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LEARNING CURVE
ALISON BOGLE



FAMILY MATTERS
BETTY RICHARDSON



SMART SCREEN
DR. BENJAMIN KRAMER



FILM REVIEW
JACK KYSER



Iris, 8 years old. Iris loves dancing and playing with friends. "Thanks to Sweet Berry Farm for allowing us to photograph on location."

Photo by Kim Crisler Davidson
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EDITOR'S NOTE

JESS ARCHER

Archer is a writer, a mom of two kids and wife. She is the author of the memoir, Finding Home with the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Billy Graham.

It's taken me 18 years of living in Austin to adjust my expectations about what autumn really means in central Texas. Fall in Austin doesn't mean jackets. And it doesn't mean chilly high school football games with hot cocoa (unless you want to sweat while you drink it.) No, four distinct seasons are a whimsical idea 'round these parts. But if you look closely at an Austin October, you can see incremental changes.

In October we see slight color shifts in the trees and even feel a cooling breeze now and again while we watch our children play on Austin's great playgrounds or participate in fall sports. In October we see our kids get off the school bus and suddenly notice that they've grown. When did that happen?

October also marks a slight shift for *Austin Family Magazine* as I take on the role of head editor. Our wonderful, former editor, Annette Lucksinger, has prepared me well, and I hope that as readers, you feel that what is best about AFM stays intact, while I also lead us onward and upward.

Read on in this month's issue for some great reasons to take your family to a U-Pick Farm, (which, by the way, we do have in central Texas). And as October is fire safety awareness month, please read Steve Kerber's fire safety piece with lifesaving advice. Also this month, our Learning Curve column helps answer a question many parents ask when their children come of preschool age.

Austin, as the new editor of *Austin Family Magazine*, it will be my pleasure to grow and evolve with you. A little bit at a time—like fall in central Texas.



AFM 2022 Young Writers Contest

If I Ruled the WORLD!

Close your eyes and picture what life would be like if you ruled the world. What decisions would you make? What rules would you have for the world? What would your days be like? Now, open your eyes and ... write!

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Austin IN ACTION

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Prize for Young Heroes

The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes is a national award that celebrates inspiring, public-spirited young people from across the U.S. and Canada. Established in 2001 by author T. A. Barron, the Barron Prize annually honors 25 outstanding young leaders ages 8 to 18 who have made a significant positive difference to people or the environment. Every year, 15 winners each receive \$10,000 to support their service work or higher education.

One of the national winners this year is Aseel Rawashdeh, age 17 from Austin, Texas. Aseel developed an inexpensive, environmentally-friendly solution to mosquito-borne illnesses. About her project, Aseel notes, "I've realized the power of dedicating myself to a cause. When the experiments got tedious or things didn't go as expected and I felt the desire to quit, the one thing that kept me going was the prospect of contributing a solution to a global issue."



Aseel in front of her science fair presentation detailing the most important parts of her research.

Austin Parks Foundation: Call for Volunteers

This year, the Austin Parks Foundation is expanding its role at the Austin City Limits Music Festival in October. APF is now recruiting volunteers to promote its mission and fulfill team roles to ensure the smooth operations of one of Austin's most iconic events.

Volunteer opportunities include: Austin Kiddie Limits, Greeters, Media Team,

Divert It!, Rock & Recycle, Hydration Stations, Volunteer HQ, and Backup. All volunteers get to enjoy the festival before or after their shift over the weekends of Oct. 7 and Oct. 14.

In addition to volunteer support, attendees can contribute to Austin's green spaces by simply purchasing a ticket as a percentage of sales go back into Austin's parks system. ACLMF partnership with APF has provided more than \$48 million to Austin's public park system over the past 17 years.



Volunteers at the Rock & Recycle station get to attend Austin City Limits music festival before and after their shift.

Rawson Saunders School Proudly Celebrates 25 years

Rawson Saunders School, proudly celebrates its 25th anniversary this school year. Rawson Saunders was established in 1997 by a small group of educators and parents determined to fill the need for a new, innovative school in which dyslexic students could thrive.

Now led by Head of School Laura Steinbach, M.S.Ed., the school has grown from an organization serving 22 students in 1997 to one serving more than 200 in 2022 that attracts students and teachers from all over the country. "All of us at Rawson Saunders take great pride in the number of lives we've changed since our founding," said Steinbach. "What we do at Rawson Saunders is truly transformational."

The award-winning, non-profit school and institute have both grown to

Things To Celebrate

All Month
Fire Prevention Month

October 2nd
International Day of Non-Violence

October 4th
World Animal Welfare Day

become internationally-recognized models for dyslexia education and teacher training. Rawson Saunders' vision is now to rewrite the future of dyslexia education. "Facing limited space and ever-increasing demand, our goal is to expand our capacity to serve the greater Austin community and beyond," Steinbach said. "We look forward to building on 25 years of extraordinary."

rawson  saunders
Celebrating 25 Years of Extraordinary

Austin Ed Fund

Austin Ed Fund, Austin ISD's nonprofit public education foundation, announced that they will award 52 projects across the district as part of its Austin Ed Fund Grant Program totaling \$300,000. The program was started in 2015 to encourage and fund teacher-led, collaborative projects that focus on innovative teaching strategies that enhance learning and support the well-being of students, staff and families.



"Through our grant program we are able to assess needs and support teacher-generated projects district wide including multilingual and mental health resources," said Michelle Wallis, Austin Ed Fund Executive Director. "Generous philanthropic support from our community has allowed us to fund over half of the requests we received in grant applications, fueling innovation and student agency and engagement."

Some of the exciting projects that are slated for funding by Austin Ed Fund will include: a media lab and after school club for Gus Garcia Men's Leadership Academy, a writing barn retreat space at Kocurek Elementary School and a Girls on The Run club at Zilker Elementary School that will foster healthy habits through running and creative, hands-on curriculum.



Kids on the move in the Austin Youth Fitness program

Get Moving!

For more than 10 years Austin Youth Fitness has been helping make fitness fun. Hosted at various elementary schools all over the Austin area, Austin Youth Fitness has a mission to teach kids to love biking and running. AYF also educates students on the proper form and technique needed to be a life-long athlete.

Austin Youth Fitness is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for children to grow in their fitness levels. AYF's programs are based on child development and exercise physiology principles and now include new Covid-19 protocols to provide safe ways for kids to be stay active, have fun and be social with friends.

The Serving Center assists 1,200 households every month



The Round Rock Area Serving Center, a Texas non-profit corporation, also known as the Serving Center, carries out a community-wide mission of churches, other organizations and individuals serving human needs in the City of Round Rock and surrounding areas.

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Play it safe product recalls

Government Recalls: Audio H earmuffs and Jogging Stroller

Hearing Lab Technology/Lucid Audio has recalled 31,000 of its children's **H earmuff** product. The earmuffs, which are designed to reduce sound, use AAA alkaline batteries which can rupture and burn a child's ear. The US Consumer Products Safety Commission has reported 19 instances of rupturing batteries in the product. No injuries have yet been reported. Consumers should contact Hearing Lab for replacement AAA batteries or to get questions answered at 833-408-0479, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eastern time or online.



Popular stroller brand, UPPAbaby has recalled approximately 14,000 of its all-terrain **jogging strollers**. The recalled stroller can cause amputation or lacerations if a non-occupant child's fingers get caught in the rear disc brakes. The strollers have "RIDGE" on the side of the black frame and were sold in white, charcoal and slate blue.

The manufacturer confirms that one incident of injury to a child has occurred from the faulty stroller. Consumers should immediately stop using the recalled strollers and contact UPPAbaby to receive free replacement discs for both wheels.

The US Consumer Products Safety Commission works to protect the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products.



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5 Reasons To Take Your Children To A U-Pick Farm This Fall

SANDI SCHWARTZ

Sandi Schwartz is an author, journalist, and mother of two.

One of my favorite memories of autumn is going apple picking with my family. I was so enthralled by all the hidden treasures hanging in the orchard. I loved tasting the different varieties of apples and deciding which was my favorite. I especially cherished the warm apple cider samples that the farm provided after we finished collecting our apples.

This time of year is the perfect opportunity to head to a local farm to pick your own produce of the season, whether it be apples, pears, pumpkins, squash or other produce where you live. By taking your children on a u-pick adventure, they will learn a tremendous amount about food and the environment, and you will build family memories that will certainly last.

Encourage Healthy Eating

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America

have tripled, with nearly one in three children currently considered overweight or obese. It is no surprise that much of this trend is due to children eating too much sugary junk food.

One of the best ways to get kids excited about eating healthier foods is to let them go out and touch and feel the fruits and vegetables for themselves. When you take your children to pick their own produce, you are exposing them to healthier options and making it fun for them to choose delicious whole foods.

The best part is that you can go home from the farm and spend quality time together in the kitchen creating tasty meals from the food you hand-picked yourselves. There are so many healthy kid-friendly recipes to discover, from smoothies to side dishes to snacks. When your children play this much of a role in gathering and preparing their food, it will have a huge impact on them and influence the food decisions they make in the future.

Spend Time Outdoors In Nature

After a hot summer, many of us look forward to the refreshing crisp air. Taking your kids to a u-pick farm is a great way to spend more time outside in nature as children can

suffer from nature-deficit disorder. Between hectic schedules, safety concerns, and over-consumption of technology, children have less exposure and connection to nature.

Sadly, children spending less time outdoors has been linked to decreased appreciation of our environment, health problems including childhood obesity and vitamin D deficiency, diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties, and higher rates of emotional illnesses like anxiety and depression (*Last Child in the Woods, Louv, 2008*).

By taking them on fun outdoorsy trips, we are giving them more opportunities to explore our natural environment. Being in nature is relaxing and inspiring. Your children will be in awe of the gorgeous scenery at the farm, from the leaves changing colors to the vivid fruit and vegetables growing.

Support Locally Grown Food

When you pick your own produce at a farm in your area, you are supporting your local community

and protecting the environment. What special lessons to teach our children! You help farmers succeed by giving them business, ensuring that there will be farms in your community in the future. You are also continuing a special connection between grower and consumer.

When it comes to environmental protection, you are playing a role in reducing the distance that food travels to reach you, saving energy and resources. Local food also preserves genetic diversity because smaller local farms often grow many different varieties and rotate their crops to provide a long harvest season. Finally, local farms typically conserve fertile soil and clean water, ensuring a safe habitat for wildlife.

Additionally, locally grown food tastes better, is more nutritious, and stays fresh longer. It is picked at peak harvest time, transported shorter distances, and sold directly to consumers. The less time that passes between farm and table, the more nutrients remain.

Teach Your Children To Appreciate Where Food Comes From

When your children pick food with their own hands, it gives them a special connection to farmers that they can't experience at the grocery store.

They have a chance to meet the actual farmers that grow the food and learn about the role they play in food production. Encourage your children to ask the farmers questions about the seasons, the land, different produce being grown, and the specific work they do on a daily basis.

Seasonal Produce

The best part of picking your own

produce this fall is that you will be able to enjoy nature's delicious treats as fresh as they come. When you eat the food that is grown locally in season, you save money, have access to more nutritious food, and reduce the impact on the environment.

Visiting a u-pick farm also gives you a chance to talk to your children about the changing seasons, cycles of nature, and where certain crops grow during the year. For example, if we want to eat blueberries in the

middle of winter, they will have to come a long way using a lot of fuel. And once they arrive, they won't last very long in the refrigerator and won't taste as fresh as the berries we can pick locally during the summertime.

As the air gets chilly where you live, I hope you will venture to your local u-pick farm to give your children the treat of a lifetime that they will look forward to each year as the seasons change.



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Preschool or Pass

THE LEARNING CURVE

ALISON BOGLE

Bogle is a writer living in Austin with her husband and three children. A former fourth grade teacher, she now enjoys writing about children and education. You can also catch her talking about articles from Austin Family magazine each Thursday morning on FOX 7 Austin.

Preschool has long been the traditional pipeline into elementary school. For many families, COVID-19 created a scenario in which children missed out on preschool altogether and entered directly into kindergarten. In Texas, preschool is not mandatory, which begs the question—is preschool even necessary or can parents just take the pass?

This is revealing my age a bit, but I remember my kindergarten year being mostly about playing with playdough and blocks. For better or worse, today's kindergarten experience is more like the first grade of years ago. Now the preference is for children to enter with at least some academic skills, and they will often leave kindergarten reading or very close to doing so. In addition, the expectation is that children will also be proficient in the

softer skills of turn taking, sharing, attending to the teacher, waiting in line patiently, sitting quietly for story time, and more.

I am an educator by background and continue to be very involved in my children's schools and with school-related topics in general. Although anecdotal, I have repeatedly heard from teachers, administrators, and other educational partners that behavior and academic readiness were greatly affected by COVID-19. Kindergarten was particularly hard hit. Many of the children entering school for the first time were not able to attend preschool and teachers found themselves correcting behaviors rather than being able to address academics.

So what should an Incoming Kindergartner be able to do?

When entering kindergarten, children should be able to:

- Recognize most or all capital letters
- Recognize many of the lowercase letters
- Recognize most or all numbers 1-10
- Be able to write their own name
- Recognize most or all basic colors
- Stand in a line
- Ask the teacher for help

- Wait patiently for a turn
- Attend to own bathroom needs
- Listen respectfully to the teacher
- Follow directions
- Sit quietly during circle or story time
- Share
- Separate from parents with minimal distress
- Use a proper grip when writing

It is possible to both pass on preschool and help prepare your child for kindergarten, it will just take some intentionality on your part. Here is a list of resources and ways you can help your child grow both academically and socially in preparation for entering the classroom:

Other Ways to Get that Pre-School Experience:

Public library – The library is a treasure trove of resources! Reading with your child helps promote early literacy by developing vocabulary and comprehension, skills that will help your child make sense of printed words when she starts reading.

Most libraries also offer scheduled story times where a librarian will read to groups of children. Story times expose your child to the same literacy

concepts as when you read but have the added benefit of helping your child build her tolerance for sitting still and attending to an adult.

Libraries also offer CDs and DVDs that can promote reading readiness. For example, your child can look at a book while listening to the story on CD, turning the pages when the narrator indicates. My twins particularly enjoyed a series of phonics DVDs at our local library. They loved the engaging characters and fun plots and I loved that they learned all of the letter sounds without a fuss.

Playgroups and playdates – Getting your child together with playmates is fun, but it also helps them work on their social skills, such as taking turns, sharing, cooperating, using kind words, and keeping their hands to themselves.

Public television – Television often gets a bad rap and for good reason. American children spend significantly more time parked in front of the screen than recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics. There is some high quality children’s programming, however, that introduces letters, letter sounds, numbers, shapes and colors. When viewed in moderation, these programs can be a great way to help prepare your child for kindergarten. For example, PBS offers shows like “Word World” and “Super Why” for literacy concepts and “Peg + Cat” and “Odd Squad” for math skills development.

Group classes – Children can benefit from being exposed to a number of activities, allowing them to identify what they are or aren’t interested in. Classes like gym, dance, art, music, or soccer not only offer your child a chance to do something she enjoys, but they also provide great opportunities for her to practice many of the soft skills that she’ll need in kindergarten, like listening to the teacher and taking turns.

Online learning sites – There are a plethora of online educational sites that can help your little one learn her letters, colors, numbers, shapes, and other early academic concepts. Some programs charge a fee, while others are available at no cost. Read about and test several out yourself to select the best one for your child.

You! – Don’t underestimate yourself; you can be your child’s best teacher! Determine which concepts you are trying to cover and weave them into

your time together. You can talk about colors while playing with sidewalk chalk or finger painting. Baking cookies together gives you a chance to count, or to do simple math when a few of those cookies disappear! Choose a letter a week and introduce its shape and sound(s) while looking for items around the house that begin with that sound. The possibilities are endless!

If keeping your child at home rather than sending her to preschool is best for your family, it doesn’t mean that she will enter kindergarten behind her peers academically and socially. With some effort on your part to build her language, math, and social skills your child will not only be able to keep up with her peers, she’ll be ready to soar!



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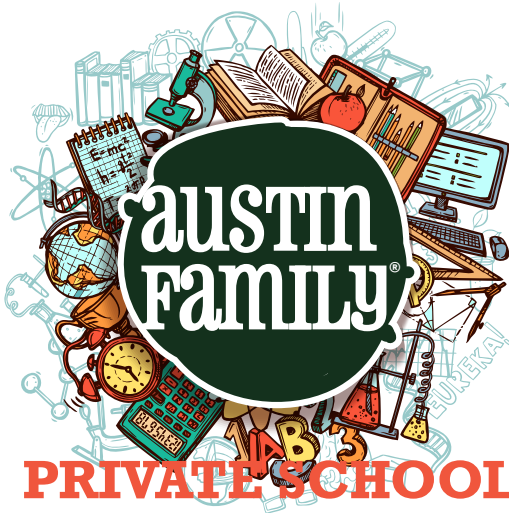
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EDUCATION GUIDE

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BASIS Cedar Park (Opening August 2023, taking applications now)	Grades K-9 expanding to 12	Cedar Park		www.basisedtx.com/cedarpark/
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HARMONY SCIENCE ACADEMY – Austin	Grades PK-8	North Austin	512-835-7900	www.hsaaustin.harmonytx.org
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HARMONY SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE – Austin	Grades 6-12	Southeast Austin	512-693-0000	www.hseaustin.harmonytx.org
HARMONY SCIENCE ACADEMY – Cedar Park	Grades PK-5	Cedar Park	512-251-5000	www.hsacp.harmonytx.org
HARMONY SCHOOL OF ENDEAVOR – Austin	Grades PK-12	North Austin	512-284-9880	www.hspaustin.harmonytx.org
HARMONY SCHOOL OF SCIENCE – Austin	Grades PK-5	North Austin	512-821-1700	www.hssaustin.harmonytx.org
HARMONY SCIENCE ACADEMY – Pflugerville	Grades 6-12	Pflugerville	512-494-5151	www.hsapflugerville.harmonytx.org
NYOS	Grades PreK-12	North Austin	512-583-6907	www.nyos.org

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ASHLEY'S DROP-IN CHILD CARE	Ages Infant-12 yrs.	North Austin	512-872-2755	www.ashleysplayhouseaustin.com
COUNTRY HOME LEARNING CENTER www.countryhomelearningcenter.com	Ages Infant-School age	North Austin South Austin	512-331-1442 512-288-8220	
EXTEND-A-CARE YMCA FOR KIDS	Ages 3 yrs.-Grade 8	77 area campuses	512-472-9402	www.eackids.org
KINDERCARE www.kindercare.com/regions/austin	Ages 6 wks.-5 yrs.	Anderson Mill Bergstrom Tech Brushy Creek Round Rock	833-905-3276 512-386-5541 833-905-3276 512-244-4956	
	Ages 6 wks.-12 yrs.	Emerald Wood North Austin South Congress	512-443-9515 512-835-2443 512-443-7765	

EDUCATION GUIDE cont.

LITTLE MUNCHKIN DAYCARE Ages Infant–School age Northwest Austin 512-454-1877 www.littlemunchkin.com

NICHOLSON EARLY CHILDHOOD Ages 18 mos.–5 yrs. Northwest Austin 512-243-6539
www.nicholsonececenter.com

SNAPDRAGON PRESCHOOL Ages 3–5 North Austin 512-593-6226 (Must be potty trained)
www.snapdragonpreschool.com

STEPPING STONE SCHOOLS Ages Infant–School age 17 locations 512-459-0258
www.steppingstoneschool.com throughout Austin

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- Redeemer Lutheran School
- Santa Cruz Catholic School
- St. Austin Catholic School
- St. Gabriel’s Catholic School
- St. Helen Catholic School
- St. Ignatius Martyr Catholic School
- St. Louis Catholic School
- St. Mary’s Catholic School
- St. Theresa’s Catholic School

SEE CHARTER SCHOOL LISTINGS FOR:

- Harmony School of Innovation – Austin
- Harmony Science Academy – Cedar Park
- Harmony Science Academy – Austin
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BE PREPARED AND PLAN AHEAD: FIRE SAFETY TIPS

LIFELINES

STEVE KERBER

Steve Kerber is Vice President and Executive Director of Underwriters Laboratories Fire Safety Research Institute (FSRI). He leads a fire safety research team dedicated to addressing the world's unresolved fire safety risks and emerging dangers to reduce death, injury and loss from fire.

How do I test a smoke alarm to see if it's working properly?

Find the smoke alarm's test button and press it. If working properly, you'll hear a very loud beep. If the sound is weak or there isn't a sound, it's time to replace your batteries, or the whole device if it's a sealed-battery alarm. Test smoke alarms at least twice a year.

When do I replace a smoke alarm and what types of alarms are out there?

Smoke alarms should be replaced according to the manufacturer's recommendations, which is usually every 10 years, or when they stop working, whichever comes first. If your

smoke alarm is more than 10 years old, install new alarms and look for products that are third-party listed or certified.

At the end of the day, the best type of alarm is a working smoke alarm. Smoke alarms can differ in the sensors and technology used to detect smoke. Newer technology can even better differentiate between cooking smoke and smoke from a fire.

Smoke alarms should never be disabled. Cooking nuisance alarms, alarms set off from common steam or smoke from cooking, are a leading reason people disable their alarms. Proper installation can also prevent nuisance alarms. Smoke alarms should be installed at least 10 feet away from cooking appliances.

Describe the ins and outs of properly placing a smoke alarm in the home.

With only three minutes or less to escape in the event of a fire, smoke alarms give you and your loved ones

the earliest warning possible so you can get out of your home quickly and safely. It's important to have working smoke alarms installed on every floor of your home, including the basement, as well as inside each bedroom and outside every sleeping area.

Smoke alarms should be installed high on walls or ceilings. Wall-mounted smoke alarms should be installed one foot away from the ceiling and they shouldn't be placed near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

If possible smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound.

What is a fire escape plan? Explain "Close Before You Doze."

If there is a fire in your home, there won't be time in the moment to plan a way out. A fire escape plan should be created now and practiced often so you and your loved ones are prepared

in the event of a fire. Your fire escape plan should include a plan A, B and C.

In Plan A, you exit through the nearest exit, most likely a door, close the door behind you and head to your family's meeting place to call 911.

In Plan B, you exit through an alternate exit, which could be a window or a door located in a different part of the home, and, if you can, close the door or window behind you before going to your family's meeting place to call 911.

In Plan C, if you can't get out, you get behind a closed door as far away from the fire as possible, turn on the light and do whatever you can to let the fire department know where you are inside the home. Cover the cracks with clothes, towels, drapes or anything else available.

Another important fire safety practice is Close Before You Doze - close bedroom doors before going to sleep. According to FSRI's research, closed doors can be an effective barrier against deadly levels of carbon monoxide, smoke and flames. In fact, there can be a 900-degree Fahrenheit temperature difference between a room with an open door and one with a closed door. While a room with an open door may reach 1,000-degrees Fahrenheit, a room with a closed door may only reach 100 degrees Fahrenheit.

“A fire escape plan should be created now and practiced often so you and your loved ones are prepared in the event of a fire.”

What else can parents do to improve home fire safety if they already have working smoke alarms inside their homes?

In addition to having working smoke alarms, implementing a fire escape plan and practicing Close Before You Doze, everyone should have a fire extinguisher in their home. However, household fire extinguishers are intended for use only

when the fire is contained, such as when something is burning in a pot or wastebasket or to clear a pathway for escape.

What are some common mistakes when it comes to fire safety and the home?

According to FSRI's latest Annual Fire Safety Survey, released this month, while 68% of Americans have a fire escape plan for their home, 21% of those people have never reviewed or practiced it. It's important to plan and practice your

escape plan to increase your family's preparedness in the event of a fire, enabling them to react more quickly and safely.

Additionally, our survey revealed that despite the fact half of Americans believe it's safer to sleep with their doors closed in the event of a fire (50%), an equal amount say that they still sleep with their door open at least some of the time. Our research proves that a closed door could save lives in a fire. Make closing your doors part of your nightly routine.

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REPRESENTATION

Rosie's Rules premieres nationwide this month on PBS KIDS and it's a big deal for us in Austin. It has been a long time since PBS KIDS had a show embedded in Mexican-American culture. Remember *Maya & Miguel*? How about *Carrascolendas*? If you peer in a little closer, you will see clues that Rosie and her family are Texans to boot! Yee-haw! (Please let your California friends down gently.)

The idea that kids benefit from seeing positive role models of their cultures in media has long been a central feature of PBS programming but it has recently taken a big step forward. In addition to Rosie, PBS KIDS has just revealed a new roster of highly diverse characters with a wide range of skin tones, outfits, hairstyles and assistive devices. This has created real excitement among kids - they can find the ones that most resemble them, and they can identify those that resemble others in their lives.

There will be those among us who will miss Dash, Dot, Del and Dee, the green characters that have been with PBS KIDS for over 20 years. But the chance for all kids to find themselves and their friends on-screen is immediately more fun, and will hopefully have a deeper impact.



SMART SCREEN TIME

BENJAMIN KRAMER

Kramer, PhD, is the director of education for Austin PBS.

PBS KIDS

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October 2022 calendar

Go to austinfamily.com for expanded listings.

Any family-friendly events can be posted at austinfamily.com and will be made live once approved. Certain restrictions apply.

Sat 1

Harvest of Fall Fun. 8:30 a.m. Join us for hayrides, pumpkins, mazes, scarecrow stuffing, face painting and more. Sweet Berry Farm, 1801 FM 1980. sweetberryfarm.com.

Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fall Festival to include pumpkin patch, photo-ops, animals, kiddie hay maze and more. Entry fee includes pumpkin patch and all farm activities. Mama Mary's Farm, 5701 Williamson Rd. \$7 - \$14. mamamarysfarm.com.

Oktoberfest. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Raffles, information and items for sale by non-profits. Exciting kids' activities with giant jumping house, duck pond game, and face painting. Historic Smithville Village, Smithville. bit.ly/3BzoZIH

Austin Muslim Culture Fest. 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Cultural festival of Islamic roots in the Latino culture. Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center, 600 River St. FREE. Cairtx.org/muslimfest.

Fiesta Georgetown. 12 - 4 p.m. Festive celebration of music, food, art, and dance. Admission and parking are FREE. City Center, Forest and 9th St., Georgetown. georgetown.org/events-calendar/

Venardos Circus at Moontower Saloon. 1-2:30 p.m., 4-5:30 p.m., 7-8:30 p.m. Created by former Ringling Bros. Moontower Saloon, 10212 Manchaca Rd. \$16.50 - \$47. venardoscircus.com.

Sun 2

Harvest Fest at Heritage House Museum. 1- 4 p.m. Harvest Fest presented by Heritage House Partners. Join us for music, Fall family photo-ops, games, face-painting, food and tours of the museum. Heritage Park, 901 Old Austin Hutto Road. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Oktoberfest, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Venardos Circus at Moontower Saloon see Sat 1.

Mon 3

Rockin' Kids Club: #PlantWildflowers Mixed Media Art Project. (ages 5-8). 4:30-5:15 p.m. Help Rockin' Kids Club

celebrate our #PlantWildflowers Campaign with guest artist, Sarah Foreman. Learn about Round Rock Public Library, 216 E Main Street. roundrocktexas.gov.

ATLAS Club. 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Join us for after school activities and exploration with ATLAS Club. Learn a new skill or explore STEM activities. Ages 8-12. Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. Register at wblibrary.eventbrite.com.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Tues 4

Morning Glories. 10 - 11 a.m. Weekly early childhood education series that aims to provide hands-on activities and programs focusing on literacy, bilingual storytelling and music. Waterloo Park, 500 E 12th St. FREE. waterloogreenway.org.

National Night Out. 6 - 8 p.m. This is a great opportunity for our community to join forces and strengthen police and community partnership. elgintx.com.

Movies in the Park: Luca (PG). 8 p.m. Movies in the Park is a series of free films brought to you by Austin Parks Foundation. Mueller Lake Park & Amphitheater, 4550 Mueller Blvd. austinparks.org/movies-in-the-park/

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1.

Thu 6

Come-and-Go Program. 3:30 - 5 p.m. Drop by the library anytime between 3:30-5:00pm on Thursdays for fun childrens' clubs. Geared for children ages 7+. Buda Library, budalibrary.org.

Girlstart Starry Night. 5:30 - 7 p.m. Girlstart's STEM Studio and Mini-Planetarium is a unique space for families to explore astronomy. Girlstart STEM Center, 1400 W. Anderson Ln. FREE.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Fri 7

Play, Learn, Grow: Caregiver/Child. Workshop. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Join us for this playful workshop series where parents and caregivers learn and grow with their children (ages 1-3) through play. Buda Library, budalibrary.org.

Round Rock Chalk Walk Arts Festival.

2 - 9 p.m. Round Rock area's largest and most prestigious festival. Dell Diamond, 3400 E Palm Valley Blvd. roundrocktexas.gov.

17th Annual Honda Leander Bluegrass Festival.

6 p.m. Enjoy music, vendors and a fun zone. Leander Public Library, 1011 S. Bagdad. leandertx.gov.

Family Fun Night at Yonders Point.

7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Bring the entire family and enjoy fun-themed activities on select Friday nights from June to October. Old Settlers Park, 3103 Aten Loop. FREE. roundrocktexas.gov.

First Friday Ghost Tour.

8 - 9 p.m. Williamson Museum, 716 S. Austin Ave. williamsonmuseum.org.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Sat 8

Fall Festival. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. St. Mary Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Parish, 6100 Lohman Ford Rd. FREE. <https://bit.ly/3C2sxOP>

Second Saturdays.

11 a.m. to 3 p.m. There is a new craft each month and materials are provided. Bring the family. Laguna Gloria, 3809 West 35th Street. FREE. thecontemporaryaustin.org.

Family Night Campout.

2 p.m. to 10 a.m. Escape the hustle and bustle and join us at YMCA Camp Moody for a Saturday night campout among the stars and fall weather. YMCA Camp Moody. austinyymca.org.

Parents Night Out at Springs.

5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Have a great evening out while the kids have a blast! Springs Family Y. austinyymca.org.

Teen Night.

6 - 10 p.m. Looking for a fun, safe place to hang out with your friends on a Saturday evening? Come to the Hays YMCA for Teen Night. Hays Communities Y. austinyymca.org.

CONTINUED:

Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; 17th Annual Honda Leander Bluegrass Festival see Fri 7; Round Rock Chalk Walk Arts Festival. see Fri 7.

Sun 9

Tales on the Trail. 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. In observance of Indigenous Peoples'

Day, join our guided leisurely park tour that explores the history of Indigenous Peoples and natural features. Waterloo Greenway, 1111 Red River St. waterloogreenway.org/events

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Mon 10

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Kids Night, see Mon 3; Rockin' Kids Club see Mon 3.

Tue 11

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Kids Club, see Mon 3; Morning Glories, see Tue 4.

Wed 12

Party for the Parks. 6 p.m. Live and in-person at ACL Music Festival. Zilker Park, 2100 Barton Springs Rd. family.do512.com.

Thu 13

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sun 2; Come-and-Go Program, see Thu 6.

Fri 14

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sun 2; Play, Learn, Grow: Caregiver/Child Workshop, see Fri 7.

Sat 15

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sun 2.

Sun 16

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sun 2.

Mon 17

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; ATLAS Club, see Mon 3; Kids Night, see Mon 3.

Tue 18

Morning Glories. 10 to 11 a.m. Weekly early childhood education series to provide hands-on activities and programs focusing on literacy, bilingual storytelling and music. Waterloo Park, 500 E 12th St. FREE. waterloogreenway.org.

Movies in the Park: Soul (PG). 8

p.m. Movies in the Park is a series of free films brought to you by Austin Parks Foundation. Mueller Lake Park & Amphitheater, 4550 Mueller Blvd. austinparks.org/movies-in-the-park/.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Kids Club, see Tues 4.

Wed 19

Tween Scene. 4:30 - 5:15 p.m. Monthly craft or activity for tweens ages 8-12. Registration is not required. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pflugger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Afterschool Class, see Wed 12.

Thu 20

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Come-and-Go Program, see Thu 6.

Fri 21

Gem Capers 2022. 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Gem & mineral show with over 30 vendors of jewelry, beads, gemstones, minerals, crystals, fossils & spheres. Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Rd. \$0 - \$8. agms-tx.org.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Play, Learn, Grow: Caregiver/Child Workshop, see Fri 7.

Sat 22

BARKtacular HOWloween Dog Festival. 8a.m. to 10 a.m. Friendly, leashed dogs for trick or treating, costume contest, a lookalike contest, vendors and more. Entry fee includes swag items for all participants and additional prizes for contest winners. \$5 per dog. Dog Depot Dog Park, 800 Deerfoot Dr., Round Rock. <https://bit.ly/3S89qse>



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Hogeye Festival. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Live music and entertainment on three stages, handmade arts and crafts, children's activities. Downtown Elgin, 310 North Main Street. elgintx.com.

Daniel G. Benes Science Show. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Performs amazing old-school and state-of-the-art demonstrations of physics, chemistry, and hair-raising, high-voltage electrical magic mixed with working museum-quality antique science and technology." Wells Branch Community Library, 15001 Wells Port Drive. wblibrary.org.

Super Saplings!: Artist Scientist/Habitat Investigator. 10:30 a.m. FREE event for children ages 5+. Children will discover more about our urban forest through hands-on exploration. Willie Mae Kirk Branch, 3101 Oak Springs Dr. library.austintexas.org

Pumpkin Carver. 12 - 3 p.m. The Carver will supply free pumpkins, (2 pumpkins per car/family) carving kits, goodie bags, food, and drinks. There will be a costume contests for prizes, face painting, fun activities, music, and more. Family-friendly event. FREE. George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center, 1165 Angelina St. <https://bit.ly/3xHuL3C>

Center Street Trick-or-Treat. 12 - 3 p.m. We invite all "ghosts" and "goblins" young and old to come out to our Treat Trail for a fun afternoon. Costume and pumpkin decorating contest. cityofkyle.com.

Spooktacular at the Y. 3 - 9 p.m. Dress up for a spooktacular afternoon of carnival style games and a spooky twist on traditional camp activities like the rock wall, quick flight and zip line. YMCA Camp Moody, Buda austinyymca.org/event/spooktacular

Round Rock Diwali Festival. 3 - 10 p.m. Food, music, art, India bazaar, kids activities Centennial Plaza, FREE. rrdiwalifest.com/

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Gem Campers 2022, see Fri 21.

Sun 23
Music of Phish For Kids. 11 a.m. The Rock and Roll Playhouse plays the music of Phish. Mohawk Austin 912 Red River St. \$12. mohawk.com.

ASO Halloween Children's Concert. 3 p.m. Bring the kids in costume to this Austin tradition. Dell Hall, 701 W. Riverside Dr. \$10 my.austinsymphony.org.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Gem Campers 2022, see Fri 21.

Mon 24
CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; ATLAS Club, see Mon 3.; Kids Night, see Mon 3.

Tue 25 NATIONAL MOTHER-IN-LAW DAY

Teen Craft Night: Polymer Clay Magnet. 6 - 7 p.m. Teens ages 12-18 can create their own pie magnet using polymer clay. Pflugerville Public Library, 1008 W. Pfluger Street. library.pflugervilletx.gov.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Kids Club, see Tue 4.

Wed 26
CONTINUED: Afterschool Class, see Wed 12.

Thu 27
CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1; Come-and-Go Program, see Thu 6.

Fri 28
Education Day. 12 p.m. Dell Diamond will transform into the largest classroom in Central Texas on Wednesday, September 28 for Education Day with the Round Rock Express. Round Rock Express, 3400 E. Palm Valley Rd. \$8 - \$12. milb.com.

Texas Foster Care Trunk-or-Treat. 6 p.m. Community event hosted by Texas Foster Care and adoption services with games, Trunk-or-treating, costume contest and more. Round Rock West Park, 500 Round Rock W Dr. FREE.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Sat 29
Fable Fest. 11 a.m. Carnival games, inflatables, rock climbing wall, petting zoo, pony rides, train rides, artist and craft booths, A'Plaisance Jousting and costumes. Elizabeth Milburn Park, 1901 Sun Chase Blvd. fablefest.com.

Tricks & Treats Spooktacular. 5 - 9:30 p.m. Join us at Devine Lake Park for a spooky, fun-filled, trick-or-treat event. Leander Public Library, 1011 S. Bagdad. leandertx.gov.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sat 1.

Sat 30
Annual Boo Bash. 1 - 4 p.m. Children and adults are invited to come in costume and enjoy trunk-or-treating, music provided by a DJ and lots of fun activities. Historic Downtown Georgetown Square, visit. georgetown.org/events-calendar/

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1; Fall Festival at Mama Mary's Farm and Pumpkin Patch, see Sun 2.

Mon 31 - HALLOWEEN
Safe Trick or Treat Trail. 4 - 8 p.m. The Safe Trick-or-Treat Trail includes Elgin's Historic Downtown Business District, Veterans' Memorial Park, First Baptist Church, Elgin's Downtown Elgin, 109 Depot Street. elgintx.com.

CONTINUED: Harvest of Fall Fun, see Sat 1.



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Fall Family Exploration

Each month, topics in this column alternate between cool, new places to go and family-friendly activities to do at home.



Now that temperatures are dropping out of the triple digits, this is a great time for nature enthusiasts and families who are looking to create more meaningful outdoor experiences.

Research has already proven the many benefits of time spent outdoors, particularly for children. For example, children who play outside and spend time in nature are more physically active, which helps prevent obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other health issues. Other benefits include:

- More advanced motor skills, such as agility, balance and coordination
- Higher levels of vitamin D, which in turn strengthens bones and immunity
- Stronger reasoning and observation skills
- Greater likelihood of developing a lifelong love for nature and care to preserve it

- Fewer incidences of illness
- Significantly fewer symptoms of ADHD

As a result, parents may be looking for simple steps to keep their families active outside during the cooler months. Here are a few ideas suggested by YMCA Program Director Megan Gonzalez:

- **Create your own backyard outdoor space** – Kids don't need acres of woods to experience the benefits of nature. An outdoor craft table, sandbox, slackline, swing or even a treehouse can do the trick.
- **Get back to the garden** – Kids love digging in the dirt, and fall gardening projects can become a family activity.
- **Prepare ahead of time** – Have a dedicated "outdoor" backpack filled with all the things you need for your outdoor adventures (sunscreen, bug spray, hats, gloves, binoculars, magnifying glass). Keep it stocked and by the door ready to go when you are.

From backyard games to excursions at the 85-acre YMCA Camp Moody along Onion Creek, there are a range of options to help everyone stay in touch with their natural environment. The Camp Moody property was donated to the YMCA of Austin by George Yonge in 1999 with the desire to establish a camp for kids to explore the great outdoors. Features include dramatic limestone outcrops along with beautiful Bald Cypress trees lining the creek banks. Native flora and fauna create a living laboratory for exploration and discovery.

YMCA Camp Moody will host Fall Family Campouts in November and December. Activities take place on Saturdays and Sundays and range from nature walks, canoeing, and archery to bird-watching and s'mores by the campfire. More information is available at www.ymcacampmoody.org or by calling (512) 523-9640.

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Autumn in Austin: Don't Fall for It

JUST FOR GRINS

BRITTANI SONNENBERG

Brittani Sonnenberg is a writer based in Austin, TX. She is crazy about dogs, tennis and the frozen drinks at Kinda Tropical.

Ah, fall. The smell of sunscreen, the light touch of my favorite linen dress, the icy kiss of popsicles. No, wait a second, that's summer. It's an early September afternoon in Austin, it's 96 degrees outside, and I'm sick of sunscreen, sick of that dress, and I never really liked popsicles. (If you're going to have something cold, I say just go for gelato.)

Every year I fall (haha see what I did there?) for Austin's un-autumn. Maybe it's because I grew up in Atlanta and Singapore, where seasons are more of a state of mind, or an AC-induced hallucination, than an out-of-doors reality.

Still, hope/denial springs eternal. It reminds me of Halloweens as a kid in Atlanta. There was one house on our block that my sister and I approached every year, clutching our plastic jack-o-lantern buckets. Every All Hallows' Eve, without fail, our neighbor's door would swing open, and Nightmare on St. Charles Place, he would fill our jack-o-lanterns with toothbrushes and

toothpaste. Talk about tone deaf. Even the toothbrushes, swimming in mini Milky Ways and Baby Ruths, looked embarrassed to be there.

Why didn't we just skip his house? That would have given us five more minutes on our route. We were stubborn optimists. We believed in basic human goodness. We thought The Dentist could change, remember his own childhood. He tried to teach us to brush better, but he only taught us that life can be disappointing.

Same with Texas Septembers and, let's be honest, Octobers. I schedule tennis matches at noon and refuse to wear mosquito repellent. I suffer, just as I did as a seven year old dressed up as a witch, hoping for a Butterfinger but getting a Crest Minty Fresh travel tube instead.

But next week will be different. A cold front could come through. I'd better unpack my sweaters.

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