

# Parent Times

April 2017



ncpg

north central parenting group



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## President's Corner

### Happy Spring!

I hope you all are enjoying a wonderful spring thus far with your families. We've had an amazing last month here at NCPG. I want to thank everyone for joining us at our **Spring Family Festival**, **McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park** play date in March, and our **I Love the 90s!** gala at Phoenix Country Club! Both events were wildly successful and a ton of fun. A huge THANK YOU to our Special Events Co-Directors for planning great family events, and to our Fundraising Directors for planning a fab party that every 90s lover would be proud of!

**BIG CONGRATULATIONS** to the 2017-2018 NCPG Board of Directors. Lindsay Perry and I are looking forward to working with such an amazing group of women next year!

Don't forget that registration for next year starts **NOW!** We are excited to roll out a new class "progression" or track system to accompany NCPG's growth for years to come. We will be adding two additional classes next year and tightening up age ranges to allow for a better educational experience all around. More information can be found in the magazine, on our website, or you can reach out to [membership@ncpgaz.org](mailto:membership@ncpgaz.org) with any questions.

As a reminder, current NCPG members may **PRE-REGISTER IN APRIL FOR A DISCOUNTED FEE OF \$200**. Fees will increase in May to \$275 for the 2017-2018 year.

As always, please reach out if I can answer any questions!

xo.

Ashley Blalock,  
NCPG Board President  
[president@ncpgaz.org](mailto:president@ncpgaz.org)



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

[www.ncpgaz.org](http://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! Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Shoot us an email at [communications@ncpgaz.org](mailto:communications@ncpgaz.org). Thanks for your help!

**Editors** - Laura Beardsley & Laurie Ball

**Designer** - Neill Fox, [foxnoggin@foxnoggin.com](mailto:foxnoggin@foxnoggin.com)

## On the Cover

Olivia Golding. Photo by Monica Stanley. For more of her work, please visit [monicastanleyphotography.com](http://monicastanleyphotography.com).



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# Five Ways to Help Misbehaving Kids

By Stuart Shanker, Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life: [Greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://Greatergood.berkeley.edu)

“For a man to conquer himself is the first and noblest of all victories.” Thus wrote the philosopher Plato in the 4th century BC, thereby instilling the idea that character is built upon self-control.

This assumption about the importance of self-control has profoundly shaped how we think about behavior, including that of our children. If only they had willpower and good character, they would be able to behave well and resist temptation, right?

Wrong. Many years of research and experience as a psychologist have shown me how misleading this notion is, even as experiments like the famous “marshmallow test” seemed to confirm it. Rather than needing more self-control, our children need better self-regulation—a way to understand and manage their stress and energy—to succeed in life.

What exactly is different about self-regulation? As I explain in my new book, *Self-Reg: How to Help Your Child Break the Stress Cycle and Successfully Engage with Life*, self-regulation is about recognizing when we are over-stressed, identifying our sources of stress, reducing their intensity, finding places of calm, and learning ways to rest and recover. Understanding the distinction between self-regulation and self-control is essential to understanding how to help our children.

I’ve seen hundreds of children and their parents in my professional capacity and have never once seen a “bad” kid. Every single child, when met with understanding and patience, can be guided along a trajectory that leads to a rich and meaningful life. But stereotypes of the “difficult child” too often color our views, as do the dreams, frustrations, and anxieties we suffer as parents. When we impart negative judgments on children, we are just mistakenly shifting blame for our own emotions and insecurities onto our children’s “nature.”

Instead, we need to understand the science of stress. New advances in neuroscience are unlocking the secrets of why we behave the way we do and, more to the point, why it is so hard at times to behave the way we want. The limbic system plays an important role here, as it is the source of our strong emotions and urges; it also plays a critical role in memory formation, as well as the emotional associations we have with our memories. This system contributes to how we respond to threats and worries, but it is largely out of our conscious control, including the control of children.

Children who are in a heightened state of emotional arousal can have very sensitive limbic systems, where their brains are primed to respond to threats even when none exist. For example, experiments have shown that children who are chronically over-aroused will label neutral faces as hostile.

This means that children who react with hostility or by shutting down are likely showing the outward signs of an inward experience of stress overload. If we don’t recognize the signs, figure out what is stressing them, and help them to cope—instead of using blame, threats, or punishments—we will continue to make matters worse for them, rather than better.

A parent’s reaction to a child’s stress is important to their later ability to self-regulate, starting in the first years of their life. Nature intends for human parents to play a close, nurturing role with their offspring and to take advantage of the “interbrain”—the shared intuitive channel of communication between a parent and child that is maintained by touch, shared gaze, voice, and, most of all, shared emotion. This is what helps a stressed child develop a way of self-soothing that will stay with them and allow them to cope with stressors in their lives.

Providing warm, nurturing care early in life can go a long way toward stress management. But that doesn’t mean that parents are solely responsible for their child’s ability to adapt. Even kids who have enjoyed warm, nurturing parenting can have trouble with self-regulation. That’s why it’s important to understand how it works and how we parents can help.

Here are the steps I outline in my book that can help parents deal with problematic behavior or anxiety in their children more effectively:

## 1. Recognize when your children are over-stressed

A lot of your work as a parent involves learning how to understand the meaning of behaviors that you would otherwise find troubling or irritating. If you learn to read the signs and recognize them for what they are—a signal of a system on overload—you will be your children’s behavior as a reaction to stress rather than willful misbehavior, and learning to listen to your children and to observe them with curiosity, is the first and perhaps most important step in self-regulation.

## 2. Identify the stressors in your children’s life

Stress in children often involves disappointments in their relationships, schoolwork, and other purposeful activities, or having too much to do in too little time. But stress can also be hidden and have biological sources. For example, some children are highly distressed by too much noise, light, or odor, and this can cause ongoing problems in their lives that may be hidden from you. They may also find boredom, waiting, or sitting still extremely stressful. Stressors can come from many sources—biological, emotional, cognitive, and social domains—so it’s important to consider all of these.

Though our environment may be highly stressful to our children, we often overlook information that could alert us to this fact. We—or they—may carry on as if it doesn’t matter. That doesn’t mean that their unconscious mind isn’t registering the stress and responding with stress, though, which can in turn create a fight, flight, or freeze response.

Parents can look for patterns of behavior—such as children always breaking down around 5:30 pm—to help figure out what their children’s stressors are—perhaps they are hungry at that hour. Or, if it’s less obvious, try reviewing in your head the different domains of their lives and what might be causing stress. Whatever you do, don’t become a further drain on them by reacting in anger or judgment. Instead, try to listen and calmly affirm what seems to be going on for your children.

## 3. Reduce those stressors

It’s amazing how simply reducing sources of stress can change a child’s behavior quickly. I once saw a child who was sensitive to noise, light, and textures labeled as a “problem child” by his teacher, only to have that opinion completely reversed when she realized that dimming the classroom lights changed his demeanor drastically. Sadly, the child had had to endure her judgment, communicated through raised voices and hardened facial expressions, for some time prior. In fact, she’d also labeled his father and grandfather as difficult.

The same thing can happen to parents who don’t pay attention to what stresses their children and bring it into their conscious awareness. Once sources of stress have been identified, it’s much easier to either help our kids avoid them or to mitigate them, as best we can—perhaps by moving our dinner hour earlier or dimming the lights or giving them a hug after they’ve failed a test.

Sometimes, reducing our children’s stress involves understanding what stresses us out and how it impacts our behavior. Learning how to soothe our own stress can help us self-regulate our emotions and lead to less reactivity toward our kids when they are suffering, as well as provide important role modeling for them.

## 4. Help your children find calming strategies that work for them

We all need strategies for reducing tension and replenishing our energy. No one size fits all, so it’s important to read the signs in your children, recognize their unique sources of stress, and make sure their self-regulation strategies fit their needs.

Mindfulness has been touted as a way to instill calm energy and to make our children more aware. But sometimes our children can get so used to feeling excessive stress that a state of hyper-alertness

becomes “normal,” so much so that sitting still and focusing on their breathing—a typical mindfulness exercise—can be a thousand times more distressing than being manic.

Helping your children to slowly develop an awareness of their inner states and to find relaxation techniques that help them calm down can be incredibly empowering. Teaching your children mindful breathing—if done slowly and with supports in place—can be one technique to help them increase awareness of their need for calm.

But it’s important that calming techniques are experienced by your children as enjoyable, too, and don’t add to their stress inadvertently. There are many relaxation exercises that produce calm, such as practicing yoga, taking a walk, or working on art projects, for example. Encourage your children to experiment with what helps them most and support them in finding relief.

## 5. Take a long-term perspective

When you help your children find self-regulation strategies, be careful to consider the distinction between “quiet” and “calm.” For example, a child may be quiet when playing video games, but no one would mistake that for calm, and you shouldn’t either. Their brains are producing stress hormones galore when they are engaged and quiet playing video games. The point of finding strategies is not to make your life easier in the short run (by having your kids remain quiet), but to make their life easier and more productive in the long run (by helping them handle stress in a calming manner).

Of course, following my advice doesn’t mean that your children will never misbehave, or that all of their problematic behaviors are a response to stress. But, so much of the time, misbehavior is a cry for help—a cry that we, as parents and adults, need to answer with compassion and understanding, not punishment.

Following the steps of self-regulation does not guarantee your child will suddenly stop irritating or frustrating you, but it may help prevent some unnecessary suffering. Our research has shown that following these steps is a powerful way for children to change their behavior. When your children see that you truly understand them and that you are committed to doing what you can to help, it will go a long way toward improving your relationship with them, as well as their ability to cope with life’s challenges.

And that will reduce everyone’s stress!





## Sunshine Doula Services Offering Placenta Encapsulation

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When a woman finds out that she is pregnant, she certainly understands that her life is going to change forever. There is so much joy to look forward to; bonding, bringing your precious baby home, hearing their first laugh and seeing their first smile. She knows that her body is in for some changes too. It is no secret that pregnancy and childbirth are hard work and come with many sacrifices to the mother's body. The American College of Obstetrics and Gynecologists (ACOG) acknowledges that a woman's weight, skin, hair, breast, bones and foot size may all incur changes postpartum. Combine these with a rapid decrease in estrogen levels, which affects mood, outlook and sex drive and adjusting to this new season of life can be very challenging. The physical recovery from giving birth coupled with sleep deprivation alone can wreak havoc on your mood and self-esteem. You owe it to yourself and your family to accept any assistance available to help get through this period.

One extremely helpful choice that you can make is the option of Placentophagy (or Placenta Encapsulation), which is the practice of ingesting the placenta after it has been dehydrated, ground and placed into pills. These pills are taken by the mother after childbirth and they impart numerous health benefits. This is not a new or scary concept. It has been practiced in many cultures throughout the world especially in the Far East as long ago as in the 1500's, longer than modern medicine has even existed.

It is used and widely proven to alleviate anxiety and fatigue, replace lost iron, nutrients and energy levels in postpartum women among several other benefits including; reduction in the occurrence of "baby blues" and postpartum depression, increase in breast milk production, providing natural pain relief from the labor and birthing process and increase in oxytocin levels (the love hormone that promotes bonding). In addition, it stabilizes hormones and mood, decreases infection and enhances wound

healing all while reducing postpartum bleeding. Bottom line, there is a way to make a positively impactful difference for a new mother's mental health, recovery and well-being.

The placenta, an organ that develops in your uterus during pregnancy is made up of a combination of cells. This miraculous interface between the mother and the baby, which provides oxygen and nutrients to the growing fetus, typically reaches about one pound by the end of pregnancy. Growing a healthy placenta takes nearly the same care as growing a healthy baby. Knowing that you grew one of the world's most nutrient dense super foods, why would you simply discard it?

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# Top 10 Characteristics You Should Look For in a Summer Sports Camp

Written by Mitch Goldberg, Owner Beginners Edge Sports Training, LLC in Arizona.



Here in Arizona families try to escape the heat by traveling away. Honestly, I cannot blame them. The heat here is incredible! But what if you cannot afford to flee the sunshine and heat for 8-12 weeks? Most families can't and you certainly do not want your kids to be sitting around all summer long. So, what do you do with your kids? What do they want to do all day? Where can they go that it is safe, fun, active, educational AND gives you peace of mind you are doing the right thing? Answer: Summer Sports Camp!

Below are my top 10 list of characteristics you should look for to find the BEST summer sports camp for your child.

**1. ALL-DAY ACTIVITY** – Where better can you send your child than to a Summer Sports Camp they will come home from exhausted? I was once confronted by a parent accusing our Sports Camp of exhausting their child to the point of them falling asleep on the way home and they would not wake up for dinner. True Story! I took this accusation as a compliment!

**2. UNSTRUCTURED PLAY** – a Great Summer Sports Camp should offer an opportunity for Unstructured and Structured play. Do not think this is the same thing as unsupervised ! Unstructured play allows children to make decisions on how they are able to enjoy themselves and interact and be socially and physically active without the provided direction of the Coach.

**3. EXPOSURE TO NEW SPORTS** – Multiple sports being taught/ presented is always a good sign of a great Multi-Sport Summer Camp. Proper equipment and teaching techniques should always be used and when combined with great Coaches and a great weekly curriculum, you have the recipe for a very successful camp.

**4. MAKING FRIENDS** – Summer Sports Camp is a great place to make awesome new friends. Camps should encourage kids to relax, make friends and play together. A camp should have the ability to allow children to talk, play, chill, eat, do crafts and do almost everything together.

**5. DIGITAL DISCONNECTING** – Kids at all ages are constantly connected to technology. Summer Sports Camp disconnects them and allows them to use their mind and body to create, be expressive and get the much-needed exercise the digital world does not provide. Sports are real and active.

**6. SOCIAL SKILLS** – unlike school where most of your day is in a seat listening and learning with maybe one period of active play with others, Summer Sports Camps offer an opportunity to meet new kids and puts you in a constantly changing and adapting envi-

ronment. Almost 100% of your day is being social, communicating with others to foster good teamwork, camaraderie and collaboration. Sports Camps build social skills as well as physical skills!

**7. INDEPENDENCE** – Children at a Sports Camp are typically in group situations with Coaches and Counselors. They are there to be guided throughout the day to the different activities. The young players throughout the day are not being told what to do but they are given the options and opportunities to participate as independent young thinkers. Summer Sports Camps should foster and encourage this independence.

**8. STRONG COACHES** – Coaches should be background checked, CPR/First aid certified and trained. This is where doing your homework is important. Coaches should not only be knowledgeable about sports, they should not only love to be around kids, they should be trained on how to work with these children that they will be with ALL DAY, all week or all summer! Find out what the training process is before you enroll.

**9. FACILITY/SPACE SAFETY** – Many sports camps are being operated out of facilities that are being rented, some are owned and operated. Educating yourself on the space your child will be in all day will enable you to better understand the security measures that are in place insuring the safety of your child. Some facilities have public access the entire day, some will have secure locations that the camp is conducted in. This knowledge is very important.

**10. GAIN RESILIENCY** – There are many firsts for sports camp campers. For many children this is the first time they are away from home, the first time they need to share, first time they are part of a team, first time they are going to be introduced to the concept of winning and losing and the first time they have to figure out how to overcome challenges without their parent. In this Camp environment the players will try new, maybe a little intimidating new things BUT this is also a time to experience and be encouraged to keep trying to overcome these hurdles. Summer Sports Camps are a great opportunity to assist Campers overcome these challenges.

All in all, when making the decision for your Summer Sports Camp there are many things to consider. Not mentioned above are the # of participants, ratio of coach to student, does the camp provide snacks, lunch, etc. So just like we ask our kids to DO THEIR HOMEWORK, I will say the same thing – Do Your Homework, then decide what is best for you and your child!

Have the BEST Summer everyone!



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8 NCPG Parent Times

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# Classes & Board Meetings

## Class Schedule

- 8:30 a.m.**  
Nursery opens
- 9:00 – 9:40 a.m.**  
Breakfast and refreshments served in Nelson Hall
- 9:45\*-11:30 a.m.**  
Classes are held  
*\*Teachers will start promptly at 9:45!*
- 11:45 a.m.**  
Nursery closes
- 11:45 – 1:45 p.m.**  
Pre-Infant Class

**Location**  
The Church of the Beatitudes  
555 W. Glendale Ave.  
Phoenix 85021

**Class Dates**  
April 19  
May 3\*

\* Monthly *Parent Times* magazine distributed.

**Board Meeting Dates**  
Meetings are at 6:30 p.m.  
May 1

# Mom's Night Out!

"Mom's Night Out" is a time for NCPG members of all classes to get together casually and unwind without their little ones in tow. Please feel free to attend any event that works for you, however, no event is mandatory.

**April 26, 6-8 pm**  
20 Highland Tavern-Whole Foods Market  
4701 N. 20th St., Phoenix, AZ 85016



NCPG does not "host" the Mom's Night Outs.



# CHECK OUT THE NEW Grandparent(s) Class!

**April 26th, 6-7:30 pm**  
**Church of the Beatitudes**  
**555 W. Glendale Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85021**  
**Cost: \$15/individual, \$25/couple**  
**Teacher: Amy Stuart**

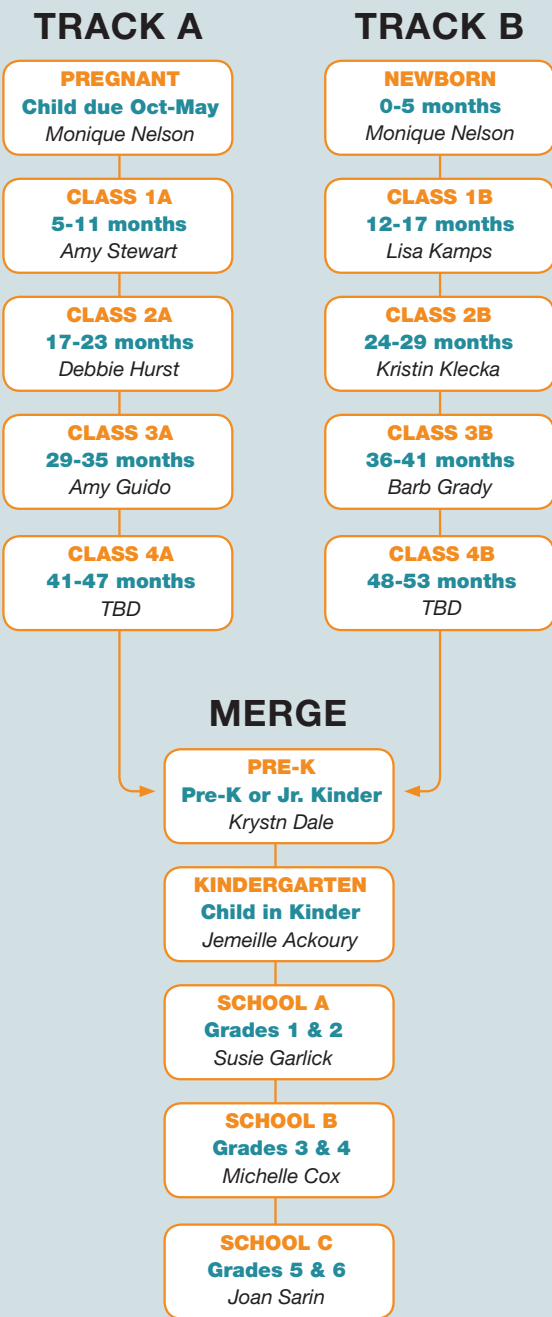
You asked, we answered. NCPG is offering its first-ever class for Grandparents who are interested. Please encourage your parents or in-laws to join us for this informative class. The class will go over the following points: Safety prevention, supporting parent and grandparent roles, respecting family plans, goals and routines, and strengthening the grandparent and child relationship through bonding, creating memories and learning play.

**Online registration began in March.**  
**For more information, email Chelsea and Meredith at [Education@ncpgaz.org](mailto:Education@ncpgaz.org)**

Due to the amazing growth and maturity of our NCPG Community, we have designed a new class progression starting in the 2017-2018 year. The progression will help with class size, consistency and age range. Our updated system also includes the addition of two new classes and focuses on a more seminar style of teaching as you advance through the program. Please reach out to the board with any questions.

# NEW! Class Progression

(Based on age of child on September 1st)



Class 4A will most likely move to Pre-K.  
Class 4B will most likely split, half to Pre-K, half to Kinder.  
Everyone will be placed in the class based on their child's school grade.



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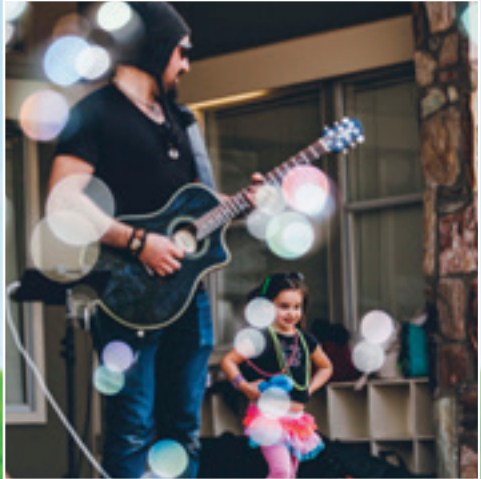
**GYMBOREE** PLAY & MUSIC





## Spring Family Festival

Photos by Kate Nelle







## GETTING A GRASP OF YOUR FAMILY PHOTOS

By Mara Schantz, Artistic Impressions Fine Photography

In January I hosted a mother's night out event for NCPG where I gave a short presentation about organizing and displaying your family photographs. The women who attended gave great feedback and made it apparent that the number of images they have of their children is overwhelming and causes them stress.

The perspective I have on this subject comes from having one son who is grown and in college and another who is two years away from leaving our home. My children were babies before there were iPhones with cameras. In order to take pictures we had to plan to bring the camera, remember to get it out, load a roll of film in a camera and then take it to get developed which usually yielded about 10 acceptable pictures from a roll of 36. I know it seems like it was the "olden days", as my kids like to point out, and that we have come so far since then. But, one positive aspect of the old time technology of film was that we had far fewer pictures to decide how to display. We threw away the bad ones and stuck the rest in a photo album (maybe a scrapbook with cute sayings and stickers if we were crafty). Once every year or two we had our children professionally photographed, ordered one or two portraits (and maybe an album if they were really cute) and hung them up in our house. Even in my home, and as a professional photographer I only have portraits of my kids on the walls from about every year or so.

The dawn of digital has led to an extreme increase in the number of images that are produced documenting one child's growth from newborn to adulthood. Whether they are snapshots that parents take of their child or professional images, it is likely the number is in the thousands by the time the child reaches the age of two. With the daily duties it takes to raise a child, (doctors appointments, parenting classes, play groups, feeding, shopping, bathing, getting them to sleep, getting them in the right music/gym/mom and tot class) this only adds to your feelings of anxiety. What I would like to do here is give you a way to organize and display the images of your family and children, and perhaps rethink why and when you photograph them in the first place.



First, let's address how many of your own snapshots you take of your child. Every time you go to a park, playgroup or the zoo, do you feel like you need to whip out your phone and document it? What is the purpose? Is it to share on social media? By the way, that is just fine, but it will lead to your device being completely jammed up and more work for you in the end. So, when should you bring out your phone or camera and document those fun, spontaneous moments so that you can remember? I would say holidays are a good place to start. And vacations. And family visits. And birthdays. But if you have 25 from each of those events you would have around 200 per year. That is too many. So here is a guide to get your existing snapshots organized. Then stop taking so many from here on out. Rather than pulling out your phone all the time, maybe just enjoy the moment.

So you have a year or two or three worth of snapshots of your child or children. Where should you start? What can you do with them?

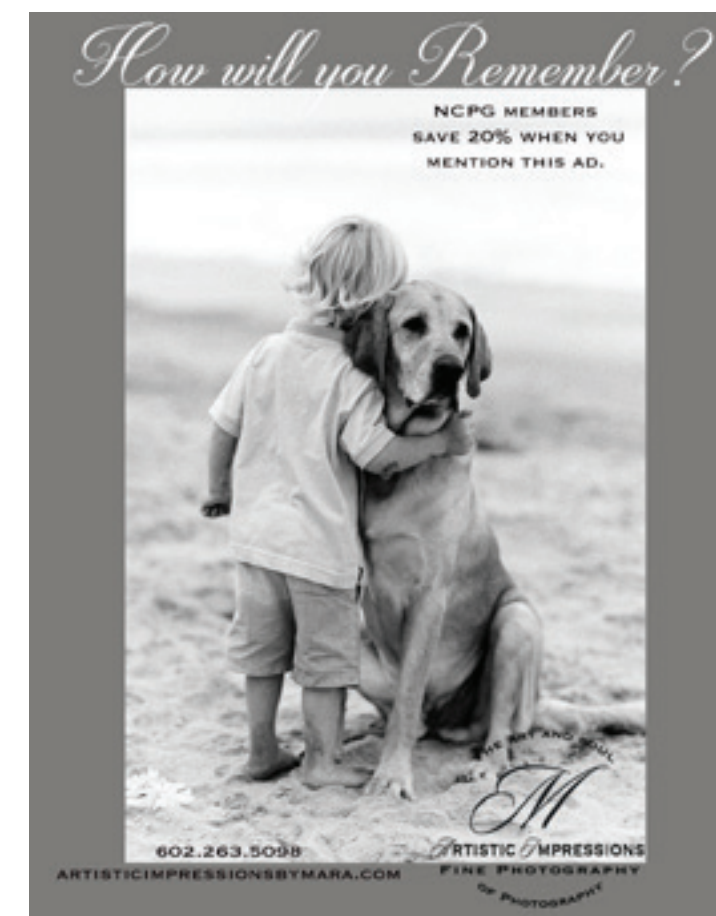
- 1. Get all the images off your device.** Do this once every month or so. Download them to your computer and also save on an external hard drive because computers crash and that is sad.
- 2. Put the images in a folder** labeled with whatever event it is (Halloween 2016, Johnny's First bday, etc.).
- 3. Work backwards so you are not overwhelmed.** Since it is only April of 2017, this year should be easy and not overwhelming at all. Next do 2016 because you can complete that one and make a scrapbook.
- 4. Go through each image you have by labeled folder and delete the ones you don't love.** Be brutal and only save a few from each event. (You don't need 25 from Halloween, maybe from a first bday, but not playgroup). Go through again and delete more. Your goal is to end up with around 60 per year – enough to put in a scrapbook.

**5. Once you are finished with one year, make a book.** If you have a Mac, you can use iPhoto and then make an iBook. This is a really simple, easy way to make a scrapbook with text. And you simply click and order and it is delivered in about a week. If you don't have a Mac, get one. Just kidding, there are other sites where you can make scrapbooks and albums like Snapfish. Now you have a year of images in a scrapbook and something you and your family can look through together!

**6. Other ideas for displaying your favorite images are:** a calendar (makes a great gift for grandparents who still use paper calendars), small frames around your home, bulletin boards, digital frame, prints to be put under glass on a table in your home.

Hopefully, that helps. This project is not meant to be done all in one night! And your scrapbook does not have to be a work of art or something you have seen on Pinterest. Just do the best you can. Work maybe an hour while the kids are napping or in the evening after bedtime a couple of times per week until you are caught up. If you start this now and limit the number of images you take throughout the year, it will never get out of control again!

Continued on page 16





If you believe what is all over Pinterest and Instagram and Facebook, it seems like in order to be a good mother, you need to have your children photographed every few months in some kind of very staged and themed set up. Whether it is a newborn wearing a special hat, a baby smashing their first birthday cake or kids in their Halloween costumes, Christmas outfits, with Easter bunnies, or in a lemonade stand, it seems like a child is professionally photographed at least 8 times by the time she reaches her second birthday. What I challenge you to think about is, what is the point to all of these sessions? Do you have a goal from each one or do you just gather these hundreds or thousands of images on your hard drive and share them on social media, maybe print a few holiday cards or birth announcements and then feel overwhelmed about how to actually showcase your favorites (if you can even decide which ones those are)? If you are paying for all of these sessions, maybe take that money, save up and invest in excellent portraits of milestone ages (see below) and do all the other pictures yourself.

There are a couple types of professional photographers you may have encountered. The first will help you choose the images to display and deliver final portraits and/or albums to you so all you have to do is hang them up. That is great and leaves no work for you! If that is the type of photographer you have worked with, you can skip down to where I discuss milestone ages.

If your photographer did not help you to choose which images to print or print them for you, you have some work to do. First, you need to decide which one or two from each milestone age to have printed. I would suggest that you choose one larger and one smaller (one main wall portrait and one smaller, or a triptych that tells a story). You can do a smaller desk portrait of one or two and an album with the others. Once you have picked the couple of favorites you would like to have printed as portraits, you will need to choose the size and lab. Cheaper labs like Walmart and Costco will look cheap. If you want to start a beautiful gallery, choose a quality lab. Tempe Camera is a local lab that will help you to size, crop, and print the images and offers different types of fine art paper options. I have listed contact info and other resources for this below.

If all that work stresses you out, going forward you might want to rethink your choice of photographer from one who simply gives you the digital files and doesn't offer any help with regard to which images to have printed and how or where to print them. I would rather spend a bit more and have the professional use their professional skills and resources to help me have something excellent. Keep in mind that your child is growing. If you have your child

professionally photographed once per year, from birth to senior portrait, you will have 19 portraits by high school graduation. Your goal should be to add to your gallery rather than replace precious portraits from the younger years. So, what are the milestone ages that you should have your child professionally photographed?

Here is my list of Milestone Ages. Obviously, space apart for development according to when you had your last session. These can be done as a separate portrait if you have larger walls or combined with siblings to accomplish two things at once (except maybe when they are really, really impactful on their own like toddler, missing teeth and senior portraits):

- 1. Infant (0-6 months)** Don't stress if you missed the first two weeks! I actually prefer when the baby can actually track, is chubby and has a face that will be recognizable later in their life. Plus, you will probably feel less stressed at the session if you wait a little while.
- 2. Toddler (12-36 months)** Walking around, talking and able to communicate a little and engage; has a variety of expressions and a developed personality.
- 3. Small Child (4-5 years)** Still has a bit of a baby face. Very well developed vocabulary and interests. Usually preschool age before front teeth fall out.
- 4. Lost Teeth (6-7 years)** One of my favorite ages and a great transitional portrait from a small child to the one with the big teeth.
- 5. Big Kid, Tween (9-12 years)** Once you have an 18 year old, these kids will look little to you. I actually also like braces because the kids still look little while they are wearing them.
- 6. Teen (13-16 years)** This is a good age because you have a kid who is still a kid but thinks and acts like they are not. They have their own defined personalities and opinions.
- 7. Senior Portrait (17-19 years)** This is the last portrait of childhood. They are graduating high school and about to embark on their own life, away from you.

I find it helpful to think about creating a portrait gallery that you will add to over time rather than just doing willy-nilly sessions with multiple photographers who all have different styles. For those of you who like consistency and would like a photographic style that will stand the test of time, choose a photographer whose style is more classic, and will pleasing to you in the long term. There are many trends in photography. By definition, a trend will go out of style, so it is best to stay away from photographers whose bulk of work is made up of images that are very trendy. For example, one trend is to severely backlight a subject, obscuring the face in favor of the sun shining behind her. Another trend is to dress up newborns in funny hats or contort them or put them in bowls or baskets or slings. Props are also distracting. If you want

something in the image to represent your child's age, I recommend something meaningful to you and them, like a favorite blanket, doll or book. I tend to gravitate toward a style that will be pleasing in 50 years or would have been 50 years ago.

One element of creating pleasing wall displays is to frame the portraits in an aesthetic that will frame and highlight the images and blend with your décor. Professional framing can make a big difference in how finished your display looks. Cheap framing looks cheap and can ruin the actual portraits over time. Choose a professional frame shop (not Michael's or Aaron Brothers) that specializes in framing art and knows conservation methods. It does not have to be expensive and you can limit the cost by choosing frames that are smaller and less ornate.

In order to determine what sizes and displays would be appropriate for the professional images of your children and family, your home décor and space should be taken into account. You don't need to have a dedicated wall upon which to hang all of the professional images you choose to have printed as portraits. Here are some ideas for display that I have seen and use myself:

- 1. One significant size portrait** in a defined space or over a piece of furniture (sofa, console table, fireplace, entryway, between two light fixtures).
- 2. Different sizes and orientations** down a hallway or up a staircase.
- 3. Gallery wall as a showcase wall** – small or large with multiple images in different sizes and orientations in a family gathering spot.
- 4. Casual leaning** on top of a bookcase or shelving.
- 5. In a bathroom** – water or beach images work well here.
- 6. Child's bedroom.**



# Albums, Books & Framing

Albums and books are also a great way to display images from your professional session, especially if you like more than you will hang on your walls. These will create a great representation of your child's growth.

In my studio, I offer the full service experience because I believe you should have beautiful, timeless images of your children and you don't need any extra work in your busy life. However, if you choose to go to a photographer who does not offer actual printed portraits or albums, you will need resources to be able to create your own portrait gallery. Below are a few printing and album resources:

**Printing** – I recommend an art paper for quality and timeless feel. If you choose to print on a canvas, framing it will look more finished and refined.

1. Tempe Camera will sit down with you and help you size and choose an appropriate medium to print images, either professional or your own snaps. [www.tempecamera.biz](http://www.tempecamera.biz) 606 West University Drive, Tempe AZ 85281 480.966.6954
2. Artifact Uprising – if the images are already sized and ready to go this is nice quality but no one-on-one help. [www.artifactuprising.com](http://www.artifactuprising.com)
3. Cheap labs look cheap. You get what you pay for. Walmart and Costco offer cheap canvas wraps that will likely fade in a few years.

**Albums** – Create scrapbooks of your own snaps or of professional images that you are not going to hang on your wall (if photographer did not offer album).

1. Ibooks is a great resource if you have a mac. You can create book and upload right from iphoto. Perfect for your own snaps.
2. Snapfish and other online sites have album options perfect for you own snaps.
3. Artifact Uprising – higher quality albums for professional images. You have to do all of the layout and design work but not too complicated. [www.artifactuprising.com](http://www.artifactuprising.com)

**Framing** – professional framing adds a finished element, incorporating your portraits with your home décor and personal style.

1. The Art of Framing 5018 North Central Avenue 602.277.3112. They have a wide variety of cool frames and will offer help in which ones will look best within your budget. Choose archival mattes and uv glass for great preservation.
2. Michael's and Aaron Brother's are not great. Not archival materials and glass with chemicals.



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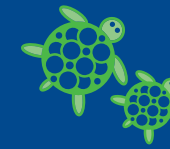
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## Member to Meet

### Suzanne Watts Toddler 3

**Children & Ages:** Nixon, 2.5 and Maxim, 9 month

**Spouse/Partners name:** Adam Webb

**How did you meet your spouse/partner:** Match.com

**Years married/together:** Married 7, together 10

**Spouse/partners favorite date night spot:** BLT, Lons and our new fav Joe's Midnight Run

**Career or previous career:** I have worked-among other places; in a wax museum, a soda fountain, waited tables. Career- practiced law and most recently have been selling real estate for 10 years.

**5 words to describe you:** adventurous, easy going, ambitious, resourceful, fun

**Favorite family vacation spot:** Jackson Hole, Wyoming

**Favorite family spot to dine in town:** Chelsea's Kitchen

**Favorite children's book to read:** "Go the F\*\*k to Sleep." We also read A LOT of "Thomas the Train."

**Favorite adult book to read:** "A Fine Balance," so good.

**What do you miss most about being a kid:** Playing outside, popsicles and not having bills

**When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do:** Go to the Foot Spa on 40th St and Camelback and get a massage....even if only 30 minutes.

**Most meaningful moment as a parent:** I love how first thing in the morning my 2 year old goes looking for his baby brother. It's so

sweet, even if we don't know if he's looking for kiss or to hit the baby...maybe pull him somewhere.

**Most "OMG did that really happen" moment as a parent:** My first day with two kids by myself. They both needed to eat at the same time and there was a lot of crying. The 2 year old would ambush the baby while I was trying to make him lunch so I had to put them both in the stroller and walk around the house while intermittently making and feeding the 2 year old lunch. It was the only way I could keep the baby away from the 2 year old (I hadn't thought to hide baby yet, which we now do). It all became real that day.

**How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own:** I have a lot of babysitters. I can't do it all, nor can my husband. I truly believe it takes a village so we use the village to get some downtime and take care of ourselves.

**If you could give your pre-baby self advice, what would it be:** That I will be a liar. I will do ALL the things I never thought I would do; bribe, beg, scream, threaten, yell no, give sugar, negotiate, give the iPad, turn on cartoons...etc. etc. etc.

**Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group:** Daphne Baldwin who was in Scottsdale Parenting Group. My mom and aunt also did NCPG when I was growing up.

**Best thing learned in NCPG:** I can't imagine trying to do this on my own without a group of amazing moms to help me navigate motherhood. The best thing I have learned is not to compare myself or my kids with anyone else/s. Everyone has gone through or is going through very similar experiences with their kids, good or bad. My parenthood experience is not unique. And this too shall pass.

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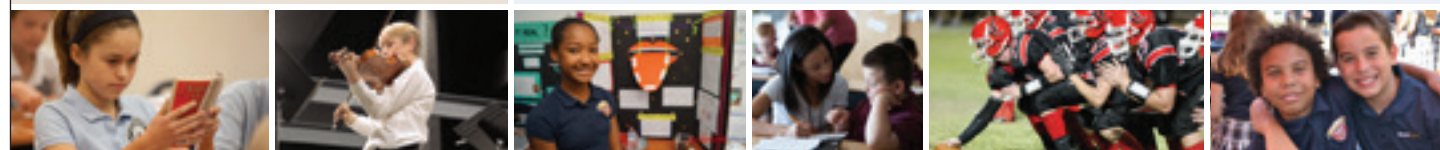
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# Crockpot Chicken Parmesan

Yields: 4 servings

Calories: 325  
Fat: 13 grams  
Carbs: 7 grams  
Protein: 45 grams

## Ingredients

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 c. marinara sauce
- 2 T. TLC Italian Seasoning
- 1/3 c. chopped basil
- 1/3 c. mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 c. parmesan cheese

## Directions

1. Pour 1 c. of marinara into Crockpot.
2. Place chicken over marinara in a single layer.
3. Sprinkle Italian seasoning directly over the chicken.
4. Pour remaining marinara over chicken.
5. Cook on LOW for approximately 4 hours.  
(This depends greatly on your Crockpot...keep an eye on it.)
6. During the final hour, sprinkle the mozzarella and parmesan on top of chicken and re-cover.
7. Serve over veggie or quinoa pasta and top with fresh basil.



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# Eraser-Stamped Easter Bunny Shirt

Source: <http://cutesycrafts.com>

Here's what you'll need to make this Easter shirt:

- Bunny pattern (can be found at [www.cutesycrafts.com](http://www.cutesycrafts.com))
- White shirt
- Freezer Paper (I got mine at the grocery store)
- Fabric paint – pink and green
- Pencil with an unused eraser

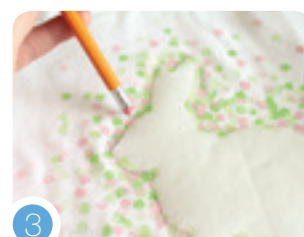
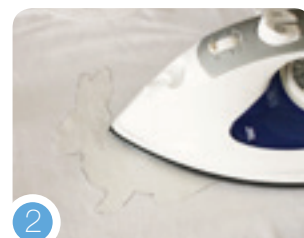
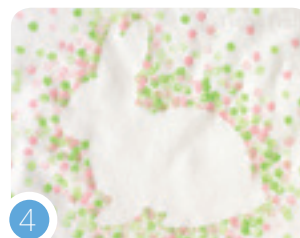
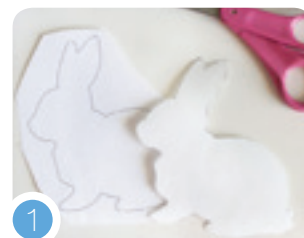
Step 1: Trace the bunny silhouette pattern onto the non-shiny side of some freezer paper, and cut it out.

Step 2: Iron the bunny, shiny side down, onto the shirt.

Step 3: Dip your pencil eraser stamp into some paint and start stamping! Don't get too much paint on the eraser or you will end up with a blob instead of a flower. You're also gonna want to put some freezer paper on the inside of the shirt to keep the paint from leaking through. Make sure the stamps are close together around the outline of the bunny so you can see the silhouette. Fade the stamps out as you get further away from the bunny.

Step 4: Let the paint dry and peel off the freezer paper. Follow the instructions on your paint to heat set it (usually this involves ironing or throwing it in the dryer).

Step 5: Ta da!



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