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San Antonio

# Our Kids

Magazine



## Raising an Expressive Child

Does your child throw temper tantrums when things don't go their way?

# 5

## EASY Ways to Start the New School Year

## *Education Listings*



## Are Music Lessons Worth the Cost?

August 2022 // Vol. 37 No. 5

[ourkidsmagazine.com](http://ourkidsmagazine.com)



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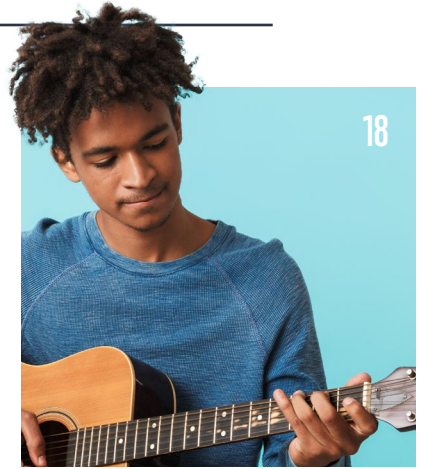
## A note from the Editor

Hi, everyone! My name is Andres. This is my third issue as editor of OurKids Magazine! I hope you're enjoying reading these articles as much as I have. Please let me know what you think through my email. Businesses: If you have any events coming up, please let us know! We'd like to add a calendar to the magazine. Check out our ad on page 21 for a QR link to send us your event. We're looking for anything family friendly. Happy reading! :)



**Andres Flores**

Andres@ourkidsmagazine.com



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14

Author Sarah Lyons writes about how you can teach your child to communicate better if they're struggling to express themselves.

**Find on page 04**



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**Andres Flores**

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Does your child throw temper tantrums when things don't go their way? Does he hit siblings when he is mad? Does she throw toys across the room when she is frustrated? Kids often don't understand how to appropriately express strong feelings like anger, frustration, or disappointment causing them to act out. This is totally normal and the good news is, parents can help kids understand their

emotions, express themselves in a healthy way, and even learn to cope with their feelings.

#### Teach feeling words

The biggest obstacle toddlers have when expressing their feelings is the simple fact that they do not have the words to explain what is going on. When your child has worked hard to build a tower of blocks only to have it topple down

over and over again, they feel frustrated. Simply stating "You are frustrated with your blocks aren't you? Can I help?" acknowledge your child's feelings and give words to identify them in the future. If a sibling takes their toy away and they begin to cry, acknowledge that they are sad and come up with a solution together to work it out. In the future, give your child the opportunity to express

Story by  
Sarah Lyons

## Raising an Expressive Child





how they are feeling and listen. This will help them show their feelings through words rather than actions (like hitting or throwing a tantrum). For an older child, ask them what they are feeling and listen to the answer without criticism. If they are having trouble coming up with words to express themselves, give them a couple that you feel may fit the situation. Ask if they feel there is a better way they could handle the situation and talk it out together.

Talk about feelings often

It is important to not only give your child the words to express their own feelings but to also notice and label the feelings of others. When you arrive home to a dog that greets you at the door and a wagging tail, explain that the dog is excited to see you. If they notice someone crying, talk about how they are sad and why. If your child acts out toward someone else, try to explain the feelings involved. "You were mad at your sister and so you told her you didn't like her anymore, that hurt her feelings and now she feels sad." Help your child to notice the cues and body language of others and guess their emotions. You can also play a game where you make faces at each other. First make a happy face, then a mad face, then a sad face. As you read books try to guess the feelings of the characters. Parents can also find many books and videos about feelings at their local library

Model appropriate expression

It's okay for kids to know that parents have feelings of sadness, excitement, frustration, and anger just like they do. During these emotional moments, we can model a positive way of dealing with our feelings to our kids. When a parent gets mad, they have the opportunity to yell or get physical or they can calmly say they need to take a walk and excuse themselves until they can cool down. When we are frustrated with a task let kids know what you are feeling and that you have decided to take a break or ask for help. Feelings of sadness are normal and we can show kids it's okay to feel down once in a while. Spending time with people we care about, exercising, or doing



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something we enjoy is a great way to lift a mood.

Teach appropriate ways to deal with emotions

Once kids can express how they feel with words we can help them come up with appropriate ways to express their feelings. For some kids this may be simply talking about it. For others they may need extra snuggles or hugs. For another child, having time to be alone to sort out their

thoughts and feelings or cool down gives them time they need to process their emotions so they can discuss them. When my daughter gets mad she finds it helpful to go to her room, shut the door and turn up the music. I often hear her singing as she looks at books, plays or even cleans. When she joins us again she is calmer, happier, and able to talk and interact with others calmly. My son prefers to take a walk when he is upset. The

exercise and fresh air helps him settle down. Depending on the child, their current emotion, and the situation the coping skills may look very different.

As kids begin to learn to express their feelings using words and appropriate coping skills, it is important to give them positive feedback. This will help encourage them to continue to express themselves as they mature.





# Extra: Books About Feelings for Kids

The Angry Dragon  
by Michael Gordon

The Way I Feel  
by Janan Cain

In My Heart: A Book of Feelings  
by Jo Witek and Christine Roussey

I Hate Everything:  
A Book About Feeling Angry  
by Sue Graves

Stand in My Shoes:  
Kids Learning About Empathy  
by Bob Somson

How Full is Your Bucket  
by Tom Rath and Mary Reckmeyer

Today I Feel Silly:  
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# LEADING THE WAY TO A HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



# Parent-Teacher Conferences: Documents to Bring and Questions to Ask

Story by  
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.

10

Parent-teacher conferences are one of the best ways to communicate with your kids' teachers about how they're doing at school. But what's the best way to prepare for these conferences? Based on the advice of such well-respected institutions as the National Parent Teacher Association, the National Education Association, and the Family Research Project at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, I've compiled a list of important documents to bring and questions to ask.

## **Documents to Bring**

# Report cards from previous school years. This gives teachers a broad understanding of

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how your kids have been doing academically so far. It's especially important to bring report cards if your kids recently changed schools and/or are doing worse academically than in previous years.

**# Test scores.** This gives teachers a good sense of whether your kids are thriving or struggling as test-takers. It's especially important to bring test scores if your kids attend schools that

place emphasis on such scores; teachers may be able to share useful test-taking strategies with you.

**# Homework assignments.** Bring examples of homework assignments that your kids had an easy and a difficult time with, spent little and a lot of time on. This gives teachers a nuanced understanding of your kids' abilities when it comes to completing assignments on



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their own.

**# Health forms.** Bring documentation for any health-related issues that already have or could affect your kids' learning, such as asthma, diabetes, or serious migraines. This helps teachers better understand why your kids sometimes need certain accommodations.

### Questions To Ask

**# How are my kids doing**

**academically?** Ask questions about how your kids are doing overall, relative to other kids in the class, and in terms of any standards they're supposed to reach. Also ask questions about how they're doing on tests, in-class projects, and homework assignments, whether they ask questions when they don't understand something, whether there are any areas in need of improvement, and how they should go about making those improvements.

**# What do you expect from my kids in the coming school year?** Ask questions about what your kids are expected to accomplish in the coming school year, which assignments they'll get to determine whether they're living up to those expectations, and how those assignments will be assessed (specific benchmarks, standardized tests, grading criteria). Also ask how your kids can best organize their time and what you can do to support them in their learning at home.



### # How are my kids doing behaviorally and socially?

Ask questions about your kid's behavior in the classroom.

Are they participating constructively in class discussions, talking when they should do that and listening when that's appropriate? Or do they tend to disrupt the classroom by disturbing other kids? Also ask questions about how they're doing socially with other kids? Are they thriving and having lots of friends, or

do they tend to be isolated and keep to themselves?

### # What kind of relationship do you prefer to have with parents? Ask

questions about what kind of relationship your kids' teachers would like to have with you going forward. Do they want to stay in contact with you on a regular basis or only in emergencies? Do they

prefer face-to-face, phone, or email conversations? How

**“Ask questions about what kind of relationship your kids’ teachers would like to have with you going forward.”**

will they keep you informed about your kids' progress? Is there anything they'd like you to do before the next scheduled parent-teacher conference?

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# 5 EASY Ways to Start the New School Year Without Losing Your Mind

Story by  
Rebecca Hastings

As I try to soak up the last moments of summer fun, I feel like I'll never be ready for the switch back to the routine of the school year.

I'm not sure who invented the

**“The transition to a new school year doesn't have to be complicated.”**

lazy days of summer idea, but it wasn't a mom. Summer is full of sun and beach and popsicles

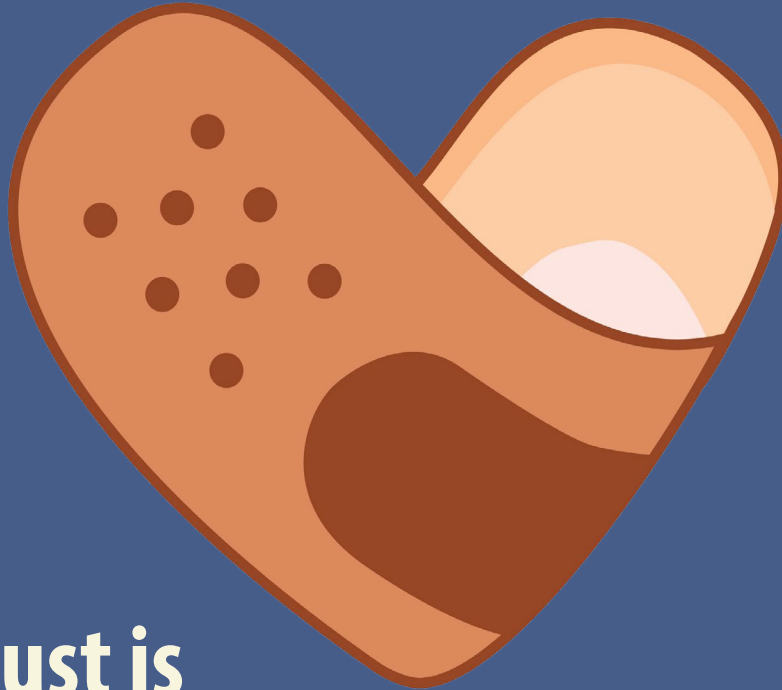
and more tv time than I care to admit. But it didn't feel lazy. Now we're on the cusp of a new school year, and the pressure is building.

All of a sudden, a switch will be flipped and we're supposed to find routine and structure again (which

feels kind of like playing with that disastrous moon sand my kids love.) The sun is screaming

“stay and play” but the calendar is an annoying buzz in my ear challenging me to get it together because the clock is ticking.

The transition to a new school year doesn't have to be complicated. You can have a great start to the school year with a few simple tricks. No, these tips will not complete the reams of paperwork headed your way during the first week of school, but they will help you feel better equipped to handle it.



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1. Rest: Don't skim past this. I know rest seems counterproductive and even impossible sometimes, but it will make a huge difference. My family knows a tired mom is not the nicest mom (at least in my house.)

Start thinking about what you can do now to feel more rested. Skip that last episode of your favorite show late at night. Give yourself permission to sit down for ten minutes in the afternoon. Do things that make your body and soul feel calmer and more rested. You'll be able to tackle the change to school days more effectively.

2. Eliminate: Think about the things you do. All of them. I know it's a lot. Write them down. Now look at that list and cross off as many things as you can. Not that you've done them, but to eliminate them, at least temporarily. You can always add them back on later.

Now that your list is smaller, look at what's left. Instead of vacuuming three times per week, try twice. Skip the daily laundry and pick two days to do laundry each week so you're not thinking about it every day. These ideas don't need to be permanent, but they will help during the busy transition.

3. Autopilot: Put as much as you can on autopilot. My favorite place to do this is with food.

Come up with a simple meal rotation by picking an easy thing for each night of the week. For example, salad night, chicken and veggie, burgers and corn, taco night, breakfast for dinner, pizza, and leftovers. Then rotate through for the next few weeks. Your grocery list will be the same, and you don't have to think too hard or prep too much ahead of time. You can let this go after the first few weeks of school in favor of your favorite fall recipes. But it will save your sanity now.





Other things you can put on autopilot: morning and bedtime routines, easy breakfast and snack options, 5 minutes a day for mail and paperwork.

4. Let Go: As much as I love finding fun ideas on Pinterest for magical first-day photos and

**“A happy, calm mom is more important than a sandwich shaped like an animal.”**

perfectly curated bento box lunches complete with animal face mini sandwiches, it doesn't help me stay sane. Instead, it makes the pressure build that I

am responsible for making the new school year amazing.

We do not need to school magical. We can let go of these crazy expectations during the transition from summer to school, and give ourselves permission to try those things in a few

weeks when we feel more grounded.

A happy, calm mom is more

important than a sandwich shaped like an animal.

5. Grace: Let's just say it right now – we're going to drop the ball. It's true. At some point,

we're going to miss something or turn in a form late. Last year I forgot to pick up my son's inhaler from the nurse at the end of the school year. We all lose track of things sometimes. So, let's start the year with a bit of grace for ourselves and one another.

Instead of beating ourselves up over getting the wrong color folder or forgetting to send a water bottle, let's remember that we're all here doing our best to love our kids well. And no folder or missed bus can change the way we love our kids.



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Story by  
Sarah Lyons

# Are Music Lessons Worth the Cost?

Does your child love to sing? Love plunking on the piano or pounding on the drum? Do you think you might have a future musician in your home? The average cost of private music lessons ranges from \$15-40 per half hour ([www.takelessons.com](http://www.takelessons.com)). Keep in mind the cost will

vary depending on location and the expertise of the teacher. With these numbers, private lessons cost parents \$1,000 to \$2,000 a year. This may make you wonder, are music lessons really worth it? Let's look at some short and long term benefits of music lessons.

## Discipline

Learning to play beautiful music doesn't happen overnight. All students must start from the beginning playing scales and mastering basic skills. In our society instant gratification is the norm. Music teaches the





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value of patience and discipline because children must set aside time for practice and make it part of their routine in order to further their skills.

## Work ethic

Music teaches children a good work ethic because they see the value of practice as they improve and reach new achievements. Students will learn how dedication creates good results, while failing to do all the necessary practice results in mediocre results. These lessons carry into school studies and future employment.

## Memory

Is your child always forgetting things? Music requires kids to practice memorization. Even if sheet music is used, students memorize how to play each note and the sheet music eventually becomes a guide. Students can use their developing memorization skills in a variety of ways in school and at home.

## Math and language skills

Music helps develop math and

language skills that give kids an edge in school. "Students who have early musical training will develop the areas of the brain related to language and reasoning. The left side of the brain is better developed with music." (National Association for Music Education)

## Teamwork

Teamwork isn't just for sports. Music students may have an opportunity to participate in a band or orchestra. This provides kids experience working as a team and a sense of camaraderie. Teamwork develops social skills that they will use for a lifetime.

## Confidence and social development

Kids will gain confidence as they begin to perform music for an audience. This helps kids learn to face their fears and builds self esteem. As kids build up this confidence, they are more likely to boost their communication skills and have increased social development.

## Lifelong challenge



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In music, there is always room for improvement. This creates the opportunity for students of any age to improve and challenge themselves for many years to come.

#### Stress relief

Playing an instrument can be an outlet for kids. Music can be relaxing and a form of stress relief, as well as a way to express yourself creatively. Kids who have this outlet are less likely to find negative ways to relieve stress, like drugs and alcohol.

#### Expression and creativity

Kids who play music are trained to think creatively. The ability to think outside of the box in many other situations is a coveted

asset among many employers.

#### Improved coordination

Kids who play instruments develop their hand-eye coordination. Just like in sports, playing an instrument requires these skills and develops their motor skills.

#### Higher test scores

Studies show that children who are exposed to music education have higher SAT scores and better grades in school overall. (Children's Music Workshop)

#### Introduces children to other cultures

Through music kids are exposed to other cultures, teaching them awareness and empathy for

others. This helps them become more accepting of other cultures at an early age.

My daughter recently started taking piano lessons. As I sat in the room observing her first lesson, I witnessed something. As she played her first chord, a smile spread across her face. It was clear she has a true love for music. To me, this makes the cost of lessons worth it. Each family will have to weigh the overall price of music lessons against their child's enjoyment of music and the many benefits to make a decision whether music lessons are truly worth the cost.



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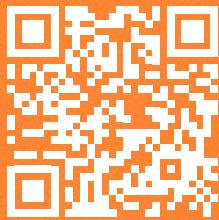
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that will improve their attitudes, grades, and behavior so they will be positive members of the school and community. The KIN program is available at all NEISD elementary and middle schools. KIN begins as soon as school dismisses. The schedule consists of a healthy snack, socialization, and recreational activities such as recess, group sports, and health and wellness programming.

### San Antonio Academy of Texas

Summer At The Academy is a place to CREATE. EXPLORE. LEARN. Registration for Summer 2022 is open, with classes running May 31 through July 22. But hurry, spots fill up quickly!

Camps are offered weekly, with morning and afternoon enrichment courses, or full-day Kids' Place options available to fit a family's busy schedule. Find one of the hundreds of classes available at [www.sa-academy.org/summer](http://www.sa-academy.org/summer).

Contact [ymcknight@sa-academy.org](mailto:ymcknight@sa-academy.org) for any assistance.

### San Antonio Independent School District

1700 Tampico St, San Antonio, TX 78207

(210) 554-2660

[www.saisd.net/enroll](http://www.saisd.net/enroll)

At San Antonio ISD, we believe that all children should have access to best-fit school options regardless of their academic abilities or where they live. SAISD is the District of Choice for FREE Full-day PreK, Dual Language, No-Cost College & Career Prep, and more. With the most PK-12 school options and the highest achievement gains of any district in Texas, San Antonio ISD offers something for everyone. SAISD: A Family of Schools for All Families!

### St. Matthew Catholic School

10703 Wurzbach Rd.

San Antonio, TX 78230

(210) 478-5099

[www.smcssa.org](http://www.smcssa.org)

St. Matthew Catholic School is dedicated to the mission of educating a strong, faith-centered

community through a commitment to the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social and physical development of each child. Register now for Pre-K – 8th grade.


### The Clowvazar Academy

(210) 690-4800

12746 Cimarron Path #120, San Antonio, TX 78249

[www.clowvazar.com](http://www.clowvazar.com)

We are a year-round private school designed for students with Anxiety, ADD, ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, *et cetera*. We have programs for General Ed., Special Ed., and Gifted-And-Talented. By putting students into subjects by ability -- and not by age -- we can more comfortably address a student's needs. Smaller classroom sizes help our students regulate better while truly feeling part of a community.



**Phonics - Reading - Writing Composition**  
**Math - Handwriting - STAAR Prep.**  
**ADD - ADHD - Dyslexia - ESL**  
**Autism - Pre-K to 8th Grade**

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**Coachbobby7755@gmail.com**  
**210-269-0725**  
[www.coachbobbysports.com](http://www.coachbobbysports.com) 



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or Immunizations**

now through August to Receive a

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and  
School Supplies!**



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**210-922-7000**

**SA PEDIATRICS**

**210-223-3543**

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