

Parent Times

Sept 2021



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President's Corner

Hello North Central Parenting Group Community!


Welcome to all of our returning members and to all of the new faces joining us for the 2021-22 NCPG year! We are so excited to have you all with us as we kick off our 37th year of NCPG!

Your Board has been hard at work over the summer preparing for a great year of learning, growing, friendship, and fun. We are so thankful to be able to meet IN PERSON at The Church of the Be-attitudes. If you are an older member, you might remember we met there before St. Barnabas. We are thrilled to be back and are so grateful the church has been so accommodating to a group of our size. While we will miss being able to offer breakfast and childcare this year due to church restrictions, we are hard at work planning social events for the year. We will be closely monitoring the COVID conditions in Phoenix, but we are cautiously optimistic we will be able to have some of the traditional NCPG gatherings we all love. Thank you for sticking with us last year and for your participation, support, and commitment to such an amazing organization! We have made it 37 years because our members keep coming back and sharing it with others and encouraging them to join. Part of that draw is our amazing teachers and we are so excited to be welcoming 2 new teachers and a returning teacher to our impressive roster. Please help me in welcoming **Lisa Ameis** (Pre-k/Jr. Kinder), **Marina Awerbuch** (Class 2A), and **Annemarie Mansour** (Class 4B)!

It's so hard to believe, but this year will be my 6th year as a member of NCPG! As a new mom I had NO idea what to do with my newborn and a family friend encouraged me to join NCPG. All joking aside, I don't think I would have survived my first year of parenthood without this organization. Now my newborn is 5 and just started Pre-K at our neighborhood elementary school. I am immensely grateful for NCPG and look forward to serving as president this year to ensure this phenomenal organization continues to thrive. It is my hope that each and every one of you has an equally fulfilling experience and can look back on your time in NCPG with memories like I do. I look forward to serving as your President this year, and I am always available as a resource should you need me. I'm looking forward to another great year of NCPG! I hope you are too!

Best,

Megan Hedstrom
NCPG President
president@ncpgaz.com





north central parenting group



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

ncpgaz.org Like us on Facebook:  [ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz)

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. Thanks for your help! Also, please send us photos of you and your family — we are always looking for photos of our community to include in the newsletter and on the NCPG website. Please keep in mind that when you submit photos, you are agreeing that we can use them in our newsletter as well as the NCPG website.

Editors – **Ashley McFate, Amanda Shaw**
Designer – **Neill Fox, www.foxnoggin.com**

Front Cover – **Tryhus Family**

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.

Member to Meet: Taylor Lowe

Class 1A



Child & Age: My daughter is Riley Shea (5 months).

Spouse: Justin Low.

How did you meet your spouse: We met at TopGolf in 2015 during a mutual friend's night out.

Years married: Dated since July, 2017. Married since November 2019.

Favorite date spot: We both absolutely love Nobu, but most date nights involve take out Thai food.

Career: I am an occupational therapist, vision specialist, and part time model, but am currently enjoying my new role of being a stay-at-home mamma for baby Riley and our two vizslas!

5 words to describe you: Kind, sincere, optimistic, engaging, and inclusive.

Favorite family vacation spot? Carmel Valley Ranch, CA.

Favorite family spot to dine in town? Chelsea's Kitchen.

Do you have a hidden talent? My husband says singing, but I think he's being far too kind. I turn my best singing voice on when I sing for Riley.

Favorite activity when you are child-free? Attending hot yoga at The Village!

Favorite children's book to read? *Elmer!*

Favorite adult book to read? *Mindset* by Carol Dweck.

Where were you born and raised? Mesa, Arizona.

What do you miss most about being a kid? How natural it was to truly live in the present moment!

When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do?

Plan for the upcoming days and weeks ahead so Justin and I can make sure to add some fun into our lives!

What story does your family always tell about you?

Some of my family's favorite stories to share seem to be those of my colorful teenage years.

What's your favorite thing to do with your child? I love babbling back and forth with Riley and doing anything I can to see that gummy smile!

Most meaningful moment as a parent? Justin and I still talk about the first time Riley looked into our eyes and smiled. It has been 'game over' for us ever since. You can have anything you want, Riley Shea! ;)

Most "OMG did that really happen" moment as a parent? The first time she slept 7 to 7 through the night.

What is your favorite family tradition? This year we spent a month out of town to escape the heat. We are hoping to make that a summer tradition!

Best parenting advice given to you? Hire an infant sleep coach.

How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own? When I ensure that my personal needs are being met (mental, physical, emotional), I can put my best foot forward for my child. A lot of the time that comes with asking for help when I need it!

If you could give your pre-baby self advice, what would it be? Follow your gut instincts.

Who introduced you to NCPG and for how many years have you been a part of the group? Sarah Schultze introduced me to NCPG and I have been a member since 2020.

Best thing learned in NCPG? The importance of community and child rearing education.

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2021-2022 Calendar

NOTE: Classes will be offered virtually until in-person classes are able to resume.

Class Schedule

Newborn B - Elementary:

Class will begin promptly at 9:45am and end by 11:30am.

Newborn A & Middle:

Class will begin promptly at 11:30 and end by 1:15pm.

Class Dates

September 8**	February 9**
September 22	February 23
October 6**	March 23**
October 20	April 6**
November 10**	April 27
December 8**	May 4**
January 12**	May 18
January 26	

** Parent Times magazine distributed.

Board Meeting Dates

October 4	February 7
November 1	March 7
December 6	April 4
January 10	May 2



Church of the Beatitudes
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Board

Announcements

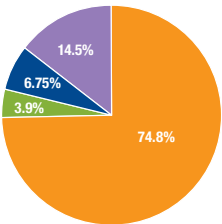
Treasury

NCPG continues to offer scholarship opportunities for both membership and nursery dues.

For more information please contact:
treasurer@ncpgaz.org

Membership Fee Breakdown

100% of Membership Fees collected support the below breakdown of expenses.



Sponsorship & Fundraising Fees Support:

Spring/Fall Festivals, NCPG Cares, Mom's Night Out, Play Dates, Parent Times Magazine, Member Swag, Public Relations

Communications

WE WANT YOUR PICTURES!

Next month's theme for *Parent Times* is

FALL FUN!

Send us high-resolution photos of the kids or your family for our photo spread. Who knows... you might wind 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.

Education

Please welcome our two new teachers, **Marina Awerbuch** (2A) and **Lisa Ameis** (Pre-K/Junior Kindergarten), and **Annemarie Mansour** (4B) who has been an NCPG instructor in the past. We are so thankful for all of our NCPG instructors for the knowledge and support they offer NCPG members. We look forward to a great year!



Marina Awerbuch
(Class 2A)



Lisa Ameis
(Pre-K/JK)



Annemarie Mansour
(Class 4B)

Childcare

Due to limitations on church space there will be no childcare this year! If you're in need of a babysitter, we encourage you to utilize Busy Bees!



Public Relations



Please continue to follow along on our private Instagram page [@ncpgaz](https://www.instagram.com/ncpgaz) for helpful information and updates!



Please continue to use the members-only NCPG Facebook Group [ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz) to ask questions, share advice, local events, deals and to buy & sell. We ask that we keep everything positive and respectful on the page. Please request to join the group, if you haven't already and join the fun!

Community Outreach

Know someone in NCPG that needs a hand? NCPG Cares. Please email us at outreach@ncpgaz.org; we want to help!

NCPG CARES

Membership

Registration for the 2021-2022 NCPG year is still open and spots are available in a few classes including the Newborn and Middle School classes. Please be sure to refer your momma friends! Anyone interested in registering can do so online at <https://ncpgaz.org/join-ncpg/> or reach out to the Membership Co-Chairs at membership@ncpgaz.org with any questions.

Education—Special Event

SAVE THE DATE: 10/20

Our guest speaker will be **Mary Flo** from **Birds and Bees**.

Location: **TBD**



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Meet Our Amazing Teachers!

NCPG is delighted to have an outstanding group of teachers returning to NCPG this year, and we have also expanded our teacher community with the addition of several new teachers. We encourage you to get to know each of these highly educated and knowledgeable women.



Monique Nelson

NEWBORN A & B

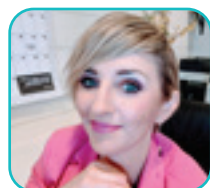
Monique Nelson is an Arizona native. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in biology/premed. She holds an additional degree in nursing with a clinical focus in pediatrics. Monique worked in the field of pediatrics as a pediatric triage/advice nurse for over 25 years. She has also been teaching pregnancy, newborn, infant and toddler classes for the past 22 years as well. Monique taught not only for North Central Parenting Group but Scottsdale Parenting Group and East Valley Positive Parenting group before the group dissolved. Monique and her husband Dave just celebrated 25 years of marriage this past June and they are the proud parents of Taylor age 22 and Dylan age 17.



Blair Hinks

CLASS 1A

Blair is a native to Arizona. She grew up in the Madison School District and went to Xavier College Prep for high school. She graduated from University of Arizona in 2002 with a BS in Business Marketing. She went on to help manage at the Hubbard Swim School. During her 17 years at the swim school she was in charge of staff training, the special needs program and taught countless number of swim classes to babies and young children. Blaire has been married to her husband, Otto, for 17 years and they have six children; Tommy (15), Maggie (13), Joe (11), Will (9), Rosie (6), and Grace (5). After years of teaching new moms in the pool and having six babies of her own, she realized there was need for support in the home for new moms after birth. Blaire opened her own business, Lille Landsby Postpartum Village, in 2018. She is a lactation counselor, postpartum doula, and baby-wearing instructor that provides a holistic in-home care approach for all families with little ones. Blaire's favorite things to do during her down time are going on adventures with her family, date night with her husband, and working out.



Amy Stewart

CLASS 1B

Amy has a Master's of Science degree in Nursing, is a Certified Pediatric Nurse, and nursing professor. Her scientific and research-based nursing background, paired with her love for being a mother to her five adopted children provide unique and relatable teaching opportunities. Amy is also the founder of Hope in Parenting, providing parenting tools, resources, and online courses for all partners in parenting. Amy feels her greatest accomplishments are found in her home. She loves being the wife to her husband Drew and mother to her 5 children Merik (11), Sophie (10), Olivia (5), Gracie (4), and Spencer (2).



Marina Awerbuch

CLASS 2A

Marina Awerbuch has 12 years experience working with children and parents in community-based settings. Marina has successfully delivered continuing education seminars to professionals and families on evidence-based parent education, trauma informed care and child development. She has conducted community outreach, education, and collaborative program efforts to enhance awareness of infant-toddler development and child abuse prevention in the Arizona community. Marina's work focuses on building program infrastructure, and data management to best support growth of local and national non-profits focusing on the wellbeing of children. Marina holds a Masters of Advanced Study in Infant Family Practice from Arizona State University and is endorsed through the Infant Mental Health Coalition of Arizona.



Kristin Klecka

CLASS 2B

Kristin is an educator who has been working with children since the early 2000's. Trained in Elementary Education, she has worked fulltime with two different grade levels (fourth and second) for six years and has also substitute taught in grade levels K6, including leading gift-ed/honors classes. Teaching in both California and Arizona, Kristin has a firm grasp of critical early years teaching skills and methods such as Core Knowledge. Kristin's course work at the University of Arizona resulted in a Bachelor of Arts in Family Studies and she subsequently obtained a Master's Degree in Elementary Education at the University of Pepperdine in Los Angeles, CA. She also achieved her teaching credential in California. But, her greatest accomplishment has been being a wife and fulltime mom to three children Ashlyn (15), Reid (13), and Beau (11). They have taught her more about love and life than anything else. Kristin likes to cook, exercise, spend time with friends, and travel.



Chelsea Kunde

CLASS 3A

Chelsea has her Bachelors of Art in Psychology from The University of Arizona (Go Wildcats!) and her Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy from The University of San Diego. She has worked extensively with children, families and couples specifically helping them with parenting skills and/or training. She has worked as a behavior interventionist, parent trainer, therapist providing individual, couple, family and group services and a sleep consultant. Chelsea owns her own company called Building Blocks Family where she provides consultation services on sleep, discipline, and potty training to families with children ages 0-6 years old. BBF was created to provide loving family solutions to families. She helps families to create a safe and predictable world for their children while maintaining healthy and safe practices. Most importantly, she helps them to create a happy environment for both parents and kids to thrive and enjoy! Chelsea enjoys in her free time taking a pilates or spin class, watching bad reality tv, hanging with her girlfriends and spending time with her family. Chelsea is married and has two daughters Harper (7) and Reese (4).



Barb Grady

CLASS 3B

Barb Grady begins her 29th year teaching for NCPG. She is a nationally certified counselor, certified teacher and parenting coach. In 1999, Barb began her business, Parenting-Plus, where she offers parenting classes, personal growth groups, individual consulting and life/parent coaching for both adults and children. Barb has taught preschool, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades as well as high school and college. Barb has two daughters: Jody, who is a director for Honor Health in charge of the Covid patients and has two children (Carter 10 and Grady 8), and Annie, who works as a senior program coordinator for the non-profit Daily Acts in California and has a one-year-old daughter. Barb loves being an involved grandparent! She is delighted to return this year to share her passion and to motivate and inspire parents. You can learn more about Barb and access parenting resources from her website: www.parenting-plus.com and through the BabySparks website.



Emma Porter

CLASS 4A

Emma is an Arizona native and currently lives in north central Phoenix. She received her degree in Early Childhood Education from Arizona State University. Over the past 11 years Emma has taught multiple ages ranging from preschool to fourth grade. In addition to NCPG, she is at Christ Church School part-time teaching the Play & Learn class as well as working for All Schools Consulting. As an educator and parent, Emma feels that it is important that adults have the ability to manage their own emotions when responding to children's challenging behaviors. Emma is married and is a mom to two young boys, Carson (3.5) and Cameron (8 months). In her free time, she enjoys spending quality time with her family, trying local restaurants with her friends, watching anything on Bravo TV and volunteering at a local dog rescue. She is excited to be a part of the upcoming new year with NCPG.



Annemarie Mansour

CLASS 4B

Annemarie has her bachelor's degree in Psychology and Child Development from Saint Mary's College of California, and her Master's Degree in Psychology from Palo Alto University. Annemarie has worked as a Family Behavioral Specialist, helping families with children ages 0-6 manage behavior problems to ready their children for kindergarten. She is currently the Preschool Director at Saint Thomas the Apostle School. Annemarie is also a Love and Logic facilitator, has received training in the fundamentals of Conscious Discipline and is a certified Kidding Around Yoga instructor. Annemarie and her husband Nick have been married for 23 years and have four children; Nick (22), Isabelle (20), Marissa (18) and Joseph (14). Her favorite days are those spent with her family relaxing at home, reading, cooking and making each other laugh.



Lisa Ameis

PRE K or JR. KINDER

Lisa Ameis is a native of Phoenix, Arizona. She attended Northern Arizona University, as well as Central Arizona College where she obtained her CDA certification. Lisa has been married to her husband Todd for 32 years, and is a mother to 6 children. She has over 30 years of teaching experience in the early childhood classroom setting. She has taught Pre-K for the past 14 years at Christ Church School. Lisa is excited to start her new position this year at CCS as Curriculum and Marketing Coordinator. She spent many years serving on parent boards, site councils, and PTOs while her children were in school. She was also very involved with her children both with National Charity League and Boys Team Charity. In her free time, she loves to hang out with her family and travel with her husband Todd, now that they are empty nesters. Lisa is looking forward to her first year with NCPG! She has always believed the days are long, but the years go fast and has learned to treasure the experiences she has gained as a teacher and a parent.



Jemeille Ackourey

KINDERGARTEN

Jemeille Ackourey has been with NCPG since 2014. She comes to us with a perspective on positive youth development that has been developed through her 40 yrs of professional experience, education and training. Currently, Jemeille is in private practice as a Licensed Professional Counselor offering therapeutic services to individuals and couples. Jemeille also provides executive coaching and corporate training. Prior to her work as a psychotherapist, Jemeille spent 25 years with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix where she retired as their VP of Operations. During her time with the Clubs she trained staff on youth development strategies and leadership development; designed programs; developed community coalitions and helped to grow the Clubs to one of the largest community based agencies in Arizona. Jemeille's greatest joy is her family. Her marriage to Karl has brought together a blended family of 5 children plus their growing families.



Michelle Cox

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

Michelle has been married for 25 years and is the mother of two adults and two teens. She loves to spend time with her family as they discover new places and explore the outdoors. She also loves to create — the messier the art project the better. Michelle is the founder of Build Family Connection and has coached and taught hundreds of parents over the last 11 years. Michelle graduated with a BS in Education from Northern Arizona University, completed "The Choice in Coaching: Arbinger Mastery Training for Coaches," a graduate of the Coachville School of Coaching, and is a PCC certified coach with the International Coaching Federation.



3 Ways to Create More Happiness

Here are 3 simple ways to find more happiness in the now.

- 1 Find more present moments through the practice of meditation & mindfulness
- 2 Practice gratitude
- 3 Trust the process and let go of your attachment to outcomes

Reflection for today...

How can I be happy today, no matter what external events are happening in my life?

Photo by Raul Angel on Unsplash

Class Descriptions

NEWBORN A

This class provides the foundation for a successful transition into motherhood. There are many new things to learn about a newborn's development, behaviors, and most importantly needs. Feel free to bring your infant with you to class if you have him/her during the school year!

NEWBORN B

All the infant "firsts" are shared and cherished in these important first six months. Bedtime routines are established and new foods are introduced. Please feel free to bring your infant (0-6 months old) to class with you!

CLASS 1A

The entirety of the first year is discussed and celebrated. The child is developing new behaviors and reaching milestones in crawling, walking and babbling.

CLASS 1B

Bye-bye baby-hello toddler! Mobility and exploration are under way. In this class we cover discipline, napping, language development and social skills. We also discuss preschool readiness, preparing for siblings and potty training. The goal of this class is to help prepare parents for the many transitions that are a part of this stage of development.

CLASS 2A & CLASS 2B

Helping parents prepare and guide their children through the major transitions of this stage and year ahead. Preparing for preschool, potty training, moving from the crib to the bed, behavioral changes and social interaction are the goals of this class.

CLASS 3A & CLASS 3B

This class focuses on the struggle for power between child and parent, providing useful and effective parenting strategies while respecting the child's need for independence. Sibling interaction and the family are discussed as well.

CLASS 4A & CLASS 4B

This class devotes much time to children's social development, covering a variety of issues from anger management to conflict resolution to peer relationships. Additionally, topics in this class will include: establishing family rules, building self-confidence and self-reliance, and encouraging cognitive and physical development.

PRE-K OR JR. KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Pre-K or Junior Kindergarten)

Parents discuss and prepare for the next step into kindergarten, including but not limited to: choosing a school that meets their child's and family's needs, learning math and reading tools that will enhance kindergarten success, and finding ways to encourage self-confidence and independence. Also, every class features take home crafts and recipes that focus on kindergarten readiness skills.

KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Kindergarten)

Come to this class for support, encouragement, and many laughs as we help moms and their children transition into elementary school. Topics will focus on nurturing a child's autonomy, helping them set appropriate boundaries, fostering their awareness, and encouraging responsibility.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Grades 1-4)

NCPG has added elementary classes to help Valley parents navigate the challenges of parenting increasingly independent children. These classes will cover topics such as: how to partner with your child's teacher and school, bullying recognition and prevention, nutrition for learning, deepening your relationship with your child as he/she gets older, parenting in the digital age, raising your child to be an innovator, and encouraging autonomy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)

NCPG has added Pre-Teen/Middle School Coaching class to help parents prepare for the teenage years. These classes will help you communicate without arguing, build a relationship that will last, and become a trusted resource your child will turn to for guidance. Come learn the skills you need to enjoy the teen years and parent with confidence.

Class Progression

(Based on age of child on September 1st)

TRACK A

NEWBORN A
Monique Nelson

CLASS 1A
Blaire Hinks

CLASS 2A
Marina Awerbuch

CLASS 3A
Chelsea Kunde

CLASS 4A
Emma Porter

TRACK B

NEWBORN B
Monique Nelson

CLASS 1B
Amy Stewart

CLASS 2B
Kristin Klecka

CLASS 3B
Barb Grady

CLASS 4B
Annemarie Mansour

MERGE

PRE-K
Pre-K or Jr. Kinder
Lisa Ameis

KINDERGARTEN
Child in Kinder
Jemeille Ackourey

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Grades 1 - 4
Michelle Cox

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Grades 5 - 8
Michelle Cox

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 starting in Pre-K..

For all other classes, placement will be based on child's birthday.
Track A is September-March and Track B is April-August.

7 Tips for a Successful School Year

Source: Mike Broch, Positive Discipline

For many children and their parents, returning to school is a joyful occasion—reconnecting with school friends and families, the excitement of purchasing school supplies and new clothes, the return to the comfort and normalcy of the school routine, and, of course, the gift of a little breathing space for Mom and Dad.

But for many other children, the new school year brings with it a large dose of anxiety: Will I struggle like I did last year? Will I make any new friends? Will I be bullied or isolated? Will the teacher like me?

And for many parents, the specter of another year dealing with various school-related issues, perhaps foremost of which is homework, creates its own anxiety, as suggested by the above quotes. To help reduce that anxiety and replace it with a sense of joyful anticipation of what the school year can bring, I offer the following seven parenting tips for a happy, successful school year:

1. Project a positive attitude about school and confidence that your children will experience success and happiness. Communicate to your children through words and body language that you are excited about the new school year and confident they will enjoy it. Children pick up on the messages we send, so make those messages optimistic and hopeful.

2. Establish supportive home routines. The school year calls for renewed attention to home routines, such as those surrounding bedtime, morning, and meals. Children appreciate and thrive on the routines that we parents establish. It gives them comfort and security and better prepares them for the routines and expectations of the school day. One routine consistently correlated with success in

school is the family dinner, all family members around the table together—make it a habit as often as possible.

3. Avoid the temptation to make schooling a competitive sport by over-focusing on grades. Our culture is plagued by competitiveness in all areas of life—sports, fashion, looks, talents, wealth, and more. Let's protect our children's school experience from this hyper-competitiveness by focusing on their own gifts and talents and avoiding comparisons with others.

4. Remember that homework is a contract between the teacher and the student, not between the teacher and the parent. Somewhere along the way, many parents have come to believe that children are incapable of doing their own homework. This is not good for the child, who needs

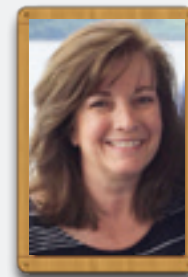
to learn how to deal with his own responsibilities, or for the parent, whose anxiety level and patience are often strained to the breaking point over homework issues. Homework is the child's responsibility, not the parents'. (And school personnel need to assist in this area by ensuring that the amount of homework is reasonable and the quality is such that the child is capable of doing it on her own.)

5. Establish family rules related to TV, computer, and video game usage. There is a place for electronic learning (and playing), but every minute in front of a monitor is a minute away from family communication. No one forms a healthy relationship with a monitor; we only form relationships with real people, and home is where those relationships and the life skills surrounding them are born and developed.

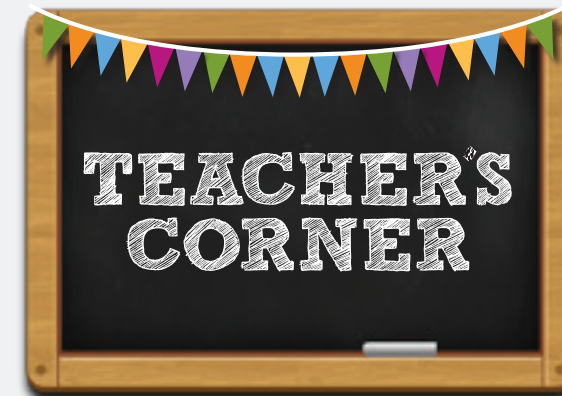
6. Make optimum use of parent/child time during trips to and from school. Make travel time between school and home a cell phone-free experience. Think of the message we send our children when our attention is given to others on the way to and from school. And think of the message we give them when we put aside our cell phone and tune into what's going on in their lives.

7. Avoid the temptation to over-involve your children in after-school activities. Life is getting busier every year for our children, as well as for the parent, usually Mom, whose job it has become to spend late afternoons and evenings as family chauffeur. How many activities our children should participate in is a personal choice, and a key word here is balance—for example, one sport at a time might be a good rule of thumb. If we adults insist on leading harried, distracted, overworked lives, let us at least spare our children that. Children need far fewer activities after school and far more family time with Mom and Dad.

And one more tip for good measure: Take care of yourself. I love the metaphor of the oxygen mask, in the familiar words of the flight attendant: "If you are traveling with a small child, put the oxygen mask on yourself first, then on your child." We are no help to anyone if we are not taking good care of ourselves. Take care of yourself—physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, relationally, and spiritually. Make it a priority—for your sake, as well as for your children's.



Lisa



Blaire

What have you found to be helpful in developing a strong, deep relationship with your child(ren)?

Lisa Ameis : Pre-K or Jr. Kinder

Talk and time. I have always believed the best way to know your child is simply to talk to them. Quality time spent with them is the greatest gift you can give a child.

Blaire Hinks : 1A

Listen to them. Really try to understand them in their moment. Also, admit that when you're wrong and say you're sorry.



THREE MUST-DO ESTATE PLANNING TASKS NOW THAT YOU'RE A PARENT

By: Paula Hannah, Law Offices of Paula Hannah

Parents of young children have a lot on their plates between work, school, and activities. It's hard to think about the future when you're so focused on the present. However, there is something you should add to your to do list: estate planning. An estate plan is critical to ensuring that your children will always be in good hands — not just financially, but also emotionally and physically.

Young families do not need extensive assets to need an estate plan. Your estate is simply all the assets you leave behind when you die, including your bank accounts, 401(k) plan, home, and cars. An estate plan helps ensure your assets go to the right people, your debts are paid, and your family is taken care of. Without an estate plan, your estate would typically go through probate, which can be a lengthy and costly court process to settle debt and distribute assets.

Here are three must-do estate planning steps for young families:

1. CREATE A WILL AND NAME A GUARDIAN FOR YOUR CHILDREN

For parents, the most important reason to make a will is to name a guardian for your children. You don't want surviving family members fighting over who should do it, and you don't want this decision left to the courts, which could result in your children living with a relative you haven't spoken to in years, or even in foster care.

By naming a guardian, you get to choose a person who shares your values and who you believe will do a good job raising your kids. This is one of the most essential things any parent should do, and do immediately.

2. BUY LIFE INSURANCE

Raising children can be very expensive. If either parent dies, life insurance ensures there are funds available for the other to continue providing for surviving children. And if both parents die, life insurance can be used to raise the children or to fund the cost of a college education.

For most parents, term life insurance makes the most sense. Premiums are affordable, and the coverage will be in effect long enough for your child to grow up into adulthood and no longer be financially dependent. But if you have a child with special needs who is likely to need care even after you pass away, a whole life policy can provide permanent insurance protection that will leave your child the financial resources necessary to provide lifelong care.

3. CONSIDER SETTING UP A TRUST

If you die before your children turn 18, your kids can't directly take control of any inheritance you leave them. This can create problems. The court might appoint someone to manage the assets you leave to your children. If you want to specify who will manage assets, how your money and property should be used for your children, and when your children should directly receive a transfer of wealth, consider creating a trust.

When you create a trust, you can name a designated person to manage money on behalf of your children and provide instructions for how the trustee can use the money to help care for your kids as they grow. Trusts aren't just for the wealthy. Anyone who wants more control over how their assets will help their children after they're gone should think about creating one.

Thinking about the possibility of passing away with young children is difficult. But it's worth taking the time to talk to a lawyer about creating an estate plan. It is an essential part of protecting your family and it can save you significant money in the long run. With an estate plan in place, you will have peace of mind knowing your children will be provided for even if the worst happens to you.



LAW OFFICES OF PAULA HANNAH, PLC

is a boutique firm based in Phoenix, Arizona. Paula has been a member of NCPG for 10 years. Her two daughters attend All Saints' Episcopal Day School.

Paula provides comprehensive estate planning services and takes pride in making the estate planning process as easy and enjoyable as possible for her clients. At the Law Offices of Paula Hannah, PLC you can enjoy the benefits of working with a licensed attorney to create an estate plan that protects your family — on your schedule, for a

reasonable fixed cost, and through a process that is designed to best serve you as the parents of young children.

Contact Paula at (602) 922-4010 or Paula@PaulaHannahLaw.com or visit PaulaHannahLaw.com.



Summer Fun!





Am I doing this MOM THING right?

By Natalie Dalpiaz
thecreativemom.com/this-mom-thing

As long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a mom. I grew up in a family of 7 kids, and I watched my own mother- who is a saint in disguise- totally rock motherhood. In my eyes, there wasn't anything my mom couldn't do, and I wanted to be just like her. I grew up playing with dolls, wearing my mom's high heels, and pretending I was the greatest thing in the world- a mother. I would spend hours dreaming of doing motherly things like baking fancy cakes, folding laundry, and going grocery shopping. While my friends wanted to grow up to be teachers, ballerinas, fashion designers or prize winning authors, I knew I wanted nothing more than to be a stay at home mom.

My dream came true when I was 21 and my husband and I were blessed with our first baby, a perfect boy with giant blue eyes. Now, 10 years later, we have a crew of 4 kids- 3 boys and a girl. We are so grateful for the life we've been given. We have a beautiful home, we have great jobs, our children are all happy and healthy, and our marriage has grown in love over the years. I live in the perfect fairytale of motherhood I dreamed up so many years ago.

But what I didn't expect would come along with my fairytale is the mountain of guilt and inadequacies I would feel every day. With every pregnancy test- positive or negative, every baby born, every first step, every first day of school, every birthday, and every report card comes those thoughts and feelings of self-doubt. If you are a mother, you know what I'm talking about.

I'm talking about those lingering thoughts that I didn't do enough, or that I did too much, that I could have tried harder, or maybe I should have relaxed a little. Basically, I'm sure I'm doing this mom thing all wrong. I either let them watch too much TV, or I'm too strict with their screen time. I either don't have the camera handy when I should, or I'm too camera-happy, and miss out on living in the moment. I'm either way too early for everything, or way too late- and it doesn't matter anyway because I forgot it's my turn to bring the treats. I'm sure I don't exercise enough, eat clean enough, or wear the right kind of makeup. Sometimes I don't make my kids brush their teeth at night, because it isn't worth the fight, and I'm sure they're going to have rotten oral health because of it. I haven't been to the salon in a year, ok two years, which makes me feel like a slob, but I'll probably wait another 6 months, just in case I seem too high-maintenance. My house is a mess, but I don't dare clean it, because Pinterest says good moms have sticky floors and happy kids- and we all know I want to be a good mom. Oh my goodness, it never ends!



I remember the day I decided enough was enough. School had just started for my kids, and we had football, tumbling, soccer, piano, scouts, and church responsibilities on top of our daily tasks. I was feeling overwhelmed and I'm sure I was in a rush, as I always am, and I hurried out the door to one place or another. I dreaded coming home that evening to the mound of dirty dishes in the sink, the peas my toddler had thrown all over the floor during lunchtime, and the never ending laundry pile that was taunting me. Besides, I didn't know what I was going to make for dinner, and I'd already picked up pizza 2 nights that week, so that was out of the question. For some reason, my husband had made it home before I did that day, and when I walked in the door, he had the dishes done, the peas all swept up, and was working on folding that pesky laundry pile. You would think my heart would have melted in a million pieces and I would have gushed with gratitude, but no. I was furious! After all, I am a stay at home mom. I should have been able to handle this situation on my own. I shouldn't need my husband to come home after a long day at work and tend to my responsibilities. I felt so worthless- and it made me angry! You better believe I gave him a good lecture about doing other people's dishes without them asking you to, and sweeping the floor without thinking about how it would make me feel! I really let him have it. And his response was simply, "I wanted to do something that would make you happy."

In that moment, watching my husband so selflessly serve me, I realized that he was right — he always is — I should have been happy. And I decided that I would be. I have spent every day of my motherhood picking myself apart- I have never been able to be content or satisfied with the person I am. I decided right then and there, to STOP IT! I decided to stop the negative self-talk, stop comparing myself to others, and stop feeling like I don't measure up. I decided I am going to try to do my best- and then I'm going to be OK with it. I am never going to be perfect, no one is, and that's fine.

I have realized that my self-worth isn't in throwing the perfect party or having a sparkly clean home. My self-worth is in raising good kids and loving their dad, and whatever else comes with it is icing on the cake. I found this quote that has made all the difference in how I view motherhood.

"I don't want to drive up to the pearly gates in a shiny sports car, wearing beautifully, tailored clothes, my hair

expertly coiffed, and with long, perfectly manicured fingernails. I want to drive up in a station wagon that has mud on the wheels from taking kids to scout camp. I want to be there with a smudge of peanut butter on my shirt from making sandwiches for a sick neighbors children. I want to be there with a little dirt under my fingernails from helping to weed someone's garden. I want to be there with children's sticky kisses on my cheeks and the tears of a friend on my shoulder. I want the Lord to know I was really here and that I really lived." (Marjory Pay Hinckley, *Small and Simple Things*, 2003)



Now that I look back on that 6 year old girl who wanted to be just like her mom, I see my own daughter, who wants to be just like me. I'm sure my mom wasn't a perfect mom, but to me, she has always been perfect. Growing up, I never saw the dirty floors or the smudges on the windows, I never heard the countless prayers she's offered in my behalf, and I never knew how daunting her task was. But now that I'm walking in her shoes, I know.

Knowing that generations of women have gone before me, and have struggled with far more than I have, knowing that they have felt beat down and worn out makes every moment of motherhood that much more precious. I know that I can choose my own destiny, whether it's misery or joy. But when I choose joy, just like my own mom did all those years ago, it makes all the difference in my life and the lives of my children and family.

Meet the Board 2021-2022



Megan Hedstrom *President*

Kids names/ages: Griffin (5), Declan (3), Sloane (6 months)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Pre-K

Where did you grow up? Arizona

What made you decide to do the board another year? Love meeting mamas outside my own class and giving back to an

organization that has given me so much!

Favorite family restaurant? Lou's at Papago

What made you choose your children's names? My heritage is Irish so I've always been drawn to Irish names.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? I got a at home cycle bike during quarantine and my son was watching me and the instructor had said to turn up the resistance. My son goes "mom she said turn it up!"...I had not in fact turned it up!

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Each phase is so fun but I love when they are learning how to talk! I also loved the newborn stage this go around. Didn't love it with my first two but I think I made a conscious effort to enjoy it knowing it would be my last time.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Get involved. It's how you make the most out of your time in NCPG.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Obviously the unconditional love for you kids, but it's also taught me to be a better person. I practice what I preach and have implemented deep breathing too!

What is your biggest pet peeve? Being late

What is a family tradition that you have?: Each night at dinner we do peak and pit of our day.

How do you de-stress? Asking for help!



Ilyssa Reading *Vice-President*

Kids names/ages: Kate will be 4 in February and Oliver will be 2 in December

Where did you grow up? Scottsdale, AZ

What made you decide to do the board for another year? Are you in the same role or a new one? This is my third year on the board. After two years as a membership co-chair, I

decided to take the leap to the Vice President position. NCPG has given me so much over the last 4 years so I wanted to be able to give a little something back.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can touch my tongue to my nose.

People might not know: I have run 3 marathons.

Favorite family restaurant: Anywhere with a patio where my kids can run around!

Favorite restaurant with no kids: City Hall

What made you choose your children's names? Kate's full name is Catherine Olive after my great grandmother and my husband's grandmother. Oliver has always been my favorite boy name and his middle names, Aaron Ross, are after each of my grandfathers.

What is your favorite "age" so far with your kids? It constantly changes, but I'm really loving 3 (when my daughter is in a good mood!).

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Come to class as often as you can and make plans with other moms in your group!

How do you de-stress: I go for a run or hop on my Peloton. Exercise is always my go to!



Cristina Kiernan *Treasurer*

Kids names/ages: Quinn (5) and Cece (3)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Elementary

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Phoenix, but moved to Dallas for college and then SF. My husband and our daughters just moved back to AZ three years ago to be close to family.

What made you want to join the board? It's a great way to get involved and meet other moms.

What made you decide to do the board another year? I've cherished the friends I've met through NCPG and wanted a chance to be on the board when we're able to be in person again.

Favorite family restaurant? The Collins, Sushiholic, Ingo's, LGO, Rita's Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Tratto, Virtu

What made you choose your children's names? Quinn and Elliott are two of our grandmother's maiden names from each side. Celia Grace is after my mom's middle name,

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Quinn told my husband to skip work for her kinder graduation party and to just say he was sick. His comment was that wasn't honest and a lie and her response was to say a Hail Mary and God would forgive him....we're in trouble!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Day at a spa with a good book and an afternoon glass of wine.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? They've all had their ups and downs but honestly watching their friendship grow during all of this craziness has been pretty magical.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Get involved as much as you can - I was worried about making it to all classes as a working mom but it's been a great way to meet new people.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Watching them figure things out on their own and to watch my girls growing bond.

What is your biggest pet peeve? Not being able to finish a meal without someone pulling on me all of dinner.

What is a family tradition that you have? Princess Unicorn Birthday Breakfast (yogurt with rainbow sprinkles)

How do you de-stress? A glass of wine at girls night or on the patio with my hubby.



Ashley Wisdom *Executive Admin.*

Kids names/ages: Emerson (2), Ellory (4) and Everett (6)

Where did you grow up? Mesa, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I loved meeting members outside of my class and it was really fun being on the inside and seeing how the organization operates.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can touch my tongue to my nose, that's about it! lol

Favorite family restaurant: Ingo's or Flower Child

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Nobu

What made you choose your children's names? They all start with the letter E and their middle name is a family name.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? My daughter always says "don't worry about it..." when she's doing something she shouldn't be.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I'd go to a fancy resort with my girlfriends and have a spa/pool day.

(continued on next page)

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? Age 4 is the sweet spot for us. I think they are easier to travel with and are better at expressing what they need/want.

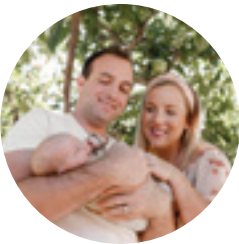
What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? We are so happy to have you here! NCPG is such a wonderful organization and it feels like a safe space you can say it all and not be judged.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? I love how kids love unconditionally and always make me laugh when I’m having a tough day.

What is your biggest pet peeve? People who are always late!

What is a family tradition that you have? We always get a Christmas ornament when we travel somewhere new.

How do you de-stress? Exercise! Love Pure Barrel! and happy hour with friends.



Alex Dembow *Sponsorship*

Kids names/ages: Declan, 11 months

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 1A

Where did you grow up? Sacramento, CA

What made you want to join the board? I was convinced to get more involved by Michelle van Der Werf and am continually inspired by how many great women we have at NCPG as a sup-

port system to tap into.

Do you have a hidden talent? Being a master organizer and decluttering Queen! So stress relieving for me if anyone needs help with projects.

People might not know: I’m obsessed with rap and love my Bay Area hyphe music which people are always surprised by.

Favorite family restaurant: We love going to Merci French Restaurant in Old Town. Great patio for families and it’s BYOB!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Steak 44

What made you choose your children’s names? Declan was a name my grandmother suggested. I had a high risk pregnancy and every time we went in they always said he is “doing good/doing great” and when we saw Declan means “full of goodness” it sealed the deal.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids: He isn’t talking yet but it was pretty funny to see my husband dealing with a massive blow out on a recent flight and ending with the baby wrapped in a garbage bag.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Take a long run and make a fancy dinner from scratch at home while drinking wine and bumping my own playlist.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? So far, I know the newborn stage wasn’t my favorite. Each day keeps getting better with more personality shining through.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? The more you put in, the more you get out. It’s such a great place to make meaningful relationships with other moms who are going through the exact same stages/ worries/concerns as you so embrace it and enjoy the whole process.



Hayley McInrue *Sponsorship*

Kids names/ages: Connor (6) Darby (4 going on 16)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Kinder

Where did you grow up? Newport Beach, CA

What made you decide to do the board another year? I chose to return as a member of the board this year mainly because of the

relationships I built last year. Board meetings are just another excuse to spend a school night with my girlfriends. The dedication the board has for NCPG is incredible and we are all there for the same reason, to provide an educational safe space for moms.

Do you have a hidden talent? I am known to break it down on the dance floor

with a wicked Roger Rabbit and Running Man.

People might not know: I lived in China for a year working for my current company, E&J Gallo Winery

Favorite family restaurant: Doordash George Wang’s Chinese and eating in the backyard

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: The Collins

What made you choose your children’s names? Both kiddos have family names as their middle names, but their first names were random. We decided on Darby as we were driving to the hospital. Looking at her now, that name fits her perfectly.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Tennis lesson, massage and boozy lunch with some of my best NCPG mamas.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I have been loving 6 and my son being in Kindergarten. Everyday he comes home with excitement in his voice as he tells me about what he learned. Some days are better than others but so far, 6 is great. 3 is the worst!!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Dive in and get involved. You get out of NCPG what you put in and the amount of connections and support I have gained through NCPG has been incredible.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? I love being my kid’s #1 fan. Cheering them on at soccer games, watching them in school performances and seeing them learn new skills gives me the best mama feels.

What is your biggest pet peeve? I can’t stand painting with my kids. Sounds awful but the mess drives me nuts.

What is a family tradition that you have? When it’s someone’s birthday in the house, we all wake them up in the morning with a cupcake and singing Happy Birthday.

How do you de-stress? Pilates followed by a glass of wine.



Mary Patterson *Sponsorship*

Kids names/ages: Charlotte 2.5, James 4 months

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 3A

Where did you grow up? St. Louis, MO and San Diego, CA

What made you want to join the board? I wanted to become more involved and meet

some new moms, especially since I joined last year when everything was virtual.

Do you have a hidden talent? Nope!

Favorite family restaurant? We love going to Luci’s at the Orchard.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone

What made you choose your children’s names? We liked Charlotte because it’s a classic name and our son James is actually the 4th! We also like that it’s a classic name.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Charlotte loves to say “Mommy hold you” a thousand times per day (instead of mommy hold me)

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Definitely at the spa!

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? Charlotte’s current age, 2.5. Her little personality is really starting to shine through and now that she’s talking so much it’s fun to have conversations with her.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? This is not only a great organization to meet other moms, but also a fantastic learning resource that helps you navigate the ups and downs of parenthood. Try your best to attend not only the classes but the playdates too!



Rachel Hall *Alternate Director*

Kids names/ages: Our son, Charlie, is 3 and our daughter, Grace, is 18 months.

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? Phoenix, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I wanted to get more involved with NCPG and meet more moms in the Valley.

Do you have a hidden talent? Baking. My Dad is an incredible baker and I learned a lot from him. One of my earliest childhood memories is baking Christmas cookies and eating cookie dough with my Dad and sister.

People might not know: I have worked in the corporate events industry for 13+ years. I love event planning and logistics; having back up plans for my back up plans. The combination of sales, creativity, client management and organization keep me on my toes. The feeling after an incredible event goes seamlessly is pure magic.

Favorite family restaurant? Sushiholic in Arcadia

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Arcadia Farms with girlfriends and The Collins or Hillstone for date night

What made you choose your children’s names? We decided to pass on family names to our children – Charles Robert after our Grandfathers and Grace Virginia after our Grandmothers. My husband’s family has a long lineage of Charlies and I love the name so that was a very easy decision.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? We have two Golden Retrievers, Remington and Ruger. Our son thinks it’s hilarious the dogs get to go to the bathroom outside. He loves trying to go outside right next to them. My husband also thinks it’s hilarious which doesn’t help the situation haha.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would do a workout class in the morning followed by a day at the Spa at Camelback Inn. Happy hour with friends would be the cherry on top of a great day.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I really enjoyed the 2s; our son grasped so many new concepts and watching his personality come to life was amazing. Seeing him form opinions on his favorite book, animal, shoes, etc. was wonderful. I really thought we skated by in the tantrum department, but now the 3s are kicking my butt, haha!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Lean on your group for questions — chances are another Mom is going through the same behavior/ milestone/ regression, etc. and can offer tips and perspective.

Serena Baker *Childcare*

Kids names/ages: Harper and Amelia - 2 year old twins

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 3B

Where did you grow up? Phoenix, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I wanted to give back and really jump into NCPG especially after the year of more Isolation than normal.

Do you have a hidden talent? Not that I’ve found yet!

People might not know: I taught for 7 years, 1st, Junior High and High School.

Favorite family restaurant? Over Easy—we love a good family breakfast.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone or City Hall

What made you choose your children’s names? The girls’ middle names are all flowers from Augusta Golf Course, where the Masters is played. My husband is a big time golf lover.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids: Potty training always brings out lots of poop comments — to everyone and everywhere!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Breakfast in bed, pool and spa and then dinner with a friend. I love a good mom staycation.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids?Toddlerhood is where we are now, and it’s pretty amazing to literally see your kids learn. It’s a lot of work, but the watching them grow and change is worth it all.



Jenna Roehm *Childcare*

Kids names/ages: Riley, 2.5 years old

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 2B

Where did you grow up? Born in Upstate New York, but raised here!

People might not know: My husband and I met at Pump It Up (I am sure you are all familiar) in high school. A few years later, my sister was the

one who insisted that Nick and I should hang out, and the rest is history!

Favorite family restaurant: Ingos

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Anywhere with a view!

What made you choose your children’s names?

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? “What’s going on here” Mom, Timon says that!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Mani/pedi, Netflix and a glass of wine

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? Right now! Love seeing her personality shine through and watch her become so independent.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Be vulnerable as you are not the only one going through the stage you are in! Don’t be afraid to ask for help.



Ashley McFate *Communications*

Kids names/sges: Emery, 3 years old

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 3B

Where did you grow up? Phoenix, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I loved NCPG and wanted to be more involved.

Do you have a hidden talent? Because of years of yoga I can touch my elbows behind my back.

Favorite family restaurant: Ladera in Central Phoenix

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Rokerji

What made you choose your children’s names? We both agreed on Emery pretty quickly and Victoria is my middle name that I passed down for Emery’s middle name.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would do a yoga class and then go to the spa with my girlfriends

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I think right now is my favorite. Emery is definitely a handful but being able to talk to her and understand her perspective is really cool. She’s really showing me how to appreciate the small things in life.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Get involved and make the most out of your classes. I still remember my first few classes with Blaire in 1B and her tips are still helping me now, 2 years later.



Amanda Shaw *Communications*

Kids names/ages: Milly (5), Frankie (3), Gwendolyn (1)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Kindergarten

Where did you grow up? Seattle, Washington

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? This is my second year on the board in the same

role, Communications. Since last year was not a typical year, I really wanted to come back and experience things in a different way. I’m really looking forward to getting to know the other board members more and hopefully experiencing some in-person meetings this year!

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People might not know: I recently left my job in sports (which I had done for 16 years) to pursue a completely new career and start my own food business. I'm super excited to be launching later this year!

Favorite family restaurant? LGO. Pizza. All day. Every day!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Vecina! We love that it's small with that neighborly feel. The food is AMAZING! And we can ride our bikes or walk there. It is definitely our go-to date spot.

What made you choose your children's names? Milly was a name that I always liked! As soon as I started a baby name list, Milly was at the top. My hub-by wasn't in love with it at first but after months of back and forth, he also fell in love with it and it totally fits our daughter! Frankie's real name is Franklin, which my husband came up with. We were having a hard time with boy names and my husband threw it out while we were on date night and after he suggested it we both knew that was the one! Gwendolyn (who we call "Gwenie") was a family name that we both loved and wanted to use if we had another daughter.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? How do you pick just one!? Apparently I use the phrase "the worst" more than I should and now my son, Frankie, uses it for EVERYTHING! "Brushing my teeth is the worst! Getting in the car is the worst! Picking up my toys is the worst!" So I am definitely trying hard to not say things that I want repeated a hundred times a day!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? My day would definitely include some kind of workout (hiking or tennis or a really good workout class). Then I would need some kind of pool / spa with girlfriends followed with lots of drinks and really good food !

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Ohhh this is such a hard question to answer. To be honest, the stages that each of them are in right now are pretty great! Our youngest is learning how to talk and repeats everything, the good and the bad! Frankie has such a funny personality and it is really coming alive now! Our oldest, Milly, just started kindergarten and is becoming so independent. It's pretty cool to see her blossom at school and see how each of them are coming into their own.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Get to know the girls in your class! It may be cliché but they are going through everything you're experiencing and it is truly a special bond when you can build a community with these amazing women.



Channa Abramson

Community Outreach

Kids names/ages: Max (5), Grant (3)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Kindergarten

Where did you grow up? I was born & raised in North Dakota, lived a short time in Minneapolis and have been in the Phoenix area since 2008.

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? NCPG has been such a great network of wonderful people and I wanted the opportunity to get involved & meet more awesome mamas. This is my second year on the board, last year I was one of the Social Directors.

Favorite family restaurant? Isabella's Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Postino, City Hall, and there are so many others I want to try.

What made you choose your children's names? Max is named after his great grandfather, Grant is a name we liked, and it was a must that their names are easily spelled & pronounced.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Doing something active outside, brunch with friends, a pool/spa day & a good book

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I loved the age of 2-3. They were cracking me up daily with their personalities and comprehension. Not to mention packing for travel got lighter and easier.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? NCPG has been a great source of education and support. Each member is here to learn and meet other parents. Participate when you can... you truly get what you put in!

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? The unconditional love you give & receive and the consistent reminders of what's really important in life.



Katrina Makhni

Community Outreach

Kids names/ages: Amara (4), Sienna (5 weeks)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Pre-K

Where did you grow up?: Indiana

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one?: 5th year in NCPG, 2nd year on the board. Love NCPG and wanted to get more involved.

Outreach which is a new roll for me this year.

People might not know: I was adopted

Favorite family restaurant: Isabellas Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Mastros

What made you choose your children's names? Names we loved

Funny story/quote from one of your kids: I'm not naked, i'm wearing socks.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Spa, facial, book, my own music, poolside

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Newborn phase — 2 years old

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Eat the burrito.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Watching your child grow, change and develop into an amazing human.

What is a family tradition that you have? We do the peak and the pit (high/low) of our day every night at the dinner table.

How do you de-stress? Get a babysitter.



Jennifer Dupuy

Education

Kids names/ages: Beau (3), Blake (1)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up?: Leawood, Kansas

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? This will be my second year on the Board and second year as one of the Education

Co-Chairs. I am excited to continue to serve on the Board as NCPG has (and continues to) provided me with so much information and support that I like the idea of helping the organization and giving back. Being an Education co-chair, I love having the opportunity to work with and support our NCPG teachers.

Do you have a hidden talent? No but that would be so fun!

Favorite family restaurant? Lou's, LGO or anywhere we can sit outside

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone

What made you choose your children's names? My husband, Mike, has always loved the name Beau so he won that discussion (I love it, too) and then we just like how Blake sounded with Beau.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? "Mom, picking up toys is not my job"

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? A morning hike followed by as many hours as possible at a spa.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Too tough to choose! Each age and stage brings on new developments, discoveries and fun — it's so fun watching them grow into little people!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Go all in — work to get to know your classmates and use the support system that these women provide as you navigate parenthood and life.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? As a former teacher, I love getting to be a part of someone discovering and learning the world — when you're doing that with little people who you've created, it's just incredible!

What is a family tradition that you have? Right now, we're still building our family traditions (so far my husband has gone along with the family holiday PJs :)) but love all of the family time and memory-making that surrounds the holidays.

How do you de-stress? Fresh air and exercise!



Deirdre Opeka

Education

Kids names/ages: Emilia (5 on 11/25), Carter (3 on 9/21)

-2021/2022 NCPG Class — Prek/JK with Lisa Ameis

Where did you grow up? Born in New York, grew up in Tucson, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I was encouraged by my good friend and co chair, Jennifer Dupuy! Im so happy I did, I am incredibly grateful for everything that NCPG has given me along my motherhood journey and it feels good to give back to this organization.

Do you have a hidden talent? Not that I know of :)

Favorite family restaurant: Chelsea's Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Hillstone or Vecina

What made you choose your children's names? Both my children's first names are names we absolutely loved, their middle names are family names, Emilia May is named after my paternal grandmother Anna May, and Carter Robert is named after my husband, his father and his grandfather, all named Robert.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Lately my kids

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? At the spa! A massage, a relaxing steam and lounging by the pool with a margarita and good girlfriends!

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Nothing beats a fresh newborn sleeping on your chest, but as my kids get older they get a lot more fun! Its been amazing to see their personalities emerge as they get more independent

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Don't be afraid to reach out to your teachers and classmates, motherhood can be lonely and that was surprising to me. You have an incredible community in NCPG, don't be afraid to put yourself out there, it will be incredibly rewarding, I promise.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Watching the little people they are each turning into.

What is your biggest pet peeve? Backseat drivers (I currently have two in my car most days :)

What is a family tradition that you have? We have recently started Movie Nights on the weekends, we pop popcorn and all snuggle in on the couch to watch a movie together. It's simple but we all look forward to it during the week, and we love the time together!

How do you de-stress? Pilates, tennis and the occasional spa day!



Liz Anzalone

Events

Kids names/ages: Liliana (Lily) 4, Alexander (Alex) 17 months. Baby girl due in November!

Where did you grow up? Born and raised in California

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? I have loved being able to give back to such a great organization and am looking forward to another year in my new role with special events!

ward to another year in my new role with special events!

Favorite family restaurant? We love Grassroots for family dinners

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Cafe Monarch ranks high on the list for those rare kid free nights!

What made you choose your children's names? My husband and I both love traditional names and incorporating family names with our kids. Lily and Alex

are both named after our grandparents.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? At the spa or the beach with a good book

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I've honestly loved each stage with both of my kids but the toddler stage is just so fun. Their personalities really start to emerge!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? This is such an awesome community of women and was such a life saver during my first year of motherhood. Find ways to jump in and get involved-you won't regret it!



Shauna Schmeisser

Events

Kids names/ages: Stav (3), Ruth (2) and one due in February!

2021/2022 NCPG Class: A

Where did you grow up? Born in California but I've lived here since I was 11.

What made you want to join the board? Last year I was class Rep and I enjoyed it very much,

and so this year I wanted to be even more involved.

Do you have a hidden talent? I am super good at reading food labels and cooking yummy meals for several dietary restrictions.

People might not know: I am very active in the Jewish Community and the City of Scottsdale

Favorite family restaurant: Zin Burger

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Steak 44 or Dominicks

What made you choose your children names? I am half Israeli so I definitely wanted Hebrew names. Stav was born in the Fall and Stav means Autumn in Hebrew. I loved the uniqueness of it. My husband's late father's name was Steven Gustav, so the name honored him as well. It was a strong name and didn't know anyone else (in the U.S.) with his name. Ruth has always been one of my favorite heroines in the Bible. I loved how it was old-fashioned and we also didn't know any young kids with the name. We didn't have a name for her until after she was born, but she looked like a "Ruth" to us.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? My daughter wears Crocs for swimming, and one day she couldn't find one of her shoes. She yelled around the whole facility, "Wheres my "Coc?" "Mom, I can't find my coc."Everyone was laughing.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Definitely at a spa with a good book, and laying outside by the pool

What has been your favorite age so far with your kids? I love the 0-3 months stage. I love all the snuggles.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Go to as many events as possible to meet people!

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? My love continues to grow more and more.

What is your biggest pet peeve? People wearing shoes in my house.

What is a family tradition that you have? We celebrate a small shabbat dinner every Friday night.

How do you de-stress? I do some sort of cardio or strength training about 5 days a week.



Arlee Maracigan

Fundraising

Kids names/ages: Cooper (2.5yrs) and Cash (7 yrs)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 3A

Where did you grow up? Tucson... Beardown Cats!

Favorite family restaurant: Arizona Country Club

(continued on next page)

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Mastros or Nobu

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Pilates, nails, yoga lunch and pool time.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? 2 YEARS Old. It's the best that he is able to have conversation with me.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Use your class and teacher as resources to help you with anything!

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Passing down family traditions that I grew up with.

What is a family tradition that you have? We go to San Diego every summer and stay in a beach house.

How do you de-stress? Take Hot Yoga at Radi8!



Ashley Stewart *Fundraising*

Kids names/ages: Stone Stewart, 2 1/2, Baby due November, 2021!

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 2B

Where did you grow up? Phoenix, AZ

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? I am returning to the board because I like

meeting new people and excited to continue the Fundraising committee role.

People might not know: I am an AZ native! My mom is too. We went to the same grade school and high school.

Favorite family restaurant? We don't take Stone out to eat if we can avoid it!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Vecina, AZ88, Steak 44, Nobu, Ajo Als..so many to choose from.

What made you choose your children's names? Stone is my maiden name.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Stone always makes us laugh. He loves to entertain.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Probably at the spa, enjoying the pool, relaxing with a friend.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? All of them so far!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Stay with it! Life gets busy but it is so rewarding to have a group of women who are moms to connect with.

What is your favorite thing about being a parent? Seeing the world through my son's eyes and having a love that is unconditional.

What is your biggest pet peeve? People who chew loudly.

What is a family tradition that you have? We cook breakfast as a family together every weekend.

How do you de-stress? Walks, bike rides, date nights and wine.



Alexis Smith *Membership*

Kids names/ages: Hunter (3) Selah (1)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? I am a Phoenix native!

What made you want to join the board? I really enjoyed being a new member this year ,and saw it as an opportunity to get more involved with the organization!

Do you have a hidden talent? Not sure if this is a hidden talent, but I've always been a super-fast sleeper. I can fall asleep in a matter of minutes after my head hits the pillow.

People might not know: My mom is from the Dominican Republic and I grew up speaking Spanish.

Favorite family restaurant: Flower Child or Lou's at Papago

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: The Mission

What made you choose your children's names? Before we were pregnant, we knew we wanted to name our first son Hunter. Hunter was one of the names my MIL wanted to name my husband. Selah is a name that I had heard from my best friend's family. I suggested it to my husband, and it was the name he loved the most!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? It would be time spent with my mom. Either shopping and lunch or a morning at the spa.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I like 4-6 months, when they can lay on their own for a period of time without crying, but don't move yet ;) BUT, even better than babies, I do like the toddler stage. Drives you crazy sometime but they are so smart and funny!



Michelle Van Der Werf

Membership

Kids names/ages: Finn(9), Ascher (3), Landon (1)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? Washington state

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? I am excited to be on the Membership team for my second year. I like

interacting with all of the members and serving on the board of such a great organization.

Favorite family restaurant: Greens

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: The Coronado

Funny story/quote from one of your kids: Lately when my 3 year old wants to be able to do something he tells me “I can do it mom, I am big and a half now.”

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I love the toddler years even though they can be a challenge. There is just so much development that is fun to watch and everything is still exiting to them. It is so fun to watch their excitement.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? If you ever feel like you want to schedule a play date or mom meet up then you should! A lot of moms are wishing for the same thing.

What is a family tradition that you have? My mom is from Germany and I always had an advent calendar each Christmas. Now I keep that tradition for my kids and have several every December.

How do you de-stress? I like being active in order to reduce stress. Yoga, hikes or Peloton. A spa day is always great as well.



Aarika Gaona *Public Relations*

Kids names/Ages: Leo 3.5 years old
Lila almost 6 months old

2021/2022 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? I am actually a Phoenix native

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? This is my second year on the board as the Public Relations Director. With

last year being a bit of a strange year for everyone, I definitely wanted to continue on the NCPG board another year. It's a great way for me to stay involved and I really enjoy my role managing our social media accounts!

Do you have a hidden talent? I am weirdly crafty, creative, DIYer, and kind of obsessed with balloon garland creations. Not sure that this is a “hidden talent” but that's all I've got!

People might not know.... That I have my masters in social work, and my full time job, other than mom is as an oncology social worker.

Favorite family restaurant? Any Mexican food really! I love a good marg!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Tough one... Hulas or Windsor for brunch!

What made you choose your children's names? To be perfectly honest, Leo was the only boy name that my husband and I agreed on! Lila is actually my grandmother's name, and we always knew we would use it for a girl if we had a girl one day! So I guess we're really locked into an “L” name if we have a third!

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Oh my goodness, lets see. Leo is at such a hilarious age right now. The other day I came home from work. My husband was outside doing yard work and Leo was inside watching a show. I walked inside to find Leo sitting in front of the TV just eating ice cream out of the carton. Apparently he had asked my husband for ice cream for dessert, my husband forgot, so Leo just helped himself.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would get coffee, have brunch cocktails with girlfriends, then spend the day at the Montelucia spa and pool!

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? This is so tough, I feel like every new age is my “favorite.” I think probably 2.5 ish with Leo. His language, his imagination, it was so fun! He is still really fun, but I think 3 is more challenging than 2! As far as “baby age” I think 6-9 months is the sweet spot!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG?

Get involved, introduce yourself, attend as many classes/events as you can! Really just get to know the moms in your class and within the organization as much as you can! You'll find “your people.” We're all just trying to figure out this crazy thing called motherhood! COME AS YOU ARE, have fun and enjoy this time with friends!



Lindsay Fee *Public Relations*

Kid's names/ages: Emilia, 3 years old
and Monroe, 10 months old

2021/2022 Class: 1B

Where did you grow up? Scottsdale, AZ

What made you want to join the board?

To be involved with an organization that introduced me to so many wonderful moms & friends.

Do you have a hidden talent? Making people laugh

People might not know: I went through over two years of IVF and fertility and had both of my girls naturally with the odds stacked against us. ANYTHING is possible!

Favorite family restaurant: Buck & Rider

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Hillstone

What made you choose your children's names? I loved the name Emmy and just backed it into Emilia. I love Marilyn Monroe so we named our youngest, Monroe.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? My oldest who is 3 is always spouting sass; every time I get off the phone with her papa, it's... “Mama, why is papa so crazy?”

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Spa day and then an early dinner & wine with great friends.

What has been your favorite so far with your kids? All of the milestones are super special.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Stay open minded and allow yourself grace as a parent because there are hard days and beautiful days. It's not always beautiful but it's a beautiful ride.



Christin Salzman *Public Relations*

Kids names/Ages: Charlotte (7), Hannah (4), Frankie (2)

2021/2022 NCPG Class: Pre-K

Where did you grow up? Phoenix

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? I came back to the board because

I wanted to have a more active role in person-last year was rough with everything being virtual.

Do you have a hidden talent? Not sure...

People might not know: I am bilingual

Favorite family restaurant: Oreganos

Favorite restaurant with NO kids: Hillstone or Rokerij

What made you choose your children's names? My husband and I love classic names.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids: My 7yo let my MIL know that I donated some recent “gifts” to GoodWill that she brought over the week before. I totally got called out.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Reading, drinking wine, and binge-watching a good series.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? 4

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG?

Get involved with the moms in your class and don't be afraid to speak your truth in your meetings.



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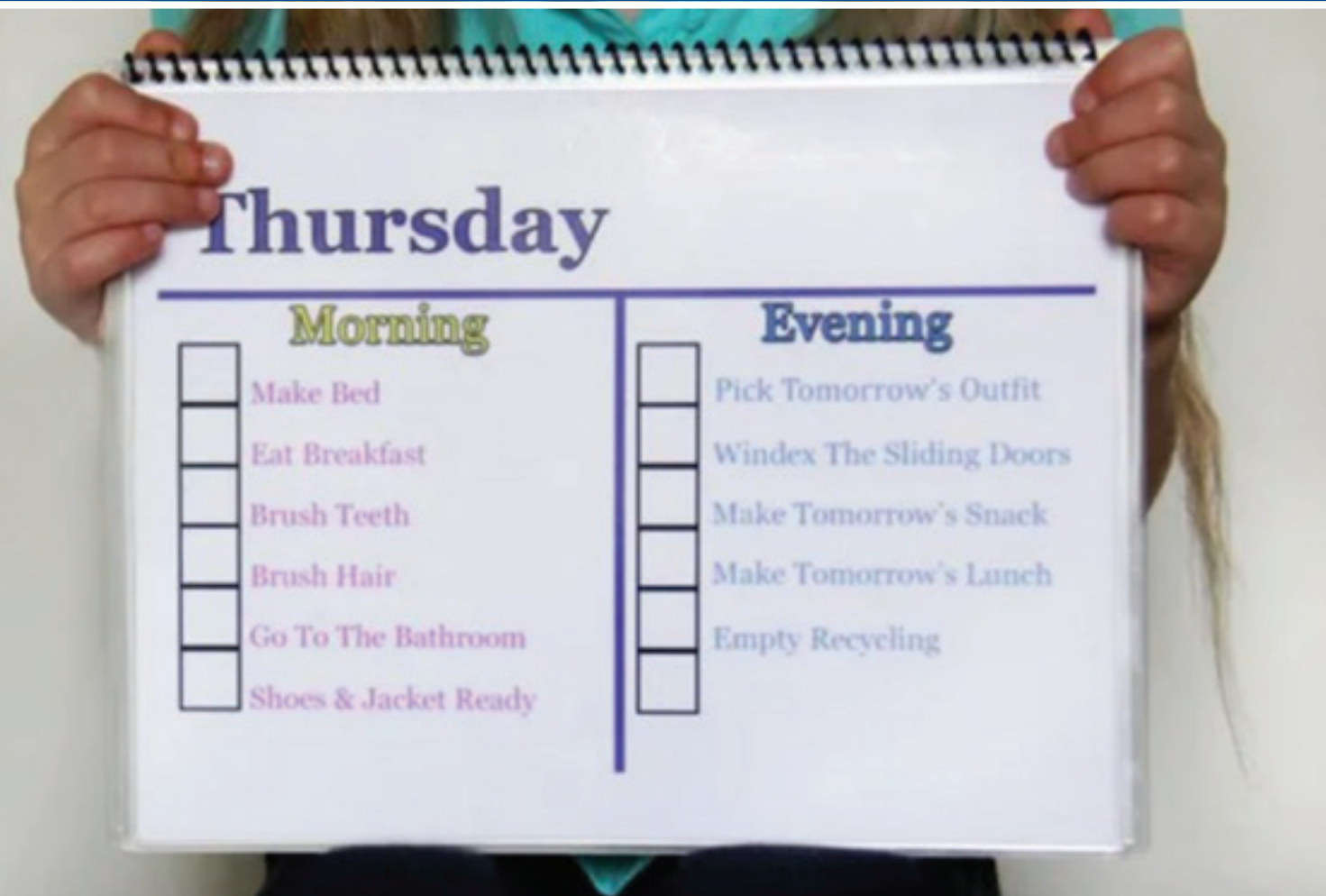
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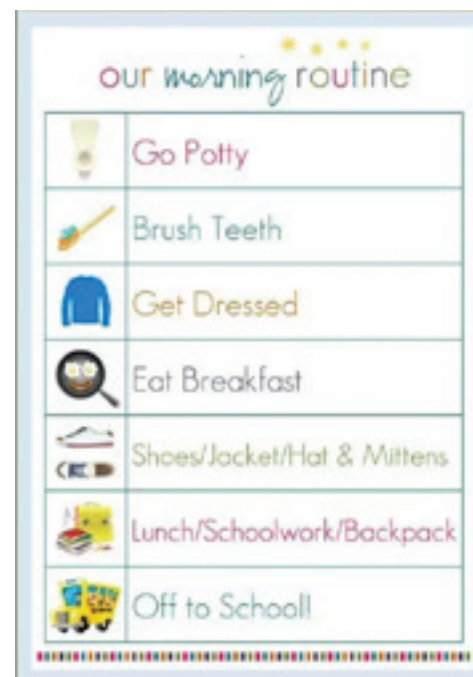
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