

ncpg Parent Times

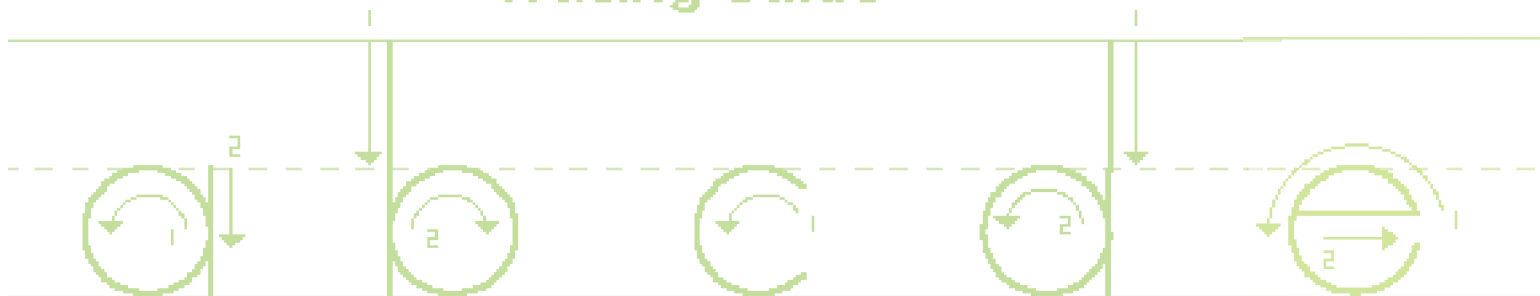
February 2014

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north central parenting group



From Scribbling to Spelling

THE STAGES OF CHILDREN'S WRITING

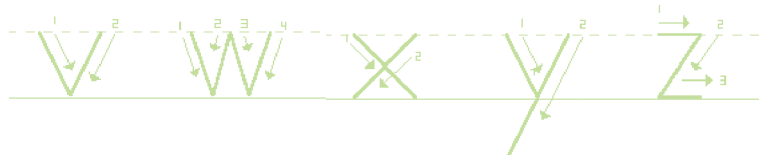
by Mindy Sobraske, Paradise Valley United Methodist Church Preschool Director

You watch in amusement as your child earnestly scribbles on a piece of paper. She works across the page from left to right, even leaving spaces between "words." She begins at the top of the page and "writes" to the bottom. Finally, to your astonishment, she innocently asks, "What does this say?" Resist answering, "Why those are just scribbles!" and consider the milestone your youngster has reached. Those scratches on the page are not just scribbles but a remarkable form of writing, indicating the child's understanding of the writing process. Children's writing has identifiable stages much like the stages that precede walking. For this reason, the scribbling stage is as important to writing as crawling is to walking.

As a child becomes more aware of the alphabet, invented letters are often used. A circle with a line drawn from the bottom, which resembles a lollipop, is a common invented letter. Soon writing includes strings of letters, usually at random. Sometimes these random letters will be intermingled with scribbles of invented letters. As writing progresses, so does the understanding that print carries meaning and is an important form of communication.

Awareness of letter sounds brings the child to another form of writing: invented spelling. Spelling is related to the sounds the child hears in each word. At the beginning of this stage the child may write one letter, usually the initial consonant sound, to represent one word. For example, the word cake may be represented by the letter k. Later, words are represented by two letters, the initial and ending sounds. As the child's writing matures, more sounds are included in each work. The word cake now becomes kak. With repeated exposure to the writing process, along with an environment rich in written and spoken words, common spelling is used for more and more words.

Encourage the writing process by allowing children to express themselves through art and drawing. Provide a variety of paper, crayons, and markers. Combine art and language by labeling the artist's work, recording the child's comments about the drawing, or creating a story to accompany the piece. Be sure to include writing materials in pretend play. Children love adult items such as pencils, pens, notebooks, cards, cellophane tape, paper clips, envelopes, file folders and old briefcases.



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President's Corner

With the hustle and bustle of the holidays coming to a close, many parents turn their thoughts from fulfilling the kids' wish lists to creating family goals for the New Year. Establishing goals together can help children learn responsibility and take ownership for their actions. Also, setting goals can build a stronger family unit which encourages all members to never give up on what they intend to accomplish. A few of our family goals for 2014 are less technology time, practicing our manners more often, picking up toys at least three times a week, staying present, and having more family meals together. If you haven't set your family goals for 2014, now is the perfect time to call that family meeting and establish some of these new intentions for the upcoming year.

Shifting from family to personal goals — if 2014 is your year to give back, consider giving that time to NCPG. We are now looking for members to fill the 2014-2015 Board of Directors slate. This is a great way to get involved with NCPG and to give back to the organization that we all love. I encourage you to consider a position on page 11 and give the gift of time and talent by joining the 2014-2015 Board of Directors.

Kori Shapiro, *NCPG President 2013-2014*

ncpg

north central parenting group

NCPG 2013-2014 Board of Directors

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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

Chauncey Reid Rome, 3, was photographed
by Brittany Stover. See more of her work at
www.brittanystoverphotography.com

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



A Valentine Even the Littlest Ones Can Help Create

Source: www.mamaandbabylove.com

For this project, you will need a large piece of craft paper, one sheet of cardstock, scissors, clear tape, paint, a paint cup, and a paintbrush. You can also use other things to spread the paint around like cotton balls, sponges or cotton swabs. A great recycling tip is to use leftover applesauce containers for painting projects (or for fun sorting games with beans or pom poms).

First step is for you, Mama:

Using the cardstock, cut out whatever shapes you'd like your toddler to paint a negative of. You can do this for any holiday or event, but for Valentine's Day I chose a heart with an arrow through it, and an I HEART U. Tape these down to the large piece of paper and set up with paint so it's all ready to go.

Step two is for your little one:

Paint! If you are having a hard time getting your child to paint over the whole page, you can either spin the paper around so she can focus on a new area, or you can pour some extra paint on the paper and encourage her to spread it out. My daughter always wears such intense, thoughtful looks while hard at work on a masterpiece. She loves mixing multiple colors together to see them swirl around and change, which is why we used pink, white and red for this project.

Step three, again for you to do:

Peel off the cardstock and tape from the craft paper to reveal the masterpiece below. I love how you don't really know what it will look like until the last moment. Also, if you are a perfectionist like me, I suggest that you make sure your hands are paint-free, and move your little one far, far away and make sure they're preoccupied so you can peel off the top paper without help.



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News & Events



The NCPG Board of Directors is excited to share that a kindergarten class will be added for the 2014-2015 year! There has been great interest from members of the Pre-K class. And, there is room for more so please spread news to any moms who will have children in kindergarten next school year.



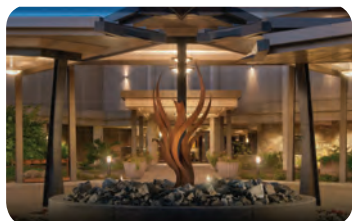
The North Central Parenting Group's annual fundraiser and auction will take place at the Phoenix Country Club on Saturday, April 26 at 6:00pm.

Secure your sitter now for this event. Invitations will be mailed and tickets go on sale March 15.

If you or a friend/family member can help secure auction items, please let us know. We are always looking for items to include in our silent auction packages including:



- "Kids" items including park passes, toys, books, and various lessons
- Restaurant gift cards
- Personal Wellness — spas, fitness, salon services
- Hotel getaways
- Sports tickets and memorabilia
- Adult beverages



We are also planning on having a live auction component at Corks this year and are building a couple "experiences" to auction off. If you know of anyone that can provide access to an amazing sporting, travel or dining experience, please let us know.

Volunteers are needed to help secure auction items and ensure the evening runs smoothly. If interested, please contact Erica Brown, Caroline Keating and Julie Christensen at fundraising@ncpgaz.org



Looking forward to seeing you at Corks for Kids!

Cheers!



NCPG Spring Event, March 8 from 10-12

Bring your family for a morning of springtime fun at the NCPG Spring Event on March 8th from 10 am – 12. There will be a variety of fun activities for the kids, and lunch will be provided. Look for the Evite soon to RSVP. We hope you can make it!

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.



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November 13
December 11
January 22

Open House Begins at 9 a.m.
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Feeding Kids: Are You Falling for Misleading Food Labels?

By Maria Mora, Source: Parenting.com

As you shop for your family, be wary of misleading food labels and health claims. Not every food label health claim is regulated. Learn how to avoid foods that aren't as healthy as they first appear.

Sugar-free isn't always a good thing

Read carefully when you see yogurt, jelly or other sweet foods labeled as sugar-free. These items may be sweetened with artificial sweeteners, which aren't recommended for kids. Sugar-free foods may also contain high calories, so don't assume that sugar-free means healthy. Ask your child's pediatrician how much sugar your child should be consuming in a single day and try to use that as a guide.

"All natural" does not mean organic

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration doesn't have a definition for "all natural." In most cases, it only means that food doesn't contain artificial flavors, colors or synthetic substances. This leaves a lot of room for interpretation. The "all-natural" meat you have your eyes on may contain preservatives and other additives. "All-natural" foods can also contain high-fructose corn syrup.

No sugar added doesn't mean much

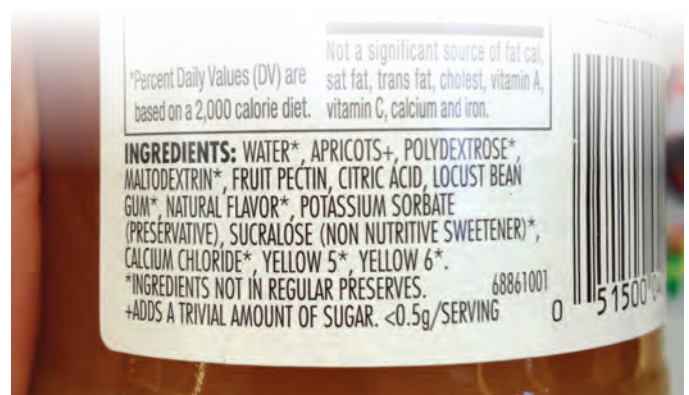
Just because a product has no sugar added doesn't mean it has no sugar or that it's a healthy food item. Learn how to read labels carefully to look at the actual sugar amounts, as well as calories and carbohydrates. A naturally sweet food that had no sugar added may contain more sugar than you'd prefer to feed your kids in one serving.

"Light" might not mean what you think

When a food is labeled as light, look closer. Light isn't a regulated term, and it might not mean a food is any healthier than its alternative. Comparison shop while you're at the store, keeping in mind what you want your food to do for you. If you're counting calories or balancing your child's diet, look past the marketing on the labels and go straight for the nutritional label.

You can become a cunning consumer

Food manufacturers are aware of the public's desire to buy healthier food, but that doesn't mean they have your best interests in mind. What do you do when you're bombarded with health claims at the grocery store? Become a nutrition detective. Don't assume claims related to digestive health, zero-or low-fat, whole-grain ingredients or all-natural ingredients mean food is better for your family. Buy whole foods when you can and always look closely before you buy.



On the Nightstand Book Review

Title: *Parenting Without Borders*

Author: Christine Gross-Loh Ph.D

Reviewed by: Tracy G. Cassels of EvolutionaryParenting.com

Well, apparently the book I wish I could have written has been written. And it's this one. Christine Gross-Loh, author of *Diaper Free Baby*, has once again returned to the cross-cultural aspects of parenting in *Parenting Without Borders*. Only instead of tackling one particular issue, she has managed to really capture cross-culture parenting in developed nations across a variety of parenting topics. The ones many North American parents struggle with.

The book starts with infant sleep. And if there's one way to win me over, it's to rightfully point out that co-sleeping and nighttime responsiveness are cross-cultural staples of infant sleep. I found myself not only nodding my head, but exclaiming "Yes!", "Exactly!", or "See?!" to no one in particular (though it did garner me some strange looks from my husband at times). The entire book is not on sleep (though I believe one probably could be done) and Dr. Gross-Loh (yes, she has a Ph.D.) moves on to cover eating, academics, play, and so much more. And it is all equally fascinating.

Though the overarching point of the book was to discuss various parenting techniques around the world most of the time it became about U.S. parenting versus other, with the other practices all fitting quite nicely into one practice with minor variants. For example, in the play chapter, the U.S. with its limited free play time for kids of all ages (through structured daycares and children being shepherded from one activity to another day after day) is compared to many other countries that all have a high emphasis on simply letting children have free time to play. By focusing on specific countries that we know are on the other end of the pendulum swing, Dr. Gross-Loh makes the contrast seem even starker than it might be. That is, we know that not all other countries have the degree of free play that younger children in Germany or Finland or Japan (yes, Japan) have. She clearly picks the countries that have the most profound differences which is great when the point is to compare and contrast, but we must remember that for every Finland, there's a Canada or U.K. which is more akin to the U.S. in some of these areas (so don't feel so alone American parents).

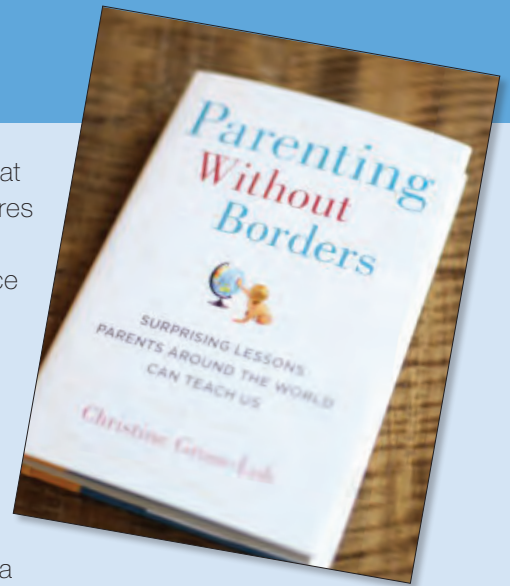
What Dr. Gross-Loh manages to make very clear using cross-cultural comparisons is that while most of the U.S. parenting styles are built on the notion of individuality and independence, our children fail to achieve the level of

independence that these other cultures achieve, which value dependence at a young age and following a child's biological development.

Notably, the main difference between the U.S. (and Canada and even the U.K. to a certain degree) and other cultures is the reversal of parental involvement. Instead of being highly involved and available during infancy and toddlerhood and then allowing more independence as children age, many Western parents do it backwards. They force separation and try to force independence in infancy and toddlerhood then hover as their children grow older, taking away responsibility and independence from their children just as they are ready for it. And we can see this happen across a host of practices, making one wonder why on earth American parents continue to parent as they do.

Although I imagine most parents will want to undergo an overhaul on their parenting after reading this, not all of the parenting practices will be things parents want to embrace. I found myself saddened when reading the section on academic achievement in other cultures where the pressure to do well on high school kids leads to depression and suicide. The chapter on food was intriguing but I certainly still feel a more relaxed style towards meals works best for our family. However, even when I wouldn't choose a particular practice, it was fascinating to read about how other cultures approach the socialization of children and to increase my arsenal of parenting techniques. I've already embraced some of what I've read in our own family and can see the improvement in a short time.

In short, if you read one book on parenting this year, this should be it. It is engaging, informative, and eye-opening. And I suppose I can cross "book" off my list of things to do now... but I couldn't have done a better job myself.





Family Goals and Values

by Joan Sarin, M.S.

We get so caught up in the whirlwind of everyday life that we seldom stop to consider what we are doing it all for. What do we want our children to become; what strengths do we want them to develop? What are our family's goals and values? To pursue a family goal means putting **purpose** into practice in your everyday life. Consider the alignment between **what** you are doing in the little moments each day, **how** you are doing it, and **why**. Just by keeping the values in mind that we want to teach our children, we can make great progress.

Unless we consciously choose the values that are important to us, we will find ourselves living by the values we learned as children and those that are held in society in general. That may or may not be what we want. In any case, it's worth thinking about and making a conscious decision about what we want. If we want something different from what is prevalent in today's world, it will take more effort to go upstream against it. Our intentions are more potent than we think; all accomplishment is driven by intention.

Make a decision on what is important for your family.

Whether you are consciously aware of it or not, you live your life based on your priorities. What's important to you is what drives you. And that's where our noble goals, or values, come in.

Determine what values and goals you want to live by.

Discuss your values as a couple, which will lead you to your noble goals – some you may consider are joy, respect, honesty, authenticity, tolerance, trust or love (you can download a poster for your family from TheVirtuesProject.com). Select the top five for your family, or consider rotating the ten you care most about, throughout the year. For an example, let's say that you and your husband have selected two values as top priorities for your family: acceptance and perseverance. You want to have everyone in the family feel accepted for who they are; and you want your family to be one in which everyone develops perseverance – the ability to stick with a task or goal until it's completed.

Be unwavering in observing those values yourself.

If we don't observe the values we say are important to us, then our children won't absorb them for themselves. What you model in everyday life is what they learn from you. What you say is important, but your actions speak louder than words. So, in our example, you will show your acceptance rather than criticize one another and your children. You will catch yourself in thoughts or comments that might indicate that you're wishing your child was different from the way she is, and remember to accept her (even if you don't accept her behavior). As for perseverance, you'll remember to be persevering in your own tasks.

Set family rules with goals and values in mind.

For example, since you've determined that acceptance is an important value for your family, then you will have rules to address disrespectful or critical behavior. You will also show acceptance to your children, taking their feelings and input into account. For perseverance, your rules will emphasize completion of tasks before going on to the next thing. You will encourage perseverance by noticing instances of it and noting it.

Look for teaching opportunities; discuss goals and values that are important to you.

Books, movies and sometimes TV shows can be valuable resources for sharing with your children and then discussing the values portrayed. Stories of people who failed numerous times before succeeding, like Abraham Lincoln, will help to get the point across. Encourage questions about goals and values. Be authentic with your children about the difficulty of holding to values in all situations, and the courage it takes to keep going back to them in difficult times.

Notice and encourage your child when her behavior illustrates a family value or goal.

There is tremendous power in looking for, and then encouraging, what you want to see in your children. What you focus on grows, and you'll be surprised at how much you see this as applied to your family. Once you begin the process of making a strength or value a part of your family's



New Arrivals!



Please welcome these recent additions to our NCPG family!



Campbell Thomas Martin

November 2, 2013

Weight: 7 pounds, 3 ounces

Length: 19.5 inches

Parents: Brad and Colleen



Caroline Ryan Christensen

November 13, 2013

Weight: 7 pounds, 10 ounces

Length: 20 inches

Parents: Mitch and Meredith



Avery Alyn Groen

December 8, 2013

Weight: 7 pounds

Length: 20 inches

Parents: Eric and Andrea

Sibling: Big Brother Beckett



Ari McClarren Steinberg

December 14, 2013

Weight: 8 pounds, 11 ounces

Length: 22.5 inches

Parents: Jeff and Leslie



Fiona Frances Wood

January 4, 2014

Weight: 7 pounds, 7 ounces

Length: 19 inches

Parents: Kurt and Nicole

Siblings: Oliver (5) and Victoria (3)

Photo by Amanda Marie Photography



Luke Gosselink

October 14, 2013

Weight: 7 pounds, 11 ounces

Length: 21 inches

Parents: Todd and Desiree

Sibling: Big Sister Grace



identity, then discuss it and encourage it, you'll find those values becoming part of who your children are.

Don't expect yourself or your children to live each value in your life at every moment; far from it. But those values live inside you as seeds, creating meaning for you and for your children. You can turn to them when you're feeling lost or overwhelmed by the experience of parenting. You'll get deep fulfillment when indeed you do live by them, as well as fulfillment when you see your children exhibiting them.

What values call you and keep you going? Your values and goals should be big enough and broad enough to cover all aspects of your life in one sense or another. They will certainly be more than you can easily attain, and are most effective when they guide you on a daily basis.

Without determining your goals, you can end up anxious and frustrated because life runs you instead of you running your

own life. It takes a tremendous amount of work and commitment to make a family work well; but your family goals help to guide you and pull you forward. They can pick you back up and keep you going, at least for one more round, when the going gets tough. When you do need to address a misbehavior, or negotiate a conflict in your family, it can be done most effectively by first agreeing on what's important – the value or goal – and working towards it in your discipline or discussion.

There's tremendous power in your commitment to and standing for noble goals. The more you focus on what you want and the values that are important to you, the more you'll find them showing up in your life. The more you react to (that means focus on) the values you don't want, the more those will grow. Whatever you put your attention on grows. So begin today by setting those goals in place and keeping them in mind!

Things to Do in February



Childsplay, The Cat in the Hat

January 26 - March 16

Ages 3 and up

From the moment his tall, red-and-white-striped hat appears at their door, Sally and her brother know that the Cat in the Hat is the most mischievous cat they will ever meet. *Childs Play Campus at Mitchell Park, 900 S. Mitchell Drive, Tempe, AZ 85281*



Party Safari

Saturday, February 22, 4:30-8:30 p.m.

Cost: \$50 for adults, \$30 for children 3-12, free for children 2 and under. The Zoo's newest fundraising event, the Party Safari, is a family-friendly affair featuring live music, animal encounters, a children's dance party, crafts and more. *The Phoenix Zoo, 455 N. Galvin Pkwy., Phoenix, AZ 85008*



Family Friendly Sunset Series

Friday, February 7

Visitors connect to the natural and cultural resources of the Preserve through the use of their senses, allowing kids of all ages to see, smell, touch, hear and even taste their surroundings.

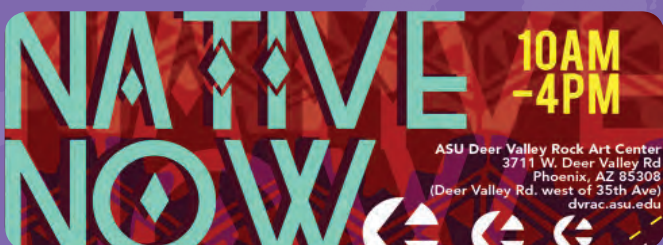
Gateway Access Area Amphitheater, McDowell Sonoran Preserve



Tumbleweed Tots

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9-11 a.m.

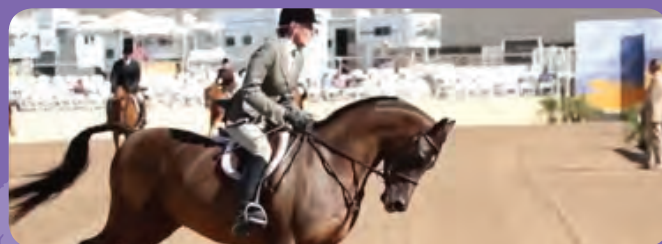
This indoor play area is designed for children 5 and under to play under parental/guardian supervision. This fun, safe and clean area will have plenty of toys, equipment and activities that are sure to keep the kids entertained. There is a maximum of four children per adult. Fee included in all TRC family passes. *Tumbleweed Recreation Center, 745 E Germann Road, Chandler, AZ 85286*



Native Now

Saturday, February 8, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Deer Valley Rock Art Center celebrates Native American culture with a free festival exploring the culture of Arizona's indigenous peoples. Visitors can enjoy live musical performances, short film screenings, traditional foods, art projects and a variety of family activities. *ASU Deer Valley Rock Art Center, 3711 W. Deer Valley Rd. Glendale, AZ 85308*



Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show

Family Fun Night, Friday, February 21

The largest event of its kind in the world, the Scottsdale Arabian Horse Show attracts hundreds of thousands of spectators. On Family Fun Night, admission will be FREE for all spectators after 3 p.m. Bring the whole family to have dinner, peruse the Shopping Expo and watch the beautiful Arabian horses compete for the coveted title of Scottsdale Champion. Free parking for attendees. *WestWorld, 16601 N Pima Rd, Scottsdale, AZ 85260*



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NCPG Invites Members to Join Board of Directors

The NCPG Board of Directors invites you to join the 2014-2015 NCPG Board of Directors. Please review the position descriptions below and share any interest with your class social rep or by emailing director@NCPGAZ.org before March 1. Most positions have more than one person serving as co-directors to share responsibilities. Joining the NCPG Board of Directors gives you the opportunity to build lasting friendships while giving back to the organization we all value.

President

Responsibilities: From presiding over Board meetings to negotiating the leases and contracts, the President supervises and controls all of the business and affairs of the corporation. She provides support and oversight for Board members and ensures that the Corporation is in compliance with requirements from the Arizona Corporation Commission and the Internal Revenue Service.

Vice-President/Secretary

Responsibilities: In addition to keeping records of current and past official Board business and filling in for the President as needed, the VP performs all duties incident to the office of the Secretary and conducts membership year-end evaluations.

Treasurer

Responsibilities: The Treasurer has the care and custody of all funds of NCPG and keeps records of all accounts. She performs monthly payroll duties, manages the bank accounts, and acts as the liaison with the accountant. She approves expenses, issues financial reports at each Board meeting, and proposes a detailed annual budget for the approval of the Board. Preparation of official year-end financial statements and forms are also part of the job.

Assistant Treasurer

Responsibilities: With the intention of becoming the treasurer the following year, the Assistant to the Treasurer performs many of the same duties as the Treasurer, filling in for her as needed.

Membership Director

Responsibilities: Collecting tuition, nursery and guest fees are the monthly duties of the Membership Director. She also compiles class rosters, keeps attendance records, and maintains a current mailing list. She communicates class registration status and class information to members. Working with the President, she helps lead orientation each September, including creation of the membership brochure and orientation folders. Working closely with communications, she conducts ongoing member recruitment via the website, Facebook, and other avenues.

Education Director

Responsibilities: The Education Director serves as the liaison between the teachers and the Board. She is responsible for hiring /re-hiring teachers each year. She assigns classrooms to each class and arranges for necessary teaching materials throughout the year. She coordinates teacher evaluations and provides feedback to teachers regarding the results. She also hosts a Teacher Orientation/Welcome Back dinner and two teacher appreciation luncheons per academic year.

Nursery Director

Responsibilities: The Nursery Director assigns children to nurseries according to age and handles payments and roster updates for nursery in conjunction with the Membership Director. For each class she ensure the readiness and safety of the nursery, working closely with Sitter Director in coordinating nursery needs and supplies.

Sitter Director

Responsibilities: The Sitter Director hires the childcare providers, sets compensation rates for sitters, and maintains satisfactory child-to-sitter ratios. Throughout the year, she adjusts the number of sitters based on nursery participation and finds substitutes as needed to ensure age-appropriate activities in each nursery.

Social Director

Responsibilities: The Social Director coordinates the social representatives for each class, providing them with an orientation and an outline of duties. She communicates with the class social reps about announcements, handouts, class announcements, playgroups, and the breakfast schedule. She communicates class attendance and other class issues to the Board.

Communications Director

Responsibilities: The Communications Director oversees content, design, and production of the monthly Parent Times newsletter. She sells advertisements for the newsletter and works closely with the Fundraising Director to ensure sponsors are properly represented in the newsletter and on the website. She utilizes the NCPG website and Facebook to help raise NCPG's visibility in the community and promote the organization's activities, events and educational effort.

Special Events Director

Responsibilities: The Special Events Director plans and organizes the fall and spring family events for NCPG. She also coordinates the holiday giving campaign by helping select the charity and communicating with NCPG members.

Fundraising Director

Responsibilities: The Fundraising Director plans and organizes fundraising events for the year, including the annual Corks for Kids event each spring. She solicits and coordinates corporate sponsorships, working closely with the Communications Director to ensure sponsors are properly represented in the newsletter and on the website.



NCPG Mom To Meet

Stephanie Binch

Spouse

Bill Binch

Children

Samson, 10.5 months

Born, Raised & Lived

Born in Toledo Ohio, raised in Northern California, and spent many years in Los Angeles. Moved to Scottsdale in 2007.

Years Married

Married 7.5 years

Career or Previous Career

I was in software sales to the Veteran's Hospitals for the past 11 years. I just retired late last year!

Non-mother Hobby

Snowboarding, surfing, pilates, traveling, trying to finish my first novel, cooking, swimming.

5 Words to Describe Yourself

Patient, easy-going, adventurous, caring, fun.

Favorite Vacation Spot

Hmm so many! London, Sayulita Mexico, Kauai, Miami.

Favorite Adult Spot to Dine in Town

Roka Akor and The Mission.

Favorite Children's Book to Read

Good Night Moon, Where the Sidewalk Ends.

Favorite Family Hangout

The Silverleaf Country Club most of the year and Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the summer to get away from the heat.

Rules to Mother By

Don't take parenting too seriously and enjoy every precious moment. Also, stop beating yourself up for not being the perfect mother. Try not to worry about every tiny thing (I have a hard time with this one).

Most Meaningful Mom Moment

In the hospital when Samson was first born and we both fell asleep and I woke up and he was trying to nurse my tummy! So precious.

Best Mothering Advice Given to You

Stop listening to everyone else's advice and go with what feels right for you and your child. This one is hard to follow sometimes.

Who Introduced You to NCPG

Our fabulous President, Kori Shapiro.

Best Thing Learned in Class this Year

Wow, a lot! I had zero training in parenting and I am so grateful for NCPG and being able to share with all these wonderful mothers. Best lessons range from how important it is to make your own family traditions to no bumpers in the crib. And, that it's really not normal for my 10.5 month old to wake up 5 times each night...

Cooking With Kids



Slow-Cooker Chicken and Pasta Soup

Serves: 6 **Hands-On Time:** 5 minutes **Total Time:** 5 hours, 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs (about 2 pounds)
- 4 carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 stalks celery, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, halved
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 bay leaves
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1/2 cup small pasta (such as stellette or alphabet)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Crackers, for serving

Directions:

In a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker, place the chicken, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, bay leaves, 6 cups water, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon pepper.

Cook, covered, until the chicken is cooked through, on high for 4 to 5 hours or on low for 7 to 8 hours (the low setting will make total cooking time 8 1/2 hours).

Twenty minutes before serving, transfer the chicken to a bowl. Remove and discard

the onion and bay leaves. If the slow cooker is on the low setting, turn it to high.

Add the pasta to the slow cooker, cover, and cook until tender, 15 to 18 minutes.

Meanwhile, shred the chicken. When the pasta is cooked, stir the chicken into the soup along with the parsley. Serve with the crackers, if desired.

Homemade Pop Tarts!

Ingredients:

Original recipe makes 8 tarts

- 1 (15 ounce) package refrigerated pie crusts
- 1/4 cup strawberry jam, divided
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 Tbs colored decorating sugar

Directions:

Preheat oven to 425° F and line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Unroll the pie crusts, place on a lightly floured work surface, and roll the crusts slightly with a rolling pin to square the edges. Cut each crust into 8 equal-sized rectangles. Place about 2 teaspoons of strawberry jam in the center of 8 squares, and spread the jam out to within 1/4 inch of the edge of the pastry square. Top each with another pastry square, and use a fork to crimp the squares together, sealing in the jam. Use a knife to trim the pastries, if desired. Move the filled pastries to the prepared baking sheets.

Bake in the preheated oven until the edges are lightly golden brown, about 7 minutes. Allow to cool on the baking sheets. Meanwhile, stir together the confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla extract in a bowl to make a spreadable frosting. Spread the cooled tarts with frosting and sprinkle with colored sugar.



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Holiday Giving Campaign

NCPG celebrated the conclusion of its holiday giving campaign by making donations totaling more than \$12,000 to the families of children in treatment at Phoenix Children's Hospital through the Jaydie Lynn King Foundation.

In October, NCPG selected the Jaydie Lynn King Foundation as our holiday charity for 2013. "We were excited to reach out to our members with a unique opportunity to meaningfully and directly help families in need with children at Phoenix Children's Hospital," said President Kori Shapiro. "By the first week of December, we had collected more than \$12,000 in gifts and gift cards and directly 'adopted' nine families with children battling cancer or blood disorders."

The Jaydie Lynn King Foundation works with Phoenix Children's Hospital to help families that are in need of items for the holidays. The foundation was formed to serve special children in Jaydie Lynn King's honor.

"The Jaydie Lynn King Foundation was the perfect marriage for what we wanted to do and how we wanted to make an impact on the community" said Jules Christensen, co-director of fundraising for NCPG. "We were privileged to meet Mrs. King and hear her story. As mothers, the foundation immediately impacted us emotionally and we knew we had to act. North Central Parenting Group isn't just about parenting education and becoming better mothers but helping other mothers and making a positive beneficence on the Phoenix area as well."

Through the donation of NCPG members as well as the extreme generosity of matching funds from The Keating Group, Inc., Apstar Consulting, Inc., and ccrd partners, NCPG was able to provide gifts, food cards, clothing and other necessities to families totaling more than \$12,000.

We are extremely proud of the results of this endeavor and look forward to more charitable giving opportunities, not just during the holiday season, but throughout the year.



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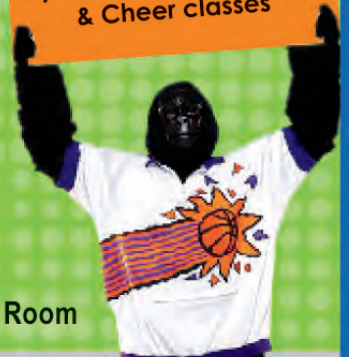


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Pregnancy, Take Two

Five things you can expect when you're pregnant with a second child.

Source: *American Baby* magazine

1. You Look Extra Pregnant

The first big surprise: The belly that took months to pooch with baby number one will pop instantaneously. "The abdominal muscle tone is not the same as it was with the first baby," says Heather Paar, a certified nurse-midwife. "You don't regain that, even if you're very physically fit. "Without that muscle tone, Paar adds, your uterus is more mobile -- which explains not just why your baby belly is so big but why it feels so low. "With second-time moms, the uterus can sink a little into the pelvis," Paar says, which can mean more pelvic pressure and even more trips to the bathroom later in the pregnancy. But one thing it doesn't mean is that your baby's a boy; male or female, second babies tend to hang low.

2. You Feel Extra Pregnant

The loss of muscle tone and the stretching of the ligaments that support the uterus, both of which you experience in your first pregnancy, can also lead to more of those good old aches and pains. "Usually, whatever symptoms women felt during the first pregnancy, they will now feel earlier," says Benito Alvarez, MD, codirector of obstetrics and gynecology at the Cleveland Clinic. Topping the list of complaints for second-timers are back pain and pelvic pressure. And if you had a big complication with the first - gestational diabetes, breech baby, or cervix issues — expect your doctor to be on top of it from the get-go this time, because it could become an issue again.

3. You're Superwoman

It's true that you'll be more drained with less time to rest. But despite this, you'll keep on keeping on. Motherhood brings with it a demand for energy that will force you to power through even the most exhausted moments. Besides possessing the superpowers that come with parenthood, you'll be so busy that you just won't be able to give your aches and pains the attention you did the first time - which is sometimes a good thing.

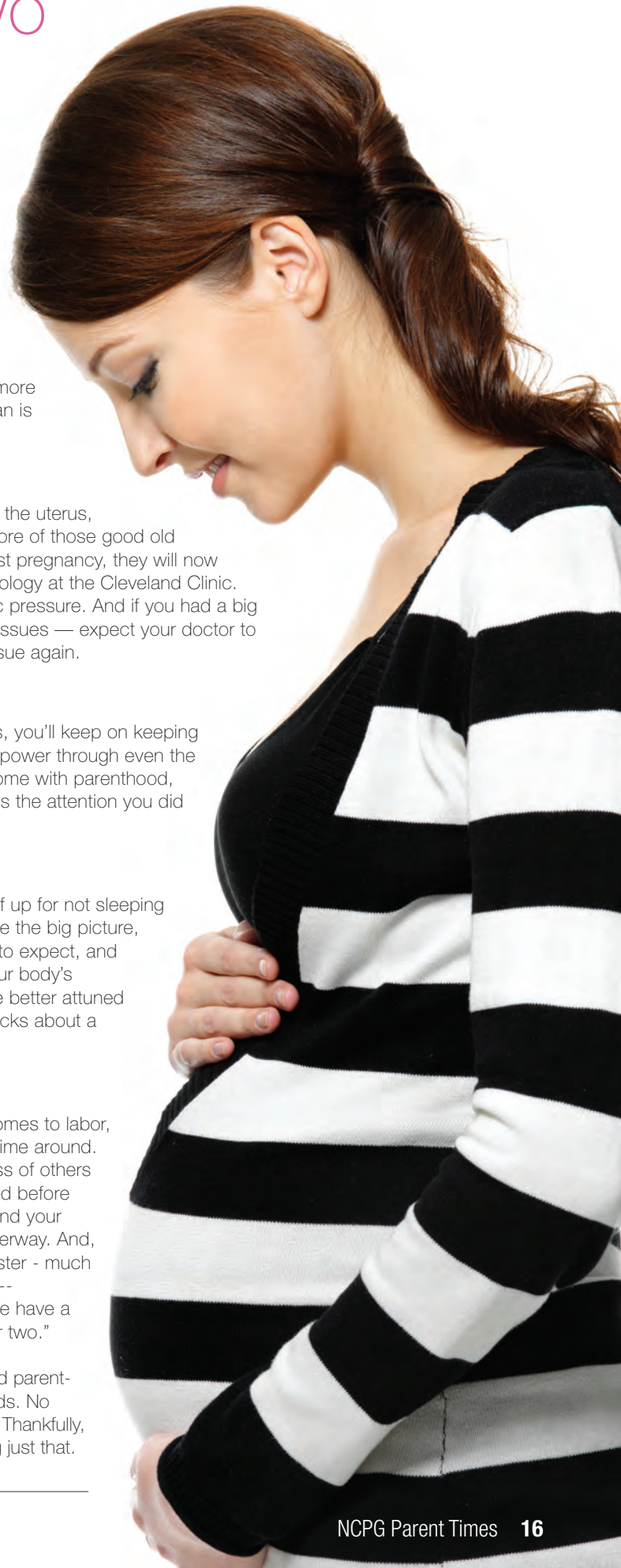
4. You're More Relaxed

Remember how you agonized over every cup of coffee and beat yourself up for not sleeping on your left side? With a few years of parenting under your belt, you'll see the big picture, which helps even the worst worrywarts lighten up. Plus, you know what to expect, and preparation eases anxiety. Being less preoccupied by the minutiae of your body's changes and being more informed about what to expect means you'll be better attuned to what's happening - that's part of why second-timers feel baby's first kicks about a month earlier, on average, than first-timers.

5. You're on the Labor Fast Track

There are no hard-and-fast rules, and even fewer guarantees, when it comes to labor, but you'll notice some subtle and not-so-subtle differences the second time around. There's more of some things (get ready for Braxton Hicks - sorry) and less of others (vaginal tears are less common - hurrah). And certain things that occurred before labor started the first time around, like your baby dropping in the pelvis and your cervix starting to efface, don't happen this time until labor is actually underway. And, of course, the light at the end of the tunnel: second labors tend to be faster - much faster - than first ones. "Pushing time is much shorter for second-timers -- between 30 minutes and an hour," Dr. Alvarez explains. "Which is why we have a rule here: never turn your back on a woman who's already had a baby or two."

The toughest and most exhilarating part of childbirth -- and pregnancy, and parenting too — is that you don't have a whole lot of control over how it all unfolds. No matter what surprises pop up, the best you can do is relax and roll with it. Thankfully, your years of parenting are sure to have given you plenty of practice doing just that.





Why It Is Important To Use A Certified Professional Childproofer

The International Association For Child Safety (IAFCS) is the organization that tests and certifies childproofers. Some of the reasons why you should only trust a Certified Professional Childproofer (CPC) are:

1. CPC's are trained and have many hours of installations under their belts
2. CPC's are tested on their knowledge and understanding of Childproofing best practices
3. CPC's have 20+ current referrals that go directly to the IAFCS
4. CPC's have to have Continuing Educations Credits (CEU's)
5. CPC's are members of the International Association for Child Safety
6. CPC's have to renew their certifications every 3 years which requires:
 - a. More CEU's
 - b. 15 new current referral letters

The child safety industry is constantly changing. New regulations, updated products and recalls. It is hard for parents and grandparents to keep up! You have us.... your Safety Resource!

What about handymen?

Every Handyman has a specialty. CPC's specialize in Childproofing. We have seen gates installed incorrectly, upside down and with missing parts. We have seen locks put in wrong and fail. We have seen things put together with the best of intentions that leave the situation unsafe. Let the handyman do the handyman stuff and the Certified Professional Childproofer do the childproofing and know that your baby is getting the best practice of childproofing, the best products and correct installation. CPC's have access to other CPC's to confer with on tricky situations.

What about my husband...he is handy?

There are definitely things that you or your husband can install. Be sure that you are using the correct products.

When you purchase your products from a CPC you know that you are getting the products that childproofers use. Then ask....is this an easy product to install or should the childproofer do it? We can childproof your whole house in a few hours.

Why Arizona Childproofers?

Arizona Childproofers has the only Certified Professional Childproofer in Arizona....Dustin Dastrup...which many of you have already met! He has been childproofing for over 9 years and installing pool fences for over 11 years. Dustin has installed thousands of baby gates and even more locks. You are in great hands! Here's some other things to know:

Car Seats

Most Certified Professional Childproofers are also Certified Car Seat Technicians. Four common mistakes:

1. Turning child from rear facing to forward facing too soon
2. Seat or straps too loose
3. Chest clip to low
4. Straps in the wrong position

Kitchen Safety

Best practice of kitchen safety is to be consistent.

1. Lock all your lower cabinets and drawers with magnetic locks
2. Lock drawers under counter with push down or magnetic locks.
3. Keep items away from edges of counters
4. Keep pantry door locked



Having all cabinets locked teaches the child this area is off limits... this can relate going to other people's homes too. My 11 month old grandson was over the other day... he didn't even touch a cabinet or drawer. His kitchen is "buttoned" up so he didn't even try.

Chemicals Keep locked up in an upper cabinet.

Water Safety

Water safety is very important...especially in Arizona. Three common mistakes:

1. No pool fence
2. Doggie door that leads to the backyard
3. Propping the gate open

TV's and Furniture

1. All TV's need to be anchored.
2. Anchor Furniture....even heavy and short pieces can lose their center of balance.
3. Use anchors with metal fittings (no zip tie or plastic anchors as they tend to break and crack over time) (See our online store)
Furniture anchors are important for babies and older children.

Nursery Safety

The nursery is one area in a home that we find so many things that are unsafe.

Four common mistakes:

1. Bumpers in the crib
2. Monitor ON the crib
3. Things on the wall above the crib and changing table
4. Wires loose around the room
5. Un-anchored pieces of furniture

For all of your childproofing and safety questions, contact Childproofers. We will be happy to answer and/or take care of the areas of concern that you are facing.

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