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Parent Times

November 2013

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north central parenting group



10 Holiday Traditions to Try with Your Family

Moms share their favorite holiday traditions. Try one (or more) with your family this year.

Share your family traditions with NCPG members at facebook.com/NCPGAZ.

Friendsgiving

We love thanksgiving so much, we do it twice! Once with our family and once, a few weeks early, with our friends. 'Friendsgiving,' as we've dubbed it, is a highlight of my year.

Thankful Tree

To showcase what everyone is thankful for, we cut out individual leaves from paper and have each family member write what they are thankful for on a leaf. We then attach the leaves to a small tree branch, a paper cutout of a tree, or to the wall in the shape of a tree.

Pump Up Hanukkah Fun

We act out the story of the Macabees with mock swords and all. When we light the menorah candles, we put our arms around each other and sing the Hebrew song about putting down your swords so there will be peace in the world.

Camp Out Under the Tree

Every Christmas we spend one night sleeping on the living room floor under the lighted tree, listening to holiday music. We talk about Christmas, and the previous year. The kids look forward to it, and so do we!

Surprise Your Neighbors With Treats

We do 12 days of secret surprises for a neighbor, bringing the appropriate number of goodies — one on the first day to twelve on the twelfth day.

Help the Needy

We limit gifts to one per child and one gift to share. We donate our time to a charity or soup kitchen. It's our job to teach our kids that there are rewards beyond money or things.

Tell Holiday Stories

On our oldest daughter's first Christmas we read her the Christmas Mouse which is my husband's favorite childhood story. Now we read it to all of our children on Christmas Eve before we tuck them into bed to dream of sugar plums.

Give a Christmas Eve Gift

Every Christmas Eve, when the doorbell rings, the children run to answer it. They know Santa has left them their first present. Inside a brightly colored sack is a pair of new pajamas for everyone. This idea serves two purposes. It's easier to get the kids ready for bed because they can't wait to wear their new pajamas! And we all look great in the pictures the next morning.

Learn About Other Cultures

The children and I go to the library and each pick out a story about Christmas, or holidays in other cultures. Then on Christmas Eve everyone reads the story, finishing up with the story of Christ's birth.

See the Lights

In the middle of December we go on a family sight-seeing trip to look at all the Christmas lights and decorations. It's a wonderful thing, even for my six-month-old. What baby doesn't like to look at lights? On our way home, we vote on the best decorated house.

Relive the Year's Memories

On New Year's Eve our family stays home. We have a buffet of hors d'oeuvres and sparkling cider. Then we watch the video of our family's past year. Each year we start a new video.



President's Corner

As the holidays are swiftly approaching, we're reminded of the value of family traditions and the importance of giving.

One of my favorite family holiday traditions is on Christmas day. We bake a special treat, light a candle and together we sing happy birthday to Jesus. A tradition to remind not just my girls but also myself that Christmas is not just about presents and breakfast in our pajamas, but that it's actually the day Jesus was born.

I hope you are able to carve out some time to attend our **NCPG Annual Membership Fair** on **December 4th**. It's sure to be an evening full of holiday cheer and shopping. What a great opportunity to invite a friend to share in the spirit of NCPG and the holidays.

To celebrate hope this season, NCPG Members have committed to donating more than \$5,000 to local families through the **Jaydie Lynn King Foundation**. Truly an amazing contribution as we share in the magic of the holiday season.

Giving back and honoring family traditions don't have to stop after the holidays. Giving back can be an ongoing effort that changes our children's perspective of others and themselves for a lifetime — make it a year-round tradition with your family. Honoring family traditions of all kinds can lend a certain magic, spirit, and texture to our everyday lives.

Wishing you and your family a very happy holiday season.

Kori Shapiro, *NCPG President 2013-2014*

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*NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization
providing classes to parents of infant to pre-school age children.*

www.ncpgaz.org



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Parent Times

Members, this monthly newsletter is for YOUR benefit, so we want to ensure our team is publishing content that is valuable, useful, informative, and fun! We don't want this to be something that gets lost in your stack of mail. Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Thanks for your help!

Editors – Sarah Frey and Carlie Garcia

Designer – Neill Fox, foxnoggin, thinking@foxnoggin.com

On the Cover

Lyla Shapiro was photographed by Stuart Thurlkill at Eyes 2 See Photography. See Stuart's work at www.eyes2seephoto.com.

Want to see your little one on the cover? Send high-resolution photos with name, age, and photographer credit to sarahjfrey@gmail.com

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News & Events



Bonner David GALLERIES
celebrating a decade

2013 Member Holiday Fair

Grab your friends and come join us for cocktails and shopping. Admission is free for everyone. Enjoy browsing the displays of participating local businesses, in the amazing art gallery setting.

Make it a girl's night out. Look forward to seeing you there.

Wednesday, December 4th
6:00 to 8:00 p.m.
Bonner David Galleries
7040 East Main Street in Old Town Scottsdale

Please contact Erica Brown, Caroline Keating, and Julie Christensen with questions at fundraising@ncpgaz.org

SAVE THE DATE – Corks for Kids, April 26, 2014

Our annual fundraiser and auction will be taking place at the Phoenix Country Club on Saturday, April 26 at 6:30 p.m.

Mark your calendar for this exciting evening. More details to follow soon...

If you are interested in helping with the planning, please contact Erica Brown, Caroline Keating, and Julie Christensen at fundraising@ncpgaz.org



Send Us Your Photos

Share photos of your little one dressed up for Halloween.

Email jpgs to:
sarahjfrey@gmail.com

Call for Submissions from Mom Authors

Have an idea for an article for *Parent Times* or want to write one yourself? We welcome suggestions and submissions from our members. Contact sarahjfrey@gmail.com with your ideas for future issues.

Philanthropy:

The Jaydie Lynn King Foundation — Phoenix Children's Hospital Adopt-a-Family



NCPG is excited to reach out to its members this year with a unique opportunity to meaningfully and directly help families in need with children in treatment at Phoenix Children's Hospital for cancer or blood disorders.

The Jaydie Lynn King Foundation was formed to serve special children in Jaydie Lynn King's honor. In spring of 2005, Jaydie was diagnosed with an inoperable Brain Stem Glioma. During her treatments, Jaydie began to think about things that she could bring to the clinic to keep herself occupied.

She found great comfort in special items like homemade quilts from grandma, a special stuffed animal to hug, a movie for her personal video player, or listening to soothing violin music from a compact disc player and headphones. She became convinced that items like this and other comforts of home should be available, as "gifts of hope" to each child who must fight these battles.

Since Jaydie's passing, the Jaydie Lynn King Foundation has become even more committed than ever to their mission. They are determined to honor her memory by continuing her work.

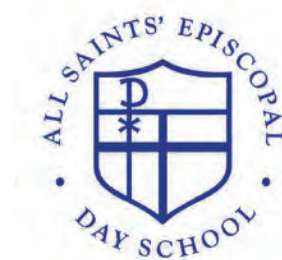


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The Jaydie Lynn King Foundation works with Phoenix Children's Hospital each year to help families that are in need of items for the holidays. Each of these families has a child receiving treatment at the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at PCH, and is experiencing other difficulties in their lives. Many have lost jobs to be there to care for their sick child or have encountered staggering medical bills.



Without the help of donors, these families will not be celebrating the holidays this season.

This year, NCPG classes will be paired with families in need to provide gifts, grocery gift cards for a holiday meal, household necessities (blankets, sheets, towels, cleaning supplies), and other items.

*Thank you for
giving back to
our community!*



On the Nightstand Book Review

Title: *It's Okay Not to Share*

Author: Heather Shumaker

Reviewed by: Kristen Kemp

Source: Parenting.com Blog "Moms Must Read"

Is it the 1980s again? I almost thought so after reading the new parenting book called *It's Okay Not to Share* by journalist Heather Shumaker. I mean this in a good way.

While sometimes the advice reminded me of Roseanne Barr's best lines, mostly I thought this new book was brilliant. Shumaker has guts. She's not afraid to write what most of us are secretly thinking. For example, recently a mom lectured my son about sharing his pirate ship during a playdate. I had the itch to say, 'Actually, I wouldn't share my Coach purse with you, so why would my son want to give his toy to your 3-year-old?' I've always wondered why we push this sharing thing on young kids when we adults don't swap GAP shirts and car keys.

So here are my favorite "renegade rules for raising competent and compassionate kids" from the book. This was good stuff — some of it made me scratch my hair and go, 'whoa!'

1. My youngest is headed to kindergarten in a month, and all summer long, I've been asking my husband, "Is he ready?" This child has a late summer birthday, often pees his pants and doesn't know the letter J. Shumaker's book tells me to get over myself. She writes, "Should we teach you [parents] to get ready for old age?" Of course not. So why are we worried about how "ready" our kids are all the time? "Don't rush kids into academic learning until they're six or seven. It's a waste of their precious time." Instead, she emphasizes that my son needs to play. I know he would agree.
2. When my kids fight, I let them go at it to a reasonable degree (no biting and no banging bricks into heads). At the pool, for example, I often see other parents butting into kids' conflicts. Shumaker says to stand back and stay out of it whenever possible. "Kids Need Conflict" is the title of her chapter, and she writes, "Children learn about peace by having problems."
3. When my then 5-year-old said she hated me for the first time, I freaked out and sent her to her room. I acted like I was fuming, but mostly, my too-delicate feelings were hurt. Shumaker says we parents need to man up. "'I hate you' is nothing personal," she writes. Instead of telling the child, "We don't use the word hate in this house," (I'm guilty), Shumaker advises parents to say, "I know you're angry right now. I love you even

when you're angry with me.
"Note to self: Wise advice.

4. "Young kids aren't ready to share. They are ready to take turns," Shumaker attests. Instead of forcing a child to give his toy to someone else, tell him he can play with it for as long as he wants. This teaches the other child to wait and not grab while protecting the other kid's right to say, "I'm not done yet." Children who aren't forced to share will usually give up their toy sooner because they feel empowered, and they'll be less prone to hogging the goods later. I totally believe in taking long turns. And I especially believe in not letting anyone—especially my husband—touch my laptop computer.
5. Just because I really like the neighbor down the street doesn't mean our daughters of the same age have to get along. I tried to force their friendship, and it didn't work. I lectured them. Shumaker implies a big fat duh to me in her book. "We're not all friends here," she writes. "Accept social fears and favorites." She says that simple exclusion is not bullying, and it's not mean. Instead, allowing kids to choose their friends makes them more tolerant of each other's differences.
6. I let my kids have toy guns because I had so much fun playing Charlie's Angels with my BFF when I was young. I just make sure I shove the fake weapons under my bed before my horrified friends arrive. Shumaker assures me that I'm not setting them up for a future filled with striped jumpsuits. "Wielding a toy gun or sword as a preschooler is not going to cause our child to grow up to be a violent criminal," she states. "It is social, appropriate fantasy play." I teach my kids that toy guns can't be pointed at anyone who's afraid of them, and they're very different from real ones. Shumaker says I'm doing okay on this. This is heartening because my son thinks he's Han Solo and loves to kill Stormtroopers.

Is this advice really renegade or is it retro? Do you agree with some of the stuff Shumaker says? Either way, *It's Okay Not to Share* is an enlightening book that will make you take a second look at everything you believe. I think Shumaker's opinions will help you solidify your own parenting strategies either way.



Preparing for Holiday Travel with Your Little One

Source: Colleen Lanin of TravelMamas.com

The holidays are upon us and with that comes trips over the hills and through the woods and, more often than not, up in the air. Here are our favorite tips for surviving your trip. We leave surviving the in-laws up to you.

Print a packing list.

I used to wrack my brain writing out every little thing I didn't want to forget before each trip with the kids. It finally occurred to me to save the list and simply modify it for each trip. I have been perfecting that packing list ever since I became a mom five years ago.

Keep a separate stash of toys and books for travel.

Sure, a new diversion or two is always fun. But a hidden toy is a forgotten toy. Kids will be psyched to rediscover old favorites on the go, saving you money and effort.

Never, ever count on feeding your children food provided on an airplane.

A three-hour delay on the tarmac could easily thwart your plans. Instead, bring plenty of healthy snacks. A steady stream of sliced and dried fruits, whole grain crackers, and pretzels keep kids busy munching instead of fighting or whining. Throw in a few forbidden treats as a reward for good behavior too!

Be a hypochondriac.

I keep a zipper-lock bag of every sort of medicine and ointment our family just might need while away from home. This is especially handy when traveling to a foreign country or when embarking on a cruise, where getting familiar medications might be difficult. Even when traveling somewhere close-by where you could easily purchase some teething tablets or cough syrup, do you WANT to run out in the middle of the night in a strange town chasing down something you could have easily packed?

Hitting the road? Don't forget the bucket!

You never know when car sickness will strike and if it does, you need to be prepared. Bring along a bucket (a sand pail will do) or snag an air sickness bag to stow in your car. I learned this one the hard way, people.

Break some rules.

You try to get little ones to take their regular naps while traveling. You do your best to get some fruits and veggies into your kids' bodies while away from home. You wash hands or slather on the germ juice before meals to protect from germs. But try to let some things slide – that might mean a slightly later bedtime so the kids can see the fireworks, a few more cookies than you'd serve at home, or breaking out the travel DVD player so you can enjoy an entire meal in a restaurant. It is, after all, a vacation!

Don't forget it's your vacation too!

Whether you and your husband take turns watching the kids so you can get a spa treatment one day and he can golf another, or you hire a babysitter so the two of you can duck out for a night on the town, or you enjoy a glass of wine on the hotel room balcony after the kids are tucked in for the night... it's important to make time for the grown-ups.



Eat breakfast in bed, or at least near the bed.

Rather than making hungry kids wait...and wait until they are downright starving before they get to eat breakfast at a restaurant, eat in the hotel room. Try to book a room with a kitchen or at least a fridge and stock it with milk, juice, yogurt, cereals and other breakfast favorites. It will save you time, money, and sanity!

Visit a playground.

One of my favorite things to do with kids on vacation is to visit the local playground. Not only does climbing ladders, zipping down slides, and soaring on swings allow kids to get their wiggles out, but also playgrounds are a great place to escape tourist attractions and connect with locals. Kids make friends easily, no matter the location or the language barrier.

Slow down and savor the moment.

Often we are so busy on the go, go, go while traveling that we forget the purpose of a vacation: to relax, have fun, and connect with those we love. Children live so much in the present moment that they simply will not rush. This can be an annoyance when trying to make it to the museum or aquarium before it closes. At least some of the time, instead of hurrying your kids along, go at their pace. Let them boogie to the street musicians' music until their tootsies hurt; get down to their level and ponder the ants marching across the hiking path; linger over that last bite of ice cream. Seeing the world anew through your children's eyes is the joy of the journey – don't let it pass you by!

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The Traveling Mom's Packing List

Stay sane during your flight! Pack the right toys, gear, feeding and changing items in an airplane kit for babies and toddlers to ensure a happy flight for you, your child (and your fellow passengers). Depending on your baby or toddler's age and needs, you may not need all of these items:

- ☒ Car Seat (even if not booking a seat for baby – it can be gate checked) and/or CARES Restraint by Kids Fly Safe for children who weigh 22-44 pounds
- ☒ Stroller or Collapsible Wagon (can be gate-checked too)
- ☒ Diapers (enough to make it through the flight, plus 3-6 extra)
- ☒ Diaper Cream (tube must be smaller than 3.4 ounces due to airline regulations)
- ☒ Diaper Wipes
- ☒ Changing Pad
- ☒ Change of Clothes for Baby (and maybe one for you)
- ☒ Plastic Bags for Soiled Diapers (air sickness bags can be used for this as well)
- ☒ Bottles (enough to make it through the flight, plus 2 to 3 extra)
- ☒ Nursing Cover-Up
- ☒ Pacifiers (plenty of 'em stuffed in more than one bag to make retrieval easy)
- ☒ Powdered Formula (pre-measured into a plastic container with serving dividers)
- ☒ Healthy Snacks
- ☒ "Forbidden" Snacks
- ☒ No-Spill Snack Container
- ☒ A Sippy-Cup
- ☒ Bib
- ☒ Baby Spoon
- ☒ Baby Fork
- ☒ Baby Food (in plastic containers – twice as much as you think you will need)
- ☒ Baby Medications
- ☒ Nose Aspirator
- ☒ Digital Armpit Thermometer
- ☒ Travel DVD player or Smart Phone and Plenty of Kid Movies (and a couple "grown-up" movies for you in case the baby actually sleeps!)
- ☒ 3-5 Favorite Books (depending on the length of the flight)
- ☒ 1-2 New Books
- ☒ 1-2 Favorite Small Toys
- ☒ Cuddle Object (favorite blankie or stuffed toy)
- ☒ 2-6 New Small Toys (you can gift wrap these for older toddlers to buy some time)
- ☒ Pack of Fat, Triangular Crayons or Washable Markers and a Coloring Book
- ☒ Stickers
- ☒ Flash Cards, Lacing Cards or Other Compact Activity (for older toddlers)

Learning a Thing or Two from Preschool

Preschool is the proverbial launching pad for so many things in life. It is a grand adventure filled with a wide range of emotions and experiences. Some can't wait to walk through that magic door of preschool and be transported to an amazing place of silly songs, messy crafts, and new friends. Others are a little more anxious about the prospect and need a little more coaxing and time to warm up to the idea. These wide ranging sentiments most certainly apply to the children, but truth be told, they apply to the parents too!

Much like children, sometimes we are more open to growth than other times. Sometimes we get angry, confused, sad and scared. There can even be an occasional temper tantrum thrown in a heated moment, but we inevitably come through the experience with a new, deeper understanding of what it means to be a parent.

The transformation we parents make during the preschool experience can be nearly as great as the changes that take place in our children. Our transformation is a result of input, encouragement and example by our "teachers." These teachers come in several forms. The other parents become our teachers. Our children's teachers become our teachers. And, sometimes even our own children teach us a thing or two!

Parenting styles are as different as the parents themselves. Being in an environment where we can share parenting "war stories" and see that we aren't alone in the trials and tribulations of parenting is a wonderful bonus for preschool parents. This aspect of preschool life isn't something you see on the tours and or read about in a brochure. However, it is a huge part of the learning process that preschool offers and it truly one of the biggest blessings.

Many preschools and teachers encourage parent involvement on campus and in the classroom. By embracing opportunities to become involved in preschool, we can learn many amazing things. The involvement gives us the chance to watch the teaching "pros" in action. We can learn from their patience, their creativity, their enthusiasm and the way in which they kindly command respect. Our children's teach-

ers help us see that each child can be an artist, a scientist, an engineer, an author, and a comedian. There can and should be a wonderful give-and-take between teachers and parents. And, the benefits from a great teacher/ parent partnership cannot be understated!

Getting involved at your child's preschool, in the broader sense, has other great benefits for you and your child. The talents that have made us successful in our adult/work environments can be an incredible asset to your child's preschool. And, offering your skills and talents for the greater good is good for everyone! Your participation shows your child that you are committed to their school experience. This example can encourage a child's own desire to put in time and effort and thus foster the child's personal success. (Not to mention, kids just get a kick out of being able to say "hey, my mom made those" or "my dad built that"!)

Before writing this article, I asked several parents about the biggest lesson learned from being a preschool parent. Time and time again, they mentioned the importance of FUN! The parents stressed the importance of embracing the fun and their amazement at how much children can learn in a happy, fun environment. Adding to the sentiment was the idea of truly appreciating the simplicity of preschool in general. Once elementary school begins, expectations rise, playtime diminishes and schedules go nuts! The advice is to cherish the stage when the sign of a great day is coming home tired, with paint on your clothes and sand in your shoes!

Like everything in the life of a parent, preschool is a phase. And, although it is fleeting, it offers wonderful opportunities for you and your child to learn and grow and become better prepared for the phase that lies ahead.

Annemarie Mansour is the Director at Cross Roads Preschool and Kindergarten, a developmental preschool, in North Central Phoenix. Annemarie has a Master's in Clinical Psychology and a background in parenting consulting and education.



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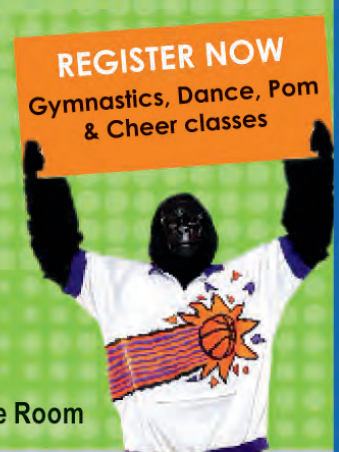
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Racing for Tricia

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TREATS AND TREASURES 8:30 am to 2 pm

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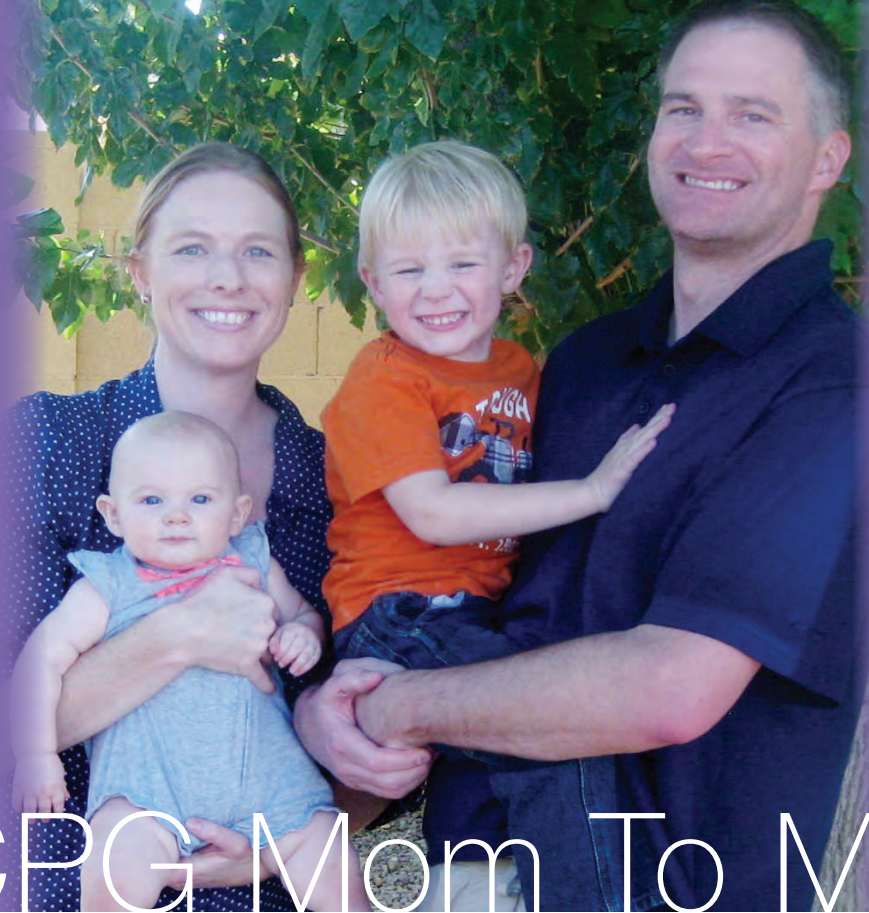
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Christ Church School



NCPG Mom To Meet

Meredith Bragg

Spouse: Dylan Bragg

Children: Sam (3), Grace (7 months)

Born, Raised & Lived: Born: New York City, Childhood homes in Buffalo, NY, Westlake Village, CA and Las Vegas, NV. I moved to Phoenix to attend ASU after high school and have lived here ever since.

City & Years Married: Married in Phoenix and have been married for 7 years.

Career or Previous Career: This is my first year not working full time. I was a first grade teacher at Hopi Elementary. Currently I am a mom and a gymnastics coach at Arizona Sunrays a few evenings per week.

Non-mother Hobby: My favorite thing I can do for myself is yoga, which happens a lot less now than it used to. Now that I am back in the gymnastics world I am spending a lot of my "free time" working on getting back into the sport (mentally not physically), which is something that has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember.

5 Words to Describe Yourself: Personable, talkative, silly, strict, real.

Favorite Vacation Spot: San Francisco is probably one of our favorite cities. But we love a good beach vacation too!

Favorite Adult Spot to Dine in Town: Rokerij/Richardsons.

Favorite Children's Book to Read: To my school kids it was always *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl. My kids are not there yet so I love reading *How Do I Love You?* by P.K. Hallinan.

Favorite Family Hangout: The Phoenix Zoo.

Rules to Mother By: Be able to bend but not break!

Most Meaningful Mom Moment: Anytime my son says "I love you Mommy" and the actual birth of my daughter. Not only was the overall experience incredible but the fact that we had a girl was such a shock!

Best Mothering Advice Given to You: This too shall pass.

Who introduced you to NCPG? My good friend Jonnie Jamison who had to move back to Washington DC about 2 years ago. Her second child and my first are 3 weeks apart and she has no idea how much she helped talk me down that first year on account of my cluelessness of babies!

Best thing learned in class this year? Every mom struggles with the same things that I do and the affirmation that I am doing the right things for my child. 3 year olds are really just that difficult!!!

Cooking With Kids

Weelicious.com



Crispy Orange Stuffed French Toast Sticks

Serves: 2

Hands-On Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1/4 cup whipped cream cheese, 2 tablespoons orange marmalade
4 slices sandwich, french or challah bread, crusts on or off
2 large eggs, 1/4 cup milk
1 cup crushed corn flakes (or your favorite flake cereal work great too)
Butter or oil, for greasing pan

Directions:

1. In a bowl, use a fork to whip marmalade & cream cheese until thoroughly combined,
2. Spread the mixture evenly on two slices of bread and top with remaining bread creating 2 sandwiches.
3. Slice the sandwiches into 1-inch sticks.
4. In a bowl whisk the eggs and stir in the milk.
5. Place the cereal in a zipper bag and using a rolling pin or mallet crush into tiny pieces and pour in a flat shaped bowl.
6. Dip the sandwich sticks first in the egg mixture on each side and then into crushed cereal coating completely.
7. Heat 1 tablespoon of butter or oil in a large sauté pan and cook the sticks over medium heat for 1-2 minutes per side or until golden.
8. Serve with honey or maple syrup.

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Fall Fun!

NCPG families gathered on Saturday, October 26 at All Saints' Episcopal Day School for the annual Halloween party. Little ones came dressed up in their Halloween costumes and enjoyed the train rides, bounce house, playground, and yummy treats.

