

January 2012

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A Note from the Nurse

Choking Hazards in Young Children

By **Connie Goldsmith, RN, BSN, MPA**

Most parents are pretty savvy when it comes to knowing about choking in young children. Even so, at least one child dies every five days in the U.S. from choking on food, and another ten thousand children are seen in an emergency room each year for choking. Choking is the fourth leading cause of accidental death in children one to nine years of age (surpassed by motor vehicle injuries, drowning, and fires/burns). While food is the most common cause of choking, toys and small household items also present a choking hazard. Manufacturers must label small toys as being unsuitable for infants and toddlers, but food, of course, carries no warning.

The American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Otolaryngology joined forces in a campaign to help parents recognize common choking hazards in young children and how to prevent them. A study of data from nearly fifty children's hospitals around the world found the ten foods most commonly associated with fatal airway obstruction are: hot dogs, hard candy, nuts, grapes, meat, cookies and biscuits, carrots, apples, popcorn and peanut butter. Other high-risk foods for choking include sticky candy, cheese cubes (and other cubed food),

seeds, whole grapes, cherries, chewing gum, marshmallows, pretzel nuggets, small sausages and other round foods that could occlude a child's small airway.

Choking from food is largely preventable with appropriate supervision and food preparation. *Supervision* means that you should never leave a small child unattended while eating. A choking child cannot call out for you if you're in the next room. Children should sit up straight when eating, should have a sufficient number of teeth for the intended food, and the muscular and developmental ability needed to chew and swallow chosen foods. Children with certain neurological or developmental problems may be unable to safely eat foods that children without such conditions can eat.

Young children should eat while sitting in a quiet calm environment with continual supervision. They should not eat while standing, walking, running, playing, lying down, or when they are sleepy. They should refrain from eating while riding on a bike or as a passenger in a vehicle. They should not play games such as catching thrown food in the mouth or stuffing the mouth full of food. Young children are easily distracted and may not pay full attention while they are eating.

Food preparation means cutting foods into age appropriate sizes, especially round

foods that could easily occlude the child's airway (especially grapes and hot dogs). Remove seeds or pits from fruits. It is safer for young children to eat their fruit and vegetables cooked rather than raw. Peanut butter should be thinly spread on bread so it doesn't form a glob that cannot be swallowed. Offer fluids with meals, but be sure the child has completely chewed and swallowed any food before drinking.

Certain toys and household items pose a special risk of choking. Latex balloons are extremely dangerous to young children. If inhaled, the latex can form an airtight seal over the child's airway. Other problematic items include coins, marbles, toys with small parts, small balls, pen or marker caps, tiny button-type batteries, magnets, screws, stuffing from a bean bag toy, and jewelry such as rings and earrings. Make sure children cannot get into trash cans that may hold a variety of small objects of interest to a curious toddler.

Be sure other caregivers such as sitters, older siblings, and grandparents know about choking hazards. Ideally, parents and anyone who cares for young children should know child CPR and the Heimlich maneuver. Read instructions from the Mayo Clinic at: www.mayoclinic.com/health/first-aid-choking/FA00025, or view a video in which

a first responder demonstrates the Heimlich at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrPzux2rI4&feature=related. When it comes to childhood choking, nothing beats supervision and knowledge.

Coming in March: Food Allergies in Children.

References: "Choking Hazards Campaign," American Academy of Otolaryngology, at: www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/Choking-Campaign.cfm; "Prevention of Choking among Children," American Academy of Pediatrics, at: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;125/3/601>; and "Preventing Choking in Children," American Academy of Pediatrics at: www.entnet.org/HealthInformation/upload/Preventing-Choking-in-Children-News-Article.pdf.

Note: Information contained in this article is not intended to replace medical advice. Parents and caregivers should always contact their child's doctor for guidance with any health concerns.

Connie Goldsmith writes health and science books for young people and continuing education courses for nurses. She has also worked as a triage nurse on a 24/7 nurse advice line. She maintains a health blog on her website at www.conniegoldsmith.com.

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VISIT the California State Railroad Museum in Old Sacramento, open daily 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. It's a family learning experience that will delight like no other.

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Discovery Museum's Weekend Activities

Blast From the Past! opening Weekend Saturday, Sunday and Monday, January 14, 15 and 16

Are you ready for some prehistoric fun? The Discovery Museum's Blast From the Past! exhibit is the place to be. The exhibit's grand opening is this weekend and it is full of hands-on dinosaur fun. Visit the Dinosaur Train creative play area, view dinosaur bone replicas, and enjoy a photo opportunity for little ones sitting in a "dino nest." Remember the experience by crafting a take-home dinosaur diorama: the staff will provide the materials -- including a mini-toy dinosaur -- you provide the creativity!

Rockin' Rock Pets

Saturday and Sunday, January 21 and 22, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Rocks are so cool -- you can do a lot with them while you learn all about them! This weekend kids have fun making their own pet rock. Use your imagination! Is it a fish? Turtle? Ladybug? Take your pet rock on a tour of the exhibit to learn about other types of rocks, crystals and fossils. Planetarium shows are at 1 and 3 p.m. for ages 4 and older.

Woolly Wonders

Saturday and Sunday, January 28 and 29, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Visit the Discovery Museum to learn about an animal that may be in- or under- your own backyard. Woolly Mammoth fossils have been discovered in the Elk Grove area, proving the species once resided right here in the Sacramento Valley! Learn about this colossal creature in our Blast From the Past! exhibit. Kids 12 and under help create a life-size baby Woolly Mammoth by adding yarn to his coat! There is a smaller mammoth craft to take home with you.

The Discovery Museum Science and Space Center opens at 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Science Discovery activities are from 12:30 to 4 p.m. The Museum is located at 3615 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento. Admission is \$8 adults (18+), \$6 seniors (60+), \$6 teens (13-17), \$5 children (4-12), and free for children age 3 and under. Exhibits are ages appropriate for 4 to 12 years old. For more information, call (916) 808-3942 or visit www.thediscovery.org

Chinese New Year celebrated

The Sacramento Public Library is celebrating Chinese New Year's "Year of the Dragon" at two of its library branches.

• Chinese New Year, Dim Sum and Calligraphy: Thursday, January 19, 3 p.m., at Sylvan Oaks Library, 6700 Auburn Boulevard, Citrus Heights.

Teens are invited to learn to make tasty dim sum, and to explore Chinese New Year traditions, Chinese ink drawings and calligraphy.

• Chinese New Year Party: Saturday, January 21 at 11:30 a.m. at North Natomas Library, 4660 Via Ingoglia, Sacramento.

Families can celebrate the Year of the Dragon with a dragon dance and a story. Please bring a dish to share for the noon potluck lunch, which will be followed by a craft-making program at 1 p.m.

For details, call the Sacramento Public Library at (916) 264-2920 or visit www.saclibrary.org.

Trappers, Trades, and Treaties

Sutter's Fort State Historic Park presents a special "Hands on History: Trappers, Trades, and Treaties" event, Saturday, January 21, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visitors will step back in time to the 1840s to learn why trappers were considered "jacks of many trades" and experience how they lived, worked, explored new territory and traded with local Native Americans. Docents will treat Fort visitors to musket demonstrations and share examples of many fascinating aspects in the life of a trapper. Fort visitors will have the hands-on opportunity to examine fur pelts, create documents with a quill pen and oak gall ink, and even string trade beads to take home. Admission is \$6 per adult (18 and older), \$4 per youth (ages 6-17), and free for children 5 and under. Sutter's Fort State Historic Park is located at 2701 L Street, Sacramento. For more information, call (916) 445-4422 or visit www.suttersfort.org.



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Effie Yeaw Nature Center Events

Special Event:

The Center's new speaker series, "Nature of Things," will start with a presentation on *Venomous Bites and Stings* by Mike Cardwell. It is a vividly-illustrated program describing where California's only dangerous native snake – the Northern Pacific Rattlesnake – is likely to be encountered, how to avoid being bitten, and how to provide appropriate pre-hospital first aid to a snakebite victim. Common myths will be addressed and questions answered about these extraordinarily interesting creatures. Topics to be discussed include controversial new snakebite first aid guidelines and the currently evolving situation with rattlesnake antivenins. A live Northern Pacific Rattlesnake will be on display. Advanced registration is required because space is limited. The cost is \$5 per person. There is free parking for this program. Call (916) 489-4918 or visit www.sacnaturecenter.net to register.

Black-tailed deer, Saturday, January 7, 10:30 a.m.

The bucks are in their winter glory, with beautiful antler crowns. Grab your binoculars to catch a closer look at the black-tailed deer in their habitat and learn more about their world. All ages welcome.

Nature's Art Box, Sunday, January 8, at 1:30 p.m.

Expert artists NOT required! Join a naturalist and learn some simple skills needed to capture nature on paper. Supplies provided, all ages welcome.

Beginning Wildlife Photography, Saturday, January 14, at 10:30 a.m.

Chris Knight of Knight's AD Vantage will teach you some of the techniques NOT to use, tips to take better shots, how to approach wildlife and ethics while out in the field. Bring your camera and prepare to get some good shots! Suggested ages are 10 and up.

Cold-blooded critters, Sunday, January 15, 1:30 p.m.

Some have scaly skin, some have slimy skin, some have legs and some don't. Can you guess what they are? Join the staff at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center and find out! All ages welcome.

Animal tracks and signs, Saturday, January 21, 10:30 a.m.

There are many animal-made signs in the woods that reveal who has used the trail before you. Become a nature detective by playing tracks and scat games, then take a walk to find some animal signs in the Nature Area. All ages welcome.

Coyote tales, Sunday, January 22, 1:30 p.m.

Join the staff for a Native American story about a Coyote, then get a close-up look at a coyote pelt, skull and mounted specimen. Discover some facts about these wild dog relatives and take a walk in their habitat. All ages welcome.

Winter Bird Walk, Saturday, January 28, 10:30 a.m.

Discover why winter is a great time for bird watching. Join a naturalist for a guided hike while looking for some of the Sacramento area's most common birds. Bring your binoculars. All ages welcome.

There is a \$5 per car entrance fee into Ancil Hoffman Park (free to members) which is located at California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael. All programs are free unless stated otherwise. Donations gratefully accepted. The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is located in the park at 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. For more information, call (916) 489-4918 or visit www.sacnaturecenter.net.

Night Hunters!

Bring the family to the Effie Yeaw Nature Center for a free program, "Night Hunters," Sunday, January 29, at 1:30 p.m. Uncover the mysteries of owls: what they eat, where they sleep, how they find food and more. Get a close-up look at the Nature Center's newest resident, Echo, the great horned owl. All ages are welcome.

Program is free, but donations are gratefully accepted. There is a \$5 per car entrance fee into Ancil Hoffman Park, which is located at California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael. The Effie Yeaw Nature Center is located at in the park, at 2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael. For more information, call (916) 489-4918 or visit www.sacnaturecenter.net.



Your Amazing Body!

Hey kids! You can jump, hop, sing and dance, spin around and climb a tree! What an amazing body! Can you find the words that are a part of our body? Have fun searching for the hidden words related to the body. Look carefully, words can appear vertically, horizontally, diagonally, backwards, and upside-down. Good luck and have fun!

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

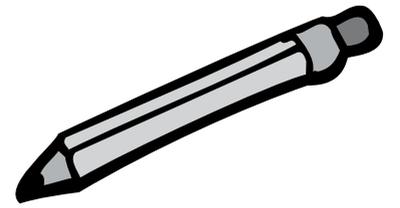
Ankles
Arms
Brain
Ears
Elbow
Eyebrow

Eyes
Face
Fingernails
Foot
Head
Hair

Hand
Knee
Legs
Shoulders
Tooth
Toes



MAKE IT YOURSELF!



Happy New Year Hand Poster

Decorate the house for the New Year and capture a picture of your child's hands to keep forever, too!

You will need:

Construction paper, gold and silver paint, gold and silver glitter glue.



Here's an example from 2009.

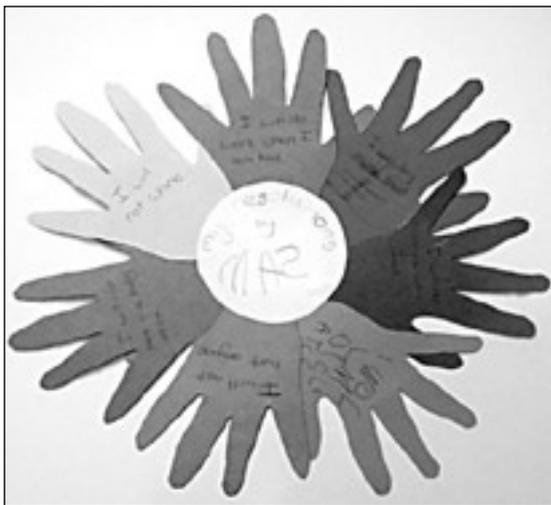
You will need to:

Print two silver and two gold handprints in a line in the center of the paper and leave them to dry.

With the glitter glue, write the year across the hands and a New Year message above and below.

Resolutions Hand Wreath

This New Year's resolution wreath is a super way to capture a moment in time. Encourage them to write down their resolutions on handprints and you will not only have a snapshot of what was important to them at this age, but a record of the size of their hand, too.

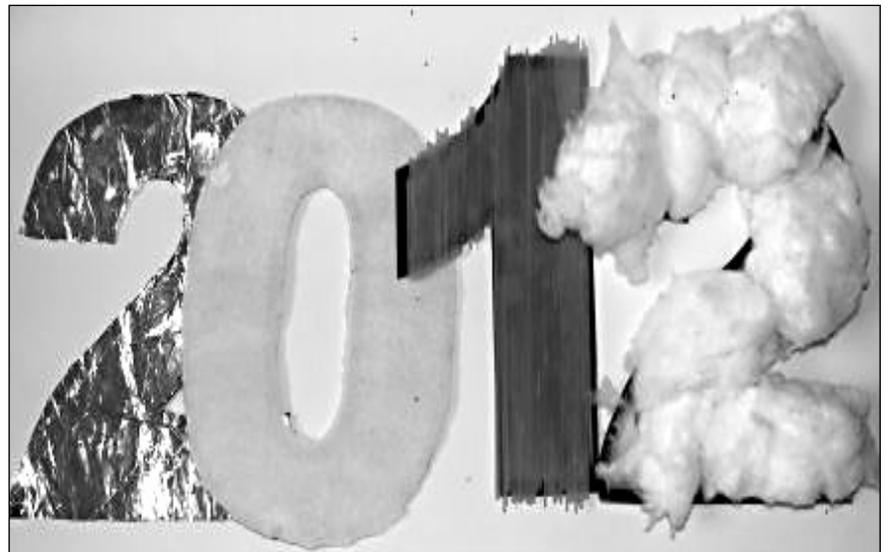


You will need:

Brightly colored card, white card, pens

You will need to:

- Cut out a circle of white card and write upon it 'My Resolutions by...?'
- Draw around your hand on bright card. Cut out the hand. Repeat until you have 6 or 7 hands.
- Write a resolution on the palm of each hand.
- Glue the fingers of the hands together to form a circle.
- Finish by gluing the white card circle in the middle of the wreath, and displaying. What a great way to help you stick to your New Year's Resolutions this year!



New Year Numbers craft

You will need:

A4 card or sheet of construction paper, PVA (white) glue, Dried beans, lentils, rice, kitchen foil, fabric, cotton wool, sand, etc

You will need to:

Draw, or print, a large number onto the sheet of the card. Cover each number with glue and then stick on your chosen 'texture'. Cover each number in a different material to get a range of textures. When the glue is dry, cut out the numbers. You could make the numbers 0 to 9 in different textures to help children learn to recognize their numbers.

Savings Jar

It is quick and easy for kids to make their very own savings jar craft, great for encouraging them to save up during the year!

You will need:

Old clear jar. Sparkly stickers including, stars and number stickers.

You will need to:

Decorate the jar with the stickers. Use the number stickers to spell out the year. Doesn't it look great!



Here's an example from last year.

Crafts courtesy of: www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy



Who Wrote That?

The Creators of Your Child's Favorite Books

Featuring **Donna Jo Napoli**

By **Patricia M. Newman**

As a child, Donna Jo Napoli loved climbing trees and reading books with her legs dangling in the air. Walter Farley's *The Black Stallion* was a special favorite because of the love between boy and horse, and the story's pure, clean adventure in a world neither pure nor clean. Reading was Napoli's escape from the misery of her family. "A lot of the joy of my childhood came from reading," she says. "My family was poor and we didn't travel and I didn't have all that many experiences; my world was pretty small. But books gave me so many different places and times and adventures." Now, when she begins a new project she considers the young girl she used to be and tries to give her readers "a place and a time they can go to for the first time."



Napoli is the author of more than 50 picture books, chapter books, middle grade novels and young adult novels, but admits to a 14-year apprenticeship before her first book was published. A personal tragedy lured her to write at the age of 28, but now she writes because she has to. Life is her inspiration, although she says, "I don't like the word 'inspiration' with respect to art. I think it gives the impression that art just comes out of your head, full blown and polished, like Athena from the forehead of Zeus. Writing is hard work." Hard work made harder by the fact that Napoli has five children (now

grown) and is a full professor of linguistics at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania. "My writing has to fit into the cracks of [my life]," she says.

Her tales are crafted in the laundry room of her home. "When my children were small it made a lot of sense," she quips. Napoli learned storytelling from her grandmother, sitting at her feet and listening. "So when I write stories, I do it out loud." She says that winning the Anne Izard's Storyteller's Choice Award for *Mama Miti* "made me feel like my grandmother was sharing it."

Generally, Napoli begins a story with a character, such as Mary Magdalene. "My daughter Eva went to see the musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* when she was ten. She fell in love with Mary Magdalene and asked me who she really was. I was off and away immediately—and two years later I sent my manuscript to a publisher. It came out as *Song of the Magdalene*."

Several of Napoli's books take root in fairy tales. *The Prince of the Pond* is a hilarious take-off on "The Frog Prince" with a speech impediment, hence the subtitle *De Fawg Pin*. *The Magic Circle* focuses on the witch from Hansel and Gretel, perhaps the most evil of all fairy tale villains because she eats children. This young adult novel is a perfect example of Napoli's academic background informing her work. Research into folklore, psychology, and a rich description of the natural world combine to develop a sympathetic back story

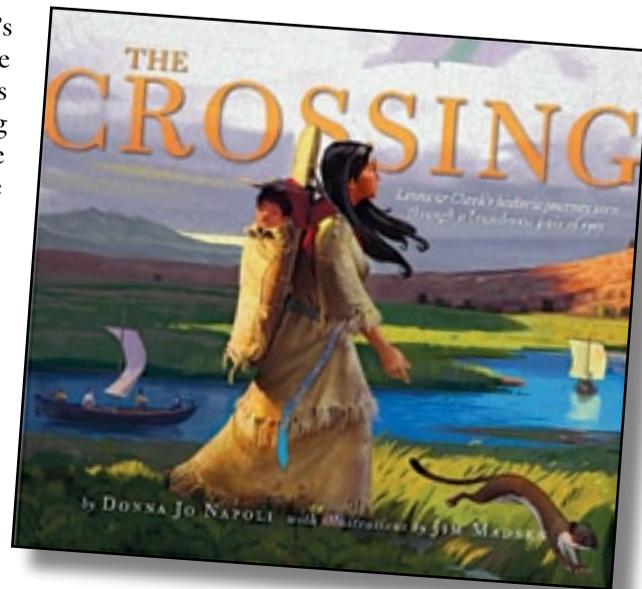


for one of childhood's scariest baddies. "I love *The Magic Circle*," says Napoli, "but the writing of it nearly killed me in terms of giving me nightmares. Being so involved in a book is a gift—it's one of the best gifts of writing."

Research brings Napoli closer to her characters. "I write about places and/or times that I need to learn a lot about. Doing research is one of the best parts of the job" She either haunts libraries or visits the places she is writing about "to try to walk the paths my characters would have walked." In *Beast*, she retells "Beauty and the Beast" from the beast's point of view. One of the earliest retellings claimed the beast was a prince from Persia, so Napoli plunged into the food, music, language, literature, fine arts, politics, and religion of Iran, ultimately visiting the country.

Barring an actual trip, Napoli relies on Internet photos and videos to see things she wouldn't otherwise see. "When I was writing *Mogo The Third Warthog*, I read a lot about African wild dogs. But when I went on the Internet, I actually found a video of them hunting. It was fabulous—and something I probably never would have seen even if I'd lived years in Kenya."

One of the other joys of writing is the fan mail Napoli receives. Her very best



letter said: "My teacher said we had to ask our favorite author a question. So here's my question. Do you know anyone in Michigan who wants a kitten?" The real story behind that letter is that Napoli and the reader have been corresponding for five years and have become friends.

Next month: Alan Silberberg

Patricia Newman is the author of Jingle the Brass (Farrar, Straus & Giroux), recommended by the Smithsonian National American History Museum. Her newest book, Nugget on the Flight Deck (Walker), received the California Reading Association's Eureka! Silver Honor Award for excellence in children's nonfiction. Visit her website at www.patriciamnewman.com to watch the trailer.

MORE ABOUT DONNA JO NAPOLI

How to Contact Donna Jo Napoli

Website: www.donnajonapoli.com

DONNA JO NAPOLI'S LIBRARY

- Treasury of Greek Mythology*, National Geographic, 2011.
- Lights on the Nile*, HarperCollins, 2011.
- The Crossing*, Simon & Schuster, 2011.
- Mama Miti*, Simon & Schuster, 2010.
- The Wager*, Henry Holt, 2010.
- Ready to Dream*, Bloomsbury, 2009.
- The Earth Shook*, Hyperion, 2009.
- Alligator Bayou*, Random House, 2009.
- Bobby the Bold*, Dial, 2006.

Sly the Sleuth Series

- Sly the Sleuth and the Code Mysteries*, Dial, 2009.
- Sly the Sleuth and the Food Mysteries*, Dial, 2007.
- Sly the Sleuth and the Sports Mysteries*, Dial, 2006.
- Sly the Sleuth and the Pet Mysteries*, Dial, 2005.

UPCOMING

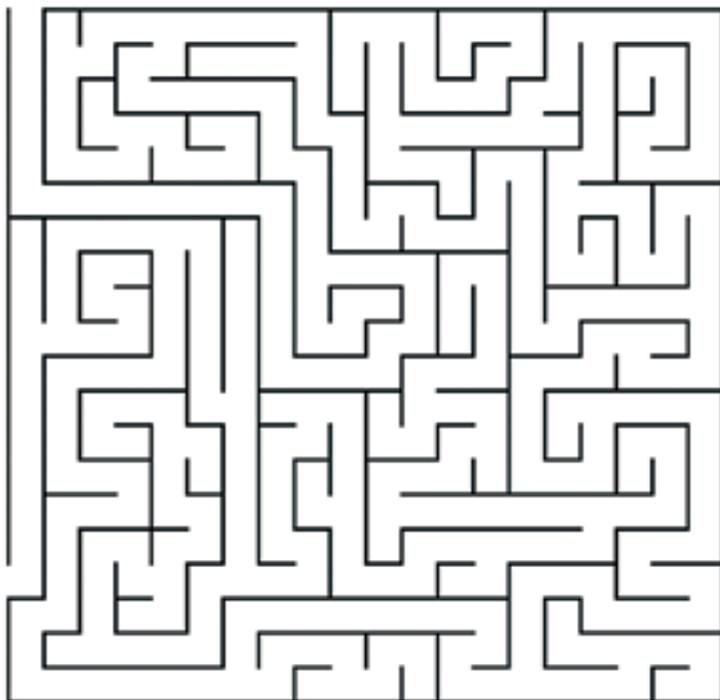
- A Single Pearl*, Hyperion, TBD.
- Fishgirl*, Clarion, TBD.
- The Garden with Robert Furrow*, Walker, TBD.
- When the World Caught Fire*, Random House, TBD.



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The Friends of the Sacramento Public Library are hosting a Warehouse Clearance Sale at the Book Den Warehouse, 8250 Belvedere Avenue, Suite E, on Saturday, January 7, and Sunday, January 8, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. A preview for Friends members only will be held Friday, January 6, 3 to 7 p.m. The warehouse is currently overstocked with a wide variety of books which must be sold so that room is available for incoming new donations.

All books and other materials in the warehouse will be sold for \$6 a bag at the preview and during both sale days. Because of the reduced prices, the Friends members' usual discount will not be offered at this sale. The Book Den store, which specializes in collectibles and better books and is located at the same site, will be open during the same hours with materials offered at regular prices. For more information, call (916) 731-8493 or e-mail fspl@att.net.

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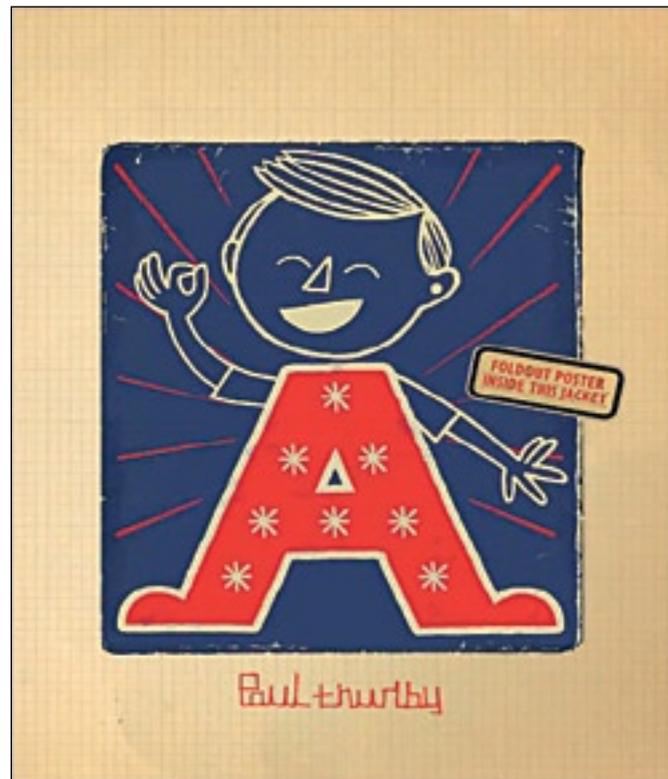
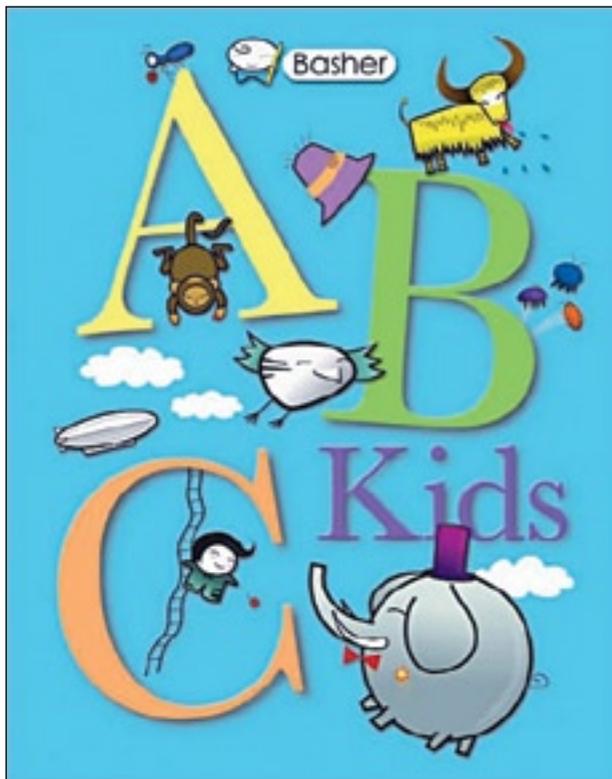
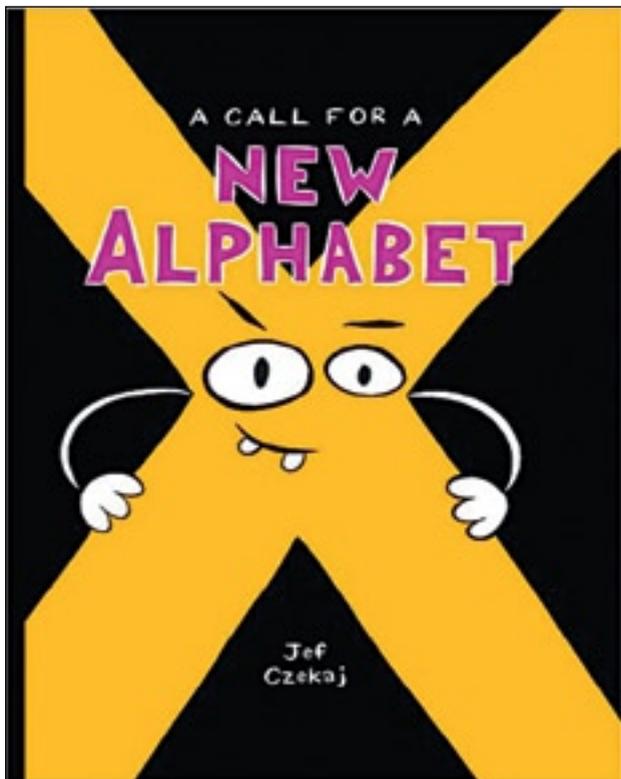
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THE BOOK REPORT

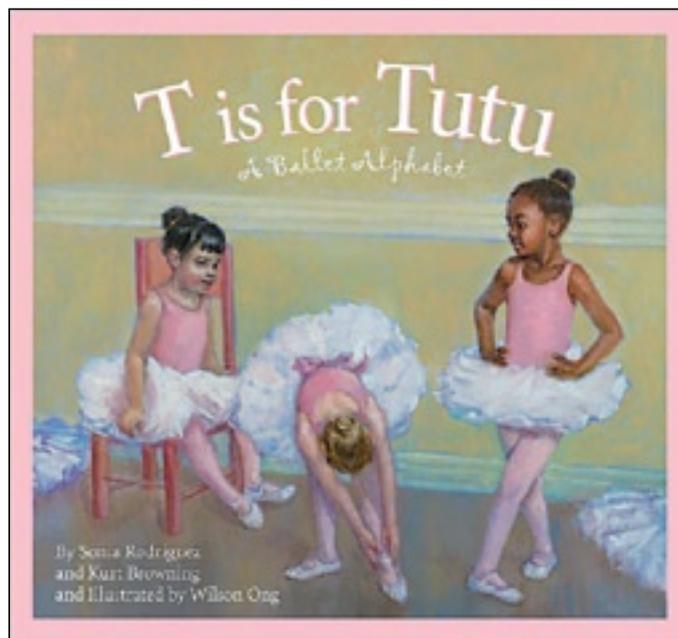
Learning the ABC's

By Connie Goldsmith

Every child learns the alphabet, and most learn long before first grade. Alphabet books can turn that simple task into a joyous good time when parent and child read together. Play alphabet games during tedious car rides. Call out a letter, such as B, and see how fast your child can spot a bike, a ball, or a blue balloon. Slightly older children might enjoy finding and calling out passing objects in alphabetical order. Letters form the foundation for all learning; making it fun for children now may ensure that it remains fun in the future.

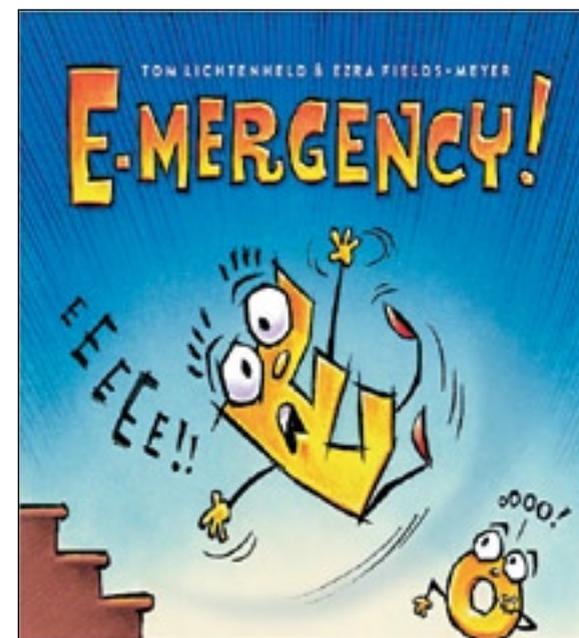
“Paul Thurlby’s *Alphabet*,” by Paul Thurlby. (Templar). This British graphic illustrator has produced a stunning alphabet book. Each letter is a work of art by itself. Many of the letters are shaped for the word they represent, as with the dog shaped like a D, the mountain made of an M, and the rabbit that forms an R. Both upper and lower cases are displayed helping the young reader to better understand why some letters seemingly have two different shapes (as in upper and lower case Aa and Rr that do not look at all alike). The primary colors are bright – red, green, blue and yellow. The dust jacket unfolds into a poster starring our new-found friends – the letters! ** Reviewer’s pick of the month**

“ABC Kids,” by Simon Basher. (Kingfisher). “Leonard’s lobster loves licking lollipops. Tim’s tortoise tickles tadpoles. Vera vacuums various vegetables.” Basher’s signature Manga-style artwork, creative use of alliteration, and cleverly designed pages are a joy to behold. Be sure to notice the silly things the letters are doing for a giggle or two. Unusual words will help build vocabulary as well as letter recognition. The art is bright, boldly outlined, and highly engaging. The alphabet in small letters appears at the bottom of each page with the applicable letter underlined to help kids keep track of where they are. Basher’s work stands out in the crowded market of ABC books.



“A Call for a New Alphabet,” by Jef Czekaj. (Charlesbridge). X is just tired of it! He’s nearly last in the alphabet and he appears in so few words. What’s an exasperated X to do? Lobby for a new alphabet, that’s what! No letter had ever acted this way before. The other letters are very confused. E reads the Alphabet Constitution that states a new alphabet may be created if the majority of the letters are not satisfied with the current alphabetic order. But X has a bad dream about all the problems the other letters face. He wakes up deciding that things are just fine the way they are. The story is as much a grammar lesson as an alphabet book, disguised with bright text, fun wordplay, and darling cartoonlike illustrations. The book is suitable for older kids who already know the alphabet but who may be learning to read and struggling to learn the rules of reading and writing.

“T is for Tutu: A Ballet Alphabet,” by Sonia Rodriguez and Kurt Browning, illustrated by Wilson Ong. (Sleeping Bear Press.) “A is for Anybody. Anybody can dance all you have to do is give yourself a chance.” With these encouraging words, young readers and listeners are carried into the wonderful world of ballet. The book is presented in the publisher’s signature style – a short rhyme on every page followed by smaller text with further information for the curious. Plenty of the pages show boys engaged in dance, making the books suitable for both boys and girls. This is not only an alphabet book,



it also tells a story beginning with children at their first practice sessions to prima ballerinas at the theater. Learn about famous dances and dancers, tutus and leotards, pointe shoes and ribbons. Note the authors, a principal dancer and a feted figure-skater, are superbly qualified to write about dance.

“E-Mergency,” by Tom Lichtenheld and Ezra Fields-Meyer. (Chronicle). Did you know that 12.7% of the words in English contain an E. So when E falls down the stairs and breaks a limb or two, she must take time to recover in the hospital. The other letters are called upon to fill in. Z is too lazy to help, P is always in the bathroom, and Y is full of questions. O, being a well-rounded letter, agrees to take E’s place. This is harder than it sooms! Some of the words don’t mako sonso! Filled with puns and quirky jokes, this is a wonderful read-aloud story suitable for those learning their ABCs and those who already know them. The art is bright and engaging; the story will entertain its listeners for a very long time.

Connie Goldsmith (www.conniegoldsmith.com) lives in Carmichael where she writes for adults and children. Her newest nonfiction juvenile books, “Battling Malaria: on the Front Lines Against a Global Killer,” and “Leukemia,” one of the USA Today Health Reports series, recently came out. Her books can be found in school and public libraries, and at online booksellers.



A "Wonder"ous, Double Dose of Disney for Multigenerational Vacationing California Families

By Carmel L. Mooney

Different types of cruise experiences abound but perhaps nothing offers a more "Wonder-ful" appeal for multi-generational travel than a cruise aboard the Disney Wonder. (and a trip to Disney Resorts afterwards)

Much like the Disney Magic, its sister ship, the Disney Wonder boasts 11 decks and comfortably accommodates 2700 passengers. Nearly a thousand cast and crew members cater to the guests on the Wonder's Mexican Riviera voyage.

For Disney-Loving Families, a magical Disney cruise experience starts the moment you board this spectacular vessel from the World Cruise Center in San Pedro, California, just a short ride from LAX.

What makes the Disney Wonder, and any Disney cruise so magical is the approach to offering activities, dining, serene and quiet places, while offering world class entertainment for all ages and lifestyles.

Disney Wonder's Captain Thor says, "Our ships are unique in that we target couples, elderly, and families. You can get away and relax in our adults-only areas. As people have become more familiar with our product, we see really wide demographics now."

When we were recently cruising on the Disney Wonder, my husband and I found it "Wonderful" to be able to escape from the busyness and activities, and yes, even the kids, to simply enjoy a relaxing afternoon in the adults-only pool. Other relaxing adult areas were easy to find.

We found fine dining in Palo, a lovely Italian style restaurant serving exquisite cuisine, a welcome respite

from a busy day of family activities as this is an adults-only option as well.

With its elegant Venetian glass and inlaid wood paneling, this romantic spot offers 270 degree sweeping panoramic views of the sea. Floor to ceiling windows and a circular layout afford a unique dining experience. A back-lit bar and open kitchen add to the ambiance. Chef Stephan says, "The galley is open and we love to interact with the guests."

Numerous lounges and coffee bars with specialty coffee drinks and magazines also allowed us some quiet down time as did the Spa and Fitness Center which both are reserved for grown ups.

Adults-only comedy, art shows, and performances were peppered throughout the itinerary too.

While on board our family met numerous multi-generational traveling families who enjoyed these more mature aspects as well as a well-rounded array of activities that all generations could engage in together. While onboard, several different TV and music trivia games drew participants of all ages, as did golfing tournaments, ping pong tournaments and cooking and ice sculpting demonstrations. Karaoke parties and talent contests seemed to also attract all ages as did some of the professional acts. The guest juggler on our ship was nothing less than astounding. The adults-only sand artist was not only unique, and talented but created art in good taste.

The wait-staff in all of the beautifully themed dining rooms were some of the best we have ever encountered on any ship or cruise line. Each night families are rotated to variously themed dining venues where the



same wait-staff follows them from place to place. This proved excellent for several reasons. The wait-staff knew all our preferences and those of the children by the second night and were always a step ahead with preferred beverages and sides. The various dining rooms with spectacular effects, imagery, music, décor, and themes kept things interesting, entertaining, and upbeat.

Disney's onboard world class shows are magnificent. As Jeffrey Mouton, the Dance Captain of the Wonder's dance crew of 25 says, "We do five Broadway-style shows for our guests on each sailing. Disney's world famous attention to detail and quality shines through from the costumes

and lighting to the effects. Some of the effects we have are award-winning and make the audience literally gasp. Each and every show is family-friendly. The production value is amazing and all steps and costumes are different in each production show. We are also the only cruise line that can show first run movies onboard in our movie theater."

It was evident that all kids loved the Pirate Deck Party and fireworks display which is a highlight of every sailing. The entire ship becomes Pirate-themed all night starting at dinner with the waiters and music right up to the dance party on deck and finishing with the fireworks show

See Travel, page 19

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Travel

Continued from page 18

right off the ship's deck which was truly fantastic.

Ports of Call for the Mexican Riviera sailing are Puerto Vallarta and Cabo San Lucas which both offer a myriad of activities for families and couples alike. Snorkeling, sport fishing, shopping, tours, zip-lining, ocean kayaking and dolphin experiences are just a few of the countless options.

As if this were not enough, many families choose to go from one Disney venue to another by leaving the Disney Wonder cruise when it returns back to the World Cruising Center, to then visit Disneyland and California Adventure, just a short drive away. For those who truly love Disney, this is the most "Wonder"-ous way to enjoy all things Disney.

No matter what time of the year you order your double dose of Disney you'll enjoy the magic but this year a family can extend the Holiday Fun into January 2012 with Disney.

We have visited Disneyland and California Adventure every Christmas for over two decades and this year stands out as, by far, the most magical and memorable, for nu-

merous magical reasons. And while it's magical all year the special holiday magic continues through January 8th this year.

Disney has created a total immersion experience this year, into a wintry wonderland of sights, smells, sounds, and tastes. A truly sensually and sensory-pleasing experience awaits.

From the moment you walk down Main Street and smell the peppermint from the candy canes being made in the Candy Palace, to the moment you stand awestruck, gazing at the enormous decorated tree that greets you near the entrance, your senses will be awakened to the magic of the most wonderful time of the year.

No matter where you stop to watch A Christmas Fantasy Parade, you'll be mesmerized by the sheer beauty and magnitude of this year's version of a tradition. Characters dance, sing, wrap gifts, bake treats, and even skate on real ice, throughout this extravaganza of color, music, and costume.

Part of what sparks such embedded memories of the holidays for most of us, are the scents and aromas and It's a Small World knows how to make memories. If over 250,000 lights don't

enchant you, then the aromas of peppermint and pine surely will.

Throughout both parks, fabulous decorations, music, carolers, and shows integrate the magic and splendor of the holidays on a magnificent scale but in Disney's California Adventure Park, the nighttime water show spectacular has gone all out to add a jolly seasonal addition to the exquisite extravaganza of water and effects.

You will have to plan your evenings at both parks around the inclusion of the

fireworks and light show over Sleeping Beauty's Castle in Disneyland. The "Believe In Holiday Magic" fireworks is an incomparable spectacle of music, light and fireworks, choreographed in perfection and magnitude surpassing all previous years. And it concludes with a magical snowfall down Main Street.

You'll find holiday icons and beauty throughout the entire resort this year as well as special holiday food and beverage offerings in both parks that simply cannot be missed for the complete

magical holiday immersion experience.

Disneyland has gone all out. The magic is bigger, better, and grander than ever. Discover the magic at the Merriest Place on Earth.

But even if you order your double dose of Disney after the holidays, you can enjoy it anytime of year with a cruise on the Disney Wonder and a hop, skip and a jump over to Anaheim where the magic of Disney continues all year.

<http://disneycruise.disney.go.com>



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Your New Year's Solution: Healthy Family Resolutions

Resolve to Make It a Healthy 2012 With Goals Fit for the Whole Family

A Message Brought to You by First 5 Sacramento



With the New Year comes the time for making resolutions and pledging a fresh start. This year, nearly half of all Americans are expected to make New Year's resolutions. And just like past years, one of the most common resolutions people will make is to live a healthier lifestyle. First 5 Sacramento is committed to improving the lives of children through age five and challenges you to resolve to make it a healthy 2012 for both yourself and your family.

One of the best ways you can keep your resolutions is to get your whole family involved. By working together, you and your family can support each other to meet your goals and live a healthy life. As an added bonus, making and keeping resolutions with the whole family offers a great opportunity to spend more quality time together.

First 5 Sacramento offers the following tips to help your family set – and keep – its New Year's resolutions:

Set goals that are attainable. Challenge your family to play a sport or do an activity together, such as going for a walk, riding bikes or playing in the park, at least once a week. For variety and to involve everyone encourage a different member of the family to choose a different activity each week.

Focus on one resolution at a time and avoid "overdoing" it. With your family, identify those goals that are most important to meet. For example, family members who smoke should begin the quitting process right away. Smokers should focus on "kicking the habit" (no matter how many tries it takes) before tackling another resolution.

Start small. Rather than changing your family's diet too abruptly, begin by serving smaller portions and replacing one dish at a time with healthier options, such as low-fat versions of your family's favorites. As further encouragement, only allow "seconds" for healthy dishes.

Create a pledge card to remind everyone of their resolutions. As a family, design and decorate a family resolution checklist. Once your

family's card is complete, place it in a central spot – such as the kitchen. Then, eat regular meals as a family and support each other to help reach your goals.

Turn your resolutions into fun challenges to keep your children interested and involved. Identify resolutions that children can track themselves, such as brushing their teeth. Challenge your children to brush their teeth twice a day, and each time they do, allow them to mark a chart or table with fun stickers or crayons.

Celebrate milestones to encourage everyone to keep going throughout the year. Make resolutions – such as exercising regularly – fun by setting and celebrating goals throughout the year. Reward regular fitness each month with a family-friendly outing, such as visiting your local zoo.

First 5 Sacramento encourages all parents to be aware of their child's development and share any concerns with a health care professional. For more information on parenting resources or other First 5 Sacramento programs, please call (916) 876-5865 or visit www.first5sacramento.net.

About First 5 Sacramento

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on tobacco products to support programs for expectant parents and children ages zero to five. In the last year, First 5 Sacramento distributed approximately \$14 million a year in Prop 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. Each county has a First 5 Children and Families Commission providing unique local services for that county. Surrounding First 5's include: First 5 Yolo: 530-669-2475; First 5 Placer: 530-745-1304; and First 5 El Dorado: 530-672-8298.



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Birthday party game ideas for girls

Silly Race Games

Divide the girls into two groups for these games and have them race by: Holding balloons between their knees; jumping rope singing happy birthday; balancing an object on head; holding a balloon between two team members head; balancing a small ball on their feet; skipping backwards; bouncing a ball. And once they master the forward races, have them do them backwards!

Guess and Win Game

Fill a see through jar with lots of small candy, jellybeans, skittles, marbles or small toys. Count them before you put them into the jar. As the girls arrive for the birthday party have them guess how many toys or candies they think are in the jar. Write

down each birthday party guest's guess. At the end of the birthday party reveal who guessed closest to the right number. The winner takes home a small prize, or the whole jar with its contents.

Prize Walk Birthday Game

Have a birthday prize walk instead of a cakewalk. Place numbers on the ground in a circle or oval. Start the music and have the girls walk around the circle until the music stops. Pick a number out of a hat or roll a dice to decide which number wins a prize. The child that is standing on the number that is picked gets to choose a small toy from the birthday game prize table or have one in the middle of the circle as the winning prize.

Cheerleading Birthday Party Ideas

www.birthdaypartyideas4kids.com

Fun ideas for a Cheerleading Themed Birthday Party. Mix and match these ideas to create your own special Cheerleading party.

Cheerleading Invitations

Megaphone shaped birthday cards with the guests name on the front.

Inside reads: Go _____ (guests name) It's a birthday Go _____ (guests name) It's a birthday Come party It's _____ (birthday girl's name) Birthday! Then write in party information. Game Date: _____ (date) Coin Toss: _____ (start time) Stadium: _____ (address) RSVP to coach _____ (parents name)

Decorations for a Cheerleading Party:

- Choose two colors to be your "teams" colors for the evening and decorate with those colors. Balloons and streamers are always festive.
- Create pompom's from plastic tablecloths in your team colors and hang around the party room.

Fun Ideas: Create a cheer for everyone to learn at the party. Make up one for the group and then one for each of the girls with her name in it. Practice until it's perfect and then video tape the performance. Make DVD copies for everyone to take home.

Games: Have a cheer made up for each girl with her name in it. While you are playing games have the girls cheer each other on with their special cheer.

Cheerleading Contest:

Give awards or prizes for the best in these categories: Best cheer Most spirit Highest kick Highest jump Craziest cheer Loudest Most animated

- Activities:**
- Decorate hair ribbons.
 - Make foam megaphones with the girls names and decorate.
 - Make felt pennants and let the guests decorate with sparkles.



www.coloringprintables.net

- Decorate wooden door hangers - paint and attach little cheerleaders and pompom's.
- Make pompom's from plastic tablecloths and let the girls use them in their cheer.
- Make spirit sticks from large wooden dowels. Add glitter, feathers, ribbon, etc. to decorate them. Place a number on each one. Write the same numbers on pieces of paper, fold and put into a hat. Let the guests choose a paper from the hat. The number they get is the spirit stick they will take home.

Cheerleading Party Food Ideas:

Make sugar cookies and cut out with a gingerbread man cookie cutter - let the guests decorate them like cheerleaders with icing, sprinkles and writing gel.

Party Favors:

- Small megaphones and any of the crafts / activities done during the party.
- Small cheerleader dolls or beanies.
- Hair bows or ribbons.
- Temporary tattoos of your team.

Goody Bags: Decorate cute megaphones with the guests names and fill with candies and little surprises. Wrap in clear cellophane and tie with ribbons in the party colors.

Decorate plain bags with cheerleader theme stickers.

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7450 Pocket Road • Sacramento, CA 95831
916-429-6044
SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, March 22, 10:00 am-1:00 pm
CAMP OPEN HOUSE: Saturday, March 24, 10:00 am-1:00 pm

Merryhill School, Pre K-6th - Roseville
1622 Sierra Gardens Drive • Roseville, CA 95661
916-783-3010
OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, March 22, 5:00-7:00 pm

Merryhill School, 4th-8th - Park City
7334 Park City Drive • Sacramento, CA 95831
916-429-6055
OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, April 19, 5:30-7:00 pm

Merryhill School, K-8th - Stockton
4811 Riverbrook Drive • Stockton, CA 95219
209-477-9005
OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, April 19, 5:00-7:00 pm

Merryhill School, K-6th - Elk Grove
9036 Calvine Road • Sacramento, CA 95829
916-689-7236
SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, March 22, 9:00 am-2:00 pm
CAMP OPEN HOUSE: Saturday, March 24, 10:00 am-2:00 pm

Merryhill School, Junior K-6th - Davis
2650 Lillard Drive • Davis, CA 95618
530-297-5100
OPEN HOUSE: Thursday, March 22, 5:30-7:00 pm