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kern county **Family** magazine

APRIL 2021

Family **LIFE** WITH AN Autistic Child

Meet April's
Happy Mama
Brittany Ryan

✓ **QUIZ:**
Find the
Best Camp
for Your Kid

It's Autism
Awareness
Month

plus: pet ownership tips for kids with special needs pg 8
ways to reintroduce creative play pg 10 reader-approved family activities pg 7



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Vaun Thygerson,
Contributing Writer

their school looked like.

As the world is slowly opening back up, some of these nuances will stay for a while and some are pretty fun, too. Recently, I took my children through Netflix's Stranger Things: The Drive-Into Experience in Los Angeles. We traveled back to the 1980s (my favorite decade) and visited Hawkins High School, complete with a visit from the tiger mascot. We even drove through the rift and were stalked by monsters, who scared me a lot. The grand finale, which takes place on top of a parking structure, was entertaining with the whole cast of look-a-likes performing scenes from the series. We saw everyone from Eleven to Billy to Hopper. If you are a Stranger Things fan, you really must go!

Ultimately, these activities and Zoom parties are helping us cope with isolation. In the article, **"Readers Respond: Family Activities to Make Pandemic Life Better, Together or Apart,"** on page 7, KCFM asked its reader to weigh in on how they have handled this year's challenges. Some of the activities readers suggested included board games, hiking, baking, and so many more.

As we mark one year in quarantine, I have been amazed by the creativity of people and businesses to survive during this unprecedented time. It's amazing to see restaurants building tiny, green-type-looking houses where families can dine safely, delivering food boxes of basic necessities, and coming up with so many other innovative solutions to stay in business. A lot of local schools have had to be adaptable with their activities. American Elementary had a Zoom paint night where families picked up the supplies from the school and painted with friends virtually on Zoom. Liberty High School allowed the freshman class to drive through the campus, so the students could at least see what

One of my favorite activities to do during the pandemic is to hang out with my dog, Lincoln. Dogs really are one of the best companions. In the article, **"Benefits of Pet Ownership for Kids with Special Needs,"** Sarah Lyons writes about how dogs can really help children in some of the areas they need it. She writes that dogs not only reduce stress, but they can also help develop social and life skills. To read all the benefits adding a pup can do for your family, turn to page 8.

Hopefully, this summer will be a little bit more back to normal, and you will be able to send your children to camp. In the article, **"What type of Camp Should Your Child Attend?"** Sandi Schwartz writes about how many different types of camps are available for your children. It's important to find the right camp to fit your child's needs. If you want more help deciding on a camp, she provides a fun, easy quiz to see what type of adventure is the best fit for your child. Check it out on page 12.

April is Autism Awareness month in Kern County, and this month's **Hello, Happy Mama** on page 14 features a local mom who shares her thoughts on parenting a child with autism. Scott and Brittany Ryan, business owners and parents to five children, are active in the community and they have a son on the autism spectrum. They started noticing differences in Ethan's development when he was just 4-6 months old. Ethan's mom shares her journey and how to find support especially during the pandemic.

Some people call April the month of reawakening, and I really want it to be in more ways than just flowers and blooms. I've loved the creativity people have shown during the pandemic, but I am ready to get back to smelling the roses and safely enjoying in-person activities. I do see our ingenuity and resourcefulness continuing! This month I have so much HOPE!

Happy Blooming April!



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CDC Revises Physical Distancing Recommendation for Children in School

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently relaxed the physical distancing recommendation for students K-12. Students can now remain at least three feet apart in classrooms, which is less than the previous six-foot distancing rule. This change was made possible by new scientific findings. The six-foot rule still applies for teachers, other adults who work in the schools, and the community at large. **For a complete list of requirements in schools, please visit www.cdc.gov.**

CAPK WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program

Community Action Partnership of Kern's WIC program (CAPK WIC) offers a Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program (BFPC program) to mothers in Kern County. CAPK WIC provides breastfeeding support services to pregnant and postpartum women with peer counselors available 24/7. Participants can contact their assigned breastfeeding peer counselor through the phone or text any time.

Breastfeeding Peer Counselors provide solutions to breastfeeding challenges such as latching and lack of milk production. They also offer breastfeeding tips and techniques to mothers during their breastfeeding journey. CAPK WIC offers manual, electric, and hospital-grade breastfeeding pumps, free of charge, to mothers enrolled in the BFPC Program, as well as breastfeeding aids such as breast pads, breast shields, nipple shields, and breast pump attachments, when necessary.

Any WIC participating mother can join the BFPC program. All pregnant and newly postpartum mothers are encouraged to apply. **For more information, please visit www.capk.org.**

Fox Theatre Marquee Shows Autism Awareness Support

Join the Autism Society-Kern Autism Network, Inc. (KAN) at the Fox Theatre on Saturday, April 10, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. for a drive-thru autism spirit car parade. The Fox Theatre's marquee will highlight the cause, "April Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month," to commemorate this special day and month.

Grab your friends and family, decorate your cars, wear autism colors, bring posters and signs, but most importantly, show your support. In order to maintain Covid-19 guidelines, social distancing, wearing masks, and remaining in cars will be recommended. **For more information, please visit www.kernautism.org and/or www.eventbrite.com.**

Free In-N-Out Burger for Reading

In-N-Out... That's what reading is all about! Join the 2021 In-N-Out Cover to Cover Club through any Kern County Library branch, where any local readers age 4 through 12 who read five or more books will receive a FREE In-N-Out hamburger, cheeseburger, or grilled cheese sandwich. Each registered child can receive up to three certificate meals by reading up to 15 books.



You can sign up on beanstack at kernlibrary.beanstack.org.

River Birds Kite Flying Day

Join the Bring Back the Kern nonprofit organization on Saturday, April 24, at 2 p.m. at Beach Park to fly kites down by the dry riverbed. If possible, bring a bird kite. This day will celebrate two milestones, Earth Day on April 22, and April 26, the anniversary of Lux v. Haggin, an historic 1886 decision on water usage by the California Supreme Court.



Bring Back the Kern is a grassroots movement started by a group of Bakersfield natives with a deep appreciation for the Kern River.

For more information, please visit www.bringbackthekern.org.

New Stuff We



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STUFF WE LOVE CONTINUES ON PAGE 17

Readers Respond:

Family Activities to Make Pandemic Life Better, Together or Apart

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed so many aspects of family life throughout the past year. We asked our readers for recommendations of family activities that have helped them cope with isolation. Their answers remind us of the ways we can support one another and the endurance of the human spirit. **KCFM asked: Do you have any family activities that have helped you feel better during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Spending some time in the yard doing gardening activities like trimming trees and raking the leaves while I watch my daughters play outside is therapeutic. - Dulce Cardenas



Painting, coloring, game night, road trips and ice cream sundaes.

- Michelle Cottle

Spend quality time with each other without distractions and electronics. - Amanda Roberts

The pandemic has had everyone feeling a little blue, but there are some activities that have helped my family look at the bright side of life. We have cooked/baked as a family which the kids enjoy, and they are now open to trying new foods. We have game night when we as a family sit down and play board games or video games. We plan on starting an edible garden soon as well. Enjoying nature is always fun as a family. - Laura Gonzalez



Board games are a great way to have fun and enjoy time with your family.

- Hope Bachman



Our family created a Facebook page where we can get together and play a game, share pictures, tell stories and reminisce about family we've lost. - Cynthia Kendrick

We play board games and cards often. We have also discovered JackTV which is an app for games we play together via our cell phones and TV. - Angela Leatherman

Making movie night at home, complete with pretend tickets, candy, popcorn and sodas! No cell phones allowed! - Crystal Carney



Do anything you can outdoors: bike riding, hiking, picnics, going to the beach, being out in nature. - Debbi Work



Walking, riding bikes & going for drives to Hart Park to see the peacocks. - Angela Gray

CDC: Teens Don't Eat Enough Veggies

Bummer news about American teenagers' diets. New data from the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention reports that adolescents across demographic groups eat too few fruits and vegetables, continuing trends from previous years. Only 7.1 percent ate the recommended amount of fruits, and 2 percent ate enough vegetables. How much teens should be eating daily varies by age and gender: 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit and 2.5 to 3 cups of veggies. The CDC report suggests some ideas for increasing the appeal of better nutrition, including social media approaches and expanding existing school and community programs. Parents can also help, as modeling good eating behavior can be an effective way to encourage better nutrition. **Visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for more info.**



DID YOU KNOW?

Plants remove indoor pollutants. Peace Lily, Palms, and Snake Plants (right), often called Mother-in-laws Tongue, should be placed in high traffic areas such as the bedroom and living room. *Healthline.com*



Benefits of Pet Ownership for Kids with Special Needs

By Sarah Lyons



Pet ownership can bring joy and happiness to any home. For children with special needs, particularly for children with sensory processing disorder, autism, ADHD, and social or behavioral issues, adopting a domesticated pet can provide wonderful benefits. Here are some great reasons to consider adding a pet to your family.

Helps grow social skills

Kids who spend time playing with a pet typically enjoy interacting with people more than kids who don't own a pet. They also learn to develop skills such as interpreting nonverbal cues and trust. Owning a pet can also encourage empathy towards animals and humans alike.

Lower stress

Having a furry friend to play with, pet, and cuddle can lower stress and elevate mood. Stroking a pet's soft fur can have a calming effect on people. "When my daughter is crying, our cat will come running and snuggle up to her," says Katlyn Purkapile, mom of three. "It has been amazing to see the change it has made with her. My daughter starts petting her and calms down quicker than any other techniques we have tried. It's a really special relationship." Per a study done by Frontiers in Psychology, people who

spend time with a pet on a regular basis have lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, and less stress. Patients that were visited by a service animal while in the hospital also reported less pain.

Helps develop life skills

Kids who have the opportunity to care for a pet will also develop important life skills such as time management, responsibility, and understand the importance of schedule for feeding, walking, and cleaning their pet.

Stability

Kids who crave stability and routine will benefit from having a pet in their lives. Pets can provide a different type of stability that they may not get from peers or family members. "My 8 year old has ADHD. We recently got him a kitten and he sits still and is calm with her for long periods of time," says mom Pricella Edwards. "I believe it helps him."

Promotes learning

Many parents have found that having their pet near them during virtual learning or while doing homework helps the child stay calm and focused. "My 11 year old has anxiety and depression. For her birthday she received a guinea pig. Lilly, the guinea pig has been a game changer," says Tiffany Nolan, mom of five. "Virtual schooling was especially difficult for her. Suggesting she snuggle Lilly will dramatically improve her mood and demeanor. For her (and for us) it has had a huge positive impact."

Conclusion

Pets are a great addition to any family but can be a huge help to kids with special needs. Before adopting a pet, consider what type of animal would best fit your lifestyle, space, and budget. "It's important to do your research and get a pet that will work for your family," says mom Becky Smith. "I was very careful about getting an older cat with a calm demeanor to best get along with my kids." Ask your child for their input and let them help choose what type of pet they would like to join the family. Chances are your new pet will have a positive impact on everyone in your household.

Important Things to Consider Before Adopting a Pet

COST Pet ownership can be expensive. Before adopting an animal, research the cost of purchasing the animal, vet bills, food, and any other items needed. Depending on the type of animal the cost could go on for many years.

SPACE It's important to choose a pet that is a good fit for your home and yard size. If you are renting, check to make sure your property owner allows pets.

CARE Determine who will be responsible for your pet. Some special needs children may not be able to clean up after or manage some of their pets needs. Who will be responsible? Are you willing to commit to this for the lifespan of the pet?

ATTENTION What does your child's schedule look like? Does your child have time to give the attention the pet deserves? Are you home enough to walk a dog? Do you travel often? Who would take care of the animal while you are at work, school, or on vacation?

NOISE Some kids may have sensitivity to loud noises. If this is the case, you may not want to adopt a dog that barks loudly. If your child is a light sleeper, you may not want to have a nocturnal animal's cage in their room at night.

With these things in mind, it will be easier to determine which animal would be the best fit for your family.

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Hands-on Fun At Every Age: 11 Ways to Reintroduce Creative Play This Month

As the seasons change, now is the perfect time to go back to basics with hands-on activities whether your child is a toddler or teen. After more indoor time than usual due to a year of pandemic living and recent cool temperatures, April is an ideal month to reevaluate, decide what's working and make changes where needed.

Practice makes perfect, and sometimes it takes a second try to know what works for your family. Try, try again — then move on to something else on the list if needed.

All of these suggested activities teach skills that connect to bigger ideas, promote physical exercise, or serve as the underpinning for concepts kids need to know. Even if you think you've done it all through the pandemic, there may be a few items pending that also work for more than just a fun afternoon.

Here are 11 ideas for hands-on play to put into practice this month.

Roll out the Play-Doh: Whether you're used to the brand name product or prefer to try a homemade recipe, get hands-on with dough. Use cookie cutters, rolling pins or other manipulatives for easy fine motor skills practice. Just

rolling it out and cutting with safety scissors can be a fun challenge. Older children may prefer supervised baking with cookie or bread dough.

Break out the blocks: If Duplos and LEGOs were left behind long ago at your house, consider bringing them back out. You might be surprised at children's renewed interest in building. K'NEX or other mechanical kits can be engaging for tweens and teens, too.

Splash with water play: Try rubber ducks, kitchen utensils, or other ways of playing in the bathtub or a wading pool. Join in the fun or stay close by for safety, but let kids enjoy the water as the weather turns warmer. Even a new spray bottle can be enough of a sensory experience to add variety to a young child's day. Squirt guns and water balloons are something older children may enjoy just a little too much.

Bring out art supplies: Draw, paint, and create together. Art supplies are often tucked out of reach and forgotten. Designate an area, put down a drop cloth and enjoy using it all together: paint, glitter, markers, and more.

Make noise: Quiet has its place, but so does noise. Bang a pot with a wooden spoon, dust off

the piano, or show your children skills from high school marching band. Text a link to a favorite song to your tween or teen and create common ground through the ways music speaks to us. It just may help through tough times when you cannot talk about anything else.

Cook together: Cooking is a life skill that grows with age. Start early and get in the kitchen often with your little ones. Try simple boxed mixes like muffins or brownie. Children can line out paper baking cups, stir, and learn simple math by measuring. Adding recipes gives children foundational skills to make rice, fry an egg, and know how to follow directions as the basis for cooking in their own kitchens.

Write a letter: Teach old-fashioned letter writing skills so children know how to write by hand, including how to address an envelope and where a stamp goes. Send a card to a friend. Show children how to sign their names in cursive, a skill underestimated until it's time to sign legal documents later. These concepts may have been commonplace for other generations but they are simply not being taught in the same way now. Bridge that gap, and children will be prepared for the future.

Make chores fun: Cleaning can feel like child's play if you make it fun. Add snacks, music, dancing, and laughter to your cleaning party. Change up tasks and keep it fun.

Bring books to life: Allow children to dress up before they read aloud. If they get caught up in the characters, that's fine. Encourage reading as an active way to play instead of another time to sit still.

Plan an outdoor day: Clear your schedule and plan a day with all outdoor activities. Pack a picnic, fly a kite, find hula hoops, go to the park, and more. Soak up the sun and give it all a try outside.

Draft a childhood bucket list: Childhood days fade fast. Ask your children to tell you what they really want to do before they grow up. Be willing to listen and implement their suggestions where possible. The simplicity of the answers might come as a shock. "Make a lemonade stand" and "Go roller skating" have topped some family lists we've seen firsthand.



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camp feature

What Type of Camp Should Your Child Attend?

By Sandi Schwartz

If you are struggling to find the right camp for your child this summer, take this fun and easy quiz. You'll be able to discover which type of camp is the best fit for your child. **Please only choose one answer.**

1. **How would you best describe your child?**
 - A. Artistic
 - B. Athletic
 - C. Brainy
 - D. Adventurous
2. **What is your child's favorite subject in school?**
 - A. Music
 - B. Physical education
 - C. Math or science
 - D. My child likes a variety of classes
3. **What is your child's favorite activity after school?**
 - A. Music lessons
 - B. Playing a sport
 - C. Robotics or science club
 - D. Participating in a bunch of different activities with friends
4. **Which type of birthday party would your child most likely choose?**
 - A. Dance party
 - B. Indoor soccer or gymnastics
 - C. Science museum
 - D. Every year it's different
5. **What does your child usually do on weekends?**
 - A. Goes to theater rehearsal
 - B. Has a game
 - C. Competes in a robotics or math tournament
 - D. Mixes it up with bike rides, art projects, and shooting hoops
6. **What is your child's favorite role in a group project?**
 - A. Presenter
 - B. Collaborator
 - C. Researcher
 - D. Fills in wherever needed
7. **What's your child's favorite rainy day activity?**
 - A. Listening to music
 - B. Running around the house
 - C. Playing a video game
 - D. Inviting a friend over to hang out
8. **Which would be your child's dream vacation?**
 - A. Seeing Broadway shows in New York City
 - B. Touring sports stadiums around the country
 - C. Visiting science museums
 - D. Doing something different every day including hiking, playing on the beach, and amusement parks
9. **What would your child hope to achieve at summer camp?**
 - A. Starring in a musical
 - B. Being team captain
 - C. Creating an app
 - D. Trying new things
10. **What does your child want to be when he/she grows up?**
 - A. Movie star
 - B. Coach
 - C. Engineer
 - D. No clue

Tally up your answers and match the letter you mostly chose to the type of camp below.

A. Creative/Performing Arts Camps

Specialty art and musical theater camps focus specifically on the arts. Some may offer a variety of art forms to choose from, such as pottery, woodworking, painting, and photography. Others focus solely on one type of art, such as sewing camp or band camp. Musical theater camps are quite popular and typically showcase a production after a few weeks of rehearsals. Art camps come in all lengths and locations.

B. Sports Camps

Sports camps usually consist of only one sport that a child plays throughout the day. The main goal is for participants to improve their skills by focusing extensively on a sport they love. Depending on where you live, you can find all types of sports camps like tennis, golf, soccer, baseball, lacrosse, or gymnastics.

C. Science/Tech Camps

If your child loves to code, build, and tinker, then a tech camp may be the right fit. These types of camps make learning about science and technology fun and exciting for kids. They also provide an opportunity for kids to dive deeper into a subject they love, such as working on a science experiment, designing a website, or programming a robot. You can find science and tech camps through local schools, colleges, and museums.

D. Traditional Camps

Traditional camps are what you think of when you envision summer camp—canoeing, hiking, archery, relay races, swim lessons, and crafts. If your child enjoys exploring and experiencing new things and has not yet found one specific activity that they are passionate about, then a traditional camp is a wonderful choice. Some are day camps, while others are overnight experiences where your kids can also learn more independence skills. Overnight camps also offer a more rustic, outdoorsy experience with campouts, cabins, campfires, and activities on the lake.

Jennifer Gardinerbooks
artist - illustrator - author

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS
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Family Life with an Autistic Child

Five Questions with Brittany Ryan

By Callie Collins



Ryan Family from left: Ethan, 12; Scott; Kailey, 13; Ellie, 6; Brittany and Claire, now 7 months; Ava, 8
Photographer: Melisa Gilden Photography

Local parents Scott and Brittany Ryan are business owners, parents of five, and part of the autism community in Kern County. They own SunSolar by Sun Power, a local solar power installation company. As fans in the stands for Cal State University Bakersfield (CSUB), they also take an active role in The League of Dreams, an adaptive sports chapter for athletes with physical and developmental disabilities.

Brittany shared her thoughts with us as part of April's *Hello, Happy Mama* column with National Autism Awareness Month in mind.

Q. How old are your children?

A, Kailey is 13, Ethan is 12, Ava is 8, Ellie is 6 and Claire is our baby. She's 7 months.

Q. Your son, Ethan, is on the spectrum. What can you share about the process of realizing his development was different from that of typically-developing children?

A, Ethan was so little when we started noticing things. He was just at that 4-to-6 month age when small differences became noticeable. Our oldest daughter, Kailey, is 17 months older than him, and we just thought that every baby is different. But, it became apparent that the differences weren't just because he was another baby. He was babbling at 9 months, then at 12 months, that stopped. He lost all language. There was no more eye contact. He would just sit in the corner, not acknowledging anyone, not even us as his parents anymore. It was odd.

I will never forget, we were gently bouncing Ethan on our bed like you do with babies, who usually love that, but we had him laying in front of us and he was not interacting. It caught my attention as something being off.

When I started looking up symptoms, autism immediately came up and I just knew that's what

it was even before our diagnosis. Thank God we caught it early.

Q. How was Ethan's school and therapy experience as a toddler?

A, Ethan started school at 14 or 15 months, which was cute and heartbreaking at the same time, because he needed those early interventions. We've done everything we could to assist Ethan and any opportunity we've had, we've taken, to help him with speech and through other therapies. We've had amazing teachers. Ethan attended the Richardson Center when he was little, before going to public school, but now we're homeschooling, which has given our family the chance to be together, with additional opportunities for travel.

In the beginning of his school experience, there was just no awareness of where he was or what he was doing, but then, he said those first words, phrases like "I love you" and "Hi, Mom." Although Ethan still struggles some to answer questions, he can communicate his needs.

I would now describe Ethan as a funny, happy child. That experience of watching him go from no real contact with others to how he came to hold our hand for the first time makes you see life differently. We just take so much for granted.

Q. So many families have found themselves in unusual circumstances with work and home during the pandemic. What's giving you strength at this critical time and what advice do you have?

A, A lot of times, I just go outside and walk in our back yard. I enjoy being outdoors and planting some flowers. I would recommend clearing your mind outdoors. Take breaks as you need them. If you're not okay, you're not able to pass that down to your kids and it can affect your relationship with them.

I think as parents we put so much pressure on ourselves. What I've found out is that our kids are learning so much more than we realize. Don't be so hard on yourself. They're picking up what's important in life. Give yourself a break and a pat on the back and see that you're doing much more than you realize.

Q. How can other families support parents with children on the spectrum?

A, Just offering a word of encouragement, like saying "You're doing a great job" means so much. Especially if you're going through a time where you feel like what you're doing is not enough, it's so great to hear that other people recognize your effort. I know other moms who are hands-on with their children, many of whom need more than Ethan does, and just offering to help with a coffee and a break and a kind word can be enough.

Also, when it comes to social gatherings or family parties, don't hesitate to invite the kid who is different. Don't stop inviting. The family may turn down the invitation, but leave that choice to the parents.

Sometimes, just asking a question like "Is there anything we can do to help your child feel more comfortable or more welcome?" can make an incredible difference. I don't ever expect anyone to redo a party or change their plans, but something simple can really help. For example, in our case, Ethan loves fruit and cucumbers. Asking how to make it a better experience and taking that extra little step is so important. I know that if there's a tray of fruit or they have cucumbers out, it'll go better. Offering a room, a quiet space away from the party, can also be helpful.

I would also caution against thinking the child will not notice if they are not invited or are treated differently. The truth is they do understand, and often that understanding is a lot greater than what we realize. They may not answer, but saying "Hi" and asking "How are you?" just like you would with anyone else does matter. Treat children like Ethan no differently, because they do understand.

I also want to say that if you are facing an autism diagnosis, that might be the hardest day of your life, but you can do it. You were always stronger than you realized.

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(A lot of sleep.) And make mistakes at work. And while driving.

Welcome to parenting.

And then, one day, when your toddler is pushing you away in favor of Grandma, and your baby is crying and clinging to your shirt, and you're about to run away to the circus, an older, wiser friend is going to look you in the eye and tell you that you're doing a good job. And you are going to think, "You have no idea how many ways I am failing." But instead of saying the words, you will just buckle up the clingy baby in her car seat, ship the toddler off for an afternoon with Grandma, and cry silently all the way home while covertly munching on a bag of m-and-m's out of view of your rear-facing baby.

But this is OK. Because let me tell you something else: It gets easier. (Others are going to tell you that it does not get easier, that the problems just change. But let me just say this: A ten-year old with insomnia can read a book through the long hours of the night WHILE YOU SLEEP; a ten-month old with insomnia will drain every ounce of energy and patience you have as you spend the late-night hours walking, jiggling, going for car rides, singing, and trying every other trick that google and the pediatrician recommend - all to no avail.) Your children may not grow out of their love of mud or disdain of broccoli in the foreseeable future, but they will learn to tell you what their needs are without screaming, crying, nagging, or whining. One day, they will even learn to tie their own shoes (if they can just find them).

And somewhere along the way, in spite of all the moments you will want to throw them out the window (even though you would never actually do that, of course) ... I don't know... they will worm their way into your heart, and you will learn to love them. You will learn to see the beauty under the mud and chaos. I promise: It is all going to work out.

With Love,
A Mom Who's Been There

What I Would Say to Myself If I Could Go Back to the Days Before Babies A Letter to My Former Self

Dear Self Before Children,

You think you have all the answers right now.

You are so sure that your kids will eat vegetables willingly, always say "thank you," shape up the moment you give them "the look," and basically be happy, healthy, and obedient. Oh, and you think YOU will stay happy, fit, and healthy.

Well, have fun with that fantasy.
'Cause guess what? That is NO ONE's reality.

The truth is, kids are messy. They are happiest when they are playing in mud puddles. They hate vegetables. They will push every boundary. Oh, and you, my friend, will be too frazzled (and

exhausted) to take care of your own needs. So - therapy is definitely in your future. And theirs.

Because - who knew? - broccoli is "disgusting," a toddler can eat the "meat" out of the pea and spit out the shell without even noticing she's doing it, and even children can have insomnia and anxiety. Oh, and the "terrible twos"? Yeah, they are more like the "terrible 1 to 5's," only, since that is sort of too much to say, people have just abbreviated it to the "terrible twos." But don't think anything magical is going to happen on their third birthday. Or their fourth.

You are going to need glasses. And migraine medication. You are going to lose your hair. And gain weight. (A lot of weight.) And lose sleep.



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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

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The Mighty River

Celebrates the community we share through nature and the diverse animals and plants that call the river home. Children and early readers will learn a wide array of names of wild creatures and plants that live in the river's ecosystem. The book includes facts about the river, space to draw and describe river animals and scenes, and ideas on how to protect our waterways. \$15, <https://www.beautiful-worldbooks.com>



Love the Earth: Understanding Climate Change, Speaking Up for Solutions, and Living an Earth-Friendly Life

Packed with ideas and information for readers who care about the earth to help them understand climate change, speak up for solutions, and live an earth-friendly life. Featuring profiles of real-life girls making real changes for a healthier planet, plus quizzes, crafts, party ideas, and a science experiment, the advice book helps readers ages 8+ learn how they can use their unique passions and talents to make a difference. \$9.99, ages 8+, <https://www.americangirl.com/shop/p/love-the-earth-gyg41>



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Our printed version of the calendar has been edited for space.

For more details about these events or activities not listed please visit
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EVERY SATURDAY IN APRIL

F St Farmers Market

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Come and meet your local Farmers and Craftsmen and buy local, buy fresh! Chat with the people who grow your food and the craftsmen who hand make their products while supporting local businesses.

City Center

3201 F St, Bakersfield – Parking Lot
Bakersfield, CA
(661) 342-4671

Time: 7:45am – 12pm

<https://www.visitbakersfield.com/events-calendar/valley-farmers-market/>

Lakeshore Farmer's Market-Wofford Heights

We have some great farmer's markets in Kern County, and this is another one. Give your whole family the gift of fresh fruits, vegetables, and homemade goodies. Drive up the hill for some amazing finds on Saturdays.

7466 Wofford Blvd, Wofford Heights CA
(760) 417-9575

Time: 9am – 1pm

EVERY MONDAY IN APRIL

Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support

HEALING HEARTS (Parents that have lost children)

This is a particularly difficult time to experience the death of a loved one. Hoffmann Hospice Grief Support groups are led by trained grief counselors. The meetings are free and open to all. You do not need to have a loved one on our service to attend.

Space is limited, reservation required for all groups. Please call (661) 410-1010 to schedule.

Mondays via ZOOM (online group)

Bakersfield, CA

(661) 410-1010

Time: 5:30-6:30pm

<https://www.hoffmannhospice.org/grief-support-groups/>



EVERY FRIDAY IN APRIL

Vaccine and licensing clinic

City of Bakersfield Animal Care

Vaccine and licensing clinic. \$5 for DAPP, \$5 Rabies, \$5 FVRCP (cats). \$10 microchip or free for licensed city residents.

Animal Care Center

201 South Mt Vernon, Bakersfield CA

Time: 10am

(661) 832-7387

APRIL 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20, 22, 24, 27, 28

Bakersfield Condors Game

Watch the Condors game on AHLTV (AHLTV.com) or listen on Fox Sports 970 (foxsports970AM.com) or through the iHeartRadio App.

Home and Away Games

661-324-7825

Time: Various

<https://www.bakersfieldcondors.com/schedule/2021-03/>

APRIL 2

FRIDAY, APRIL 2, 2021 AT 5 PM PDT

Theater for Healing- Beale Memorial Library

Theatre For Healing is designed to support wom-

en through trauma through creative monologue writing. This will be held virtually in a safe space, where those in attendance will empower one another as stories are shared.

Free registration with code: VRT@MyLibrary

(661) 868-0701

Time: 5pm

APRIL 3

Low-Cost Pet Vaccine Clinic for Dogs, City of Bakersfield

The City of Bakersfield Animal Control division hosts a monthly clinic at parks within the city. The clinics provide access to the community for rabies vaccinations, licensing and micro-chipping. A license must be purchased at the same time as the Rabies vaccination. Free Microchips FREE Microchips are available to all currently licensed dogs (chip registration is included).

Wilson Park

2400 Wilson Avenue, Bakersfield CA

(661) 8327387

Time: 9am – 12pm

http://www.kerncountyfamily.com/publicationreturnframe.lasso?-token.address=https://www.bakersfieldcity.us/gov/depts/animal_care_center/clinics.htm

APRIL 4



APRIL 17 – 18

Spring Fling – National Jet Boat Association

The National Jet Boat Association is an organization to promote the sport of drag boat racing. Over the past four decades the club has had an enormous following and dedication for the

purpose of advancing the sport on the liquid quarter mile. \$10.00 Entry Fee | Kids 12 and under FREE

Bring your coolers, chairs and easy-ups. Free Parking. Racing starts at 8:00 a.m.

Lake Ming

12768 Lake Ming Road, Bakersfield, CA

Time: 8am – 5pm



APRIL 19

KLEA and Bakersfield 3 Charity Annual Tee Fore Three Golf Tournament

Kern Law Enforcement Association and Bakersfield 3 Charity are again teaming up to support local efforts to reduce and solve crimes in the county we call home.

Please join us Monday, April 19, 2021 at Seven Oaks Country Club, 2000 Grand Lakes Avenue in Bakersfield CA, 93311, for the annual "Tee Fore Three" Golf Tournament.

Proceeds from Tournament will be donated to the Kern Secret Witness, a non profit organization that offers rewards for anonymous information leading to the arrest and conviction in a case. All funding for the program comes from public donations. The Bakersfield Police Department and Kern County Sheriff's Department support the Secret Witness Program and recognize it as a valuable tool to help solve crimes and apprehend wanted persons.

Please consider becoming a sponsor, or participant, to support our cause. Your donations will provide incentives to community members for becoming involved in crime prevention and resolution.

Seven Oaks Country Club
2000 Grand Lakes Ave, Bakersfield, CA

(661) 431-8851

Time: 9am

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/klea-and-bakersfield-3-charity-annual-tee-fore-three-golf-tournament-tickets-137561693729>

APRIL 22



APRIL 26 - 29

Bakersfield Women's Business Conference 2021 - Building the Best You

The Bakersfield Women's Business Conference is bringing you the conference you've known and loved for the past three decades directly to your screen! BWBC 2021 is moving from a one-day conference to delivering engaging content to you all week. We are excited to offer BWBC 2021 virtually on the Whova platform, a simple app that will make your conference experience convenient and seamless.

We are happy to welcome all attendees within the Bakersfield area and beyond, and look forward to "seeing" you for our first national virtual conference the week of April 26, 2021.

Online: whova.com

(661) 378-4707

Time: 8am – 4pm

bakersfieldwomen.org/register-to-attend/

DO YOU HAVE A LOCAL EVENT TO SHARE?

Our Happenings section is dedicated to bringing the most current events to you, but we need your help! You can submit your calendar events at

kerncountyfamily.com

"Submit Calendar Event" can be found under the Calendar tab. Please submit calendar events by the 10th of each month prior to ensure we have enough time to consider your event.

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"Autism Society Chapter-Kern Autism Network provides support, awareness, information and education to families and the public throughout Kern County"



Happy Easter and April Autism Awareness Acceptance Month from the Autism Society-Kern Autism Network, Inc!

All Events & Activities have been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

We are dedicated to helping families and adults with autism during these times of uncertainty and have face masks available, so please contact us if you are in need. Please see our website www.kernautism.org or our Facebook page for the latest updates and subscribe to our newsletter for further information.

Covid-19 Resources <http://www.autismsocietyca.org/ca-affiliates.html>

EARLY SIGNS OF AUTISM:

- Delayed language development
- Repetitive language
- Little or no eye contact
- Repetitive mannerisms
- Inflexible routines or rituals
- Preoccupation with object parts
- Little interest in friendships

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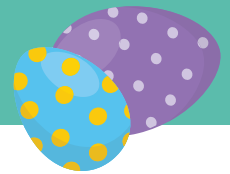
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aprilActivityCorner...answers on page 19



Sudoku

				1	4			
5				3			2	7
	9		8	2		5	4	3
	6	7		8			5	1
		9		7	6		8	
	8	2		9		7	6	
2				5			3	
	7			4	2	8	1	
8							7	

Level: Beginner

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve: the number 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. Figure out the order the numbers will appear by using the clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets!

Crossword Puzzle

O A B F W Z M H L F O M
 Q F O A U O S I G L C G
 Y O D M R F R I R U G M
 L A Z I S P R L L J A L
 E B I L A G N I Y L U L
 L Y L Y I J G C E L Y J
 I H M B I O P R A N K F
 M K Q Z T O V F X Z D J
 S E Q C E L G G I G M O
 Z E H U T Z Y I U K N K
 H A B F J J L O G D Y E
 T O R G N N I A J W W T

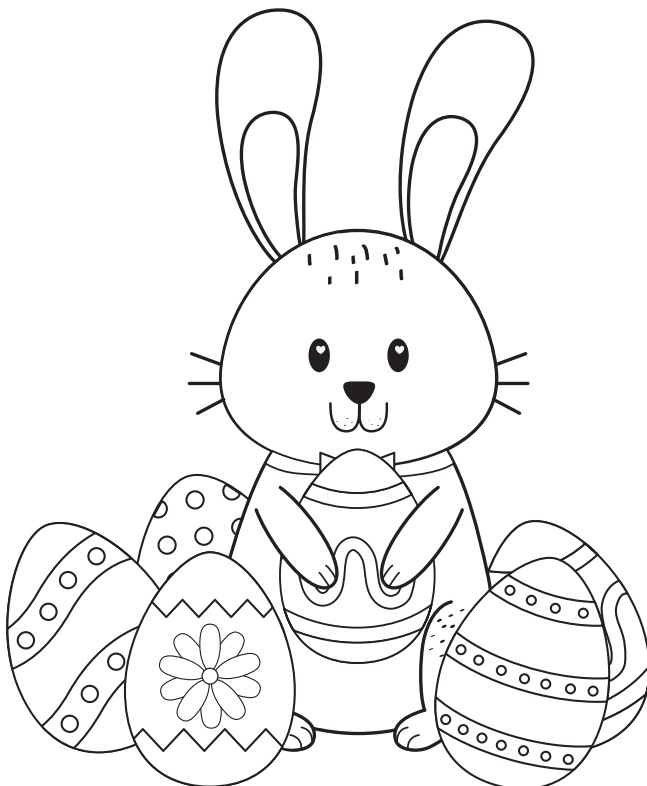
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FOOL

FRIEND
GIGGLE
GOTCHA

JOKE
LAUGH
PRANK

SILLY
SMILE

Color Craze



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- Referrals to healthcare and community services

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- Had a recent pregnancy loss;
- Have a child or care for a child under 5;
- Have low to medium income; and/or
- Receive Medi-Cal, CalWORKS (TANF), or CalFresh (SNAP) benefits; and
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