetables like cucumbers and bell peppers, and finish with greens at the top. When you're ready to eat, just shake and enjoy!

Stay tuned for more tips next month on how to make the transition to back-to-school routines a breeze!

*Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. Visit [www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca](http://www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca) for more information.*





# WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO BEGIN ORTHODONTICS?

Your child's first orthodontic visit is recommended by age seven. At this stage, your child's mouth has grown enough to know how it will develop as the permanent teeth begin to erupt.

Dr. Ari is a pediatric specialist trained to assess the growth and development during your child's routine dental appointment to ensure there are no concerns present. If Dr. Ari diagnoses any bite issues, he will recommend the right time to begin treatment. Early orthodontic treatment is also known as interceptive orthodontics.

The goal of early orthodontics is to address developmental issues in the teeth and jaws early on, which can prevent more serious problems from developing later. Here are some key points about early orthodontic treatment:

*Dr. Timucin Ari DDS, Ph.D, FRCD(C), Ari Pediatric Dentistry and Orthodontics*

**1 AGE RANGE:** Orthodontic treatment usually begins between the ages of 7 and 11, when the child still has a mix of primary (baby) and permanent teeth.

**2 PURPOSE:** The primary purpose of orthodontic treatment is to guide the growth and development of the jaw bones and create enough space for the permanent teeth to erupt properly. It can also correct bite problems (malocclusions) and reduce the need for more extensive orthodontic treatment later in life.

**3 COMMON ISSUES:** Some common issues that early treatment can address include crowded teeth, protruding front teeth, crossbites, underbites and severe overbites.

**4 TREATMENT METHODS:** Treatment methods in orthodontics may include space maintainers, expanders to widen the palate, partial braces or other appliances designed to influence jaw growth.

**5 BENEFITS:** Early treatment can potentially shorten the overall time needed in braces or aligners during adolescence. It can also improve facial aesthetics and reduce the risk of trauma to protruding teeth.

**6 CONSULTATION:** The need for early orthodontic treatment is typically assessed during a consultation with Dr. Ari, who will evaluate the child's dental development and recommend treatment if necessary.

**7 FOLLOW-UP:** After early orthodontic treatment, periodic follow-up visits are usually required to monitor the growth and development of the teeth and jaws until all permanent teeth have erupted.

It's important to note that not all children need early orthodontic treatment. The decision to undergo early treatment should be based on a thorough evaluation. Early intervention can be beneficial in certain cases, but the specific treatment plan will depend on the individual child's dental needs and development.

## SMILE! YOUR CHILD IS IN GOOD HANDS



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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 2018, Real Event Designs is an event planning and decorating business that aims to elevate events and exceed expectations. Real Event Designs offers various services, from customized backdrops and balloon displays to fresh and silk floral arrangements to elegant drapery displays and prop rentals.

At Real Event Designs, Laura understands that every occasion is unique and deserves a personalized touch. Whether you're planning an intimate gathering, a corporate event or a lavish wedding, Laura and her dedicated team are committed to bringing your vision to life with meticulous attention to detail and unparalleled creativity.

Laura's passion for event planning started when she planned her wedding 14 years ago, allowing her to bring people together to celebrate her big day. Laura then began to plan small events for family and friends as a hobby. In 2008, after she took a leave of absence for surgery related to her Thyroid Cancer that had reappeared, she reflected on her future and decided that she wanted to do something she loves – event planning!

As a wife and mother of three beautiful girls, Laura started the business in the basement of her home that blossomed into a showroom and warehouse full of unique and customization backdrops and décor for any event. Being a busy mom, she understands time can creep up and planning events can get overwhelming.

Real Event Designs' approach is centred around collaboration and personalized service. From initial concept development to flawless execution, they will work closely with you every step to ensure that your event is elevated and exceeds your expectations. Their goal is to create seamless, stress-free experiences that leave a lasting impression on you and your guests.

Real Event Designs has worked with many clients from Western University, Ivey School of Business, General Dynamics, Fanshawe College, Porsche Centre London, Lexus of London, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Ronald McDonald House of South-western Ontario and many more.

For more information, visit their website at [www.realeventdesigns.ca](http://www.realeventdesigns.ca) or their social media pages @realeventdesigns.

**real event designs**  
event planning

Laura Beharrell  
Owner, Event Planner

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# HOT MAMA SUMMER

During these sizzling summer months, wiggling into a bathing suit will most likely occur for a pool party, beach trip or backyard hot tubby. At some point, that beautiful body will be out to play.

For some, bathing suits can drive anxiety/shame levels. Staring into the mirror at our post divorce/baby bodies can elicit negative self-talk and create an ego moment to pull back and remove ourselves from the invitation altogether. Sure, you could turtle in, or you can show up for yourself in ways that allow you to feel confident/carefree and ready to work those beautiful eyes and glorious thighs.

When you notice thoughts eliciting low vibes in the change room or bedroom as you regard yourself in the mirror with your bathing suit on, anchor into a statement that detracts from the spiralling mental train you're about to ride, gorgeous. One unkind thought will

lead to another (I haven't made time to work out, I need to get to the gym, I shouldn't have eaten all the tops off of those cupcakes, etc.).

Notice when you're spiralling and anchor into ONE statement that feels better to disrupt the thought pattern. A simple go-to can be "I love you." Repeat this upwards of 50 times until the train of thoughts starts to find a peaceful country road that smooths into contentment and ease in the mind and body. The key is to catch the thought early, neutralize it with a good feeling thought, and create momentum with more better feeling inner dialogue (I'm appreciative to be going, I can't wait to giggle, I'm excited for some sun, etc.).

Remember, your body does not define your worth. You weren't invited to model swimsuits of 2024, you were asked over because you're awesome, and you have more depth attached to you than the size tag you snipped off. Get

your tankini on babe, sport some beautiful sunglasses, toss on a pair of heels like those girls in the reality shows, find a super cute cover-up to whip off, and smile as you show up to your Hot Mama Summer.



.....  
Lyndsay Campbell is a co-parenting Mom of two boys, Branch Manager by day, and Reiki Master by night.

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# BLADDER CONTROL: ANOTHER CASUALTY OF MOTHERHOOD

Let's talk about something that no one really wants to admit but all middle-aged moms know too well — bladder control, or more accurately, the lack thereof. You know what I mean, those little "oopsy" moments when you sneeze or laugh too hard. And if you're reading this and thinking "not me", well bless your heart and superior pelvic floor.

Remember in our 20s when we used to congregate in multiples to the bathroom? When you're middle-aged that still happens, except it's more like a 'lunge for the loo' to see who can get the only available toilet first. You haven't seen people scatter that fast since the police showed up at a high school party. We've all been there, right? Laughing so hard that you pee a little? Gone are the days when we could jump on a trampoline or do jumping jacks without a new kind of protection—panty liners. And let's not even talk about sneezing or coughing fits.

But here's the thing, ladies: it's not our fault! The kids did this to us. Years of pregnancy, childbirth, and running around after tiny humans have taken their toll. And let's not forget hormones. Thanks to the lovely gift of perimenopause, our pelvic floors have raised the white flag. Motherhood — it's so beautiful in the bathroom, as it seems we spend a lot of the later years either going, avoiding, looking for, waiting for or holding 'it' on the way to the bathroom.

Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not saying we should just throw in the towel (or adult diapers). There are solutions! Kegel exercises, pelvic floor therapy, and yes, even those phallically shaped gadgets that promise to "strengthen your core from the inside out." (That's what he said.) So, if you see me out with a suspiciously large handbag, just know I'm packing more than snacks and hand sanitizer.

Motherhood, the gift that keeps on giving, one sneeze at a time! As for what's next, well, I hear adult diapers are making great strides in comfort and style.

.....  
*Janet Smith is a proud mom of one daughter and a marketing professional who is grateful for her rural roots in the London area. Follow Janet's funny and honest journey at IG & TT | @re.marketable.janet or FB | @janetsiddallsmith*





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# WHY DO MY FEET HURT MORE IN THE SUMMER?

Flip flops are common footwear that most people grab out of convenience in the summer. They easily slide on, can be worn to the beach, or with any outfit. However, with the convenience of flip flops, you do not have the proper comfort or support needed. Flip flops are usually made of thin rubber with no arch support. This design does not accommodate for the weight of an individual and there are no shock absorbing properties to help eliminate the stress and strain on your body's joints. With the thin rubber design of flip flops you run the risk of stubbing your toes, losing your footing, slipping, or stepping on a sharp object which could go through the rubber sole.

Driving poses its own risks as you could have your flip flop get stuck, slide off your foot or get lodged under the pedals. Flip flops do not have a proper supporting footbed to correctly position your foot and you are more likely to pronate. With pronation your feet

collapse inward and there is additional strain on the joints in your lower body. Walking for prolonged periods in pronation can lead to pulling and straining of the muscles and ligaments which cause knee pain, foot pain, bunions, plantar fasciitis, and shin splints. In addition to pronating while walking, studies have shown that your strides are shorter and people do not lift their feet as much as if they were in proper footwear.

*Other options for summer footwear which will provide better support include:*

- Running shoes
- Supportive sandals - Birkenstock, Vionic, Teva, Chaco, Biotime, Rieker, Portofino

If you have any questions regarding your footwear or would like to discuss things further, please feel free to call our office and book an appointment with one of our orthotists.



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# IS YOUR CAT OVERDUE FOR A BATHROOM RENOVATION?

Have you ever been camping, at a concert, or other outdoor event, and chosen to pee in a bush to avoid using a stinky, stagnant outhouse? For many feline friends, their litter box resembles more of a “dirty porta-potty” than an “en suite”. If this sounds like your kitty’s situation, it’s time to plan a bathroom renovation!

## NUMBER OF BOXES

Have at least as many litter boxes as you have cats, plus one. No one likes stepping in someone else’s fecal matter! Scooping litter boxes at least once daily helps with this as well.

## CHANGED FREQUENTLY

You’d likely notice if your dog didn’t urinate for two days, but would you notice the same for your cat? When litter boxes are changed less frequently, it’s easy to miss critical health cues that signal that your furry family member is in trouble and needs your help.

## SIZE AND SHAPE OF LITTER BOX

In general, cats prefer larger litter boxes. This is especially important if the litter box is covered. Keep in mind that most covered boxes are less likely to be scooped daily, so they may become hot, stagnant and smelly inside. They may also not be ideal for multi-cat households, as a cat can become cornered in a vulnerable moment.

**TIP:** Large, flat, open containers, such as under-the-bed storage boxes, make great cat litter boxes!

## LOCATION OF THE BOX

The best place for a litter box is an easily accessible place, away from where they eat and drink. It is also critical that the location feels quiet and safe for the cat. For this reason, furnace rooms - while a popular choice - are not typically ideal locations. The noise from the furnace turning on can scare a kitty and discourage them from using their box.

## QUALITY OF THE LITTER

Generally, a clumping-style, low-dust, clay litter is a safe choice, as long as it is unscented. Special silica formulations also exist that change colour to alert you if abnormalities are detected in your cat’s urine!

Cats can be cautious of change, so ensure to offer them their old litter box until they’ve become familiar with the new set up. Then, post-transition, should your cat start urinating outside of their luxurious new “en suite”, you can be more confident in the cause being medical versus behavioural.

Not only is providing your cat with a clean and well-designed bathroom an important part of their welfare, it can save a life!



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](mailto:danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com). Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.

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