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**Fall 2021**

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## CAPITAL CITY parent

Fall 2021

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# Back-and-forth over back to school

Parents weigh the pros and cons of returning to classrooms

**PARENT | Lana Shovlin**

I vividly remember that early afternoon on March 13, 2020, when my children walked home from school for the final time. I watched as they slowly ambled down the sidewalk and up our driveway, weighed down by book bags that had been stuffed to the brim with the entire contents of their desks and crinkled artwork that had been hastily pulled from the school hallways. It was implausible to me that those backpacks were able to zip closed, but even more unbelievable that my daughters' little bodies could carry such heavy loads. They looked like cumbersome turtles with huge shells, and had I been unaware of the severity of the situation,

I would have probably made some kind of joke like, "Why did the turtles go to school?"

Instead of making jokes, though, I quickly ushered them into the front door and instructed them to drop their massive backpacks in the foyer and strip their clothes off. While I began spraying Lysol all over their belongings and preparing to throw school uniforms, sneakers and scrunchies into the washing machine, I ordered them upstairs to shower in the hottest possible water. Everything about that hectic day is etched into my mind, and looking back, I'm certain I didn't handle it very well.

Luckily, we've come a long way since those early, worrisome days of COVID, and up until very recently, it seemed like things were moving in the right direction. Considering how promising things were looking, my husband and I enrolled our children to go back to school for in-person learning, and we were happy that things were getting back to normal – whatever that means. However, as summer draws to an end, we've found ourselves feeling quite ambivalent about our choice.

On one hand, we are genuinely excited for our girls to return to in-person learning. Not only have they missed their friends and teachers, but



having our entire family working and learning from home for 15 months hasn't been sustainable. No matter how hard my husband and I try to find a quiet place to work within our home, it's impossible to escape the requests and needs of our children. Despite what we have going on in our professional lives, we can't ignore the kids while we barrel through deadlines or write up legal contracts, and that often leaves us feeling frazzled and cranky. As you can imagine, maintaining any type of work/home balance or keeping up with a schedule has completely gone out the window, and we're all ready for a break from one another.

On the other hand, we have worries about the substantial rise in breakthrough cases and new strains of COVID that are emerging. When I first sat down to write this article, I was able to run errands without worrying about wearing a mask in public places, but in a matter of hours, all of that has changed. Like every parent, the health and safety of my family is my main concern, and not knowing what things will look like

at the end of August gives rise to a new kind of anxiety. After all this time spent keeping my children safe, I'm beginning to wonder if we are making the right decision by sending them back to school.

I suppose the answer to that question is different for everyone. For now, I'm going to try not to stress over the unknown and enjoy that nostalgic back-to-school feeling that floods over me at the end of every August. Instead of worrying about how school is going to look for my kids this year, I'm going to delight in the smell of a new box of crayons, and when my kids ask if they can get a folder covered in hearts and puppies (instead of the generic primary-colored ones that I always choose for them), I'm going to say yes. After all, if the past year has taught me anything, it's that a harmonious work environment and good relationships with your co-workers (no matter how young) are key to surviving a pandemic.

*Lana Shovlin is a Springfield mother of three who has been at home with her family since March 2020.*

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# Having kids help with chores

More work in the short term, but it pays off in the long run

**PARENT | Ashley Meyer**

Not long ago, I was moaning to a friend about not being able to keep up with the messy chaos of my household. Stacks of dishes teetered in the sink, never-ending piles of unfolded laundry towered behind the couch and I constantly felt stressed, cranky and joyless. In response, my brilliant friend pointed out that my soon-to-be 9-year-old kiddo was more than capable of helping with housework. So, that night after dinner I asked my daughter to help with the dishes. After some grumbling and foot dragging, she made her way to the sink. She scrubbed and rinsed while I dried and put the dishes away. Before long, her grumbling had morphed into giggles. The following day when she asked for TV time, I said sure – as long as she folded laundry while she watched. Again, she grumbled, and I had to demonstrate three times how to properly fold a towel, but she settled into her task and eventually presented me with a basket

of haphazardly folded towels. Although I felt compelled to refold the towels in secret that evening, I persisted in enforcing the new regime, and over the next few weeks, I noticed a subtle shift in my daughter's demeanor, and indeed, my own. She seemed generally happier and more engaged, and I, too, was finding it easier to find the joy in my daily life. Although the house was only slightly tidier, I increasingly felt more like the leader of a functioning household team and less like a resentful drill sergeant.

Jaime Jensen-Cole is a board-certified psychiatric nurse practitioner in Springfield and a mom of two elementary-aged kids. She emphasized that beyond just lightening the load for parents, engaging kids in the daily maintenance of their household is essential to kids' social and emotional well-being and a key component of important developmental milestones. "I find often these days, kids just don't have

as much responsibility, and therefore, miss out on an important sense of contribution and working together as a family," she said. "Structured routines are paramount for all kids, especially if they have anxiety or ADHD. Breaking down the the steps they need to follow and facilitating opportunities for early successes gives all kids a sense of ownership and independence when they've learned to complete a task on their own."

In addition to teaching them the practical life skills they need to be a functional adult, Jensen-Cole points out that chores instill in them the mindset that doing hard things now will be rewarded later. "This plays into academics and every other facet of their life," she explained. "It's crucial for kids to learn that doing difficult things is OK and that they can get through it. Building this foundation for long-term health and development of self-esteem has



significant and measurable long-term benefits.”

#### Understand your kids’ limits

“It’s important to understand a kid’s limits and manage your expectations accordingly,” Jensen-Cole said, “although often we find that our kids are capable of more than we think they are.” Rather than abruptly assigning a list of chores or a multi-step chore to your child, begin by breaking down a larger task and recruiting your child to assist you with individual steps, such as working together to wash and dry dishes or fold towels. Dividing larger or more complex tasks into smaller subsets creates opportunities for children of all ages and developmental stages to help and learn. Younger children who start by sorting clothes, putting away cutlery and cleaning up toys will eventually be able to take on more tasks independently.

Jensen-Cole also recommends time-boxing chore time. “When we do big bedroom clean-up sessions, we do a 15/30 split. We have a plan and work together really hard, and when the timer goes off, the kids get a 30-minute break.” As kids build stamina, they may choose to forgo a break and just get it over with. Just be mindful of each child’s developmental level, Jensen-Cole points out. “While my eldest is usually keen to keep going during these 15/30 sessions, her younger sibling needs a few more breaks. In the end, they’re both learning that when they stick to the task, it’s easier and ultimately more rewarding than if they drag their feet.”

#### Perfection is the enemy of progress

“It’s important to avoid the parental concept of ‘I need to get it done the way I want it done,’” Jensen-Cole noted. When kids are trying their best and learning a new skill, parents must remember not to criticize their efforts, she advised. Many caregivers, myself included, avoid assigning chores to kids because it’s faster to just do it ourselves. Kids can be painfully slow, especially when they’re learning something new and lacking enthusiasm, but denying children these learning opportunities ends up making more work for parents in the long run.

*Ashley Meyer is a Springfield mom of two who looks forward to having more help around the house.*



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# Backyard fun

PARENT | Carey Smith

Whether you're hosting a party or entertaining your kids, outdoor games are fun for everyone.

Traditional games like horseshoes and bocce ball can be played in a spacious backyard, as can croquet. These games are relaxing and require negligible athletic skill, though supervision is advised with children, given the nature of flying horseshoes, balls or mallets.

There are a multitude of oversized games available, including chess and checkers, Connect 4, Tic Tac Toe, Scrabble, Bananagrams, Yahtzee or dominoes. Kids especially enjoy these larger-than-life games in an outdoor setting, where their bodies can move in the fresh air while their brains strategize.

Not every game requires the purchase of specialized equipment. Many old schoolyard games are coming back into play for a fresh generation. Tag and its variants such as freeze tag, TV tag and flashlight tag have been enjoyed by children for generations. Younger kids love games like Duck, Duck, Goose; Simon Says; Red Light/Green Light; Follow the Leader and Mother May I.

Playing hide and seek while the lightning bugs flash in a cool evening breeze is a rite of childhood passage. The game of sardines is a reverse hide and seek, where the person who is "it" hides, and everyone else seeks. When found, the seeker joins the hider in their hiding place until only one person is it. Careful where you choose to hide – you

may soon feel like a sardine!

Outdoor scavenger hunts can be enjoyable, especially if you hunt with your eyes instead of collecting items, greatly decreasing the clean-up time when the hunt is over. The list of items might include things in nature like a butterfly, flower or squirrel, or things in your neighborhood, such as a yellow house, a little free library or a city bus.

On hot days, water cup races can bring on the fun, as well as relief from the heat. String up a few plastic cups along a string and shoot a water gun to move them along. First past the finish line wins!

Cornhole is a popular Midwestern game, involving throwing a bag of dried corn (or beans) through holes in an angled wooden board. If you don't have



one, you can use a ladder, upright or prone, instead. The farther away, the more points your bag of corn or beans scores.

A colorful parachute can be the basis of a lot of imaginative fun for kids, and there are many games that can be played. One of the most popular is Popcorn, where the kids grab the handles of the parachute and move them up and down and side to side, while balls skitter around on the surface. Try not to let the popcorn escape the pan! Another is Up We Go, where everyone lifts the edges of the parachute as high as they can while a predesignated person runs underneath and tries to make it to the other side before the parachute comes down.

Jump ropes still maintain their popularity, including jumping double Dutch. The singsong sayings that maintain the rhythm of jump rope games can also be used for hand clapping games. Some of these games can be quite complex, and science has shown that reaching hands across the midline of the body can increase brain activity and reduce stress.

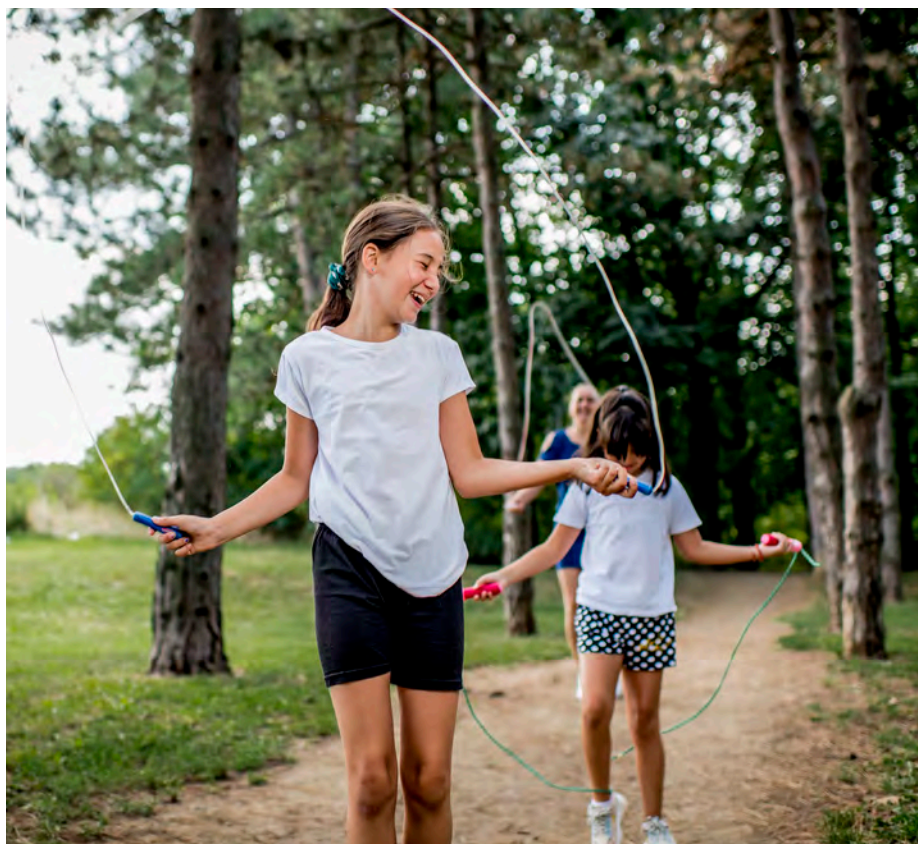
Capture the Flag can be quite exhilarating and fast-paced, as opposing teams try to capture a flag from each other's territory. Rules vary, but the competition is generally fierce.

Relay races can be a fun activity to get out the jiggles. Be sure to spice it up with variations like skipping, jumping, bear crawling, twirling or hopping on one leg.

If you have a backyard patio, draw a hopscotch. This not only gets the kids active, but it can also help young children learn to count. A bubble machine pairs nicely with a game of keep away from the bubbles, or alternatively, bubble pop. And lastly, lawn Twister can be played with just a bit of spray paint on the grass.

Make sure to have some delicious outdoor drinks or frozen goodies to cool off afterward! Or once the weather turns cool and crisp this fall, some hot apple cider or hot chocolate will do the trick.

*Carey Smith is a freelance writer from Springfield who has spent many years enjoying outdoor games with her kids.*



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# Neurodivergent friendships

PARENT | Carey Smith

One of the challenges of being autistic is making and keeping friends. How can you as a parent help nurture these friendships?

The neurodiversity movement recognizes and celebrates the diversity of how our brains are wired, instead of pathologizing some as normal and some as abnormal. The brains of autistic kids are wired differently. They take in sensory input in a different manner, and their resulting behaviors can be different. But we can value this diversity in our friendships and communities.

"Diversity is important. Understanding someone who is different from you is a good way of thinking," notes Bridget Gilliam, program supervisor at GBC Autism Services. "For kids who are not on the spectrum, it helps educate them about others around them that they might not understand, and it makes them more kind and compassionate."

One of the issues inherent in teaching neurotypical children about autism is that autism is complex and can present in a variety of ways, as it is a spectrum. But there are a few key features which stand out for many or most on the spectrum. The first is communication.

Autistic children often have difficulty communicating in a way that is socially acceptable. As Gilliam says, "Kids with autism process language differently than neurotypical kids do. To build a friendship with someone with autism, learn to communicate with them, and learn to be patient."

Some autistic kids may be nonverbal and use a communicator, which is an electronic device that speaks for them. Others may communicate via echolalia,



(L-R) Kai Herbert and Luca Heathwaite show off the "bros-lets" they made at Memorial's Festival of Trees. PHOTO COURTESY OF CAREY SMITH

which is repeating what is said to them. Some may limit the conversation to a topic with which they feel comfortable, such as a special interest. Other autistic children can have conversations, but avoid eye contact. Some need time to process the information coming in, and can hold a conversation, but slowly.

Above all, don't take a nontypical response personally. "It's not that they don't like you," explains Gilliam. "They might not know what to say or have the words. That's where patience comes back in as being important."

Imaginative play can sometimes be a challenge for kids on the spectrum, as they are often literal thinkers. This can make it hard for them to play in a traditional manner, but being adaptable is a good way to be a friend to someone who is autistic. Sometimes playing alongside of, and not with, an autistic child is a good way of including them without overwhelming them.

Another difference that is common among autistic people is engaging in self-stimulating behaviors, known as stimming. This may look odd at first,



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(L-R) Luca and Kai play in the foam pit at Bomke's Pumpkin Patch.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CAREY SMITH

but stimming helps an autistic person regulate their nervous system. They may flap, jump or spin, clap their hands or snap their fingers, rock back and forth, or anything else that gives them sensory input and helps to calm themselves.

Gilliam says it's good to talk with your children about the behaviors they may see their autistic friends engaging in. "In helping them build friendships, it helps those kids understand. Because autistic kids engage in those behaviors, they aren't weird or strange. It's what makes them comfortable."

Autistic children often get overstimulated, which can sometimes lead to meltdowns. This may look like a tantrum, but isn't. A meltdown is an uncontrollable response to overwhelming sensory input like bright or fluorescent lighting, loud or constant noises, crowded, busy places, or even an itchy clothing tag. Parks are wonderful and exciting fun, but for a lot of autistic kids, it can be hard to manage a social situation on top of all of the sensory overload. Sometimes autistic kids will wear noise-canceling headphones, weighted vests or carry and stroke a stuffie to help navigate a potentially overwhelming experience.

Kids on the spectrum often flourish when their expectations are met via a

routine. When this routine is altered or upset, it can be very hard for kids on the spectrum to manage their emotional response. This can also result in a meltdown.

Gilliam suggests talking to your children about autism and common behaviors so they are prepared when they see them on the playground or in the classroom. "Helping to understand in advance is helpful. Starting that out at the beginning can help a kid understand that kids with autism are going to do things a little differently, but that's OK." She advises parents to direct kids to ask them or a teacher if they see an unfamiliar behavior. Knowledge is the key to understanding.

In fact, teaching our children to be accepting of diversity in all areas leads to a more inclusive society. As Gilliam notes, "Parents can help their kids understand that not everybody likes the same things or does the same thing the same way, and that's OK. Helping teach those base-level ideas can help someone understand autism as well."

*Carey Smith was inspired to write this article because of the efforts of her autistic son's friend, who is the most excellent friend a kid could have.*





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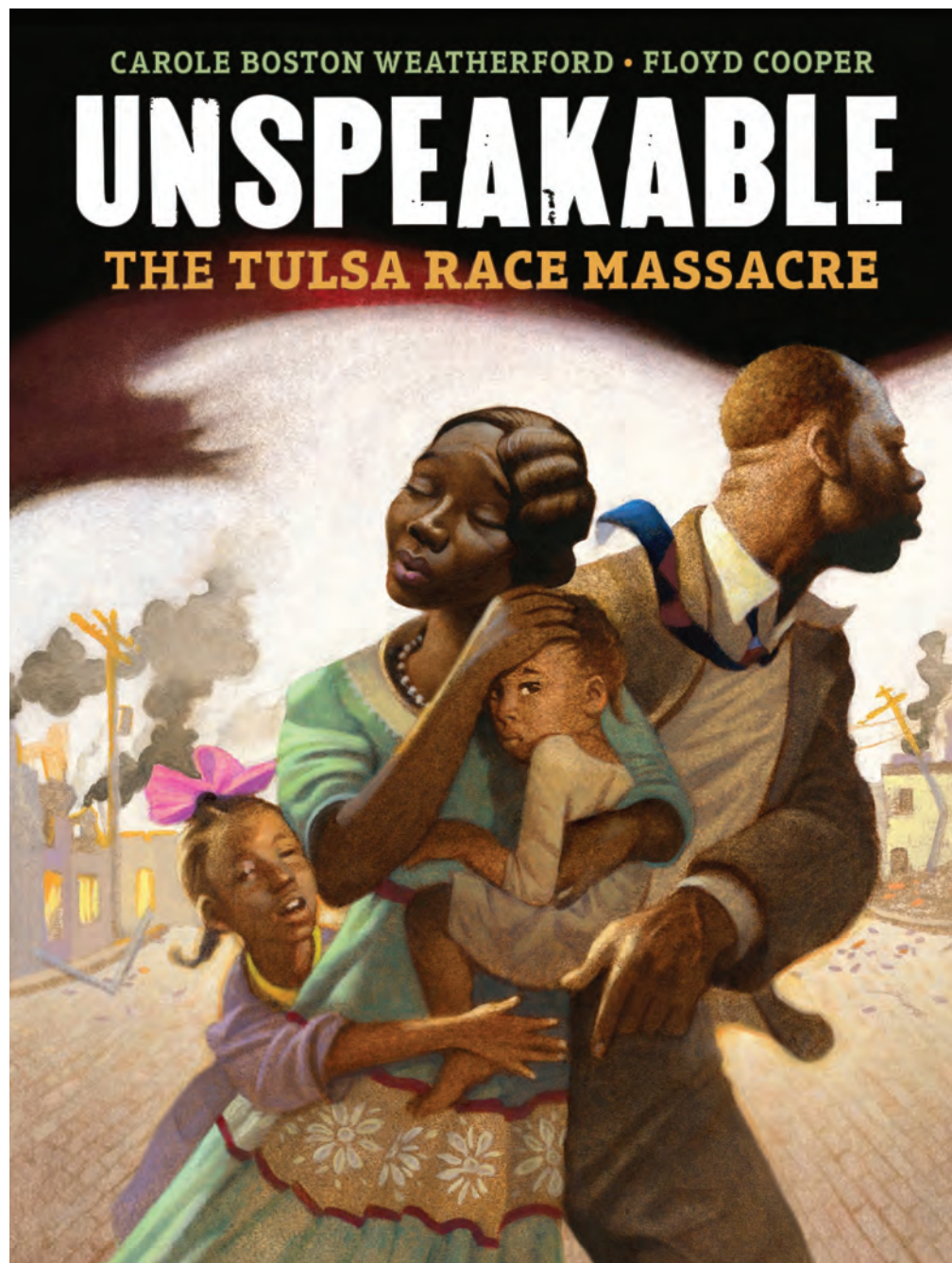
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# Nonfiction books that spark conversation

PARENT | Deana Metzke



Honestly, as an adult, one of the reasons I enjoy reading nonfiction children's books is not only because I can usually read them pretty quickly, but also because I learn something new almost every time, especially when I read books around historical events. When I read these types of books with or recommend them to my own kids, they usually spark some questions or conversation. I welcome these conversations, because it lets me know they're thinking while reading (or while listening to me read). Plus, I know reading nonfiction helps them make sense of the world around them and that learning about history can help them understand the present. Recently, I've read a couple of nonfiction books for children that you'll probably need to be ready to have conversations with your kiddos about if they read them.

First up, a 2019 National Book Award finalist book, *1919: The Year that Changed America*, by Martin W. Sandler. Sandler divides this book into major events that happened during 1919, including the women's suffrage movement, racial unrest called Red Summer and the Black Sox baseball scandal, to name a few. The book had me from the first chapter, which was about the Great Molasses Flood of 1919, an event that I knew nothing about.

It is written in a format that is entertaining, as well as easy to understand, given the topics covered. It also has photos of primary sources throughout the



book, which breaks up the text and helps give context to these events. Sandler also attempts to connect the events of 1919 to the present day. If you have a child who enjoyed books like those in the *I Survived* series, or just nonfiction in general, this might be their next great read. You just need to be ready to possibly have an odd conversation about why molasses was flowing through the city of Boston. I would recommend this book for kids in middle school and above.

My next historically focused nonfiction recommendation is a picture book, *Unspeakeable: The Tulsa Race Massacre*, written by Carole Boston Weatherford and illustrated by Floyd Cooper. This book takes the reader through the massacre of 1921, starting with the development of the Black neighborhood of Greenwood, and then the incident that precipitated the massacre. This can be a sensitive topic, but the language is simple enough for children to understand without reducing the gravity of the situation. Additionally, the illustrations in this book are beautiful and add so much context to the retelling of the event. As you can find with many nonfiction books, there is wonderful additional information at the end of the book, where the author even gives updates about Tulsa in the present day.

Although this is a picture book, it does cover a heavier topic, so until your elementary child has some background on this event, I would not recommend they read it independently until fourth or fifth grade. However, it is a great book to read *with* your child, especially if the Tulsa Race Massacre is a new event to you as well.

Nonfiction books for children have come a long way, even from 10 or 15 years ago. They are much more engaging in both their presentation and the topics they cover. I often appreciate reading these books for my own enjoyment. At any rate, if you haven't already, I highly recommend introducing some nonfiction books into your child's reading life.

*Deana Metzke is literacy coach at a Springfield elementary school and mom of two. For more children's book recommendations, follow her on Twitter @DMetzke or visit her blog at <http://raisingreaders.site>.*

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# Buzz at reopened Kidzeum

PARENT | Karen Ackerman Witter



Live bees attract children. PHOTO COURTESY KIDZEUM

Kidzeum reopened July 3 after a 16-month closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and things have been buzzing. Children rushed to climb Active Alex, splashed in the water table and searched for queen cells in the observation beehive. “Real bees? That’s so cool!” one girl squealed in delight upon seeing the buzzing beehive.

Children’s museums were especially hard-hit during the pandemic. Museums were required to close hands-on exhibits, which meant children’s museums remained shuttered longer than other types of cultural institutions. COVID-19 relief funding, along with commitments from community members, helped Kidzeum weather the pandemic. Kidzeum received relief funding through the Payroll Protection Program, Small Business Administration and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Kidzeum is now open on weekends from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. Additional days will be added based on community demand. The popular *Bees, Butterflies and Blooms* exhibit, featuring live bees, is back on display. Visitors can also see live chrysalises getting ready to hatch.

Kidzeum is available for birthday party and special event rentals. Existing Kidzeum memberships have been extended. Masks are required in the Kidzeum, per CDC guidelines for educational facilities.

This fall the Kidzeum will partner with Springfield School District 186 to offer a two-week STEAM program at the Kidzeum for second grade students. Rotating cohorts of second grade classes will come to the Kidzeum throughout the school year.

*Karen Witter, a regular contributor to Parent, is former board chair for Kidzeum.*





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Elizabeth Meyer helps her big sister, Maddie, make savory sweet corn and ham turnovers. PHOTO BY ASHLEY MEYER

# Turn to turnovers for easy meals and school lunches

PARENT | Ashley Meyer

Delicious, savory, hand-held pies are found in cuisines all around the globe. Whether they're Cornish pasties or empanadas or just old-fashioned, Midwestern turnovers, these portable pies are a tasty way to transform whatever ingredients are on hand into portable, make-ahead meals that are fun to prepare with kids. Littles will enjoy mixing filling ingredients, helping to measure flour and crimping the finished pies while older kids can get to work grating cheese, chopping veggies and rolling out dough.

Made with homemade pie crust or store-bought, the prepared pies can be frozen flat, then transferred to a zip-

top bag and stored in the freezer for up to two months. They can be baked as needed and are tasty even when served at room temperature, making them a perfect choice for lunchboxes or a meal on the run.

No matter what type of filling you use, be sure not to overstuff your pies, as this can cause them to leak when baking. One double-crust batch of pie dough will accommodate approximately 2-3 cups of filling and yield eight pies. Filling ingredients such as ham, chicken, broccoli or peppers should be precooked and cooled. Frozen veggies like spinach that contain a lot of water should be thawed and squeezed dry to remove

excess moisture.

Once the dough circles have been rolled, brush beaten egg along the edges of half of the pastry before placing a mound of filling in the center. Fold the dough over the filling, then press the edges together to seal. For a pretty presentation, brush the remaining egg mixture lightly over the top of each turnover.

At this point, the turnovers can be baked in a preheated 425-degree oven for 25-30 minutes. Alternatively, arrange on a wax paper-lined tray and transfer to the freezer. Frozen pastries should be baked at 375 degrees for about 30-35 minutes.



## Savory whole wheat turnovers

### Dough

1 cup whole wheat flour  
1 ½ cups all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon dried thyme  
½ teaspoon garlic powder  
1 cup cold butter, cut into ½-inch cubes  
½ cup cold water

### Filling

1 cup grated cheese  
½ cup finely diced cooked ham, chicken or black beans  
½ cup sweet corn, either frozen or cut off of a cooked cob  
½ cup lightly cooked diced bell pepper  
¼ cup minced green onions

Prepare the dough. Combine the flours and seasoning in a mixing bowl or food processor. If making the dough by hand, add the butter to the flour and use a fork or your fingers to work the butter into the flour. Toss the mixture lightly with a fork and drizzle in the water, stopping when the dough starts to come together. Gather it up with your hands, if it holds together, it's ready; if it looks dry or crumbles, then add water little by little until it's cohesive. Alternatively, if using a food processor, add the butter to the flour in the bowl. Turn on the machine and immediately add the water. Process for approximately 30 seconds, until the dough comes together and forms a ball.

Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate it for 30 minutes. When ready to make the turnovers, remove the dough from the fridge and divide it into eight equal pieces. Cover the dough pieces with a towel to keep them from drying out while you work.

Combine all the filling ingredients and have them ready. Roll out a dough ball onto a floured surface into a six-inch circle. Brush the edges of half the circle with beaten egg, then place a heaping 1/4 cup of filling into the middle of the circle. Fold the dough over the filling and crimp closed. Cut a small slit into the top of each turnover with a sharp knife to allow steam to escape. Brush with egg and bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes until golden brown.

*Ashley Meyer is a chef and Springfield mother of two who appreciates easy weeknight meals and school lunches.*

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# Family event calendar

PARENT | Stacie Lewis

## Bingo! night

Wednesdays, 5:30-6:30pm. Ages 8 and older. Hosted by the Springfield Park District. Call for more information. Free. Erin's Pavilion, Southwind Park, 4965 S. Second St., 217-585-2941.

## Illinois State Fair

Aug. 12-22. It's back. Entertainment, grandstand shows, midway, exhibits, agricultural shows and more. Admission. Visit the Facebook page for event updates. Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 Sangamon Ave., 217-782-6661.

## Illinois State Fair Parade Run

Thu., Aug. 12, 5pm. A 2-mile race. Register on the Springfield Road Runners Club website through Aug. 10, at the Springfield Running Center on Aug. 11 from 3:30-6pm or at the event on race day from 3:30-4:45pm. srrc.net. Village of Cultures, Illinois State Fairgrounds, 217-498-9842.

## Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade

Thu., Aug. 12. Lineup begins at 4:15pm. Parade starts at 5:30pm. Lincoln Park, Fifth Street and Sangamon Avenue, 217-544-1751.

## Virtual Star Parties

Thu., Aug. 12, 8:30pm. John Martin, UIS associate professor of astronomy/physics, will give tips for identifying planets and constellations and answer astronomy questions submitted live. Visit the website or call for more info. go.uis.edu/summerstarparties. 217-206-8342.

## Decatur Airport 75th Anniversary Airshow

Aug. 14-15. Demonstration team, parachute team, aerobatics and other performers. Free. Decatur Airport, Decatur, 910 S. Airport Road.

## Prairie Wind Flute Ensemble

Tue., Aug. 17, 12pm. Part of the Artist on the Plaza series sponsored by the Springfield Area Arts Council. 217-753-3519. Old State Capitol Plaza, between Sixth and Fifth streets at Adams.

## Capital City Big Band

Thu., Aug. 19, 12pm. Part of the Artist on the Plaza series sponsored by the Springfield Area Arts Council. 217-753-3519. Old State Capitol Plaza, between Sixth and Fifth streets at Adams.

## USAC Bettenhausen 100

Sat., Aug. 21, 1pm. Adults \$25 or \$30 day of race. Children 11 and under \$10. Illinois State Fair Grandstand, 801 E. Sangamon Ave., 217-782-1979.

## Demolition Derby

Sat., Aug. 21, 6:30pm. Skilled drivers smash and crash into one other until only one remains. Adults \$20, children \$5. Illinois State Fairgrounds, 801 E. Sangamon Ave., 217-782-6661.

## Downtown open streets

Sat., Aug. 21, 10am-2pm. A family-friendly open streets event where bikes, trikes and rollerblades have the run of downtown on Fourth and Fifth streets between Capitol Avenue and Edwards Street. 217-544-1723.

## Glow Run

Fri., Aug. 27, 5:45-9:30pm. 5k run/walk for glowing fun. Music, glow stations and activities after the race. All ages are welcome. All proceeds will benefit the YMCA Strong Kids scholarship fund. Register on the website [springfieldymca.org](http://springfieldymca.org). Southwind Park, 4965 S. Second St., 217-753-0702.

## Hook

Fri., Aug. 27, 8:30pm. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and snacks. Social distancing and masks are encouraged. Part of the library's Cinema Under the Stars series. Chatham Area Public Library, Chatham, 600 E. Spruce, 217-483-2713.

## Raya and the Last Dragon

Fri., Aug. 27. Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Film begins at dusk. Part of the Movie in the Park Series. [springfieldparks.org](http://springfieldparks.org). Henson Robinson Zoo, 1100 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-585-1821.

## Riverton/Spaulding Fall Festival

Sat., Aug. 28, 4:30-10pm. Music provided by



Illinois State Fair Aug. 12-22.



Schroeder's DJ Service. Fireworks at dusk. Food, kids' activities and more. Field of Dreams, Riverton, 6237-6269 Riverton Road.

### **Kitten Circus**

Sat., Aug. 28, 12-5pm. Kittens of all ages and sizes perform daring acts of love and cuteness. Fun for the whole family. Adoption fee is just \$25. Adoptions by appointment. Animal Protective League, 1001 Taintor Road, 217-544-7387.

### **Cool Cruisers Cruise-In**

Sat., Aug. 28, 5:30pm. Slick back your hair and listen to your favorite oldies. Put on your poodle skirt and bobby socks and have some fun. Don't have a car? Come anyway. It's a gas, man. Knights of Columbus Hall Council 4175, 2801 West St., 217-528-5740.

### **"Let's Look"**

Tue., Aug. 31. A family art exhibition. Each painting, print and sculpture includes observation and discussion prompts to spark curiosity and engaging dialog for visitors of all ages. The exhibit is designed to provide an opportunity to exercise the skills needed to look at and discuss art. Online. [illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org). Free. Illinois State Museum, 502 S. Spring St., 217-782-7386.

### **Springfield Mile 1 and 2**

Sep. 4-5. World's fastest dirt track. \$35 in advance, \$45 week of the race. [springfieldmile.org](http://springfieldmile.org). Illinois State Fair Grandstand, 801 E. Sangamon Ave., 217-632-0277.

### **"Negro League Beisbol"**

Sep. 4-Oct. 30. Open during normal museum hours. This traveling exhibit was developed to honor and explore the connections of African American baseball history with Hispanic cultures, communities and countries. The exhibit features profiles of significant baseball players, a timeline of American and Hispanic baseball history and detailed baseball histories of several countries and local players. [spiaahm.org](http://spiaahm.org). Free. Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Ave., 217-391-6323.

### **Vehicle Show & Swap Meet**

Sat., Sep. 11, 7am-4pm. See some of the finest antique and classic vehicles and also sports cars, motorcycles, trucks and tractors. Held rain or shine. Spectators and vendors are free. Contestants \$10. Downtown Springfield, Second and Monroe streets, 217-557-7220.

### **Art Spectacular**

Sep. 11-12. A juried fine art and craft fair, ranked by *Sunshine Artist Magazine* as one of The Best 200 Art Fairs in the United States every year from 2015 to 2020. Free. Thomas Rees Memorial Carillon, 1740 W. Fayette Ave., 217-546-3853.

### **Marbold Heritage Festival**

Sep. 11-12. Historical portrayals of Mary Todd Lincoln and her dressmaker/confidante Elizabeth Keckley on Saturday. Civil War presentations both days. Antiques, artisans, children's activities and food. On Sunday, homemade pies will be available. \$5 ages 14 and up, \$3 for ages 6 to 13 and free for ages 5 and under. Historic Marbold Farmstead, Greenview, 21722 State Hwy 29.

### **Chatham Paws-A-Palooza**

Sat., Sep. 18, 1-6:30pm. Leashed-animal friendly. Promoting dog adoptions and animal welfare. Food and drinks, live music, pet-themed vendors, pet costume contest and interactive canine demonstrations. \$5. Chatham Community Park, Chatham, 731 S. Main St.

### **Fall Festival**

Sep. 18-19, 9am-4pm. Music, food, children's activities, crafts, artisans, reenactments and tours. Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains, Route 125, 217-481-4430.

### **Edwards Place Fine Art Fair**

Sep. 18-19. Shop over 70 different art vendors, take tours of Edwards Place Historic Home and join in other fun family activities. [springfieldart.org](http://springfieldart.org). Springfield Art Association, 700 N. Fourth St., 217-523-2631.

### **International Route 66 Mother Road Festival**

Sep. 24-26. Celebrating 20 years, this festival brings street machines, muscle cars and hot rod enthusiasts to historic downtown Springfield for an incredible weekend of family entertainment. Downtown Springfield, between Washington and Capitol streets and Fourth and Seventh streets. [route66fest.com](http://route66fest.com). 217-789-2360.

### **Boo Crew Haunted House**

Open every Friday and Saturday night through October. Both the Trail of Lost Souls and the haunted house are back this year. Recommended for ages 10 and over. Box office opens at 6:30pm. Haunting begins around 7pm. Rain or shine. Admission

\$20 or \$35 VIP. Boo Crew Haunted House, Mechanicsburg, 11083 Buckhart Road, 217-551-6969.

### **Roasted**

Sat., Oct. 9. A unique ceramic raku fundraiser event. Glaze a pot, fire it in an outdoor kiln and then it is ready to take home. Enjoy the fire, food and live music. Admission \$20 or \$30 with a pot, children 12 and under \$15. All prices increase \$5 on the day of event. [springfieldart.org](http://springfieldart.org). Springfield Art Association, 700 N. Fourth St., 217-523-2631.

### **Fall Harvest Festival**

Oct. 9-10. All your favorite fall activities, plus scarecrow building. Visit [lincolnmemorialgarden.org](http://lincolnmemorialgarden.org). Lincoln Memorial Garden, 2301 E. Lake Shore Dr., 217-529-1111.

### **#IMOMSOHARD: The Getaway Tour**

Thu., Oct. 21, 7pm. #IMOMSOHARD began as a popular web series by real-life best friends, comedians and moms, Kristin and Jen. The phenomenon that they created has since been nabbed for development by Warner Brothers TV. \$49-\$60. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

### **Fall Festival**

Sat., Oct. 23, 10am-4pm. Period-clothed interpreters will demonstrate daily tasks such as dipping candles, making soap, baskets and brooms, spinning wool and gardening. Step into the tavern cellar to see how fruits and vegetables were preserved during the winter. [lincolnsnewsalem.com](http://lincolnsnewsalem.com). Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, Petersburg, 15588 History Lane, 217-632-4000.

### **MasterChef Live!**

Sat., Oct. 23, 7pm. This family-friendly show will feature head-to-head cooking demonstrations and fun (sometimes messy) challenges with past MasterChef & MasterChef Junior contestants, and an overall immersive audience experience fun for all ages. \$39-\$99. UIS Performing Arts Center, One University Plaza, 217-206-6160.

### **Old Capitol Holiday Walks**

Mid-November through mid-December. Downtown Springfield Inc. presents the annual Old Capitol Holiday Walks with a variety of special events each weekend throughout the holiday season. [downtownspringfield.org](http://downtownspringfield.org). 217-544-1723.





Come do something **FUN** today!  
Find a Park not far away, there's so much to do.  
There's a whole world waiting at your door  
at the Springfield Park District . . .



## AFTER SCHOOL RECREATION POWER PLAY AT THE PARK!

**Starts Aug 18th  
at Erin's Pavilion**

M-F 2:00pm - 6pm. Call 217-585-2941 for more Info.  
This program is inclusive and you do not have to have a disability to attend.  
Activity #370201



## LEARN TO DIVE... At Eisenhower Indoor Aquatic Center!

**Ages 6-21  
Sessions Begin Sept. 8**

Call 217-525-8847 for class times, pricing and availability.



## PRESCHOOL IN THE PARK

**At Washington Park!**

**Ages 3-5**

Call 217-546-3970 for more information!  
Activity #350901



**SPRINGFIELDPARKS.ORG**



## NELSON CENTER ICE RINK

### Fall Figure Skating & Hockey Lessons are Where it's At



Life's Cooler at the Nelson Center!  
Call 217-753-2800 to get signed up...



## LEAF IDENTIFICATION HIKE

Washington Park Botanical Garden



Does your child have a leaf collection project due this school year?



Get signed up for the Botanical Hike  
we will collect over 50 leaves!



Call 217-546-4116 and sign up! ONLY \$7R/\$10NR.  
September 18 & 25 Activity #361109

Join Our

**FUNSHOP**  
Family!

Funshop is an exciting, interactive early education program for the optimal one-on-one experience between parent and child.

For more information, call 217-753-6234  
or [funshop@springfieldparks.org](mailto:funshop@springfieldparks.org)

Activity #350906

Find those family events  
and more this Fall!

Find your **FUN**, find your **smile**  
at [springfieldparks.org](http://springfieldparks.org)







# Now Scheduling School Physicals

## The key to academic success? Great health.

As your children grow, regular check-ins help ensure they're meeting overall health goals. School physicals provide a window into your child's ongoing well-being and offer an opportunity to examine potential issues that may need treatment, including diet, abnormalities, mental health conditions and more.

Help your child put their best foot forward this school year. New and existing patients are encouraged to make appointments. **Schedule your appointment online using the Memorial App.**

*School physicals must be done in person. Memorial Physician Services has thorough safety precautions in place to protect our patients and reduce the spread of COVID-19.*



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