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February 2021

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Of a special  
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## Show the Love!

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**10**

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*Guide*

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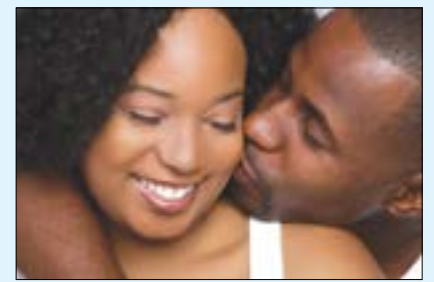
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# 10 fun online clubs & extracurricular activities for kids

By Kimberly Blaker

**S**ocial interaction during childhood is more than just fun. It's a vital part of childhood development. As kids grow, they learn from their peers and through playing with or talking to others. Engaging in social situations with other children teaches kids cooperation, collaboration, compromise, problem-solving, teamwork, and so much more.

Yet, not all kids have access to sufficient in-person socialization opportunities. Even those who do can benefit from additional options outside their surroundings. Fortunately, technological advances have made it possible to develop new forums for kids to socialize with others who share similar interests. Thus removing limits to exclusively local opportunities. Kids stuck at home due to a pandemic, those who homeschool, or even those who just want more opportunities to connect with like-minded peers can all benefit from online clubs or activities. So check out this selection of virtual opportunities.

**Activity Hero** is a hosting site where various groups and instructors can list activities for kids of all ages. There's a section with live online classes, after-school programs, and even holiday camps where students work together with a teacher choosing various options to match their interests. Options include Lego, science, cooking, art, music, coding, and more.

**FunClubs** offers live online 45-minute classes led by an instructor for kids in grades K-8, depending on the class. FunClubs provide small group experiences within larger class sizes where students are broken down into groups of 6 to 8. This allows kids more time to interact with the teacher and each other in a comfortable setting. Classes include drama, piano, guitar, Spanish lessons, filmmaking, coding, cooking, and more.

**Outschool** is an online, small-group learning platform for kids ages 3-18. It offers over 100,000 classes, so it caters to practically any interest your child might have. Kids learn from teacher experts while interact-

ing with classmates who share the same interests in a small, comfortable setting.

**Open Tent Academy** caters more directly to homeschool students but offers some "after school" classes for kids. These classes focus more on learning material than just socializing, yet emphasize discussion and interacting with peers within the class.

**Playcrafter Kids Club** is for younger students ages 3-7 to engage in a 6-week program with two hour-long classes per week. Children work with four teachers trained in the arts and participate in drama, music, yoga, and dance using stories. Kids are split up into small groups, and during parts of the lesson, they can unmute and interact with their classmates.

**Connected Camps** year-round online programs and summer camps for kids who want to learn about digital entertainment such as coding, Minecraft, Esports, digital arts, and game design. Connected Camps has small group classes that offer kids opportunities to interact with others and collaborate on projects or games in a fun environment. It also hosts a free moderated Kid Club Minecraft server for kids ages 8-13. It offers counselors to mentor kids, a code of conduct, and is based on a specific learning approach.

**iDTech** hosts virtual technology classes and camps for kids ages 7-19 who want to learn or develop their technology skills. It offers weeklong sessions of no more than five students, combining instruction time with opportunities for classmates to collaborate and socialize.

**Clubba**, for kids ages 6-12, offers online club series with classes taught by college student club counselors. Classes are small, up to five students, so students can really interact and learn new skills. Club counselors support peer interaction and developing friendships with ice breakers and other interactive activities.

**American Camp Association** provides a search for virtual camp listings by preferred categories. It has a section for live group interaction classes as well as cost and interest categories.



You can also search for virtual camps by organizational affiliation such as 4-H Clubs, The Boys & Girls Clubs, and Boy and Girl Scouts, and by religious affiliation, government-based programs, and more.

**Child & Adolescent Anxiety Practice After School Clubs** offers virtual after school clubs so kids have opportunities to socialize with peers with similar interests in a structured environment. This is particularly

beneficial to kids struggling with social isolation and related anxiety. Clubs are led by Dr. Avny, a clinical psychologist specializing in child and adolescent anxiety. Each club session is six weeks long with one 45 minute class per week and broken down into 10- to 13-year-old and 14- to 17-year-old groups. Each club focuses on a hobby or interest such as cooking, arts and crafts, video games, sports, and more, emphasizing social interaction and collaboration.

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# Show Your Love!

## The affection effect in marriage

By Christa Melnyk Hines

“They must still be dating,” my friend whispers to me.

As we stand shivering at my son's soccer game, my brother-in-law and his fiancé cuddle together sharing a warm blanket and a chair.

“No married couple would be that affectionate toward each other,” she says.

Her assessment seems a bit pessimistic to this romantic. Must the spontaneity and sweetness of courtship die as we move out of the “shout from the rooftops” kind of young love into the demands of young parenthood?

Growing complacent about displaying affection isn't unusual as a marriage is peppered with children, crises, celebrations and day-to-day routine. Nonetheless, simple expressions of love like hand-holding, hugs and kisses, and compliments are an important component to the health

of a marriage and the family unit.

“Without intimacy, people can and often do begin to feel isolated, alone, bitter, depressed, used and simply uncared for,” says Amanda Deverich, a licensed marriage and family therapist. “All the happiness that was amplified by the physicality in the early part of the marriage is no longer there to grease the wheels of family life. What remains is grinding drudgery, financial stress and short tempers.”

### Affection in the midst of parenthood

Many parents find that affection for each other can get lost in the mind-numbing whirlwind of sleepless nights and the general challenges of new parenthood.

“This is a natural phenomenon in the family life cycle as parents devote their energies to the newborn,” Deverich says.

After the initial adjustment



period, nurture your relationship to avoid resentment and a sense of neglect. Such feelings can quietly chip away at the positive family dynamic that your kids rely on to feel safe and secure.

### Why affection is healthy

“Couples believe affection is simply an inspired by-product of a feeling,” Deverich says. “However, it can be the other way around. Love, connectedness, and caring can be sparked by physical touch.”

While excessive public displays of intimacy can cause discomfort for those around you—including your kids—showing warmth toward one another gives children a sense of well-being, that all is well in their family unit.

“When children see this model behavior where affection is easily expressed, that is a skill set that can translate into other arenas of their life,” says psychiatrist Dr. Bela Sood. “They learn how to be kind, gentle, as well as, be happy with other people as they watch their own parents.”

### When affection doesn't come naturally

Not everyone was raised in affectionate homes and others simply aren't wired to display warmth toward others, including the ones they love the most.

“Understand the uniqueness and differences in the other person without being judgmental about that,” Sood says.

But that doesn't mean you can't work on meeting your spouse's needs for affection. Recall what attracted the two of you in the first place. Physical touch and tenderness

toward each other can reaffirm your love and create instant connectedness.

“We forget that we have control over many things that go on in our lives if we are willing to make that sacrifice,” Sood says. “And why are we willing to make that sacrifice? Because we love that person.”

### 17 simple ways to rekindle that lovin' feelin'

- ♥ Hold hands
- ♥ Hug and kiss
- ♥ Look each other in the eyes
- ♥ Get involved in a hobby together
- ♥ Listen when your spouse talks about his or her interests
- ♥ Flirt with each other
- ♥ Laugh together
- ♥ Pen a love note and leave it on your spouse's pillow
- ♥ Send a flirty text message
- ♥ Email a link to a sweet love song to your mate
- ♥ Give your spouse a back rub
- ♥ Offer a sincere compliment
- ♥ Help each other around the house and with the kids
- ♥ Call each other during the day just to check in
- ♥ Court each other
- ♥ Tell your kids what you love about your spouse
- ♥ Say “I love you”

*Freelance writer, Christa Melnyk Hines, and her husband of 22 years are the parents of two boys. Christa's latest book is Happy, Healthy & Hyperconnected: Raise a Thoughtful Communicator in a Digital World.*

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# Time to tango with the Tooth Fairy?

By Christa Melnyk Hines

It seems like just days ago when I waited patiently for my son's first little biters to erupt in his infant mouth. Those days somehow melted magically into years and before I knew it, I could hear the Tooth Fairy fluttering about.

Like many parents, I wondered: what is developmentally normal when it comes to baby tooth loss, how does the tooth-obsessed fairy collect her pearly prizes, and what is the paying pixie's going rate for a baby tooth these days?

## Losing baby teeth

Lyndhurst pediatric dentist Dr. Trista Onesti says, in general, children lose their first tooth between the ages of 4 and 7 and that the bottom teeth (mandibular arch) are usually the first to fall out.

Should you yank a loose tooth? "We advise to assist by wiggling it with freshly hand-washed fingers," says Dr. Onesti. "You can move both back and forth and by twisting the tooth once the tooth is noticeably naturally loose. Biting into an apple can also help dislodge a tooth that just won't budge. We discourage any strings tied to doors, remote cars, or any other such means. If the tooth isn't ready, the child may be hurt. It will take several weeks from sensing the first mobility of the tooth and it finally coming out."

When a new tooth is coming in, Dr. Onesti recommends massaging it with a damp gauze and finger pressure or a wet toothbrush to help alleviate the pain. Soft, cold foods should be eaten and not hard foods. It is also advisable to keep the area clean by brushing both the new and the retained baby tooth to avoid food impaction which can cause additional pain and sometimes infection. If the pain is severe, ibuprofen is recommended. Be sure to consult your child's dentist if you have any concerns.

## Enter the Tooth Fairy

That first loose tooth can cause anxiety for some children. Often, anxiety turns to excitement as children listen to tooth-loss stories exchanged among classmates and anticipate the reward the Tooth Fairy leaves behind.

While the exact origin of the enigmatic Tooth Fairy is steeped in mystery, historically the loss of baby teeth is an important rite of passage.

The earliest known written records regarding baby teeth date from northern Europe and describe a tann-fe, or tooth fee, in which money was paid for a baby tooth.

In the Middle Ages, Europeans, fearing witches could curse their children if they acquired their baby teeth, buried the teeth in the ground. The Vikings wore baby teeth as jewelry considering them good luck talismans in battle. Other cultures fed the teeth to animals believing the adult tooth would resemble the animal's powerful, strong teeth.

Today, countries all over the world continue to mark the loss of baby teeth with various customs. In Spain, France, Italy and Mexico, for example, the Tooth Fairy appears as a small white mouse or rat, symbolic because rodents have strong teeth that never stop growing.

In Sweden, the baby tooth is placed in a glass of water where it is mysteriously replaced overnight with coins. And, it is customary in much of the Middle East for baby teeth to be thrown towards the sun and in Asia, onto the roof.

The Tooth Fairy as many of us know her, appeared in the early 1900s.

## Cups, pillows, pockets and doors

The Tooth Fairy isn't picky about how she collects baby teeth. Lori Poland grew up placing her baby teeth in a clear glass of water on her nightstand. She says she loved fishing a wet \$2 bill out of the cup the next morning, setting it out to dry and storing it in her memory box.

Although a tooth placed in a plastic sealable bag or envelope tucked under the pillow should do the trick, many parents opt for a Tooth Fairy pillow or pouch for their youngster. Retailers offer an assortment of pillows or try making your own.

Monica Bradford designed a Tooth Fairy Pocket for her 6-year-old son when he lost his first tooth.

"He placed his tooth in the pocket, hung it on his bedpost and woke up to find \$2 for his first tooth," she says.

(Check out Pinterest for ideas



on making your own Tooth Fairy Pocket.)

Cathy Green, mom of three, says the Tooth Fairy enters their home through a small ceramic door that Green's step-mother designed. The door is outside the kids' bedrooms. After collecting the tooth from a small box under the child's pillow, the Tooth Fairy replaces the tooth with her reward and leaves the box

next to the tiny door.

## The going rate

According to a 2019 survey conducted by Delta Dental, the Tooth Fairy's cash payouts have dropped by 43 cents, with kids receiving an average of \$3.70 per tooth.

Beth Foster says that the Tooth

See *Tooth Fairy* page 7



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# How To Stop Nagging Your Teenager

By Cheryl Maguire

As I watched a local theater production of the musical “13”, I smiled listening to the catchy tune. Then the teenagers on stage sang the lyrics in a mocking tone, “No, you’re not ready! No, it’s not time yet! No, it’s not right now! Wait until you’re older! Homework. Laundry. Dishes. Courses. Just settle down and hold your horses!”

I squirmed in my seat and thought, “Do I really sound like that?”

I’m guessing if given the opportunity my twin teens would say, “No mom, you are much worse.”

“Parents can develop a habit of expecting their children to simply comply with demands made of them and nagging is a reactive behavior to increase compliance,” said Dr. Linda Kudla, a clinical psychologist.

Dr. Kudla explained that adolescents will typically respond to

nagging by either avoiding their parent (which leads to an increase in nagging and perpetuates the problem) or reacting with more challenging behaviors (such as continued/increased noncompliance, lying, sneaking, etc.).

Dr. Sherry Kelly, a clinical psychologist and neuropsychologist said, “Generally, nagging results from a difference in expectations. Like a bad math problem, if your expectations are significantly different from your teen’s expectations — they will disappoint you and you will nag.”

Dr. Kelly explained that parents should stop nagging because this type of behavior can cause symptoms of depression and anxiety in teens.

Here are some solutions on ways parents can change their nagging behavior:

## Clarify expectations

It is important to clarify what your expectations are so that you and your



teen are on the same page.

“Parents often have expectations that exceed actual life events. Be clear about what you want for your teen and listen to what they tell you about what they want,” says Dr. Kelly.

## Understand that nagging is due to fears

Figure out what are you afraid of and then either discuss these fears with your teen or find a way to manage it.

“Nagging can be a sign of anxiety. When parents nag them they often

feel anxious for their child and the nagging helps reduce their anxiety because it makes them feel like they have a sense of control,” says Amy Rollo, a licensed psychotherapist.

## Understand that this is a normal phase of development

Teens may not follow through with their parent’s requests because they are going through a normal stage of development of being independent of their parents.

“Teenagers are gaining independence. It is normal for them to rebel *continued next page* →



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or not always follow through, as it is part of this stage of development” says Rollo.

Amanda Sasek, MS LMFT a licensed marriage & family therapist also discusses this development stage.

“Parents need to recognize this is a normal developmental stage and work with it instead of against it. They need to remind themselves every day that their teen not listening to them is usually not an attack against them, but teenagers are trying to assert control at a time where they feel that they have very little control,” says Sasek.

**Create goals with your teen**

If parents and teens have a common goal then they are more likely to work together.

“Sit down with your teen and discuss the chores that need to be done and then ask what they would like to do and when they would like to do them,” says Sasek.

**Reframe nagging into a caring response**

Dr. Kelly recommends ending the cycle of nagging behavior by implementing PAR: Prepare, Accommodate & Reframe.

She explains what PAR means by saying, “Anticipate and PREPARE yourself for the situation that will trigger nagging responses. Second, ACCOMMODATE and ACCOMMODATE how you might feel (frustrated) and, third, REFRAME your nagging response into something helpful.” She goes on to say, “This is particularly important for parents to learn because nagging often is cloaked around criti-

cism. You may feel like you are trying to manage or help get your teen in gear, but your teen may hear it as criticism.”

Dr. Kudla explains that when an issue arises, an appropriate approach might be to observe and describe the situation while working towards a democratic and mutually acceptable compromise.

“For example saying ‘I notice you haven't cleaned up your room yet. What's up?’ then validating the reasons that it hasn't happened yet and wondering what might help make it easier.” She goes on to say, “Ask if they need time or some help or suggest a fun outing to celebrate after it's done.”

Dr. Kudla explains that most issues can be resolved with compromise, and when adolescents feel like their parents understand and respect them, they're more likely to have stronger relationships with them and less stress overall in their already stressful teenage lives.

**Show gratitude**

“There are several studies that show acknowledging gratitude immediately ‘lights up the brain’, softens the stress center of your brain, and makes you healthier and happier,” says Dr. Kelly.

If you show appreciation for the things your teen does do then they will be more likely to do them in the future.

*Cheryl Maguire holds a Master of Counseling Psychology degree. She is married and is the mother of twins and a daughter. Her writing has been published in Parents Magazine, Your Teen Magazine, and other publications.*

**Tooth fairy** from page 5

Fairy typically pays \$1 per tooth although her daughter Logan, 6, discovered a \$5 payout under her pillow for her fifth tooth.

“This is a Foster tradition and I've been assured the good old fairy does not leave \$10 for the tenth,” Foster says.

What does the Tooth Fairy do with those teeth? Legend says that the Tooth Fairy tosses the teeth up to the sky and they become stars.

Naturally, many theories exist. Foster's daughter Logan says, “The fairy uses her wand to shrink the teeth to a very small size so she can carry them in a bag with her from house to house. She then takes the teeth to Santa so he can use them to make toys.”

Whatever she does with them, with each tooth lost, adulthood gains another foothold on our kids. No wonder through the ages we've found ways to mark this stage in our kids' lives, which seems as fleeting as the Tooth Fairy herself.



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# Caring for the Caretaker

## How to support parents of special needs children

By Christa Melnyk Hines

When Tracy Glock's 13-month-old daughter Kira was hospitalized with acute myeloid leukemia, she was touched by the outpouring of support she and her husband received.

During those eight difficult months, the community rallied around the family. Friends and acquaintances babysat Kira in the hospital while her mom and dad worked, and many others helped by delivering meals and even mowing the family's lawn.

"Words cannot express the gratitude you feel when someone you barely know does so much for you," Glock says, who was also pregnant at the time with Kira's sister Allina.

Although Kira, now seven, has recovered from the frightening ordeal, she still faces many daily challenges. As a child with Down syndrome and autism, learning and develop-

ment takes longer and requires more patience compared to the typically developing child.

Like many parents who have children with special needs, Glock says finding time for herself is difficult.

While many of us know how to help a family in crisis, how do we support parents who often put their own needs last as they focus on the daily challenges of caring for special needs youngsters?

**Offer to babysit.** Finding trustworthy, alternate caretakers is a huge relief for parents who regularly juggle doctor's appointments, school issues and therapy, not to mention jobs and other children.

"Every special needs parent's needs are different, but most just love a little rest," Glock says.

Because special needs children require more attention from their parents, healthcare providers and therapists, other youngsters in the family may feel slighted.

"Children always struggle and this



is the case whether they're special needs or not," says Nancy Masannat, mom to two children, including Emy, 16, and Kyle, 14, who is on the autism spectrum. "There's going to be sibling jealousies."

When her children were younger, Masannat would often schedule her son's appointments during times when her daughter was in preschool. "In my daughter's mind, it wasn't fair that someone was coming to the house and playing with her brother and not her."

Having access to a qualified babysitter you can trust with your special needs child, can give you an opportunity to spend much-needed, one-on-one time with your other children too.

**Listen.** Ask your friend how she's doing and then simply listen. Avoid offering platitudes or suggestions to help her fix problems.

"We all just like to be heard. Everybody likes to vent," Masannat says. "Just listen to what the issues are without judgment. That's a huge help for everybody, but primarily when you're dealing with something that someone else might not understand."

**Educate yourself.** Get to know your friend's child, including her disability, her personality quirks and her individual needs. And ask your friend about her specific parenting challenges.

"It shows that you care and will help you provide more effective support," says Heather Trammell, mom to two special needs children, including Beth, 14, who has Down syndrome and Marie, 11, who has high-functioning autism. Both girls also have a connective tissue disorder called Ehlers-Danlos syndrome.

**Suggest resources.** Support groups help parents feel less alone and provide valuable resources for assistance in childcare, school issues and navigating healthcare.

"The biggest thing for me was to know that I wasn't in this by myself—that I wasn't the only person who had a child who didn't sleep well; that I wasn't the only one with a child who was now three and not talking," Masannat says.

To find support groups in your area, consult with the therapists and teachers your child already works with, your library, your church and online. For example, [www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org), which includes resources for families, or the National Down Syndrome Society, [www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org). Also check out Facebook and MeetUp.com for local support groups.

### Other ideas to brighten your friend's day:

- Purchase a gift certificate for a massage or manicure.
- If you plan to have the family over, ask your friend if you should be aware of any food sensitivities or specific ground rules to ensure a successful visit.
- Offer to babysit and/or help with siblings.
- Help with getting kids to practices.
- Deliver a meal.
- Mow their lawn.
- Send a bouquet of cheerful flowers.
- Arrange for a house cleaning crew.
- Ask if you can pick up anything while running errands.
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# Common Childhood Rashes

## From itchy and perplexing to kind of creepy

By Christa Melnyk Hines

**A**larmed by that angry red rash splashed across your child's body? Rashes run the spectrum, signaling anything from a mild viral infection to a chronic or even life-threatening illness. Since the list of rashes and their causes is extensive, you may wonder what's what and when to call the doctor.

First, avoid self-diagnosis. "Viral and allergic rashes both can present as a diffuse, splotchy, blanching, pinkish rash. Because the rashes look similar, it can be impossible sometimes to tell the difference just by appearance," says dermatologist Reginald B. Henry, M.D.

Below are the more common types of childhood rashes and typical treatment methods. Check with your family physician or dermatologist to correctly diagnose and treat a mysterious rash.

**Diaper rash.** Even the most conscientious diaper-changing parent may see an uncomfortable, red, puffy rash blossom on her baby's bottom. Babies can suffer from diaper rash after a bout of diarrhea, as a side effect from antibiotics or if they recently started eating solid foods.

Change your baby's diaper frequently, and use wipes without alcohol or fragrances to gently pat the area dry. Treat the area with a protective barrier ointment after each diaper change. If the skin appears infected with blisters, oozing discharge or painful open sores, call your pediatrician.

**Eczema.** About 10 percent of

infants and children suffer from atopic dermatitis or eczema. The chronic disease is especially common in families with a history of allergies and asthma.

According to the National Eczema Association, 65 percent of children are diagnosed in their first year of life and 90 percent by the time they are five years old. Eczema is extremely itchy, but is not contagious. It appears as red, scaly dry skin and can vary in severity.

Physicians generally treat eczema first with an over-the-counter cortisone cream to calm the red, inflamed skin. Throughout the year, treat skin with moisturizers. "Lotions are better in the humid months, ointments in the winter months," Henry says. "Don't over-treat your child if the dermatitis isn't really bothering her."

**Bacterial.** Staphylococcal and streptococcal bacteria often cause infections with rashes, including impetigo, scarlet fever (strep throat with a rash), folliculitis and cellulitis. Lyme disease, caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi* and transmitted by ticks, can cause a bull's eye rash. If you suspect Lyme Disease, seek medical attention immediately. Bacterial infections are typically treated with antibiotics.

**Viral.** Viral-related rashes are splotchy, blanching (disappears when pressed), pinkish-colored and usually accompany other symptoms like fever, diarrhea, sore throat and lethargy. Typical childhood viruses that present with a rash include fifth disease, molluscum contagiosum, chicken pox (varicella), roseola and hand, foot and mouth disease. Depending on



65% of children are diagnosed with eczema in their first year.

the diagnosis, your physician may prescribe antiviral medications.

Warts are another viral skin condition commonly seen among kids. Although warts generally resolve on their own, "due to the fact they are contagious, we tend to treat them with a spray or liquid nitrogen every one to two weeks until they are gone," says dermatologist Donna Corvette, M.D. "We can also treat with various topical acids and sometimes we use blister beetle juice which is quite effective."

**Parasitic.** A pimple-like skin rash that's extremely itchy and contagious could be caused by scabies, which is a mite that burrows into the skin. Because scabies can spread quickly through skin-to-skin contact, your physician may recommend treating the entire family with a topical medication.

**Fungal.** The name might make you shudder, but ringworm (tinea corporis), a red circular skin rash, is

caused by a fungal infection, not a worm. The rash doesn't always itch, but can spread from skin-to-skin contact. Treat with an anti-fungal product.

**Allergies.** Rashes like hives are allergic reactions that are typically splotchy, blanching, pinkish and intensely itchy. A new food or a new medication could be the culprit. Consult with your doctor for diagnosis and treatment. (Seek immediate medical attention if your child has trouble breathing or experiences swelling of the tongue, lips or face.)

Contact dermatitis like poison ivy or exposure to other irritants can also cause itchy allergic reactions. Treat the area with an over-the-counter cortisone cream. For insect bites, try ammonia-containing products like AfterBite Kids. Henry also recommends oatmeal baths, baking soda compresses, and Sarna lotion or Noxzema cooled in the refrigerator to help relieve itching.

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# Private School GUIDE

## Finding the right private school for your family

By Jan Pierce

**Y**ou want a top-notch education for your children and choosing the perfect school is probably one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make. Depending on your location, you may find your public schools offer everything you want. If not, you'll need to embark on a search for the right private school.

In general, private schools exist to provide smaller class sizes with greater individual attention to each student and a safe, focused environment free of discipline problems. They tend to set a higher bar than public schools in academics, and build a culture of shared values. They offer a strong sense of community and may tailor lessons to the needs of the student.

In reality, each private school is a world unto itself. It may or may not hold accreditation with a national education association, or hire credentialed teachers. It may have many extracurricular offerings or just a few. It may charge a very large tuition plus additional fees, or may be more affordable, offering scholarships and sliding scales. It may have a long history in your community or be a brand new charter school.

To find the right private school for you, you'll need to consider the following:

### 1. What are your educational priorities?

Some private schools are faith-based and some are not. You'll want to decide as a family your basic priorities. Is it most important to find high academic standards, or more important to support your family's faith? Do you expect accelerated

programs such as advanced placement classes or extensive access to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs? How important are extracurricular activities? Are you comfortable with homework policies and school rules?

### 2. What is the culture of the school?

In a faith-based setting the culture of the school will place religion at the forefront. There will be religious studies as part of the curriculum. The school may be all boys or all girls. Does this suit your goals? What is the relationship of staff to students? Is it casual and friendly, formal and strict? How are parents involved? What is the balance of academics to sports, the arts, clubs and other activities? Does the culture "feel right" for your children?

### 3. What role do parents play in the school?

Some private schools make great use of parent volunteer time and emphasize whole family participation in their programs. Others minimize parent involvement to occasional visits or conferences to report progress. Which best suits your family's needs?

### 4. What are the costs? Are there scholarships available?

It's a sacrifice to pay for your child's education when public schools are free. And there are huge variations in the expenses involved. When researching possible schools, be sure to check not only the tuitions, but also book fees, sports or other extracurricular expenses and possible transportation fees. Check on scholarships available and

the possibility of a sliding scale based on family income.

### 5. Is the staff credentialed and the school accredited?

Some faith-based schools and newer charter schools don't require their teachers to be credentialed. How important is this to your family? In addition there are many different education associations nationwide offering accreditation. If a prospective school has received accreditation, they've shown the initiative to meet high standards.

### 6. Is the curriculum up to date?

In this technological age, you'll want to be sure your private school has kept up with the times. Do they offer appropriate college preparation standards in science, math, languages, writing and more? Do they offer a well-rounded education in art, drama and music? Are textbooks current and in good condition? Are computer labs or individual screens available to students?

### 7. Does the school provide transportation?

Do buses transport students to school? Are they available for

after-school activities? Does the school coordinate carpools? Are there extra expenses charged for transportation?

### 8. How well do students transition into or out of the school?

If a particular school offers classes such as K-6 or K-8, do they work closely with a sister high school? What provisions are made to make a smooth transition from one school to another? If students transfer into the school either at the beginning of a year or mid-year, what provisions are made to welcome them? How do children fare when they need to move from this school to another?

### 9. What is the school's reputation?

Most private schools have a reputation to uphold. Are they the best in college prep? Are they known for a friendly, family community spirit? Who do you know with firsthand information and experience with the school? What recommendations can you find amongst friends and acquaintances?

*Continued on page 17*



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## Private School *GUIDE*

### All Saints of St. John Vianney School

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

### Cleveland Montessori

12510 Mayfield Road, Cleveland  
(216) 421-0700  
[www.clevelandmontessori.org](http://www.clevelandmontessori.org)

Cleveland Montessori is celebrating over 25 years of serving the children of Greater Cleveland. The school is located in the historic Alta House. Students in preschool through middle school thrive within this unique urban campus inclusive of Little Italy and University Circle. A Cleveland Montessori education looks at each child's individual potential academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Their students become independent thinkers with compassionate hearts.

The authentic Montessori curriculum incorporates a variety of opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom to the culturally rich neighborhood of Little Italy. Their proximity to University Circle provides many extensions for cultural and scientific exploration setting the stage for an experience rich in diversity, growth and joy. Cleveland Montessori operates on a school year calendar, September to June.

Call to arrange a personal tour or visit their website for more information.

### Communion of Saints School

2160 Stillman Road  
Cleveland Heights  
(216) 932-4177

[www.communionofsaintsschool.org](http://www.communionofsaintsschool.org)  
Communion of Saints School, formerly St. Ann School (1916), was established in 2010.

The school services Cleveland Heights and surrounding communities. The school renewed its Accreditation in 2019, setting continuous improvement goals for the faculty and students. The school has updated technology such as active boards in the classrooms and one-to-one devices for all students.

As a Catholic school, their program is permeated with a spirit of mutual respect and concern for

each individual. They follow the Diocese of Cleveland curriculum which is compliant with the Ohio State Standards.

Enrollment for the 2021/2022 school year will begin in February for preschool through eighth grade. Communion of Saints School accepts the EdChoice Scholarship for kindergarten through grade eight.

For information or to schedule a tour, please call (216) 932-4177, visit [www.communionofsaintsschool.org](http://www.communionofsaintsschool.org) or send an email to [admissions@communionofsaintsparish.org](mailto:admissions@communionofsaintsparish.org).

### Corpus Christi Academy

5655 Mayfield Road, Lyndhurst  
(440) 449-4242  
[www.corpuschristiacad.org](http://www.corpuschristiacad.org)

### Creative Playrooms Montessori & Child Care Centers

Solon (440) 248-3100  
Independence (216) 524-8008  
Parma (216) 898-9520  
Strongsville (440) 572-9365  
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[www.creativeplayrooms.com](http://www.creativeplayrooms.com)

Creative Playrooms Montessori and Child Care Centers have been a part of the greater Cleveland community for over 50 years. These unique learning centers provide families with Montessori and traditional programs, swimming lessons, cafeteria-like lunchrooms, and expansive outdoor play spaces.

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For more information about their six locations and program offerings, visit [creativeplayrooms.com](http://creativeplayrooms.com).





## Private School *GUIDE*

### Gesu Catholic School

2450 Miramar Boulevard  
University Heights  
(216) 932-0620  
www.gesu.com

Gesu Catholic School is an educational community created in partnership with students, their families, and the Church of the Gesu. Founded in 1926 under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Society of Jesus, the school community is committed to the Jesuit traditions of Catholic faith formation, academic rigor and excellence, personal growth, service to others, and global citizenship, "all for the greater glory of God."

They are proud to be part of the Diocese of Cleveland's "Better Together: Exceptional Catholic education for every student" initiative and to be a "Designated STEM School" by the state of Ohio.

The school community includes approximately 650 students in kindergarten through grade 8 with another 85 students in the Gesu preschool.

For preschool, kindergarten, or

admissions information for grades 1-8, please contact Judi Herbert at (216) 932-0620, ext. 117 or email [jherbert@gmail.com](mailto:jherbert@gmail.com).

### Gilmour Academy

34001 Cedar Road  
Gates Mills  
(440) 473-8050  
[admissions@gilmour.org](mailto:admissions@gilmour.org)  
www.gilmour.org

### Gross Schechter Day School

27601 Fairmount Boulevard  
Pepper Pike  
(216) 763-1400  
www.grossschechter.org

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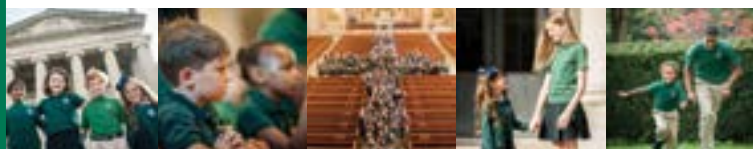






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## Private School *GUIDE*

### **Hawken School**

[www.hawken.edu](http://www.hawken.edu)

#### Lyndhurst Campus

(Preschool–Grade 8)

5000 Clubside Road

(440) 423-2950

#### Gates Mills Campus

(Grades 9–12)

Mayfield and County Line Roads

in Gates Mills

(440) 423-2955

#### The Birchwood School of Hawken

(Preschool–Grade 8)

4400 West 140th St., Cleveland

(216) 251-2321

#### The Mastery School of Hawken

(Grades 9–12)

11025 Magnolia Drive, Cleveland

(440) 423-8801

Hawken School is an independent, coed day school of over 1,400 students, toddler through grade 12, located on two campuses in the eastern suburbs of Cleveland, a campus on Cleveland's west side, and a campus in University Circle that is home to the recently opened Mastery School of Hawken, which takes the school's problem-based program-

ming to scale.

Hawken was founded in 1915 as an educationally progressive school, and they remain academically progressive – because that's what it takes to prepare students to thrive in a changing world. From recognizing the value of a coeducational environment to designing programs, learning spaces, and innovative schedules that support learning by doing, Hawken boldly adapts to prepare students for a promising future.

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**Concord Campus**  
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Hershey Montessori School's approach to education allows students to master the skills needed to adapt as the world changes, careers shift, and the demand on human ingenuity evolves. The transformative outcomes demonstrated by Hershey students, especially through these unprecedented times, exemplify why Hershey is revered as a world leader in Montessori education.

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**Julie Billiard School**

4982 Clubside Road  
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(216) 381-1191  
www.juliebilliardschool.org

**Laurel School**

www.LaurelSchool.org  
(216) 464-0946  
**Lyman Campus**

One Lyman Circle, Shaker Heights  
**Butler Campus**  
7420 Fairmount Road  
Russell Township

Laurel School, founded in 1896, is a nationally recognized college preparatory, independent day school for girls, kindergarten through grade 12, with a coeducational preprimary. Its traditional Ly-

man Campus is in Shaker Heights and its 150-acre Butler Campus is in Russell Township. The Butler Campus is home to competitive athletics and outdoor experiential learning, including northeast Ohio's first outdoor pre-primary school.

Laurel's Center for Research on Girls (LCRG) was established in 2007, drawing on the school's long history as a site of pioneering research on girls. LCRG conducts and sponsors original research on girls, harnesses existing research to shape the day-to-day education of girls and connects parents and teachers with research findings relevant to raising and educating girls.

**Montessori School of University Heights**

23599 Cedar Road, Lyndhurst  
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www.ms-uh.org

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- Engaging children in a caring, supportive community. Their multi-age environment, serving children ages 3 through 6 years old, provides a family-like atmosphere. Children develop compassion and confidence.
- Respecting each child's developmental abilities and personality. Montessori children enjoy choosing their own work each day guided by adults who are sensitive to each child's unique personality. Children experience joy in learning. They warmly encourage interested parents to schedule an in-person or virtual tour.

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## Our Lady of the Lake School

175 East 200th Street, Euclid  
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Learning goes beyond the classroom. Students enlarge their world with service learning and field trips. Outreach programs bring a wealth of resources into the school, and students also engage in hands-on learning through technology, with interactive boards in every classroom, a cutting-edge makerspace, and iPads for curriculum use. Even their youngest students take part, with preschoolers

making full use of the gymnasium, art rooms, makerspace and library.

Students are also encouraged to develop their talents through art and music programs and a variety of clubs and extracurriculars. A fully-equipped gym hosts an array of sports and athletics. An active parent-teacher organization keeps the school community engaged and welcoming.

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3455 Norwood Road  
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www.stdominicschool.net

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498 East Washington Street  
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www.stjoanofarc.org

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## Ss. Robert & William Catholic School

351 East 260th Street, Euclid  
(216) 731-3060  
www.srwschool.cc

## St. Paschal Baylon Catholic School

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www.saintpaschal.net

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2785 SOM Center Road  
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Young boys are growing quite fast physically, mentally, and emotionally. University School's junior kindergarten and kindergarten programs invite, inspire, and cultivate a boy's curiosity. The teachers understand boys and this impor-



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## Private School **GUIDE**

### University School cont'd

tant stage of development.

The junior kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms were designed by teachers and are housed in the primary building on the 32-acre Shaker Heights campus. These spaces are ideal for young, active boys and the hands-on academic program. The low student-to-teacher ratio is possible because each classroom has full-time licensed lead and associate teachers. Boys enjoy the resources of the extensive physical education, performing arts, outdoor, and maker spaces.

University School is a wonderful community to launch a young boy's lifetime love of learning. Having a strong knowledge base and desire for learning in the youngest years is key to future educational success. Schedule a personal family tour or join them for an upcoming virtual admission program. Learn more at [www.us.edu/visit](http://www.us.edu/visit).



### Villa Angela-St. Joseph High School

18491 Lakeshore Boulevard  
Cleveland  
(216) 481-8414  
[www.vasj.com](http://www.vasj.com)

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## Finding a private school From page 11

### 10. Is the school open to visits and drop-in observations?

All schools need to make sure their campus is secure and will have procedures to follow when visiting. But as a parent, you want to feel comfortable visiting the building to observe or take care of business. You'll want to find a school that makes parents welcome and is proud to show them around.

When you've narrowed your search to several schools, be sure to take the time for a personal visit. Talk with an administrator, take the tour and gather

any written information they've prepared for prospective students. Discuss pertinent questions and voice any concerns you may have about your child's specific needs. Above all, gauge your "feel" of the school. Is it the right place for you and your family?

Selecting the perfect private school is well worth the time it takes to research, visit and finally make your selection. This is the place your children will make important friendships, learn and grow, and pave the way to their bright futures.

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# Who has the world's most valuable autograph?

By Tim Anderson

U.S. President Herbert Hoover had a great sense of humor. During his term he once received a letter from a young autograph collector requesting two of Mr. Hoover's signatures. "You see," wrote the youngster, "I want to trade them for a Babe Ruth autograph and it takes two of yours to get one of his."

Friends say Hoover obligingly forwarded the two autographs and chuckled over the letter for years. One wonders if his sense of humor would still be so keen if he knew that it now takes seven or eight Herbert Hoover autographs to get one of the Babe's. Hoover's ink signatures are worth around \$100, while Ruth's signature can sell for \$800 or more.

Two of our presidents were long time autograph collectors themselves. Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy were both avid autograph hounds and understood how the economic law of supply and demand largely dictates the value of a particular autograph.

JFK once received a note from an old friend who teasingly pointed out that while the autograph of ex-president Ulysses S. Grant was then selling for \$55, Kennedy's was going for an even higher \$65!

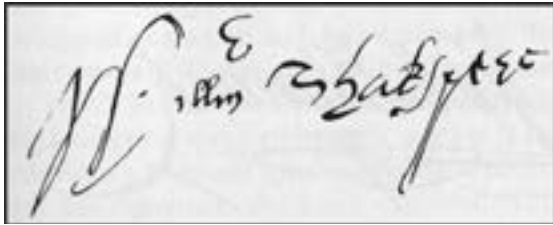
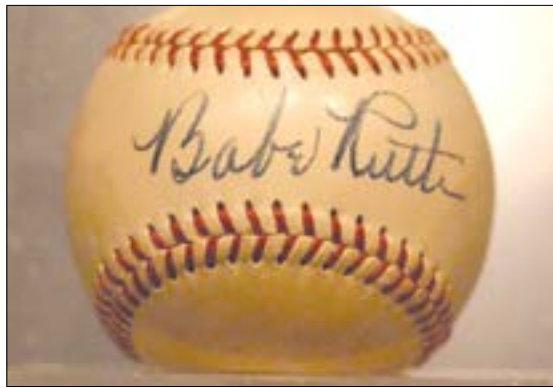
Always quick with a quip, JFK wrote back saying, "I appreciate your letter about the market in Kennedy signatures. It is hard to believe that the going price is so high now. In order not to depress the market further, I will not sign this letter." And he didn't.

Presidential signatures are always fun to collect, but autographs come from all walks of life and in all shapes and sizes. Baseballs, books, legal documents, photographs, playbills and all sorts of things are signed by movie stars, astronauts, athletes, scientists, or even famous figures from the Wild West. Annie Oakley, James "Wild Bill" Hickok, Bat Masterson, Wyatt Earp and "Buffalo Bill" Cody have all left signatures on letters and documents that can sell for thousands of dollars today.

Signed letters, documents and photographs are normally worth more than simple signatures on cards or autograph album pages. But this doesn't mean a simple signature has little value. Dark ink signatures in excellent condition of Walt Disney, Charles Lindbergh, Betsy Ross, or Martin Luther King, Jr. can sell for \$500 to \$1,000. And those of Indian fighter George Armstrong Custer, ball-player "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, Sigmund Freud, and Apache legend Geronimo are worth even more!

Today some of the autographs most in demand are those of Hollywood's great film stars of the 1930s and 1940s. Signed photos of Greta Garbo, Jean Harlow, Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, or Marilyn Monroe are among the most valuable and will cost a collector \$1,000 and higher. In fact, Marilyn's signed 8 x 10" photos are now worth a whopping \$5,000.

Because of the hundreds of requests they receive in the mail each week, some of today's TV and



movie stars hire secretaries to sign their fan mail for them. If a fan writes to a big star today and requests a signed photo, chances are if a photo is received at all, it will either bear a machine-imprinted signature, or it will be signed by a secretary. Bob Hope, Bette Davis, and Elizabeth Taylor all used secretaries to sign the photos they mailed to fans.

Yet there was a time, not long ago, when one of Hollywood's biggest stars took time out of his busy schedule to answer a young boy's letter. Back in the 1950s, one of my younger collector friends wrote to John Wayne and mentioned that other kids teased him because his first name was Marion. The "Duke" surprised the youngster by writing

back and revealing that he too was named Marion, and that "John Wayne" was just a stage name. Then, to my happy friend's surprise, the letter was signed with Wayne's full birth name: "Marion Michael Morrison."

Because of its rarity, this unusual John Wayne autograph would be worth at least \$2,500 if it could be pried from the happy owner's hands.

Most Hollywood stars however, are much more affordable. Nowadays a collector can still purchase a signature of Bo Derek, Kirk Douglas, Doris Day, Sidney Poitier and hundreds of other stars for around \$10 each.

But if you want a signature of William Shakespeare, you'll have to dig a bit deeper in the pockets. The English playwright has the honor of having the most valuable existing autograph in the world. None of his original manuscripts have ever been found, and only six of his signatures — all in institutions — are known to exist. If one of the six autographs were to be sold today, experts predict it could sell for as much as \$20 million dollars!

Ironically, if you were to see an actual William Shakespeare signature, you might not be able to read it. Same goes for Napoleon Bonaparte, artist Salvador Dali, ballet legend Rudolf Nureyev, and King Henry III. All had a tendency to scribble when signing their names.

On the other hand, if awards were to be given for autographs that were simple, clear, and easy-to-read, then American wild west figures Jim Bridger and Calamity Jane would win hands down. Each signed with an "X."

## Just For Laughs



### Baby Edition

The nurse told the parents of a newly born child, "You have a cute baby."

The smiling husband said, "I bet you say that to all new parents."

"No," she replied, "just to those whose babies really are good looking."

The husband again asked, "So what do you say to the others?"

The nurse replied, "The baby looks just like you."

Little Johnny's new baby brother was screaming up a storm. He asked his mom, "Where'd we get him?"

His mother replied, "He came from heaven."

Johnny exclaimed, "Wow... I can see why they threw him out!"

A friend asked me if she should have a baby after 40. I said no, 40 babies are enough.





## Don't give up hope for 2021

By Stacy Turner

When my youngest sister was getting ready to turn 9 or 10 and set about planning her birthday party, she decided on a pool party. Since we had an above-ground pool in the backyard, this wasn't a huge ask. The problem was, her birthday arrives in January, a time when backyard pool parties in northeast Ohio are a little tricky to plan. But she had a simple solution -- she moved her birthday to July, which she explained, was a far better month to have it.

Although our parents asked repeatedly if she really meant it, explaining that she wouldn't receive presents, a cake, or any of the usual birthday trappings on the day formerly known as her birthday, she stuck to her guns. They thought she might regret it, but she knew what she was doing. It was as if once she made up her mind, her birthday actually WAS in July, and she was happy to wait for the sunshine, blue skies, and beach towels that came with her special summer day.

It didn't matter to her how cold and grey it got, or how much snow and ice came that year, because she had a super fun pool party to look forward to. She knew a winter storm couldn't cancel her party, and that her new swimsuit would look much cuter than a big fat winter coat, snow pants, hat and gloves. She was all in for fun in the sun, and was more than happy to wait for the right timing. Once she made her decision, she waited for six long months without a fuss or complaint -- even when our other sister celebrated her

'real' birthday on the day they both shared, receiving gifts, cake, and a solo day of celebration. She waited, content that on a warm, sunny day in July, she'd have an awesome summer celebration that would be worth the wait.

I remembered that birthday as I sent her card this year, knowing I wouldn't see her and get to celebrate for a little while longer. I remember the determined little girl who decided it was better to wait patiently for the day she knew was coming than to settle for the less-than-ideal right now. As it turned out, good things do come to those who wait, at least in my sister's case that year. And I think it's applicable to this year, too. As 2021 began, we got past the novelty of it not being 2020 anymore, only to realize that it's still kind of the same. These challenging days mean we may need to recalibrate our thinking in order to maintain hope and hold on to our optimism.

It's true that it may take time before many of us can see all the loved ones we've been missing; until we can finally do all the things we've missed doing, too. But hold on to hope, because the day is coming in the not-so-distant future when we'll be able to see people up close and in person, go to concerts and movies, and hang out together like we used to.

We'll eventually get there, back to get-togethers and celebrations. And who knows, maybe my sister and I will get the chance to spend a warm, sunny day by a pool somewhere sipping umbrella drinks to celebrate her birthday like we did all those years ago. A girl can hope.

## Body Worlds Rx exhibit at Great Lakes Science Center

BODY WORLDS Rx offers visitors the unique opportunity to explore the amazing biology and physiology of human health and the dramatic effects of disease. From organs to muscles to the nervous system and to skeletal structures, BODY WORLDS Rx gives an unprecedented look inside the most sophisticated mechanism in the world, the human body.

The specimens on display in BODY WORLDS Rx show impressive comparisons of healthy organs and diseased organs, to reveal the physical impact of disease on the body's systems. Through the process of plastination, a complex preservation method that removes the fluids from the body and replaces them with reactive resins and elastomers, the specimens in this special exhibition offer guests the unique opportunity to be inspired and amazed by the inner workings of the human body. Visitors will see specimens that illustrate common ailments like cardiovascular disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.



It's up to families to make the decision about whether they feel it's appropriate for their children to visit BODY WORLDS Rx. To help with the decision, a family and educator guide can be found online at GreatScience.com. It gives an overview of what to expect in the exhibition, encourages discussion and provides conversation starting questions.

All guests and staff will be temperature checked when entering the building and will be required to wear a mask. Building capacity will be reduced and guests must buy their tickets in advance online and select an arrival time.

For info visit [GreatScience.com](http://GreatScience.com).



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