

Parent Times

December 2018



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President's Corner

To all NCPG Members,

Happy Holidays!!! I am blown away by the generosity and overwhelming holiday spirit of our entire membership, THANK YOU!!!!!! With **Salvation Army** donations dropped off today, I have no doubt we are again going to be a "Top 5 Contributor" to the Salvation Army, providing gifts to children that may not otherwise experience new toys this holiday season. As a nonprofit organization educating parents, the NCPG Board of Directors truly feels this is such a special way for NCPG to make an impact in not only the recipients' lives, but in our children's lives as well.

Today is our last class of 2018 (how did that fly by SO fast!?) and I hope everyone has loved, enjoyed, learned and gained a sense of support from their classes. Our amazing teachers, generous sponsors, and welcoming membership that surrounds us have cultivated such an enriching environment. As a testament to your dedication and appreciation of NCPG, our Membership is now completely full! Thank you for referring your friends and spreading the word about NCPG to anyone you feel can also benefit from such a great resource and community. Of course, we are still always welcoming of new members to guest in our classes, so please reach out to membership@ncpgaz.org with any questions.

I want to give a big THANK YOU to our Special Events Directors for planning two amazing events last month! **The Fall Festival** and **All Class Play Date at the Children's Museum** were so fun and such a great way to socialize and connect outside of the classroom! As we close out 2018, the Board is well under way planning our calendar for Spring 2019. Mark your calendars for our **Spring Gala at AZ Country Club on Saturday, March 9th (Belles and Beaus!)**, and be on the lookout for another all class play date and our **Spring Festival**.

As always, please reach out to me or any Board Members if you are interested in getting involved on the Board or any committees. We will start conducting Board interviews for open positions in February, so it's never too early to start asking questions! There are several opportunities to get involved! Finally, I want to wish you and your families a safe, joyful and happy holiday! See everyone back for our first class in 2019 on Wednesday, January 9th.

Happy Holidays!

Stacy Medeiros
NCPG Board President
president@ncpgaz.org



The information provided by NCPG instructors should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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

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Parent Times

Members, this monthly magazine 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. Thanks for your help!

Editors – Kelly Anderson & Chandra Petelin
Designer – Neill Fox, foxnoggin.com, neill@foxnoggin.com

On the Cover

Megan, Sean, Anderson & Magnolia Garvey.
Photographer: Kristen Carnes Photography.



Member to Meet Marti Varni

Kid's Names, Ages and Current Class:

Emma 5 ½, Mason 3 ½, Stella 21 months, Baby #4 due December 2018, Class: Kindergarten

Spouse:

Kevin Varni

Years married/together:

Together: 10.5 years. Married: 7.5 years.

Born and raised:

Born in Portland, OR but grew up in Northern CA.

Career:

My husband and I own Beaus & Belles, A Children's Shoppe at Camelback Village.

Favorite family vacation spots:

Maui, Hawaii & Beaver Creek, Colorado

You and your spouse's favorite date spot:

Steak 44

Favorite family spot to dine out:

North Italia

Favorite children's books to read:

In My Heart by Jo Witek

What do you miss most about being a kid?

Having endless energy!

Favorite thing to do with your children:

Every night after dinner we go on a walk around our neighborhood. It is the best spent time with our kids since we are able to spend quality time together with no distractions.

Best parenting advice:

Live in the moment, you won't ever look back and remember what you accomplished in the day, but you will remember the time spent with your kids.

Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group?

Catherine Western. This is my first year.

Best thing learned in NCPG:

How refreshing it is to hear that I am not alone in the experiences I am going through as a mom.



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For Prospective Parents

November 07
December 05
January 23

KEY DATES

Application
Opens

OCT 01

Pre-K-Eighth Grade
Application Deadline

JAN 18

Kindergarten
Group Screening

JAN 25

Pre-K
Group Screening

JAN 26

First - Eighth Grades
Group Assessment

FEB 02

Admissions Decisions
Announced in Early

MARCH

For more information call the Admissions Office
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5 Tips for Improving Mealtime

By: Rachel A. McIntosh, M.A., BCBA



Keeping our children healthy through good food choices is one of our top priorities as parents. This can be particularly challenging when we find ourselves “sneaking” vegetables into smoothies or coming up with a “healthy” chicken nugget because it’s the only things our kids will eat.

Here are five tips that may help reduce stress at mealtimes and create good mealtime habits:

1. START A MEALTIME ROUTINE. Routines help provide clear expectations. Select one meal to have at the same time and in the same place each day. The meal you select should be the most realistic one for you as a family. Make sure the location is free of distractions and that your child is in a comfortable and secure seat. The table (or tray) should be at waist height and the plate and utensils should be easily reachable. Use this mealtime to connect with your child/children. In addition to eating, have each person share their favorite part of the day. For really little ones, play simple imitation games and take turns being “the leader.”

2. PROVIDE CHOICES. Children have to do so much that is not in their control. We tell them when to go to bed, when to take a bath, when they are going to school, and so much more. Eating can be an area that can quickly become another battleground for control. To help alleviate that, offer lots of choices. Asking, “Do you want three bites on your plate or four?” can make all the difference in the world. Let kids decide what utensil they want to use — “Would you like the yellow or green spoon?” Remember, only provide options you want them to select!

3. LIMIT SNACKING AND GRAZING. By limiting snacking and grazing throughout the day, your child will be hungry and ready to eat when mealtime comes. If you are going to offer two snacks during the day, consider having two Post-it Notes on the fridge. When your child eats a snack, they remove a Post-it. When all the Post-its are gone, there are no more snacks. Being hungry at mealtime is the best motivator to eat!

4. SET CLEAR AND REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR THE MEAL. A child’s stomach is about the size of their fist – little! Start by offering small amounts of new foods. If you are going to try something new, be sure to put plenty on the plate that is familiar (and ideally preferred) so the task doesn’t feel as daunting for anyone.

5. KEEP TRYING. Perhaps none of these strategies will work on your first attempt. That’s ok! Keep trying. One of the best ways to get a child to try a new food is to keep offering it to them in a fun and relaxed environment.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Rachel A. McIntosh, is a licensed board certified behavior analyst and is the director of the **Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center (SARRC) Community School**, which has campuses located in central Phoenix and Tempe. The SARRC Community School an inclusive pre-school program that provides intensive, ABA-based programming for children with autism spectrum disorder and high-quality early childhood education for typically developing children. Children 18 months to 5 years old experience important social and academic fundamentals to ensure kindergarten readiness.*



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2018-2019 Calendar

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9:00-9:40 am Refreshments served
9:45*-11:30 am Classes are held
***Teachers will start promptly at 9:45!**
11:45 am Nursery closes
11:30 - 1:15 pm Pre-Infant Class

Location

**Saint Barnabas on the Desert
Episcopal Church**
6715 N. Mockingbird Lane
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Class Dates

January 9
January 23
February 6**
February 20
March 6**
April 10**
April 24
May 8**

**Parent Times magazine distributed.

Board Meeting Schedule

January 14
February 5
March 5
April 2
May 7

Board Announcements

Treasury

NCPG continues to offer scholarship opportunities for both membership and nursery dues. For more information, please contact treasurer@ncpgaz.org

Sponsorship

If you know of a business that might be interested in being an NCPG sponsor or advertiser, please let us know! Email us at sponsorship@ncpgaz.org

Childcare

NCPG is happy to continue offering onsite childcare to our members for children 6 months to 5 years old from 8:30 am-11:45 am on class days. Newborns ages 0-6 months may attend class with their parent. In order to take advantage members must first register their children through our website ncpgaz.org. Detailed instructions on how to register can be found under the Childcare tab. Space is limited so be sure to book your spot when the sign up opens at 8am the morning after Wednesday classes. The childcare login can be found under the Childcare tab on the website. First child is \$35, each additional Child is \$15.

Email us at childcare@ncpgaz.org with any questions.



WE WANT YOUR PICTURES!

Next month's theme for *Parent Times* will be
CELEBRATING NEW YEAR!



Send us your hi-res photos of your family trips from over the holidays for our photo spread. Who knows? Your child might end up on the cover!

Please send all birth announcements, snapshots of NCPG kids and parents, and professional photos to be considered for the front cover to communications@ncpgaz.org.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We're looking for members who want to join the 2019-2020 board! It's a great way to get involved and have more fun within the organization. Positions involve:

- Various levels of responsibility
- Leadership Skills
- Decision Making
- Event Planning
- Networking

We would love to hear from you if you're interested. Please email president@ncpgaz.org to find out more details.

Membership

We've had an amazing start to the year and membership is full for the 2018-2019 year. However, we are still offering one-time trial class visits if you know someone that is interested. Registration for 2019-2020 will open in April. Please email membership@ncpgaz.org for additional details.

Public Relations

Please continue to use the NCPG Members Only Facebook Group to ask questions, share advice, local events and deals, and to buy and sell. We just ask that we keep everything respectful and positive on the page. Please request to join the group and you will be approved.



Special Events

GUEST SPEAKER

Wednesday, Feb. 20th

Get excited for our guest speaker! Jenny Hodges is a certified holistic nutrition practitioner who is very passionate about how food affects learning and behavior in our children. Come join us as we discuss "Food for Thought".

SPRING GALA

Saturday, March 9th

Our Annual Spring GALA will be returning to Arizona Country Club! If you have any donations for the silent auction please email fundraising@ncpgaz.org

NORTH CENTRAL PARENTING GROUP SPRING GALA



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Fall Festival

Fall Festival Photographer : Mitch Medeiros



Parenting: Why It's Not About You

By Alison Crotteau for gottman.com

The gift of parenthood was bestowed upon me in the spring of 2013. As an avid reader, lifelong student of psychology and self-development junkie, I immersed myself in the latest research and literature on being the “best” mother possible. But as most parents know, nothing can truly prepare you for everything parenthood brings. I was about to embark upon a journey that ultimately led to the undoing of my self-development.

When my daughter was born, my world as I knew it was rocked. It went beyond the shock of sleep deprivation, social isolation, and coming to terms with a new identity. The further into parenting I got, the more I felt that all of my “weaknesses” were being exposed, including my apparent desire for control and lack of assertiveness. I felt like I was somehow not getting it, and was failing as a parent.

My daughter was not responding to my methods the way I had expected. It was like trying to cram a (noisy, colorful) square peg into a (serene, orderly) round hole. I dove into self-development even further. I needed to “fix” myself and address my issues one by one. I made it all about me: my shortcomings, my preferences, etc. But what I ultimately concluded in my quest for knowledge in effective parenting is that I needed less “me” in the equation.

In a personal interview, Gottman Level 2 trained psychologist Dr. Heather Rose-Carlson clarified to me that parenting is “not about you as a parent.” It’s about your child. It’s about who your child is and what their specific needs are. Only when you can understand and adapt to these needs can you be the most effective. Each child is a precious individual, and a one-size-fits-all approach to parenting will come up short.

I looked at my daughter’s behavior as being the “effect” and my parenting style as the “cause.” When I changed my perspective and let her unique traits and needs guide my course, things started to sync together. I made a point to study my daughter, not myself. I learned a lot. I learned this most of all; my daughter is not me! She is a unique individual. She is social. She is sensitive. She is loud and spirited!

I know who she is and what’s important to her, so forcing her to try to fit into my perfect (quieter) world was diminishing her spirit and robbing her of her true essence. Because we were all suffering from that, I had to learn how speak her language. Honing in on these things has helped me customize the right approach to parenting her. It’s also helped me let go of some of those unrealistic expectations I held about what my life was supposed to look like as a mother.

In 2015, we were blessed with a beautiful baby boy! Loving and learning the uniqueness of a new child has reinforced how different we all can be. I went into parenting more prepared this time around. Using Dr. Rose-Carlson’s “box of chocolates” metaphor, it was just up to me to figure out what “flavor” I would get with my son. It was not up to me to predetermine this or the most effective parenting tactics. As my son enters his toddler years now, my approach with him is quite different than with my daughter. They are two completely different people.

It would be easy for me to try to establish a standard set of parenting “rules” that apply to all of my children, as my natural desire to be in control would have me do. However, when I really look at my kids as individuals, it’s clear to me that this method would be setting all of us up for failure.

Don’t get me wrong, our home is not a “free-for-all” where the toddlers are in charge (though they’d love to think that is the case). I’ve just learned the art of translating my children’s different “languages” in order to be the most effective parent I can, and I’ve learned to honor my children’s gifts.

Self-development continues to be one of my passions, and I do feel that this will have a positive effect on my children. However, I have been given such a gift with this new perspective. In allowing myself to surrender control and be a student of my children as much as their teacher, I’ve learned the value of being a loving presence versus an authority. Allowing your children’s true colors to shine is a wonderful gift to them and to you, and it’s brought harmony to the chaos of toddlerhood.



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New Arrivals



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on September 10th.



Claire Blystra welcomed
Cooper Blystra
on September 21st.





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BOYS VERSUS GIRLS

How to Tailor Your Parenting Techniques



By Wendy Mogul, PhD for Parents Magazine

They interpret what you say—as well as your tone, volume, and body language—very differently. Here are my favorite psychologist strategies for encouraging any child to listen and open up.

We know this: The brains of boys and girls develop in distinctive ways. The latest techniques in neuroscience, such as brain mapping, have helped us get closer to understanding this complex organ. Using functional magnetic resonance imagery, for example, researchers have watched how various parts of the brain light up when girls and boys speak, do puzzles, or encounter distractions.

At the same time, we've also learned a great deal about neural plasticity; a child's experiences affect every aspect of brain functioning. While inborn differences in brain anatomy may explain why boys get squirmy in class and girls tenderly rock their dolls to sleep, every child is unique and evolving.

Stereotypes are dangerous, of course. As adults, we have a responsibility to encourage technical aptitude and physical daring in girls and to appreciate sensitivity and verbal expressiveness in boys. But to do that, we need to be aware of how gender can affect communication, while also tuning in to a child's individual traits and temperament. Having worked with children and families for decades, I

want to share my most successful techniques for connecting with sons and daughters.

CHANGE HOW YOU SPEAK

Boys develop language skills more slowly than girls.

Most of their speech is comprehensible by age 4 1/2. So avoid "constructive criticism" using abstract words such as inappropriate, focus, disruptive, or success. They can sound like the wah-wuh-wah-wah-wah of the adults in "Peanuts" cartoons to your son.

Girls develop language skills earlier than boys. Nearly all of girls' speech is comprehensible by age 3. The corpus callosum, the nerve tissue connecting the two hemispheres of the brain, is thicker in girls' brains, which facilitates communication. But don't mistake your daughter's impressive verbal sophistication for emotional maturity or interpret her meltdowns as regression or attempts to manipulate you. It's strategically smarter to give her the last word in a heated discussion to prevent escalation and let her save face. You can always revisit the issue later if necessary.

GET THEIR ATTENTION

On average, boys say fewer words per day than girls and speak more slowly. To make sure he understands you, speak at a relaxed pace, but don't taunt him by speaking too robotically. ("Please. Put. Bowl. In. Sink.")

On average, girls say two to three times as many words per day as boys and speak twice as fast.

To help maintain your authority, talk quickly enough to hold her interest, but not as quickly as she talks.

BE UNDERSTOOD

A boy's brain secretes less serotonin than a girl's.

This makes boys more fidgety and quicker to act on impulse. So think of your conversations as shooting hoops: You say a little something, then another little something, and sometimes it goes through and you get a basket.

A girl's brain secretes more serotonin. This makes it easier for girls to modulate their moods and regulate their expression of emotions. But realize that the arguments—about rules, food, or your daughter's messy room—won't be resolved during a single, earnest, logical discussion.

CONVEY YOUR FEELINGS

A boy's brain secretes less oxytocin and vasopressin than a girl's. This makes boys less likely to perceive signs of pain or distress in others. So your son often won't hear subtle differences in your tone, and your sighs or sarcastic hinting may be lost on him. Don't let that make you feel insulted or ignored if he doesn't notice that you're upset about something.

A girl's brain secretes more of those hormones than a boy's. This helps girls respond quickly to signs of pain or distress in others. So know that your daughter is acutely sensitive to tone that reveals scorn, mockery, or indignation. To help diffuse the emotional aspect of what you're saying and improve your tone, shift your focus first. Try singing along to her music for a few minutes before asking her to shift focus and listen to you.

ASK FOR HELP

To comfortably hear a speaker, boys require the person's voice to be six to eight decibels louder than girls do. They also have a higher tolerance for background noise. So keep in mind that if you have to ask your son to do something twice, he actually may not have heard you. Try to use short sentences and speak fairly loudly but not at a high pitch.

Girls can discern voices at lower decibels and also can discriminate nuances of tone better than boys.

They can hear better at higher frequencies but are also more easily annoyed or distracted by background noise. So be straight with your daughter—unlike little boys, girls notice stammers and silences. Not only will she hear your words, she can easily detect a sales pitch or a half-lie.

GET MORE DETAILS

Boys don't seek out eye contact as often as girls.

They tend to be more verbally communicative when they're sitting beside someone. So try talking in the car, while ambling down the street, or in the dim light of his room before bed. He will be more comfortable talking side by side, but you can help focus his attention by sitting face-to-face for important requests or reprimands.

Girls seek out and react positively to eye contact, smiling, and face-to-face verbal communication. So if you need clarification about an upsetting event, use open-ended rather than yes-or-no or leading questions. Instead of "Were you furious with her???" say, "What was that like?"

DISCUSS EMOTIONS

Boys experience greater separation anxiety and cry more easily before age 3 than girls. As they get older, their autonomic nervous system (which regulates heart rate, blood pressure, and digestion) causes them to react to stress or confrontation with excitement or exhilaration. So talk about feelings indirectly, such as by reading a bedtime story and talking about what happened to a character, or by asking about the details of his dreams.

Girls' ability to read social cues helps them adjust to new environments. Their autonomic nervous system makes them react to stress by withdrawing or feeling dizzy, nauseated, or fearful. So if she comes home with a tale of grief, injustice, or anger, think of yourself as a compassionate aunt or camp counselor and listen without expressing pity or panic.

From Voice Lessons for Parents: What to Say, How to Say It, and When to Listen, by Wendy Mogul, Ph.D. Copyright © 2018 by Wendy Mogul.





Almost any jar works for this project: Baby-food, pimienta, and olive jars are good choices. Look for plastic or ceramic figurines (metal ones are prone to rust) at flea markets and hobby or model-railroad shops. Synthetic evergreen tips are available at many floral-supply stores. You will also need oil-based enamel paint, sandpaper, epoxy, distilled water, glitter, and glycerin (available at drugstores or in cake supplies).

Add Distilled Water and Glitter
If the jar lids are not in seasonal colors already, paint them with oil-based enamel paint. Sand the inside of the lid until the surface is rough. With clear-drying epoxy, adhere the figurine to the inside of the lid, and let the epoxy dry.

Fill the jar almost to the top with distilled water; add a pinch of glitter and a dash of glycerin to keep the glitter from falling too quickly. Don't add too much, or the glitter will stick to the bottom of the jar when it's flipped. Screw on the lid tightly, being careful not to dislodge the figurine. Turn the jar over and back again — and let it snow.



RECIPE: Snowmen Donut Sticks Recipe courtesy of Food Network Kitchen

Little ones can help stir up playful sweets for holiday party fun or gift giving with this kid-friendly holiday recipe. Store-bought sugar donuts become impressive holiday snowmen when decorated with chocolate candy pieces, pretzels, chocolate chips, and orange gummy candies.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 9 sugar donuts
 - 1/2 cup mini chocolate chips
 - 3 orange slice candies
 - 1 package M&M's chocolates
 - 1/3 cup white cookie icing
 - 1/3 cup white candy melts
 - cake pop sticks

- INSTRUCTIONS**
1. Use a serrated knife to cut off the outside of the pretzels to get the shape of the snowman arm.
 2. Cut the orange slice candies in 23 small triangles. These will be the snowmen noses.
 3. Slide the sugar donuts on to your lollipop stick. Then take some melted white candy melts and place at the bottom of the snowman. When the candy melts are set, it will ensure that the snowmen don't slide down the stick.
 4. Once the snowmen are secure, insert two pretzels to the side of the lower donut.
 5. Use the cookie icing to attach his nose, two chocolate chips for his eyes, three miniature chocolate chips for his smile and three M&M's for his buttons. Place two dots of the icing on his eyes to give them a little sparkle.



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