

TODAY'S family

April 2025 Cuyahoga

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Market at the Food Bank

Annual event raises
money to fight hunger

PRESCHOOL GUIDE

Family Kindness Festival

Healthy Kids Day

The great booger excavation

Humor essay: Why kids
pick their nose

7 ways to extend
kindness to a friend
dealing with infertility



**April is National Child Abuse
Prevention Month**

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Shutterstock/By Pavel Kobyshev

Spring Discovery Days at Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Have you observed a dwarf seahorse's bony plate exterior or watched a poison dart frog tap its tiny toes? Did you know that a spade-like lower jaw extension allows hungry little central stonerollers to scrape up algae? Were you aware that fused pelvic fins let ping-pong-ball-like lump suckers adhere to rocks and kelp so they're not swept away by currents?

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is highlighting these and other diminutive animals during Spring Discovery Days, March 22 – April 27, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Daily animal encounters, small species shout-outs, a "Spot a Spotted" challenge, Splash Fund "Ohio Turtle Tales" popups, interactive Discovery Carts, a fill-in booklet and short videos are all part of this celebration of nature's hidden influencers and included with regular Aquarium admission.

While standing under 230,000 gallons of saltwater in the shadow of a massive sand tiger shark is a memorable part of any Greater Cleveland Aquarium visit, Curator Ray Popik



hopes Spring Discovery Days brings a little more attention to a few micro marvels and some of the features that help them make it in the big world—like the weedy seadragon's independently moving eyes, the spiny softshell turtle's pig-like snout or the pencil urchins blunt spines.

Tickets are \$19.95 ages 13 and older, \$13.95 ages 2-12, \$0 passholders and children younger than 2

Visit greaterclevelandaquarium.com to purchase your tickets.

February article update

In the February 2025 issue we published an article about peanut allergies which included a section about signs and symptoms. We listed vomiting as a digestive issue, which is technically correct, but we have learned that vomiting (especially repetitive) should have been listed as a **severe reaction** which could need immediate medical attention. We are thankful that this was pointed out by a reader and have prepared the list below that goes more in depth of the symptoms of peanut allergies and what to watch for.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A PEANUT ALLERGY

Detecting a peanut allergy early can help prevent severe allergic reactions. Parents should be vigilant for symptoms, especially after introducing peanuts into their child's diet, as reactions often occur within minutes to a few hours of consumption. Common signs include:

Mild symptoms:

GUT: Mild nausea

SKIN: A few hives, mild itch

NOSE: Itchy or running nose, sneezing

MOUTH: Redness around the mouth, itchy mouth



Severe reactions (anaphylaxis):

GUT: Repetitive vomiting, severe diarrhea

SKIN: Many hives over body, widespread redness

THROAT: Tight or hoarse throat, difficulty breathing or swallowing

MOUTH: Significant swelling of the tongue or lips

HEART: Pale or blueish skin, faintness, weak pulse, dizziness

LUNG: Shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough

Anaphylaxis is life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention. Call 911 and tell the emergency dispatcher the person is having anaphylaxis and may need epinephrine when emergency responders arrive.

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7 ways to extend kindness when your friend is dealing with infertility

The other moms and I chatted while watching our kids' gymnastics practice through the glass. The small talk grew deep, and then awkward when one shared with some sadness that she wanted another child, but so far, it hadn't worked out. "At least you don't have to worry about birth control!" another mom offered. I cringed. I wasn't sure what the right response was but I was pretty certain the birth control comment wasn't it. Given the fact that one in eight couples experience infertility, if you haven't been on the receiving end of insensitive comments, you've struggled to find the right words to say to a friend who has been trying to conceive for months or even years.

There are, in fact, at least seven important ways you can support a friend with infertility. The following tips came from conversations with experts—a dozen women who experienced infertility and a clinical social worker.



Acknowledge the loss

Abby MacDonald, LICSW, an infertility specialist, says a vital part of helping a friend with infertility, is understanding that they're grieving a loss. While it may not be as concrete as a miscarriage or a death, the intangible losses are many; including privacy, autonomy, and the loss of

the narrative where pregnancy just naturally happens. She may also be struggling to reconcile her relationship with her own body, which she perceives as having failed her. Even if you're not sure what to say, your friend will appreciate your sensitivity to the fact that she's grieving.

Remember it's not about you

Particularly if infertility is something you haven't personally experienced, it is not perceived as helpful when you project your own feelings on the situation. For example, one friend cringed when friends would ponder the possibility of multiples as a result of fertility treatments, and be either excited by or terrified of it. "As a new parent, I have no idea how what having multiples would be like and I might feel excited or terrified. Either way, I don't give a darn how you feel about it. Nor do I care that you think I'm misguided for being excited or terrified. I'm allowed to feel how I feel about it." Sharing the fact that you would never be willing to go through IVF is also not helpful. As my friend said, "It's personal. People feeling so free to comment on what they would do in my situation was unsettling."

Unless you've been there, avoid giving advice

If you take nothing else from this post, take this: Friends don't tell friends who are dealing with infertility to just have a bottle of wine and relax. Nor do they say any variation on this. That includes telling the story of that couple who adopted,

only to find themselves pregnant immediately. "Tips" from people who've never been through infertility personally are not tips at all. At best, they are annoying. At worst, they are cruel and insensitive, no matter the intention. No one who has given hours of their life to scheduling doctors appointments and carefully timed shots wants to hear about the position you heard was effective, or your sister's friend's cousin's brother's wife, who got pregnant when she ate pineapple.

One woman recalled feeling insulted by a friend's suggestion that she supplement IVF with herbs. "The implication is 'You could do more.' And my response is, 'No, I couldn't. I'm at my limit. I took three injections a day for the past week and a half, my stomach is purple, I woke up early and went to the clinic four of the past six days, and I am done.'"

On the other hand, advice from someone who has been through it is comforting. One woman said she was grateful to hear her best friend, who had also struggled to conceive, break things down in a very matter-of-fact way. She recalled her best friend's warning. "There are only 24-48 hours a month that you are most likely to get pregnant. Time your ovulation and time sex. Don't leave it to chance."

Leave the wise sayings to Hallmark

Perhaps even less helpful than advice from the uninitiated are their theories on why this is happening. As MacDonald explains, "Comments like 'God has a plan,' while often offered with good intentions, and seemingly supportive of allowing faith to take a front seat during this difficult time, can reinforce questions someone has about why this bad thing is happening to an otherwise good person." Another cliché many women told me they did not appreciate: If it's meant to be, it will be. Let Hallmark handle the "encouraging" remarks. All you need to do is be there if your friend wants to talk.

Just listen

This can be easier said than done. In a culture obsessed with doing,

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FRIENDSHIP

staying quiet can feel like inaction. The opposite is true, however. Giving someone space to talk (or not talk) is among the most powerful gifts you have to offer. MacDonald says it is key to simply listen and offer reflections based on what your friend says. For example, if she says she feels hopeless, an appropriate response might be, "Given all you've been through, it's hard to expect anything will go to plan." MacDonald emphasizes the importance of stopping at that point to give your friend a chance to talk about her feelings, rather than filling any silence with a stock line about hope or positive thinking.

Be curious (but not nosy)

If you have to ask when or if someone is planning to have a baby, that's a pretty clear sign that it's none of your business. Nothing is more awkward or painful than having an acquaintance put their hand on your belly and ask why you're not pregnant yet, when you're privately tortured over that very same question.

But if your friend has been open

with you about her struggles, make sure she knows you want to support her, even if you're not sure how. Said one woman, "Even if awkward things were said, I appreciated getting to have the conversation rather than nothing being said at all." Says MacDonald, one way to show that you're curious and that you care is by taking the time to educate yourself. She and several other women I spoke with recommended connecting with Resolve, a nonprofit dedicated to providing support, advocacy, education, and community for people facing challenges in their journey to create a family.

Offer genuine support

Avoid offering vague support, (e.g. "Let me know if you need anything.") If you're compelled to offer more than a listening ear (which is plenty), give something specific (exceptions: advice, platitudes). Women who battled infertility recalled being grateful when friends:

- Called or texted just to say they were thinking of them.
- Reached out to their partner to get a drink.

- Sent a copy of the book "Things Fall Apart" by Perna Chodron.
- Educated themselves on infertility.
- Left flowers on the porch when they knew her period came.

Another gift you can give is a pass when it comes to attending baby showers or kids' birthday parties. MacDonald encourages people to be sensitive to the fact that holidays other than Mother's Day and Father's Day can be triggering. One woman expressed gratitude for a friend who only called when she was away from her kids, so she wouldn't hear the sound of babies in the background.

Supporting a friend through infertility is showing up, listening, and being sensitive. It's letting your friend feel her feelings. It's sharing a long pause instead of anecdotes or adages. It's asking, "How are you doing," and giving space for your friend to answer or a shoulder to cry on. It's saying, "I don't know what to say, but I want you to know I care." It's simply being a friend.

~Article by Pam Moore

~Photo: Adobe Stock/ By phpetrunina14



My teacher asked me to name an invention. I said, "The snooze button." Genius, right?

My math teacher said, "You'll need this in real life." Still waiting, Mrs. Johnson.

My PE teacher said I ran like a turtle. I said, "Turtles live longer."

My science project was a potato battery. The teacher called it "half-baked."

I tried to teach my dog to play dead, but he just gave me a "you first" look.

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Drop the cement suitcase: Tools to get unstuck this spring

As the daffodils emerge and the trees blossom, spring brings a fresh start and a clean slate. Why, then, do many parents tell me they feel stuck? They feel trapped in routines, overwhelmed by daily demands, and weighed down by unhelpful thoughts, impossible expectations, and unresolved emotions. To get out of this rut, it helps to understand why we feel stuck and how to unpack the cement suitcase filled with limiting beliefs, resentments, and emotional baggage many of us carry.

Why do we feel stuck?

We get stuck when we don't process our emotions, we ruminate about the past or future, and our nervous system gets caught in overdrive. Imagine piling your negative thoughts, worry, external pressures, and uncomfortable emotions into a suitcase and then trying to carry it around with you. You wouldn't get very far. For parents, the pressures of work, family, relationships, and finances can all contribute to feeling weighed down and out of options.

When I became a mom of two, the demands were so intense that I lost myself. Thoughts like "this is so hard" and "I'm not cut out for this," overwhelmed me. I didn't have the tools to manage those feelings and thoughts effectively and I spiraled into a stuck state. I felt trapped and overwhelmed.

Here are four tools to help us unpack that cement suitcase:

1. Get out of story and assumptions, and into fact and truth

Do you find yourself going over stories or assumptions when you're trying to make a decision? If you're considering a career move, for example, do you talk yourself out of the jobs you come across assuming you are over or underqualified or not sure if it will work with your family's schedule? Instead, try asking yourself, "What's true?" Often, the truth is you don't know all of the facts about the role. In that case, sending in your application is a great first step. Challenging your default thoughts can help you see your situation more clearly and nudge those limiting stories out of the way.



2. Feel your emotions

Imagine your emotions as a river. When we allow them to flow up and through us, our internal channels remain open and clear. When we don't allow ourselves to feel our feelings, it's like building a dam that blocks the flow. When an emotion arises, take time to sit with it, journal about it, or simply allow yourself to feel it without judgment. This process can help you get to know yourself and release it. Feelings are energy and they are meant to be processed.

3. Get into the present moment

In the present moment, we can tap into our intuition and make conscious decisions. When you notice yourself ruminating about the past or future, take a moment to breathe deeply, scan your surroundings, and notice the sensations in your body. This is a beautiful practice to do with your children, as they naturally live in the present moment.

4. It's all in your head

Our thoughts stem from our beliefs and they determine our actions. If you think, "I'm never going to succeed," challenge that thought with something a bit kinder like, "Right now, I'm facing challenges, but I'm working on finding solutions." Reframe negative thoughts to shift your mindset and challenge limiting beliefs.

Drop the cement suitcase

To get unstuck, we must let go of emotional baggage. Reflect on what beliefs, thoughts, or actions no longer serve you. Journal, meditate, or talk with a trusted friend to help unpack and lighten your emotional load.

When I was struggling in young motherhood,

my chest felt heavy, my breathing was shallow, and negative thoughts were pinging me constantly. I chose a few small things that gave me pleasure and a glimpse into my whole self. Whether it was a cup of hot coffee, or feeling the sun on my face, I embraced those moments and allowed the stuck energy to gently start to fall away.

Tools to get unstuck

Accept yourself: Embrace your current reality, including the challenges. Acceptance doesn't mean approval but it can create movement and clarity.

Envision your future: Get clear on where you want to be. Visualize your desired future and the emotions associated with it. Start to feel what it will feel like to reach your goals. For example, if you want to feel connected with your partner again, imagine what you will feel like when you do. This can help bring it into reality.

Practice gratitude: Even amidst challenges, finding things to be grateful for can shift your perspective and mood. Look for 3–5 things you are grateful for each day. Gratitude multiplies!

Journal: Take pen to paper to explore and process your thoughts and emotions. When you journal, you allow your unconscious mind to flow up and through, revealing your inner knowings.

Choose empowering thoughts: Focus on thoughts that lift you and guide you toward your goals. When thoughts that don't help you arise, imagine them floating away on a cloud.

Reflect and reconnect

As we embrace the new beginnings of spring, reflect on where you feel stuck and how you can use these tools to create positive change. By tuning into your emotions, staying present, and choosing empowering thoughts, you can lighten your load and start moving forward with renewed energy and clarity. Like the seasons this too shall change.

Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified life coach, writer, and Cleveland area mom who helps parents enjoy this time in their lives. You can find her at rebecca-fellenbaum.com.

~Photo: Adobe Stock/By DragonImages

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Family Kindness Festival • May 4

Join in for an extraordinary afternoon that brings kids and parents together to have fun, do good, and be kind—all under one roof! Family Kindness Festival, on Sunday, May 4, from 1–4 p.m., at Beachwood High School (25100 Fairmount Blvd. in Beachwood) is a free family event geared for children ages 5 and older. All ages are welcome to attend, however, children must be accompanied by an adult. Now in its fourth year, the festival is presented by Senders Pediatrics in partnership with Beachwood City Schools.

Thirty inspiring nonprofits, 28 innovative students and 20 area schools will join together to create a one-of-a-kind landscape where families can have fun while engaging in service projects, meeting inspirational kids, and learning about volunteer opportunities within the community. Teens can connect with local nonprofits and identify a number of ways to meet their service hours requirement.

The event also features entertainment, games, unique art projects, strolling characters, ice cream trucks, and so much more, which will surely



captivate kids and parents alike.

Highlights of the day:

- Interactive family games including Gaga
- Video games for the older kids
- Henna Art tattoos
- Card-making for area hospitals
- Strolling characters
- Printmaking
- Friendship bracelets
- “Shrinky Dinks” to design colorful key chains and charms
- Ice-cold treats from East Coast Custard and Kona Ice trucks
- Wigs for Kids Cut-a-Thon—participate or cheer on volunteers donating their hair to children experiencing hair loss.

For more information and to register, visit www.senderspeditrics.com/kindness.

30th annual Market at the Food Bank

Featuring Cleveland’s most delicious cuisines and beverages

Tickets are on sale now for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s premier event, Market at the Food Bank. The event is set to take place on Sunday, April 27 between 6 and 8:30 p.m. at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s Partner Distribution Hub. The signature event benefits the annual Harvest for Hunger campaign, a 21-county food and funds drive, coordinated by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

The event welcomes guests and donors behind the scenes of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s 197,000 square-foot partner distribution hub, providing an exclusive look at how their contributions make the Food Bank’s mission possible.

Hundreds of guests will spend the evening sampling superb cuisine and delicious drinks from over 25 of Cleveland’s premier restaurants and beverage purveyors. There will also be a silent auction and bag pull, where guests can choose a surprise bag filled with at least a \$50 value. Guests will have the chance to walk



away with fabulous restaurant and unique entertainment packages.

General admission tickets to the event are \$150 per person and inclusive of all event food and beverage.

VIP tickets are \$250 per person and grants attendees access to all food and beverage as well as access to the party an hour earlier at 5 p.m., a first look at the auction, specialty cocktails, private lounge and seating, and live entertainment.

Visit www.GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org/Market today to purchase tickets.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Issues like poverty and inadequate childcare can prevent parents from successfully parenting. But we as a community can help solve the issues and provide happier, healthier childhoods.

Learn how to get involved



Cuyahoga County
Division of Children and Family Services



Earth Day: It's not just for tree huggers anymore

Every April 22, millions of people gather to celebrate Earth Day. For years, this holiday has been associated with tree-hugging, composting, and people who know far too much about which bin to put a yogurt cup in. But let's be honest—Earth Day isn't just for eco-warriors in hemp clothing. It's for everyone, including you, the person currently drinking from a plastic straw and pretending not to notice.

Yes, even if your version of “going green” is buying a basil plant that dies within a week, Earth Day is still for you. Here's why:

1. The Earth belongs to all of us (unfortunately)

There's no escape. Whether you drive a Prius or a gas-guzzling SUV named “The Carbonator,” we all live on the same planet. And while billionaires are busy planning their Mars escape routes, the rest of us are stuck here trying to figure out how to keep our air breathable and our oceans less... plasticky.

Sure, you may not be planting 500 trees in the Amazon, but even doing something small—like not throwing your gum on the sidewalk—makes a difference. It may not be as glamorous as chaining yourself to a redwood, but hey, every bit counts.

2. Earth Day is about survival (not just sentiment)

You don't have to be a hardcore environmentalist to appreciate clean water, fresh air, and a world where pigeons don't outnumber people. Earth Day is about keeping the plan-

et livable, which benefits everyone—including those of us who think the only thing “green” in life should be guacamole.

You might say, “But I recycle sometimes!” That's great! Even the laziest effort, like using a reusable bag that's been stuffed in your closet since 2015, is still something. Earth Day is a gentle reminder that we should try to do better—ideally before our cities start resembling scenes from a dystopian sci-fi movie.

3. It's a perfect excuse to judge people (productively)

Earth Day gives you 24 glorious hours to silently judge your neighbor's trash habits. Are they still using single-use water bottles? Gasp. Did they throw away an entire pizza box without breaking it down? The horror!

It's also a day to flex your own eco-consciousness. “Oh, you're still using plastic bags? That's so 2010.” Suddenly, your reusable tote collection makes you an environmental influencer, and that smug sense of superiority is completely justified.

4. Being green is easier than ever

Back in the day, caring about the environment meant wearing scratchy hemp shirts and knowing how to install solar panels with your bare hands. But now? You can be eco-friendly with minimal effort. LED light bulbs, meatless Mondays, walking instead of driving two blocks—it all counts. And bonus: most of these changes save you



money, which means more funds for important things, like coffee and online shopping.

5. It's a reason to go outside

Let's be real—most of us could use a little fresh air. Earth Day is a great reminder that nature is actually pretty cool. You can enjoy it without hugging a tree (unless you really want to). Take a walk, have a picnic, or just sit outside and appreciate the fact that oxygen is still free. For now.

Earth Day isn't about perfection; it's about participation. So whether you're a hardcore environmentalist or someone who just remembered to turn off the lights when leaving a room, you're part of the movement. Celebrate however you like—just maybe don't litter while doing it.

And if all else fails, at least plant a basil plant. It'll probably die, but it's the thought that counts.

~Article by Jeannine Todd

~Photo: Adobe Stock/By Melinda Nagy

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Child Abuse Prevention Month

Raising awareness and taking action

Every April, communities across the United States observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, a crucial time dedicated to raising awareness, promoting prevention strategies, and supporting survivors of child abuse and neglect. Established in 1983, this month-long campaign serves as a reminder that protecting children is a shared responsibility that requires the collective efforts of individuals, families, and organizations.

Understanding child abuse and its impact

Child abuse encompasses various forms of maltreatment, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Each type of abuse can have long-lasting consequences on a child's development, emotional well-being, and future relationships. Studies show that children who experience abuse are more likely to face challenges

such as mental health disorders, substance abuse, academic struggles, and difficulty forming healthy relationships in adulthood.

The importance of prevention

Prevention is the key to reducing the prevalence of child abuse. By fostering safe, stable, and nurturing environments, communities can help children thrive. Key prevention strategies include:

- **Education and awareness** – Providing parents, caregivers, and community members with information on positive parenting techniques, child development, and the warning signs of abuse.
- **Strengthening families** – Offering support services such as parenting classes, family counseling, and economic assistance to reduce stressors that contribute to child maltreatment.
- **Community engagement** – Encouraging neighbors, schools,



and local organizations to play an active role in promoting child welfare and reporting suspected abuse.

- **Legislative advocacy** – Supporting policies that protect children's rights, fund child welfare programs, and ensure strict penalties for abusers.

Moving forward

While Child Abuse Prevention Month brings national attention to the issue, protecting children is a year-round responsibility. By continuing efforts to educate, support, and advocate, we can work toward a future where all children grow up in safe and loving environments.

So if you suspect something isn't quite right, or you're just concerned a family needs help, pick up the phone and call one of the numbers below. You can be a hero for a child by speaking up.

How to get involved

Everyone has a role to play in preventing child abuse. Here are a few ways individuals and communities can make a difference:

- **Wear blue:** The color blue symbolizes child abuse prevention. Many organizations encourage people to wear blue on specific days in April to show solidarity.
- **Spread awareness:** Use social media to share resources, statistics, and educational materials about child abuse prevention.
- **Volunteer:** Many child advocacy organizations and shelters welcome volunteers to help support at-risk children and families.
- **Report suspected abuse:** If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, report it to local child protective services or law enforcement. Early intervention can save lives.

Cuyahoga County
Children and Family Services
216-696-KIDS or send an email to
Protecting-Cuyahoga-Kids@
jfs.ohio.gov

Lake County Department
of Job and Family Services
440-350-4000 (then press 1)
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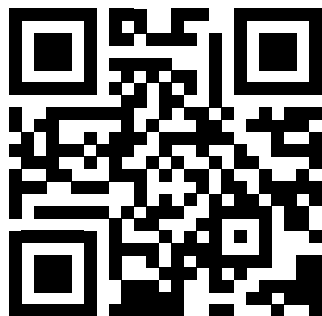


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Questions? Contact GSNEO at 800-852-4474 or customercare@gsneo.org

*The Girl Scout Extended Year membership spans April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026, followed by the annual membership year from October 1 to September 30, which requires yearly renewal.

girl scouts
of north east ohio

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The 20 questions playlist – Parenting teens

When you are a parent of young children, you probably repeat the same questions over and over. “Did you brush your teeth?” or “Do you need to go to the bathroom?” When the kids become teenagers, you still repeat yourself, but the questions are a little different. The answers, at this age, often come with some heavy sighs and a few eye rolls.

“Will you be home for dinner?” I usually follow that up with, “Will you be alone or are 20 of your closest friends joining you?”

“Is there gas in the car?” I don’t care that the dashboard says you have 50 miles until empty and it didn’t ding yet.

“Where are you going now?” They always seem to have keys in their hand. I am seriously considering getting a revolving door.

“Are you sleeping?” This is typically a morning question when I don’t see a light under their door. However, if I find them napping in the middle of the day, I might use a different tone of voice.

“Did you get my text?” I know you did because the read receipt is on. What I really want to know is why didn’t you answer my text.

“Where is MY phone charger?” Just because I leave my charger in the same place all the time does not mean it is free for you to use or move to a more convenient spot.

“Who used the last (fill in the blank) and didn’t



put it on the shopping list?” It is so frustrating to reach for a box of cereal in the pantry only to find it is empty. The same goes for the milk. Just put it on the list!

“Where are all the cups/bowls/spoons?” I had to eat breakfast out of Tupperware this morning and use a fork to stir my coffee.

“Does anyone know how to change the toilet paper roll?” I taught them this, I swear.

“Am I made of money?” Every day someone needs money for something. Don’t you people have jobs? Use your own money once in a while.

“Are you really wearing that?” My kids all have their own idea of appropriate attire for occasions. It rarely matches mine.

“Where is your coat?” Apparently, I am the only one aware of temperature change.

“What is that smell?” This is usually answered with “I don’t smell anything.” Maybe it’s coming from the three-day-old cup of melted shake in the back seat.

“Why is it so dark in here?” My kids are part vampire. The blinds are always drawn in their bedrooms and they cannot watch TV unless all the lights are off.

“Do I know him/her?” When the kids were in elementary school, I knew everyone they knew as well as their parents. In high school, my kids seem to have a new friend every day.

“Do you have homework?” The answer varies conveniently around what is going on at the moment. “Yes,” is the answer if I need dishes done but it’s a definite “no” if friends invite them out on a school night.

“Who is driving?” When they didn’t have their license, I knew I would get the crappy shift of the carpool. Now that they are driving, I need to know if I should shine up my St. Christopher.

“Whose towels are on the bathroom floor?” I am going to start assigning colors. It’s the only way I will know who the real culprit is.

Pam Molnar is a writer and the mother of three. She is fluent in sarcasm, can decipher mumbled words and can halt procrastination with a single eyebrow raise.

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The great booger excavation

Why kids love picking their noses

Ah, children. They are tiny, sticky, chaos machines who defy the laws of hygiene with Olympic-level enthusiasm. If you've ever spent time with a small child, you've undoubtedly witnessed one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of human behavior: the irresistible urge to mine for nose gold.

It starts early—too early. Before they can walk, talk, or even understand that the cat does not, in fact, enjoy being licked, children discover that their index finger is a perfect spelunking tool for nasal exploration. And once they figure it out, there's no turning back.

The scientific appeal

Why do kids love nose-picking? Some say it's curiosity. Others suggest it's an innate desire to recycle natural resources. The truth is, kids pick their noses for the same reason people binge-watch reality TV—it's disgusting, oddly satisfying, and they can't stop.

To a child, a booger isn't a gross bodily excretion. It's a mystery, a treasure, an experiment. "What is this strange, sticky substance?" they wonder. "Why does it change color? Can I flick it farther than my last one? What happens if I stick it to the couch?" These are the questions that

haunt the minds of our youth.

The social minefield

Every parent has experienced the sheer horror of their child digging for nostril gold in public. Maybe it was in church, at a family dinner, or worse—at a school play while they were standing front and center.

And let's not forget the pièce de résistance: when the child, caught in the act, decides that the most logical next step is to eat it.

At that moment, time slows down. Parents lock eyes across the room, silently wondering if it is too late to put this one back.

Despite the sheer volume of times we say, "Get your finger out of your nose!" children simply do not care. Why? Because their tiny, developing brains have already assessed the situation and have decided "this is a battle I am willing to fight to the death."

The forbidden snack

If there's one thing kids love more than nose-picking, it's snacking on the results. Science has yet to explain why children, who gag at the mere sight of a green bean, will happily ingest something they just dug out of their own nasal



passages. Maybe it's the thrill of the forbidden. Maybe it's a survival instinct from caveman days. Or maybe it's just because they know it horrifies adults.

Regardless, parents everywhere have mastered the art of a soft mid-air slap, the desperate tissue grab, and the frantic, "SPIT IT OUT!" command—usually followed by the soul-crushing realization that it's already too late.

Hope for the future?

Thankfully, most kids outgrow their nose-picking phase by the time they realize their peers find it gross. Until then, parents must endure the battle, armed only with tissues, hand sanitizer, and the fervent hope that their child won't be "that kid" in kindergarten.

Until then, we must accept that nose-picking is a childhood rite of passage—one that is, unfortunately, still happening in the backseat of your car right now.

~Article by Jeannine Todd

~ Photo: Adobe Stock/Lightfield Studios

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Healthy Kids Day is April 5

The YMCA of Greater Cleveland and Rocket Arena are teaming up to host their annual Healthy Kids Day event on April 5 from noon to 3 p.m. Suitable for kids ages 12 and under, Healthy Kids Day will serve as a reminder that fitness can be fun! Kids will have the opportunity to take part in sports skills clinics and enhance their basketball skills on the Cleveland Cavs practice court! They'll also be able to take part in high-energy fitness classes, expand their creativity with various arts and crafts, and dance to their heart's content! New this year, guests will be able to try their hand at pickleball!

More than 20 local vendors will be

at the event sharing tips about healthy habits. If you visit all the vendor tables, you can be entered in a drawing for two winners to win a \$250 Amazon gift card each. Preregistration is encouraged, but not required.

Healthy Kids Day® is the Y's national initiative to improve the health and well-being of kids and families. For more than 30 years, YMCAs and their communities have hosted free community events aimed to inspire kids and families to keep their minds and bodies active.

For more information about or to register for Healthy Kids Day 2025, visit www.clevelandymca.org/healthy-kids-day.

HOLIDAY HUMOR



Easter: The Only Holiday Where You Hunt for Your Own Food

Ah, Easter! The magical time of year when we celebrate renewal, rebirth, and the fact that an oversized rabbit apparently sneaks into our homes and leaves us candy. It's the only day when eating chocolate for breakfast is not only acceptable but encouraged.

Let's start with the real highlight of Easter: the egg hunt. Nothing says "fun" like unleashing sugar-fueled children into the yard, where they'll fight to the death over a plastic egg containing a single jellybean. Meanwhile, parents stand on the sidelines, coffee in hand, wondering why they didn't just hide \$5 bills and call it a day.

Speaking of eggs, Easter is the only time we willingly participate in an elaborate egg-dyeing ritual that leaves us with rainbow-stained fingers and countertops that will be "festively decorated" until July. Somehow, despite using every color imaginable, the eggs all end up the same murky shade of disappointment.

Then there's the Easter feast—a meal that somehow manages to involve both ham and deviled eggs, which seems oddly threatening when you think about it. And let's not forget Grandma's "famous" carrot cake, which is basically a sneaky way to add vegetables to dessert.

Of course, no Easter is complete without the mysterious Peeps—those neon marshmallow chicks that have the texture of insulation foam and a shelf life of eternity. No one actually enjoys them, yet they somehow multiply in your pantry like real rabbits.

In the end, Easter is about family, faith, and the universal agreement that hollow chocolate bunnies are a scam. So whether you're celebrating with church, candy, or just an excuse to eat ham for three days straight, enjoy the holiday!

Just watch out for rogue Easter eggs hiding under your couch until Halloween.

~Article by Justin Daniels

~Photo: Adobe Stock /By romanets_v

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PRESCHOOL GUIDE



Tips for finding the right preschool for your child

Choosing the right preschool for your child is a significant milestone in their early development. The preschool years are crucial for laying the foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive growth. With so many options available, selecting the best fit can feel overwhelming. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the process and make an informed decision.

1. Understand your child's needs

Every child is unique, and their individual temperament, interests, and learning style should guide your decision. Some children thrive in structured environments, while others may prefer a more flexible, play-based setting. Consider your child's personality, strengths, and any special needs they may have when evaluating different preschools.

2. Research different types of preschools

There are various preschool philosophies and teaching approaches to consider:

- **Montessori** – Encourages self-directed learning and hands-on exploration.
- **Waldorf** – Focuses on creativity, imagination, and routine-based learning.



- **Reggio Emilia** – Child-led learning that fosters curiosity through projects and collaboration.
- **Play-based** – Emphasizes learning through play and social interaction.
- **Academic-focused** – Offers structured learning with an emphasis on early literacy and math skills.

Understanding these approaches will help you determine which aligns best with your child's learning style and your family's values.

3. Consider location and convenience

A preschool's location plays a vital role in daily logistics. A school that is too far may add stress to your routine. Consider whether you prefer a preschool near your home, workplace, or a trusted caregiver. Also, check their operating hours to ensure they align with your schedule.

4. Evaluate the curriculum and learning environment

When visiting potential preschools, observe the classrooms and curriculum structure. Look for a balance of structured activities and free play. Ask about daily routines, subjects covered, and how teachers encourage curiosity and critical thinking. Ask if they provide meals and snacks, are naps taken and how they handle discipline.

The classroom should be a safe, engaging space with age-appropriate materials that stimulate creativity and learning.

Continued on page 16

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Finding a preschool from page 15

5. Check teacher qualifications and student-to-teacher ratios

Qualified, caring teachers are essential to a positive preschool experience. Ask about teachers' credentials, experience, professional development opportunities and ongoing training. Additionally, a low student-to-teacher ratio ensures that children receive individual attention, helping them feel secure and supported in their learning journey.

- Emergency preparedness
- Illness prevention and hygiene practices
- Food and allergy policies
- Background checks for staff
- Supervision during playtime and outdoor activities
- Required immunizations
- Sick child rules

8. Consider cost and affordability

Preschool tuition varies widely depending on the school type, location, and facilities. Create a budget and explore tuition assistance or scholarships if needed. Some public programs, such as Head Start, offer free or low-cost preschool options for qualifying families.

9. Ask for parent reviews and recommendations

Talking to other parents can provide valuable insights into a preschool's reputation. Read online reviews, join local parenting groups, and ask for recommendations from friends or family. First-hand

7. Inquire about safety and health policies

Children's health and safety should be a top priority. Ask about the school's policies regarding:



experiences can help you gauge the strengths and weaknesses of different schools.

10. Trust your instincts

While research and recommendations are helpful, trust your instincts when making a final decision. If a preschool feels right and aligns with your child's needs and your values, it's likely a great fit. If something feels off, continue exploring other options.

Finding the right preschool takes

time and careful consideration, but the effort is worth it. A positive preschool experience lays the foundation for a lifelong love of learning, social development, and emotional growth. By considering your child's needs, researching options, and visiting schools, you can confidently choose the best preschool for your little one.

~Article by Justin Daniels

~Photo: (boy) Adobe Stock/By GulArt

~Photo (girl): Adobe Stock/
By Oksana Kuzmina

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PRESCHOOL GUIDE

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Carol Nursery School creates a nurturing and engaging environment where children can learn and grow at their own pace. Knowing every child is unique, their curriculum is individualized to support emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development. Through guided play, children learn and develop imagination, exploration and collaboration. Their STEM lab offers additional opportunities to engage with materials that allow for teamwork and critical thinking.

In order to foster a strong partnership with parents, families are informed and involved in their child's education. Their offerings include part-time classes for children 2.5 to 5 years of age. A first school experience is their Moving On Up program which provides a safe, supportive experience for the youngest learners while their caregivers are nearby in a class for adults facilitated by experts

on child development. For their oldest students, they offer an extra year of preschool to gain confidence and independence before entering kindergarten.

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They offer programs for ages 6 weeks to 12 years old; infant/toddler, nursery school, prekindergarten, Montessori program, chartered private kindergarten, before- and after-school programs, and summer camp. Some activities offered are swimming lessons in their indoor pool, computer labs, music, gymnastics, Spanish classes, and science. Their experienced cooks serve breakfast, snacks and hot lunches.

JDN Early Childhood Center

22201 Fairmount Boulevard
Shaker Heights
(216) 320-8489
www.bellefairejcb.org

JDN Early Childhood Center offers quality, year-round Infant, Toddler, and Preschool programs for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years. A Jewish program with a wonderfully diverse student body, they excel at fostering academic readiness, confidence and a love of learning, while attending to the social and emotional needs

Continued on page 18



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PRESCHOOL GUIDE

JDN Early Childhood cont'd

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For more information or a personal tour, contact Suzanne Appel, LISW, director, at (216) 320-8489.



Laurel School

www.LaurelSchool.org
(216) 464-0946

Butler Campus

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Lyman Campus

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Laurel School, founded in 1896, is a nationally recognized college preparatory, independent day school for girls, kindergarten through grade 12, with a coeducational early childhood program. Named a top all-girls school in Ohio by Niche.com, its traditional Lyman Campus is in Shaker Heights and its 150-acre Butler Campus is in Novelty. The Butler Campus is home to competitive athletics and outdoor experiential learning, including grades 3–5, northeast Ohio's first outdoor prekindergarten class, and home to the new Ruhlman Family Center opening in 2026!

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 Laurel parents and teachers with research findings relevant to raising and educating girls.

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www.ms-uh.org

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www.us.edu/visit



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For Boys, Junior K - Grade 12

PRESCHOOL GUIDE

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- 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 a personal tour.

University School

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The focus in junior kindergarten is helping each boy develop the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to enter kindergarten with self-confidence and independence. Boys engage in activities that propel the development of early cognitive language and math skills while infusing science, language, art, music, and physical education. Their teachers understand and support the needs of young boys, and small class sizes allow for close and trusted connections.

University School is a vibrant and welcoming community where each boy is known and loved. Schedule a personal visit or join them for an upcoming event. Learn more at www.us.edu/visit.



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Beacon Gold Satin 45-Piece Flatware Set (Cambridge)

Designed with clean lines and modern proportions. This 45-piece service for eight and serving set features a sophisticated gold satin finish.

- Service for eight
- Material: 18/0 stainless steel
- Gold satin finish
- Dishwasher safe
- Includes (8) five-piece place settings and five-piece serving set



Tuscany Classics Iridescent Set of 4 Glasses - Red Wine

With joyfully colorful facets that reflect a brilliant ombré rainbow, these wine glasses made to enhance your favorite reds are an instant mood boost. Perfect for cheerful celebrations and friendly gab sessions, they'll inspire bigger smiles and more colorful conversations every time you entertain.

- Style: Iridescent
- Made especially for red wines
- Material: glass/crystal
- Dishwasher safe
- Includes (4) red wine glasses
- 15-oz capacity



Visit www.lenox.com to see the wide selection of beautiful items!

FREE Earth Day celebration event

Stop by Penitentiary Glen Reservation to celebrate Earth Day with activities for all ages. Earth Day is a global celebration and one day of the year that humans join in bringing awareness to the issues facing our planet. Actions, whether big or small, can help our planet as we work together to protect it 365 days of the year. Earth Day activities include:

- FREE event!
- Eco-fair with local conservation organizations
- Earth Day Marketplace with locally made merchandise
- FREE tree for each family



- Wildlife programs
- Games and crafts
- Shop in The Nature Store
- Miniature train rides (1 to 3 pm, weather permitting).

April 27, 2025 • Noon-4 pm

Penitentiary Glen Reservation

8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd., Kirtland

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