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Magazine

Free Oct. Issue



**More Magic
& Fewer
Meltdowns**

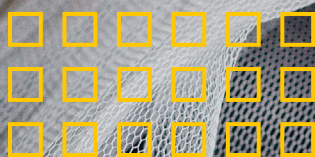
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**Ways To Stop
Micromanaging
Your Kids**

**Cyberbullying and
your kids**

Read more about
the signs

Halloween Issue



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A note from the publisher

Happy Halloween! I'm Andres Flores, the publisher of OurKids Magazine. This month is ADHD and cyberbullying awareness month, so I wanted to provide you with two great articles that might help you learn more about these important topics. On page 18, I included an article to help your Halloween run a bit more smoothly with your little ones. I hope that you and your families have a safe and spooktacular Halloween!



Andres Flores
Andres@ourKidsMagazine.com



Social media is king these days. Author Tanni Haas, Ph.D. writes about recognizing signs of cyberbullying with your children.

Find on page 14



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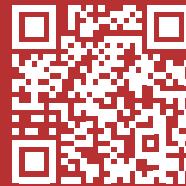
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Andres Flores

Special Thanks to
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Calendar

To see more upcoming events, follow the QR code or visit our website at ourkidsmagazine.com



Zoo Boo! at San Antonio Zoo All Month

The zoo's annual Halloween celebration is a fun, non-scary daytime Halloween event for the entire family and will be offered daily during the month of October.



Cavern Fall Fest Weekends 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Cavern Fall Fest kicks off at Natural Bridge Caverns every weekend in October. This event will feature a host of FREE activities including mini-hay maze, live music, and a free maze ticket to anyone who comes in a family-friendly costume!



Cinema On Will's Plaza | Hocus Pocus Oct 14 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm

Hocus Pocus Cinema on Will's Plaza – FREE EVENT
The Will Naylor Smith River Walk Plaza opens at 7 PM. The movie begins at 8 PM. Full concessions and bar available. Please bring your lawn chair or blanket.



Family Workshop: Halloween Make-Up Oct 23 1 pm - 2:30 or 3 - 4:00

Let your imagination run wild as we think about creating characters. Following a planning and design challenge, apply prosthetics, and more as they learn the ABCs of special effects make-up. Creepy or cute? Scary or silly? What will you be?



Spiritlandia Day Of The Dead River Parade Oct 27 7:00 pm

Join us at the San Antonio River Walk for the SpiritLandia (Day of the Dead) River Parade. See elaborately decorated floats with altars, catrinas, and costumed riders all celebrating life and loved ones. Check out our website for a link to tickets.



Día De Los Muertos At Hemisfair Oct 29 10:00 am - 11:00 pm

Día de los Muertos (Muertos Fest) returns to Hemisfair for its 10-Year Anniversary with a FREE two-day festival on October 29 and 30. The event has been listed as one of the "7 Best Fall Festivals in the USA" by National Geographic.



Teaching our kids to have goals, do their best, and leverage personal momentum to succeed are all good ideas. However, there is a difference between supporting a child's efforts to reach goals and taking control of the results we deem the best possible outcomes. Parents who habitually steamroll their kids rob them of personal experience on multiple levels. When parents over-step, kids can lose their point of view, their self-esteem may go down, they may feel confused, anxious or depressed, and may focus too much on pleasing parents instead of

honoring their own desires.

Don't let your children miss out on opportunities to learn from their own life experiences. Healthy kids are not confused about who they are and what they want. In fact, a lack of assertiveness and self-expression in children may be a signal to parents that they push too much and may need to back off and give kids a chance to assert themselves. If you tend to push too much, what are you so afraid of? If you are afraid your kids will set goals differently than you, don't worry. This is the

way it should be!

Insecurity and poor boundaries are two reasons parents take over their children's goals and make them their own. So what's a well-meaning parent with some teeny-weeny control issues to do? Plenty. You can foster healthier relationships with yourself, with your child, and with other family members, so each person in your family can focus on setting and achieving goals without interference. Then, when each of you inevitably succeeds, you will all have something to genuinely

Power Down The Parent Pressure: 10 Ways To Stop Micromanaging Your Kids' Goals

Story by
Christina Katz

celebrate. Here are ten ways to detach from your kids' goals.

1. Accept. Your kids are unfolding individuals-in-process and you are a unique person-in-process, as well. People are stories. We have beginnings, middles, and ends. As long as we are here, our story is still in progress. Sometimes progress is messy, and we are never done growing, until we are done living. So if we can allow each other to be unique works in progress, we don't have to put quite so much pressure on ourselves to achieve everything right this very minute.

2. Distinguish. You are not your child and your child is not you. So maybe it's time to ease up on comparing and contrasting family members. Who says parents and children have to be anything



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alike? Maybe every single person in your family is a unique individual and you all have varied perspectives on any topic. This is likely true. Forget pressing for family groupthink. You can't make your kids into you, nor should you ask them to be you. All you can do is be yourself and let them be themselves.

3. Moderate. Be a good enough parent, not a perfect parent. If you have to be a perfect parent, then everyone in your family has to be perfect too, and this is exhausting for everyone. If you put unrealistic pressures on yourself and your family members, stop. Try not judging your family by appearance.

External indicators are not the measure of internal happiness, anyway. Truth: you are imperfect, you make mistakes, you do the best you can, and this is all good enough. You can only feel like enough if you can let yourself and others embrace imperfection.

4. Strive. Have your own goals, not just goals for each of your children. Do you have a vocation or avocation beyond mothering and fathering? If not, you really need to get one or several. Parents who put all their identity eggs in one parenting basket are destined for a big fall, once children grow up and leave home. Because, yes, parenting is a full time job;

but it's not supposed to be your only identity in life. If you cling to your parenting role too much, ask yourself what other life challenges you might be trying to avoid. Chances are good, you are anxious about stretching your own wings. Focusing on your own goals and taking pride in each baby step will make you feel better than staying stuck.

5. Reach out. Get your own emotional needs met, rather than using your children for inner fulfillment. You may not realize you are doing this, but if you have unresolved childhood issues you have not yet faced, it is probably time to heal your past. The emotional work you are not willing to do can have



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long-term negative effects on your children. So don't try to sort everything out without assistance. If you are aware of a family history of addiction, neglect, mental illness, divorce, narcissism, abuse or control issues, then you are likely going to need professional input to sort it all out and get yourself on a healthy emotional track. Don't put this off, for your family's sake.

6. Let go. As the wife of a high school theater director, I have witnessed parents of aspiring thespians bartering for their children's advancement on more occasions than I care to remember. After moving into the district, it took us a couple of years to realize that many

of our new overly enthusiastic friends were actually looking to secure a future leading role for their child. Why do parents do this? Apparently they believe that trading favors is better than letting their kids compete with their peers on an even playing field. But how long are mom and dad going to be able to smooth the way for successes? And if you asked the child, wouldn't he say that he would rather earn the role rather than having mom and dad nab it for him?

7. Allow. Acknowledge your fears and insecurities in life and express them in front of your kids occasionally. You may think your children can't handle seeing you struggle, but by hiding your

negative emotions you won't provide healthy examples of how to process feelings with trusted others. Life is full of highs and lows. Trying to keep the emotional tone unnaturally high at all times is more detrimental than helpful. Kids need to see parents as regular old human beings who both thrive and falter. So set the example of how to experience a full range of emotions in your home and you're children will learn how to move through negative emotions instead of getting bogged down every time they experience a setback.

8. Join in. Help your kids create momentum in arenas they love, while still acknowledging the

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The Don't List For Parents:

- Don't try to write your child's story.
- Don't fantasize about your goals for your child.
- Don't compare your kids to others.
- Don't manipulate situations.
- Don't trade favors.
- Don't grease the wheels.
- Don't covet rewards other kids have earned.
- Don't fixate on having a perfect child.
- Don't talk smack about decision-makers.
- Don't over-react when your child fails.
- Don't try to fix it when your kid makes a mistake.
- Don't assume your child's innate superiority.
- Don't keep everyone on an intense schedule 24/7.
- Don't be addicted to the rush of constant striving.
- Don't forget to ask kids how they feel and what they think.
- Don't rant, rage or give anyone a piece of your mind.
- Don't neglect your own ambitions.
- Don't think parent is the only role you are playing in this life.

rest of the team. If your child always has to be the star for your sake, she will have trouble fitting in with the rest of the kids. If you can't settle for anything but the best for your child, check your attitude for entitlement. So take her down off the pedestal and get to work figuring out why you need to put her there in the first place. Chances are good it has more to do with your low self-esteem than what your child wants and needs. If you can join groups without having to be the best or the leader, your child can learn to appreciate the value in connecting for it's own sake, too.

9. Aim high. Toddlers don't usually walk across the room on their first attempt, and you won't hit every goal on the first try either. But if you don't set goals beyond your ken, then how are kids going to learn how to do the same themselves? Of course, this means sometimes you won't succeed and your children will witness your inevitable failures. But, if you come up with ways to bounce back from life's disappointments, your children will learn to do the same. And that's great because

then you are teaching them that aiming high is a challenging learning experience, not just an opportunity for guaranteed applause.

10. Relax. Make sure family members value down time. Home is supposed to be a sanctuary for the whole family, not a place where kids come to get probed, lectured, and controlled. If your home is not a place where each family member can retreat and find some peace and quite, why isn't it? Maybe a parent is spending too much time alone worrying about how each child can get ahead rather than getting out and contributing to the community. Don't be a pushy parent. You may feel like you are making strides for your children in the short run, but you are robbing each of them of developing an organic identity at their own pace. Value each child without pressuring. Create a restful home, full of divergent opinions, healthy debates, and spontaneous self-expression. Only then can your children evolve into the people they are each meant to become.





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Five Expert Tips to Help Teens with ADHD

Story by
Cheryl Maguire

"I got detention for forgetting my book three times in a row," read Michael's text. His mother wasn't surprised. Michael was diagnosed with ADHD when he was eight years old, and she's received other messages saying he misplaced or even forgotten to do his homework. His mother hoped that he'd be more organized by 13, and she wonders if this is typical teenage behavior or if it's due to his ADHD.

"Everyone has ADHD behavior at times," says Dr. Sarah Cheyette, a pediatric neurologist and author of the book, *ADHD & The Focused Mind*. Cheyette says the difference between a person

with ADHD and other people is that the person with ADHD is unfocused too much of the time.

"There are differences between a child and a teen with ADHD," Cheyette says. When a younger child has ADHD, parents tend to be more forgiving and helpful with their unfocused behaviors. A teen with ADHD may want their independence but lack the skills to focus and control their impulses. This can lead to more severe consequences than when they were younger. But parents can help their teens with ADHD improve their focus.

5 Ways to Improve Focus for Kids with ADHD:



1. Positive thinking

When a teen is interested in doing a particular task, it will be easier to accomplish. "Most people become more focused when they decide they want to do something," says Cheyette. "If you say to yourself, I don't feel like doing this, then you probably won't." For example, if your teen doesn't like doing homework, encouraging them to change their mindset can help improve their focus. Reframing the negative thought ("I don't want to do my homework") in a more positive light ("Finishing my homework will make me feel good about this class") can help a teen become more focused

and complete the task.

2. The right surroundings

Emily, a parent of a 14-year-old son diagnosed with ADHD, has found that choosing the right environment helps her son's mindset. "I encourage him to stay after school to do his homework," she says. "This way he doesn't become distracted by things at home, like his phone, and he can receive help from his teachers."

3. Healthy lifestyle choices

Cheyette also stresses the importance of a healthy lifestyle for improving and maintaining focus. Eating healthy, getting

enough sleep and making time to exercise can all contribute to improved focus for teens with ADHD. Sleep problems can lead to issues with memory and impulse control for any child, but especially kids with ADHD.

Jen, a parent to a 12-year-old daughter diagnosed with ADHD, agrees with Cheyette about the importance of eating healthy and getting enough sleep. Her daughter experiences intense mood swings and an inability to deal with stress when she doesn't eat or sleep well.

4. Setting goals

Cheyette says that setting goals can help teens with



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ADHD improve their focus and achieving their goals will help them feel successful. As a parent, you may be tempted to provide directions or nag your child to make sure they are working towards their goals, but it's important for teens to actively set and own their goals.

But you can still help them. "Make observations and ask questions," Cheyette recommends. "If you notice your son's backpack is a mess, instead of saying, 'You need to organize your backpack,' try saying, 'It must be difficult to find your homework when your backpack looks like this' or 'How are you able to find

your homework?'"

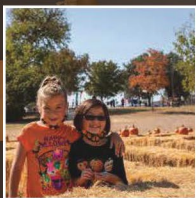
Once you've framed the problem, she says, "Ask questions such as, 'How can you help yourself?' or 'How can you act differently next time?' to allow your child to think about and own their behaviors.

5. Medication

Like younger kids, teens can benefit from medication. Amy, a parent of a 15-year-old son diagnosed with ADHD, bought her son a trampoline to use after school to help him release his energy. And the exercise was helpful. But she saw the most improvement when her son began taking medication. "Once

he was medicated he could use self-regulating strategies," she says. "Before that, he wasn't able to learn these strategies since he couldn't pay attention."

Cheyette wants to remind parents that you are your child's best advocate and the parents interviewed here agree. "The best advice I can give other parents is to tell them that there may be really bad times, but your child needs to know that you are in their court," Jen says. "When your child feels like a failure or has no friends or school is horrible, they need to be able to come home to you and release their frustrations and emotions."



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Story by
Tanni Haas, Ph.D.

How To Tell If Your Kid Might Be The Victim Of Cyberbullying

No matter how much and how well you try to protect your kids, there's always the possibility that they'll become the victims of cyberbullying. If that's the case, how do you know if your kids are being cyberbullied? What are the tell-tale warning signs?

It's important to know the warning signs as only about

one in ten kids tell their parents about being cyberbullied. Dr. Michele Borba, an internally-renowned expert on cyberbullying, says "Don't expect your child will come and tell you about the harassment. Research says that chances are that your child won't tell which is why you need to tune in closer and get educated."

Kids often keep silent because they're ashamed, fear retribution from the bully, and, perhaps most surprising to parents, are afraid that their computer and phone access will be restricted or taken away which, in turn, they see as an unfair punishment of them rather than the bully. Unlike traditional bullying which often leaves physical



marks like bruises or black eyes, cyberbullying can often only be identified by certain changes in a kid's behavior. Cyberbullying can occur right in front of parents, or in the next room, without them realizing it.

According to Drs. Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin of the Cyberbullying Research Center, you can tell if your kids might be the victims of cyberbullying by paying close attention to their general demeanor and online behavior. Like victims of traditional bullying, kids who're cyberbullied often show signs of depression. They exhibit little interest in the things and activities that used to matter to them the most, tend to withdraw

from friends and family, experience sudden changes in their eating and sleeping patterns, and complain of headaches and stomachaches. "Moodiness and mood swings are just part of being [a child]," says Walter Meyer, a well-known cyberbullying expert. "But if a child really changes – becomes withdrawn, stops speaking to friends, etc. – the parents should ask what is going on and not be satisfied with 'nothing' as an answer."

Research by the National Crime Prevention Council shows that kids who're cyberbullied often are fearful about going to school, ask to be driven to school rather than take the

school bus, skip school when they can get away with it or request permission to leave school early because they feel sick, have trouble focusing and fall behind in their school work, and may even experience a significant drop in their grades. This is often precipitated by problems with sleeping which make it difficult for them to focus on the school work.

While it's important to pay close attention to your kids' general demeanor, pay particularly close attention to their online behavior. Kids who're cyberbullied tend to be unusually secretive about what they're doing online, avoiding conversations with their parents



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about which sites they're on, who they're talking to, and the topics of their conversations. If they're willing to talk to their parents about what they're doing online at all, they're likely to get defensive and give vague or dubious-sounding explanations.

Kids who're cyberbullied often quickly turn off their computers or phones when a parent enters their space, hide, clear or rapidly switch screens, or outright refuse to use their devices unless the parent leaves. They also tend to be unwilling to part with their devices, or share them with their parents, fearing that their parents might find out what's

going on. This is especially true in the evening when friends and cyberbullies are most likely to be online.

When they are online, kids who're cyberbullied tend to be visibly agitated or jumpy, especially when they receive an IM, text or email from a bully. Their minds are racing with thoughts and emotions as they're trying to figure out how best to handle the situation without revealing anything to others. They're also likely to keep checking their computers and phones while going back and forth between different screens in short spurts, say they're doing homework when they're really

doing something else entirely, and may abruptly shut off or walk away from their devices mid-use for no outwardly apparent reason.

Not surprisingly, kids who're cyberbullied often appear angry or frustrated after they have been online. Some may suddenly and unexpectedly stop going online at all. Others may go online more than usual, unable to resist the temptation to check whether any new comments have been posted about them. Another possible indication that your kids are the victims of cyberbullying is that they try to cover their "online tracks" such as by erasing their user history

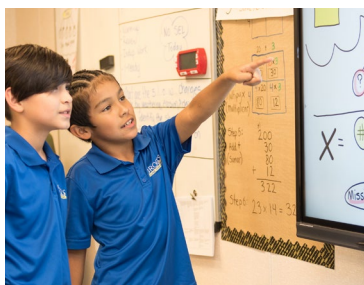


folders every time they turn off their devices.

You know your kids better than anyone else. Look for multiple signs that seem to go together; they could be an indication that they are the victims of cyberbullying. “The key,” as Dr. Borba says, “is to look for a pattern in your child. You shouldn’t overlook a sudden change that’s not your child’s ‘normal’ behavior.”

A note from the publisher

I was in middle school at the onset of instant messaging through services like AIM, MSN Messenger and MySpace. My parents were afraid to give me a phone when I was 12 because they thought that I would lose it (I misplaced many things), but they ultimately decided that being able to reach them for emergencies was more important. They never imagined that giving me a phone was opening a portal for potential bullying. Cyberbullying wasn’t a thing that was widely talked about back then, but it’s a widespread issue now. I think that we can universally agree that saying harmful things over the Internet is much easier than saying them to someone’s face; kids don’t see the instant effects that come from harmful and hateful words. As technology has advanced, the likelihood that parents are giving their kids a communication device at early ages has increased, and the chances of them being bullied over the Internet has increased as well. It’s not a bad thing to give your kid a phone, but we must remain aware of how kids are using these devices so they are neither the victim or purveyor of bullying. Please visit stopbullying.gov to more resources if you believe your child is being bullied.



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More Magic & Fewer Meltdowns: Tips For Trick-Or-Treating Parents

Story by
Christina Katz



Blister abound, sugar levels soar, dehydration ensues, and next thing you know, what started as a fun, festive night feels more like a ghoulish nightmare.

The uncomfortable truth is that Halloween costumes are often flimsy and lack the insulation needed to stave off a brisk autumn chill. Kids' candy bags can quickly become overstuffed to the point of creating a cascade of candy-and tears-as the evening wears on.

Before you turn into a witch or a warlock, parents, remember, the key to enjoying All Hallows' Eve is as simple as rallying the troops in advance, going over your expectations, and getting

prepared for anything that might go amiss. Here are some tips from a mom who has literally been around the block a few times:

Split into age groups. Have one parent take one age group and the other parent take the other age group. Tweens like to run in packs and they move fast, so wear sneakers and layers you can lose, if you plan on keeping up with them. Toddlers and preschoolers may dawdle or tire quickly, so choose the more patient parent to accompany them. Or consider taking two shifts, one earlier in the evening for younger kids and another later in the evening for older kids, trading off who stays home to

hand out candy.

Wear a backpack. Maybe it seems extreme to gear up as though you are going for an overnight hike just to walk a few blocks around the neighborhood. But the weather is fickle this time of year, and once you grab everything you need for a pleasant evening, you will be amazed by how much stuff you have to tote. And don't be surprised if your kids shed pieces of their costumes as the excitement heats up. A shoulder bag may feel fine for the first fifteen minutes of the night, but after two-hours, you will likely wish you had brought the backpack.



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Invest in warm & dry. Your evening could end prematurely if there is a sudden windstorm or rain shower. If your kids have on enough layers of tights and long underwear underneath their costumes, they won't falter even if they get a little wet. And if you are walking with a young child or children, bring a large umbrella, and keep a couple of compact umbrellas in your pack for older kids who will say they won't need them, but then might.

Eat a high-protein dinner. 'Tis the season for over-indulging in sugar, which means it's more important than any other time of year to emphasize three healthy high-protein meals a day. Be sure to give your kids limits on how

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much sugar they may consume between meals. Take their candy away and mete it out yourself if they don't comply with your limits or can't seem to wean themselves off the sugar roller coaster.

Practice their refrains. Commit to making the night pleasant for all. "Trick-or-treat!" and "Thank you!" are the only things young children need to be able to say their first couple of years out. But encourage older children to be more cordial especially to

the older folks in the 'hood, who will likely opt out altogether if they are offended by enough poorly behaved kids. How about making a chorus of "Happy Halloween!" or "Have a great night!" mandatory before the kids run off to the next house?

Be prepared. Plastic and paper bags for treats are out. They are the most likely to rip or tear. Pillowcases are better, but these too may split open when stuffed. So whatever you do, don't let the kids use your good set.

Whatever they carry, stuff a few extra bags in your backpack in case you need replacements. Also carry band-aids for blisters, water for hydration, and cash on hand in case you come across a food cart selling something you might enjoy. And, of course, don't forget the camera.

Aim for the middle. If you are driving to another neighborhood to walk with a friend or friends, consider parking your vehicle in the middle of the neighborhood instead of on the edge or back



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at the friend's house. This way, if you need to make an early exit for any reason, you'll be that much closer to your escape car. When bringing along very young children with older children consider bringing along a stroller or wagon. Even if the kids insist they don't need one, they might want one later after exhaustion sets in.

Use social sense. No one likes to feel left out, so encourage your kids to invite new or shy kids who might not already be part of a group to join you. Or, if you know that you will all have a better time if it's just you and your kids, don't feel bad about breaking off from a group.

Halloween is a great opportunity to teach kids about doing what works best for your family rather than always going along with the crowd. On the other hand, if there is a crowd you need to keep up with, now you will be ready. Happy Halloween!



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