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# beijingkids

November 2020

**Plus:**

The Ins  
and Outs  
of Handing  
Tech to  
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Children



How Smart  
Does  
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**Digital Age**  
Teens and Parents Talk Tech



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November 2020

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November 2020

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Teens and Parents Talk Tech

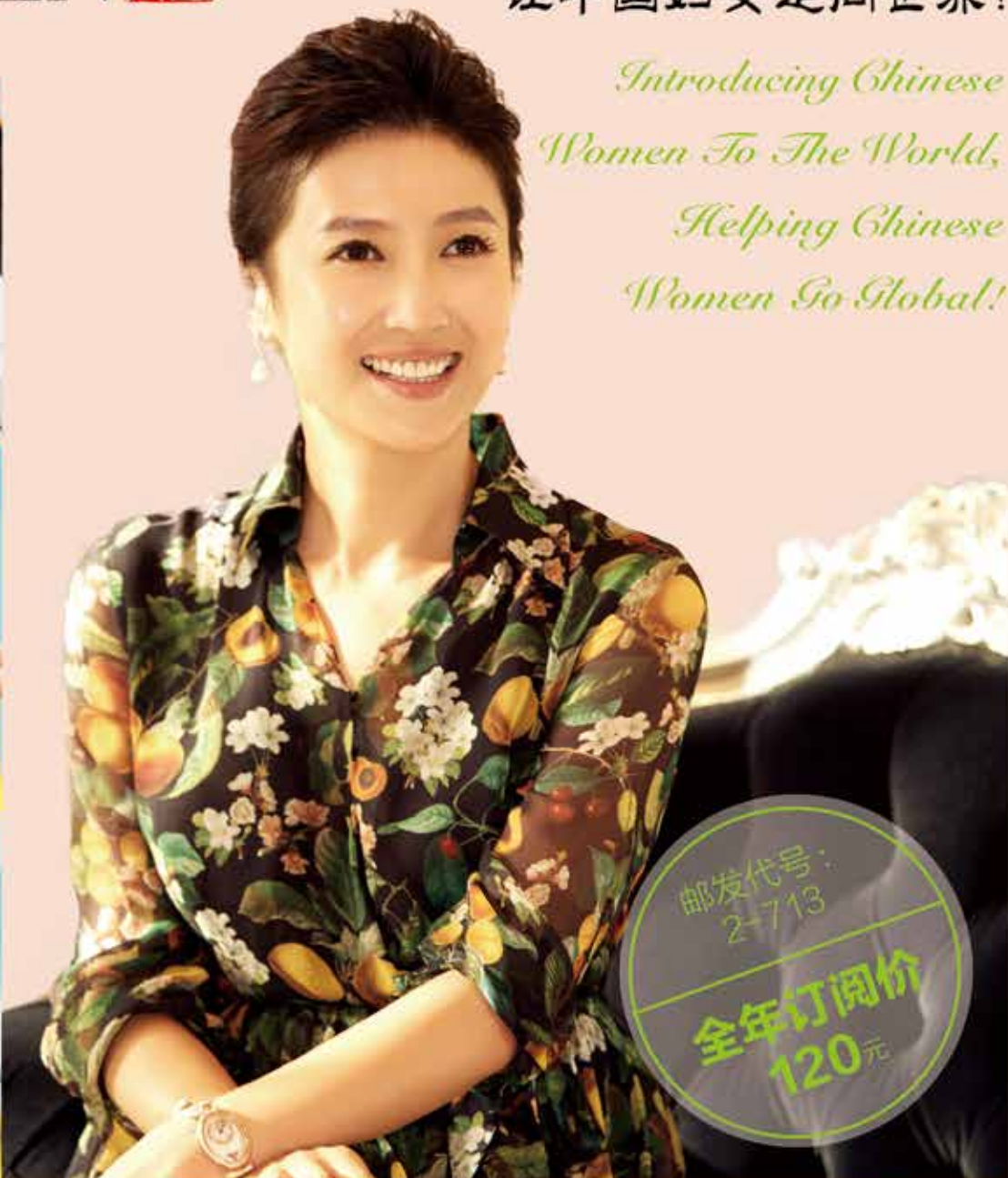


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### ON THE COVER:



This month our cover photographer Dave Hansen and his sons model what it looks like when technology and family collide.

Photographed by Dave Hansen of Dave's Studio

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
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## The beijingkids Board

### Tim Coghlan

Tim first came to China in 2001 and has made Beijing his home for the last 10 years. He specializes in new market development for the world's most iconic consumer brands, previously helping luxury brands enter and expand in China, and now helping a Chinese technology company build their global business. He enjoys outdoor adventures with his two young children, and time permitting, vlogs in Chinese under the moniker of "Kangaroo Daddy".



### Mike Signorelli

Mike Signorelli arrived in Beijing in 1994 as a student and has called China home ever since. He has held several senior management roles over the past 20+ years, including his last corporate job with NBA China. Mike is the founder of Signature Wine, an independent subscription wine club. Contact him at mike@sigwine.com.

### Marianne Daquet

In Beijing for 12 years, Marianne Daquet has always been passionate about art and education. She founded Atelier Art School 6 years ago with the mission to pass on her strong belief that creativity can change the world. She and her French husband have two daughters. You can reach her at Marianne@atelier.cn.com.



### Tara Gillan

Tara is from England, UK, and been in China over 14 years where she is raising third culture, bilingual kids. She has a passion for education in China, and is a lifelong learner still trying to master Mandarin. In between, work, study and being a mum, you will find her looking for her next adventure!

### Caroline Nath

Caroline Nath moved to Beijing as a teenager after having grown up in the US, Canada, France, and India. She is a filmmaker, radio host, Parent Effectiveness Training teacher, founder of Bonne Nani Jams, and an organic food promoter. She has two multi-ethnic and multi-lingual children. Contact her at kulfidoll@gmail.com.



### Alessandra Azambuja

Alessandra's Beijing adventure began in 2010 when she arrived here with her local Beijinger husband and two children. She is originally from Brazil and has also lived and worked in Argentina and New Zealand. With a passion for working in multicultural environments with international students, Alessandra worked for nearly nine years at The University of Auckland English Language Academy, and is currently at AISB-Hope International in Beijing. You can contact her at azambuja.alessandra@hopeintlschool.org

### Lise Floris

Lise Poulsen Floris is an EU official turned blogger. Since leaving her native Denmark in 1998, she has lived in Italy and Belgium before moving to China with her family. She writes about life in Beijing on her blog [ninemillionbicycles.com](http://ninemillionbicycles.com), aiming to tell "the big story through the small story." Her work has been published in the *South China Morning Post*, *Global Times*, and *Point of View International*.



### Juliet London

After seven years in Beijing, market researcher, branding consultant and writer, mother to two teenagers, Juliet 'Lady' London continues to be fascinated by this ever changing city. British by birth, she has also lived in Australia and other parts of Asia. Her work primarily focuses on education research, leaving less time than she would like to take exercise, walk her dog, and snap up bargains at local markets.

## A NOTE TO OUR READERS

“

We're all dependent on technology. Long gone are the days when datebooks, floppy disks, and landlines could be found in every house. Everything is up in the cloud now and we've all got a smart phone tethering us to our social circles. So, instead of being a Luddite, embrace the benefits of the digital age and teach your kids how to grow up responsibly with technology.

In this latest issue of *beijingkids* we sent one of our colleagues Cindy Marie Jenkins on a no phone retreat (p. 12) with her family. We had no doubt that she'd survive it, but it wasn't an easy journey. We spoke with two families from different cultural backgrounds for their views on technology (p. 28). How young is too young for kids to have a smartphone and just how much time is too much for them to spend online?

As kids get older, the lure of social media becomes even more mesmerizing, with many teens now including "Social Media KOL" on their list of career aspirations. One Beijing student shares some insight on the digital life of this city's teens (p. 40). But a social media footprint doesn't start when our children create their first profile. For some, it starts the day they're born. One mom shares her insights on the widely discussed topic of whether parents should be posting their kids' photos on social media, especially when they're babies and without their consent (p. 34).

But this issue isn't all about technology. As 2020 (finally) nears its end, we gear up for some traditional end-of-year celebrations with

our friends and family — all while following the latest social distancing regulations, of course. Check out some potluck favorites from Beijing's expat community that are easy to make, fancy to look at, and delicious to eat (p. 18). And I don't know about you, but I'm going to be ready to ring in 2021 in style. No, not with a night out on the town. I'm a firm believer that a new hairstyle can completely change your whole mood. This year, it's going to be with a fresh haircut and some much needed relaxing time at home with my family. Mom Candy Perez gets a head start on her new look at Laurent Falcon (p.8) and I can't wait to do the same.

On a personal note, as my husband and I welcome the birth of our daughter Aria, I'm delighted to leave you in the capable hands of our *beijingkids* Deputy Manager Cindy Marie Jenkins. Happy holidays and see you all in a few months!



”

Mina Yan



# What's New



## COVID-19 Vaccine Ready in China?

In case you missed it, on October 12, state-owned China National Pharmaceutical group (Sinopharm) launched an online vaccine reservation system. Before you get excited, the system currently only accepts appointments for China's essential workers and students living in Beijing and Wuhan. Students planning to travel abroad from November 2020 to January 2021 will also be eligible for the shot.

## 70 Schools, Hundreds of Families Attend Jingkids International School Expo

COVID-19 might have seen the Jingkids International School Expo (JISE) postponed, but not even it could stop this annual event from taking place this year. Over 70 international schools were in attendance, showcasing the best that each of their campuses has to offer to Beijing's parents and students. There were also engaging panels, where experts, educators, parents and students alike were able to engage and learn. This year's JISE was certainly one for the books!



In our October issue, the article "From Art Attack to Nurturing Creativity" included a photo of artwork that was not properly credited. The artwork is titled "Paola" by local Beijing artist Annette Golden. *Beijingkids* apologizes for this error.



## Beijingkids' Mina Yan and Husband Welcome Beautiful Baby Daughter

It's said that each cloud has a silver lining. And for us at *beijingkids*, as for most of Beijing's international families, 2020 hasn't been the easiest of years. But our Chief Manager, Mina Yan's, baby bump became a constant source of joy in the office as the entire team waited with great anticipation for the arrival of the baby. And arrive she did, on October 19, after keeping not only we on the *beijingkids* team on tenterhooks, but also her mommy and daddy waiting days after she was due to arrive. Better late than never we say, and with such a precious reward after a long wait, it makes any stretch of time well worth it. Congratulations again to Mina Yan and her husband, Billy Jin, as they embark on this new adventure of parenthood.

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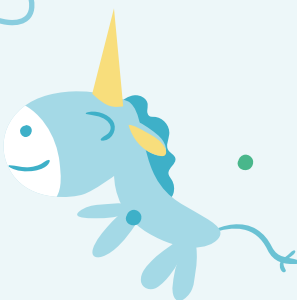
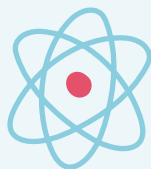


Note that we will only publish  
photos of babies born  
in the last 12 months



**Andrea Medina Bicelis**

Venezuelan. Born Dec 15  
to Evelyn Bicelis and Diego Medina  
at Oasis International Hospital



**Evan Soh**

Singaporean. Born Apr 9  
to Sara Lin and Jimmy Soh  
at Mount Elizabeth Hospital



**Felipe Granja Benassi**

Brazilian. Born Feb 20  
to Natália Ferraz Granja and Eduardo Benassi Rodrigues  
at Beijing United Family Hospital



**Kristina Mercedes Hysen**

American. Born Apr 17  
to Cai Min and David Shaban Hysen  
at Oasis International Hospital



**Shaka Du Toit**

South African. Born Oct 6  
to Hilette du Toit and Joubert Geyer  
at Oasis International Hospital





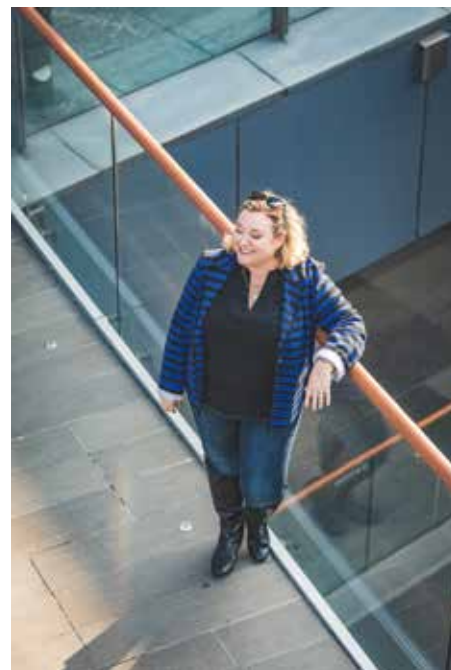


# *A HOP, SKIP, AND HAIRCUT AWAY!*

This Beijing Mom gets some autumnal  
life back into her luscious locks!

*By Mark Allan Karanja*





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Candy Perez is your typical Beijing expat mom. But this year has been anything but typical for her and her family. Like many who were taken aback by China's decision to shut the borders following the global COVID-19 outbreak, Perez and her three kids — Bella (17), Jonah (11), and Dean (9) — found themselves stranded in the states for the better part of 2020. Only having recently returned, Perez and her family have been working to catch up with all that they had missed in their absence from Beijing.

Admittedly, having three kids will run any mom off her feet. Between working to help the entire family readjust to their return to Beijing, and the normal running of a household, Perez has had little time to do much in the way of self-care, making her a perfect candidate for this month's Indulge spot. This day was, however, a bit nerve-racking for Perez. You wouldn't know to look at her luscious locks, but in the past, Perez suffered from Alopecia totalis — a condition where someone's immune system attacks their hair follicles, resulting in the total loss of hair.

Thankfully, this condition is not permanent, and once assessed by a physician, several effective therapies can be recommended to reverse the process of hair loss. This doesn't diminish how traumatic losing one's hair can be. The experience of eventually growing back her hair, patiently coaxing it to its former glory, had Perez rather reticent on doing much with it, instead adopting a "live and let grow" attitude. But she finally decided to bite the bullet and give her now full head of hair a much needed and well-deserved revamp.

Having entrusted her hair to the genius that is Laurent Falcon, owner of the Laurent Falcon Salon in Sanlitun, Perez was ready to have some fun. To start, Perez and Falcon decided to go shorter, adding shape and body to the lanky tresses with playful layers. The next step was lifting the color to achieve a balayage effect, taking Perez from honeycomb to bombshell blonde.

Bleaching can be incredibly damaging to the hair, leaving it dry, brittle, and listless. After

achieving just the right level of blonde, Perez was rinsed off, and the bleaching process was followed up with an Olaplex treatment. We have written about Olaplex several times in the Indulge section since it works wonders when it comes to reconstructing bonds in each strand of damaged hair. It is an important step in ensuring your bleached hair remains healthy, strong, and shiny at the end of your service. Following up on the Olaplex treatment, Perez's hair was toned to reduce the brassiness which may occur from a bleaching service. Then it was on to styling!

A master at the round brush blowout, Falcon proceeded to add some bounce to Perez's newly layered hair, then added tight flat iron curls, before fluffing them out to create a voluminous side-sweep to flatter Perez's face.

Next, her makeup! With the brightness of the hair, it was important to bring some warmth to Perez's skin, while keeping the overall makeup look autumnal and soft. And to tie it all together, Perez chose a beautiful Autumnal ensemble, a classic combination of a cardigan, jeans, and knee-length riding boots, perfect for a chilly autumn day but one that can also go from day to night effortlessly. In the end, Perez got a well-deserved day of pampering and a look that says 'forever summer' to match her sunny personality!

## Keep your bleached hair healthy

1. For brassy results after a bleaching treatment, always keep a bottle of purple shampoo handy. Purple shampoo counteracts the orange hue, leaving perfectly blonde tresses.
2. Add a Keratin shampoo and conditioner to your hair care regimen to maintain the strength and health of your hair.
3. Following a professional Olaplex 1 and 2 treatment at a salon, you can get Olaplex 3, which is designed as an at-home treatment to maintain the results of the initial Olaplex treatment.
4. In winter, it is important to add a sheen oil or gloss to your regimen. The oil not only lubricates the hair, but it also reduces static and provides a protective shield against the harsh elements.



# STAYING PLUGGED IN

Tech The Vuillermin-Cui Family Can't Live Without

By Mina Yan

## Daniel

As an only child, my siblings were video games so I've owned a console from almost every generation. If I had to choose one console it would have to be the Nintendo Switch, if only for "Zelda: Breath of the Wild." It's much more child-friendly than the PlayStation 4. I also can't live without Spotify. Listening to music and podcasts is the best way to survive subway journeys.



**N**owadays it's impossible to live in a city like Beijing and not depend on technology for your daily needs. Whether it's for transportation, news, or just entertainment, we're always plugged in! Dad Daniel Vuillermin is originally from Australia and works as a lecturer at the School of Health Humanities at Peking University. In his free time, he coordinates Spittoon Beijing and plays music for Boss Cuts, Back Seat Bingo, and The Ravages. Mom Cui Ling is a senior account director in the advertising industry. The couple welcomed their son Yuni three years ago, who was born in Beijing and attends Peking University Health Science Center Kindergarten.

### Yuni

During our two-week quarantine, Yuni started playing his Dad's Nintendo Switch and it turns out he is really good at classic games like "Yoshi's Island" and "Super Mario Bros." As a treat — or if we want him to be quiet — we let him use iPad apps such as Little Penguin Garden (小企鹅乐园 xiǎo qī'ē lèyuán), which has a huge selection of Chinese and international cartoons. But his favorite app is YouTube Kids as it has a lot of monster truck videos.

### Ling

Before COVID-19, I would spend a lot of time gazing at C-Trip dreaming about all of the places I could go to. But until we can travel again, the iMuseum app is a great resource for keeping up to date with the latest cultural events in Beijing, China, and abroad. For families I recommend VUE. This app is great at taking really cool short films. It is simple to use and has stunning visual effects so that we can all become influencers.



# A PHONE ADDICT ON AIRPLANE MODE

## Benefits of a No-Phone Retreat

*By Cindy Marie Jenkins*



*You can't swing with a phone in your hand!*

N

early every article on screen time for kids says that parents must model good behavior. Every time that's brought up I feel guilty for the amount of time that I spend on my phone in front of my kids. So when I heard that *beijingkids* needed someone to try a no phone retreat, I volunteered. I knew I would only follow through with it if I had to for an article.

A little background so you might understand why it's so hard for me not to use my phone: I used to work in social media marketing and often live-tweeted events. I'm

the one at every baby shower and birthday party who has their phone out to catch the important moments. I taught executives at all levels and all ages that if there isn't a photo, it didn't happen. Once my kids got out of their respective baby phases, I didn't feel the need to capture every burp for their grandparents across the country; before that, however, I am very guilty of taking a photo to commemorate all the mini-milestones.

Since they've gotten older, I've worked hard to take fewer pictures and just live in



the moment. That independence comes with a weird balance though, because they don't need me to play with them as much and thus I have more time to browse the news at a park.

I eased myself into a no-phone retreat by not looking at my phone while we did homework. My kids are just getting used to homework so they need guidance for the 30 minutes to an hour a day we spend on it. I did have to stop myself from reaching for my phone a few times, but for that week, I was much more present and helpful to my children. Even when I had to check the homework app for help on the next assignment, I didn't want to. And shocker! The only important message I missed was planning dinner with my husband. But we figured that out each day a little earlier or later with no big fuss.

Another way I helped this cause was by changing my notifications so they only show that I have a message but no more information is revealed unless I click on it. I don't get a preview of the message and so am not as tempted to check it. I also removed some of the more intrusive apps and thus had to physically go to them in order to see if I had a message, versus opening them every single time those little "dings" came into my life.

Then came the big day. We were headed to a hiking trip near Mutianyu. My husband came with us, so I couldn't use him as an excuse to have my phone ready. I didn't need directions, I didn't really need my phone for anything except distraction. My original plan had been

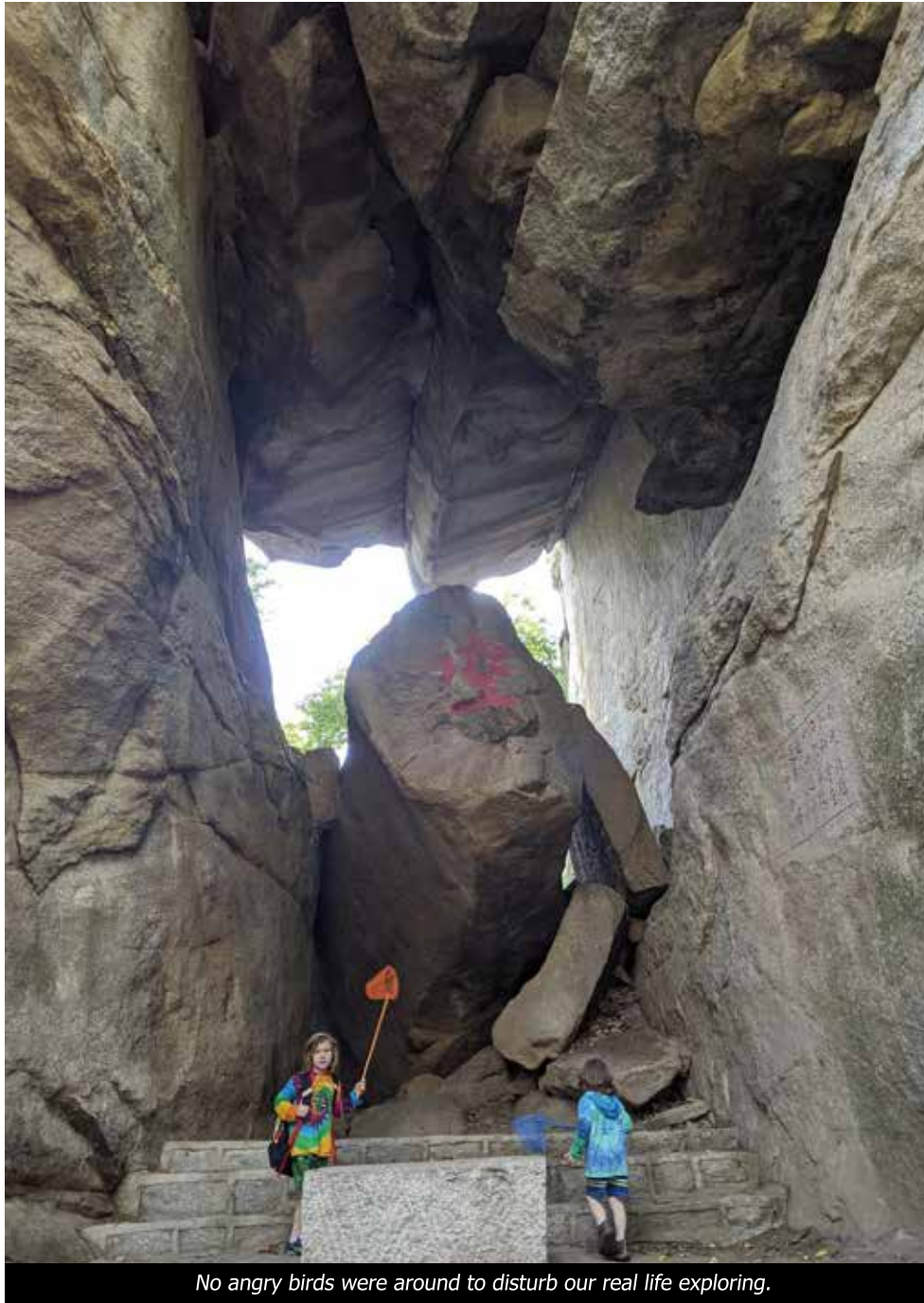
to take my real camera and not use my phone even for that, but I forgot to charge the battery so I needed a Plan B. I just set my phone to airplane mode before we got off the bus. It would be a four to six-hour trip, which was

I decided to make it official there, too. I sent a photo of my family as we were about to set off on our adventure and reminded my team that this was my "no phone retreat" day. Now it was really official. I had no excuse.

Turns out, I didn't need one. We had lots of new families to meet and the kids were so thrilled to be out in nature that they demanded our full attention, and there was nowhere else I wanted to be. I devoted myself entirely to being their playground monster and rock hopping helper. When we got to a large rock and some kids were swimming, I laid my head on my backpack, my four-year-old laid down on me, and we just talked. He told me whatever was on his little mind and we spoke like the best of friends. I didn't even take a lot of pictures. I just leaned into every moment and appreciated that my mind could wander without direction and nothing I saw or did had to be distilled into a "Moment" or a "Story."

Since that day, it's been a lot easier for me to leave my phone in another room, or keep it on silent on the other side of the apartment. Even during a recent week off of work while my kids were home from school, I haven't felt

the need to have my phone near me every hour of the day. And we've read books each day for at least twice as long as we normally do. And when I need to sit down and simply write, or work, or both, I can accomplish these tasks in a shorter amount of time because, well, I don't feel the obsession to check my phone for any little alert. It can all happen in its own time and I will be there when necessary, not before.



*No angry birds were around to disturb our real life exploring.*

surely enough time to test all these theories.

The closer we got to our destination, the more antsy about it I was. I decided that telling my husband would keep me accountable, and I briefed him on my plan. I didn't know how worried I was that I wouldn't be able to handle it until the words came out of my mouth. In a way, this retreat was at a time that made it easier; I had the week off for Golden Week and no one expected me to be available.



# HOW SMART DOES YOUR KIDS' WATCH NEED TO BE?

Looking at the Tech on Their Wrist

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

As with most things parenting-related, I initially scoffed at the idea of a smartphone or smartwatch for pre-teens. The more independent my kids get, however, and the more they're under another adult's supervision, I do long for them to be able to just press a button and call me. The idea of a phone with GPS is appealing as well, although certainly not foolproof for the worst-case scenario of getting kidnapped.

I mostly want to introduce them to the responsibility of such a

device in their lives. Even my six-year-old asks for a smartphone of his own, without understanding that if he doesn't charge it, it won't be charged. And if he tosses it into his bag like he does everything else, then it could break. Not being allowed to use it during school time will be quite a shocker as well. But I'd rather he learn these lessons on more inexpensive technology before we invest in a phone when he's older. So here are some of the smartwatches that friends have used in Beijing.

## VTech Kidizoom Smartwatch DX2

**Ages:** 4 to 12

**GPS:** No

**Phone:** No

The VTech Kidizoom SmartWatch was chosen out of 500 digital technology products for kids to receive the esteemed KAPI (Kids at Play Interactive) Award for "Best Peripheral" in 2018. With a touch screen, selfie, and side camera for stills or video, games and the choice of either an analog or digital display, Kidizoom gives parents some solid control but retains the cool parts that appeal to kids as well. All the learning games connect to VTech's Learning Lodge, however, so it's probably not a good choice if you aren't already in that world. Available in blue, pink, green, white, and camouflage. Special editions also offer interchangeable wristbands so your four-year-old can start accessorizing!



## Kurio Watch 2.0+

**Ages:** 6 to 12

**GPS:** No

**Phone:** Yes

This one grabbed my attention because of the stickers you can add to photos and videos, which my kids love to do on my personal phone. You can send texts, doodles, and more to other Kurio watches and also message with any Android device, so long as the recipient has downloaded the Kurio app. With games like Pirate's Battle, Tic-Tac-Toe, and Battleship, siblings and friends with the same watch can play together too. There's an Activity Tracker but even more important to me, an Emergency App! Here you can not only input numbers and contacts in case of emergency, but also allergies, blood type, and special instructions.

It's available in many colors with interchangeable straps, and thermal straps also change color based on your wrist's heat. Good luck getting them to take this one off at school.



PHOTOS: FROM THE PRODUCT WEBSITES



## Omate Wherecom K3 Smart Watch

**Ages:** 6 to 10**GPS:** Yes**Phone:** Yes

Some of the techier parents tend towards Omate, with its built-in 3G and up to two days of battery life when charged. There's an emergency button, video camera for calls, touchscreen, noise cancellation microphone, and unlimited data. Messaging is also easy with unlimited voice messaging and fun emojis, of course. All of these features are available through the iOS or Android apps, with supposedly no "pricey plans".

The interface looks user friendly enough, and games can be played solo or with other K3 users. Of course, only the programmed numbers can be used to call in or out, so keep those parental controls tight. It's a little pricier than some of the other options but is made to be durable to keep your active child from breaking theirs and needing a new one too soon.



## Xiaomi Kids Smartwatch

**Ages:** 6 and up**GPS:** Yes**Phone:** Yes

Beijing Mom Charlotte Edwards likes the bells and whistles of this watch so her kids, Nathaniel (12) and Catherine (8), feel cool, but it's the parental controls that sold it for her. "The kids can call any of [the programmed numbers]...We used the app to specify the times during which the phone cannot make or receive calls. From the app we can also see where the children are; the only downside we've experienced is that because we live near the school, at least once a day while the kids are at recess or out for PE, our phones alert us that the child has left school." A quick glance is enough to check their exact location, however.

Some other perks are the songs and stories they can access on WiFi, and Charlotte explains "they can also add friends who have this brand of watch and send voice and text messages to them outside of school hours."



## WORD TO THE WISE

As exciting as these smartwatches might seem as an alternative to younger kids owning a cell phone, parents must be sure to check the latest data and security findings for their products. In their 2010 paper "STALK: Security Analysis of Smartwatches for Kids", researchers at the Münster University of Applied Sciences in Germany found an incredible amount of vulnerabilities in many smartwatch security systems. Often hackers could listen in to conversations, track or

change GPS coordinates, and even send text messages that looked like they came from a child's parents in some cases.

My takeaway from this research is to not only perform my due diligence as a parent to find the right features for my child but also check out my top choices against studies like the one from Münster University. Don't let a tool bought for safety turn into a security nightmare.



# Dating it Jing style

The Lius Find a Perfect Return to Dining Out  
at Jing Yaa Tang

*By XueFei Liu*







*Appetizers are tasty but won't fill you up!*



*You will make room in your belly for the delicious noodles.*

My parents have been overprotective from day one, and facing the pandemic was no different. So, after staying in the house for a total of 213 days, imagine the shocked and surprised faces when I announced that I had arranged a date night for them. My mom comes from the south of China and my dad from the north. They have completely different taste buds, so finding a restaurant that compliments both would be a challenge. After much thought, I finally decided on the 2020 Michelin one-star restaurant, Jing Yaa Tang.

Not only do they serve Beijing Cuisine, they also have various flavors suitable for both Chinese and Western taste buds. As my parents entered the restaurant, it was as if they'd been transported back in time. The setting of the restaurant creates an elegant atmosphere with a hint of mystery, and my mom immediately regretted not wearing an evening dress. My parents were greeted with sparkling champagne, and I nearly had to pry the phones out of their hands because they couldn't stop taking pictures of everything.

The appetizers — Chilled Yunnan Golden Tremella Mushroom with Turnip Seed Oil dressing (RMB 98) and the Pan-Fried Tofu Roll with Mushroom, Carrot, and Yunnan Black Truffle (RMB 168), were refreshing and flavorful, giving your stomach a warm-up for the bigger dishes ahead.

Speaking of warming up, the Stewed Pea Sprouts and Jiangsu Tofu Skin in Pork Broth (RMB 138) was up next. A silky and smooth broth mixed with the chewy tofu skin perfectly matches the crunchiness of the bean sprouts. Even my dad had to admit that it was the best remedy after a day of working under air conditioners.

If you go to Jing Yaa Tang and don't try the "Three Cup" Clay Pot Cod Fish with Basil (RMB 338), that would be possibly the worst mistake ever. The tenderness and freshness of the codfish is unbelievable. With the slightly spicy peppers and basil inside the pot, its flavor and texture really make this dish unforgettable.

It'll be hard to top a classic, but my parents were left speechless when they tried the Tea Leaf Roasted Beef Belly (RMB 158). The tea used in this dish is called *tieguanyin*, which belongs to the Oolong tea class. The beef is slow-roasted to medium, resulting in maximum tenderness. Also, they add the tea in the sauce during the process of roasting the beef, creating a unique taste. To the side of the dish are fried tea leaves that have a bit of bitterness but are also refreshing, thus going in perfect harmony with the beef.

Now what would Jing cuisine be without Peking duck? My mom wondered the same thing when multiple plates were cleared. It was finally time for Jing Yaa Tang Roast Duck

(whole duck RMB 328, half duck RMB 248). What sets this dish apart is its secret sauce, melon that is added as a condiment to give a refreshing taste, and the fried garlic which adds a level of texture to the Beijing style. Their pancakes are handmade, which make it taste even better. Jing Yaa Tang roasts their duck using date wood, so that when they light the wood on fire and smoke the duck, the aroma comes out and gives the duck a unique essence.

Just as my parents thought they were done, the last dish, Sichuan Dan Dan Noodles with Spicy Minced Pork (RMB 58), arrived. Like most Dan Dan noodles, this dish was spicy. However, the hint of sourness and the unique texture of the noodles creates the perfect blend. With the minced pork, it's the go-to dish for your dose of carbohydrates.

On the car ride home, my parents were overjoyed. With full bellies and the discovery of a wonderful restaurant, it was the perfect way to reintroduce them to date nights.

My parents met when they were around my age, and my dad remembers when he first laid eyes on my mom as if it was yesterday. He saw her riding her bike on the high school campus, and they exchanged letters during college to stay in touch. The result of this courtship is that both my parents are anti-phone, so they set up a rule called "zero-technology" where phones and other devices are stored away during date nights. "Communication is the key to everything," they say. "It's the foundation of our marriage and it's what keeps us from fighting."

And that, dear reader, is their secret.



*The experience is not complete without such succulent roast duck.*

### Jing Yaa Tang

Building 1 No.11 Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District, 朝阳区三里屯路11号太古里北区地下1层 (瑜舍酒店内)  
(6536 0601)



# POTLUCK PARTIES FOR THE

## *Domestically Challenged*

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

You get an invitation to a party. What fun! You scan the details and can make the date and time. Excellent prospects so far, and a quick look at the guest list shows all your favorite people in one place. You put the party on the family calendar and forget about it. It's not until the host starts pulling together the potluck list that you freeze.

Potluck? As in, you have to cook something? Oh, and everyone else is making fancy dishes from scratch. You can barely make a simple pasta dish.

As someone who's always been domestically challenged, becoming a Mom only made it worse, not better. Being responsible

for two more mouths to feed put the pressure on high, never mind the added intensity of making a meal that everyone would love. I'm lucky because my husband is really the cook, but the anxiety that a potluck party brings me would diminish if I could find some standbys that taste great but are still relatively easy to make.

So let's turn to our favorite source of information: crowdsourcing. It is here where even the most mageirocophobic (it's a real phobia, look it up) can find some solace in the mythology that yes, anyone can cook. All you need for both an edible and presentable meal is to follow these simple instructions, step by step. Let's see how easy these recipes really are.

## *italian Antipasto Skewers*

**Kirsten Harrington** is from Orlando, Florida and loves the outdoors, exploring Chinese culture and spending time in the kitchen with her two teenagers. She assures me that "if you can boil water, you can make these festive appetizers." I didn't tell her that I often forget I'm boiling water and boil it dry, but the rest looks easy enough.

"These skewers are elegant enough to bring to a party but easy enough that even the kids can help make them," she continued. "No chopsticks or utensils required, making them the perfect finger-friendly food. The ingredients are flexible; feel free to add and subtract to find your favorite combination."



### Ingredients

The exact amount of ingredients you need will depend on how many skewers you want to make

- **1 package** of cheese tortellini, cooked according to package. Toss with olive oil and chill.
- **1 container** of miniature mozzarella balls, or larger size fresh mozzarella cut into chunks
- **1 jar** of kalamata olives or other olives without pits
- **1 package** of Genoa salami
- **1 container** of cherry or golden yellow tomatoes
- **1 can** of artichoke hearts, drained and cut into half or quarters
- **1 package** of fresh basil leaves, washed and torn in half if large
- Bamboo Skewers

### Assembly

- Thread each skewer with alternating items, folding the salami slices into quarters for easy threading.
- Arrange on a platter and cover with plastic wrap until ready to serve.

### Variation

"Feel free to experiment with feta cheese cubes, sun-dried tomatoes, pepperoni, ham slices, pickled pearl onions, pepperoncini, yellow peppers, roasted vegetables or cucumber pieces. If you can thread it onto a skewer and it looks pretty, go for it!" Harrington says.

That recipe barely requires an oven? I'm in!



## Crab Roll



Next, *beijingkids'* Chief Manager **Mina Yan** sent this mouthwatering recipe. Not too many ingredients, and most Jenny Lou's have everything you need. This one may just be doable as well.

"Unless I'm baking, I tend to eyeball the number of ingredients that go into my cooking," Mina explained. When you're catering to a large group, putting together something quick and simple is key for me. While imitation crab rolls aren't healthy, they are delicious and fast to make."

Delicious, fast, and not healthy: the perfect potluck combination.

### Ingredients

- New England style hot dog buns
- Butter
- Imitation crab meat
- Mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper
- Celery
- Chives
- Lemon

### Instructions

- Shred the imitation crab meat into small strips (or larger ones if you prefer chunkier bites).
- Add in a tiny dab of mayonnaise just so the consistency is a bit smoother and the meat holds together better.
- Mix in salt and pepper to taste and squeeze in just a dash of lemon juice for a fresh zest.
- On a flat non-stick pan, melt the butter and give your hot dog buns a nice buttery sear until they're crispy golden brown. Your arteries will hate you but your taste buds will love you.
- Stuff your buns with your crab meat mixture and sprinkle chopped chives and celery on top to garnish.
- Stick a few toothpicks in your rolls so that they hold better when you cut them into smaller serving sizes and you're done. Enjoy!

Don't mind if I do. Although I still need more choices in case Mina and I are at a party together, so let's try the next contribution.

## Dahl Curry

Beijing residents **Tasneem Jakoet** and **Jamie Wang** created a passion project called **FeedHer**, which unites a sense of cultural exchange and wellbeing through food. Sounds great, but how easy is it to both find and make these tasty dishes? If you order one of their kits (WeChat: FeedHer), you'll get the dry ingredients and spice, ready to cook. Here's what they suggest for those that want to try it from scratch:

### Ingredients

- **150g** red lentils
- **2 teaspoons** masala
- **2 tablespoons** of oil
- **1** finely chopped tomato
- **1/2** diced onion
- **2** crushed garlic cloves
- Salt to taste
- **1-2 cups** of water

### Instructions

- Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a pot.
- Add onion and crushed garlic cloves. Cook on medium heat until onions begin to soften.
- Add masala and finely chopped tomato to the onions and stir. Add 1 cup of water and salt to taste.
- Rinse the lentils under cold water and add to the pot. Stir and cook for 15-20 minutes until lentils are soft and the water has disappeared. Remember to stir occasionally.

### Variations

"To bulk up the curry add spinach or aubergines. Top with fried onions. Serve with rice or alongside masala fried fish," Jakoet adds.



PHOTOS: FEEDHER, UNSPLASH, THERESA TRAN

I could almost smell that curry as I read the recipe, but I did ruin lentils once, so we'll see how this one goes.

I'll be honest. I went into this exploration skeptical that any recipe would be simple enough for me to attempt, but these three are some excellent suggestions. I guess the upcoming holiday season is the ultimate (taste) test!



# A TICKING TECH **TIME BOMB?**

## Can Extended Screen Time Affect Your Child's Mental Development?

By Mark Allan Karanja



For parents wishing to limit screen time for their children, it is becoming increasingly difficult with every new game or product launch. As challenging as it was before, complications and shutdowns occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic brought about an even greater reliance on smart technology, not only among adults but also for kids. While parents were telecommuting to work and attending Zoom conferences, schools around the world predominantly moved learning online, either conducting all learning via Zoom or via various proprietary online learning platforms. Even though kids in Beijing are back on campus, there are many more that are still caught in the distance learning loop, unable to unglue their eyes from their devices. And this techno-vortex has not only sucked kids into it, but has dragged parents in right along with them, as now parental feedback, and even parent-teacher conferences are performed online. Want to help your kid with their homework? Well, pull up a chair and turn on the computer screen!

This situation is bound to be a source of great alarm for parents who might pine nostalgically for bygone years when the worst thing that could happen to kids was watching too much TV. But the world is inextricably linked to technology and kids need to not only have a functional understanding of how these devices operate but also must become savants in their own right if they are to fit into this ever-changing, increasingly digitized world.

A survey conducted by Common Sense Media found that in the US alone 53% of children have their first smartphone by the age of 11, while tweens between eight to 12 years old were spending an average of five hours a day on their devices, with the average coming in at seven hours for teens. By the age of 17, at least 88% of teens have a smartphone. These statistics do not include desktop computers and laptops as these are considered ubiquitous in most households.

Nonetheless, these statistics could be alarming for a tech conscious parent who fears any negative effects that such early and extensive exposure to technology might have.

### How Much Is Too Much?

On to the burning question. Is exposing children to technology, especially smartphones and computer screens, all that bad? We spoke to Dr. Elly Wong, a psychologist at Oasis International Hospital, to answer this and other key questions that parents might have. According to Dr. Wong, screen time might not be all that bad. As Dr. Wong explains, "Recent studies indicate that learning can be more effective through games and play-based activities. If your child is watching high-quality television programming or educational apps, they're likely experiencing interactive storytelling. This can also encourage learning processing to take place." Furthermore, those dreaded video games most kids are obsessed with might not be the bane they initially appear to be, as they could encourage better hand-eye coordination.

Does this then mean that kids should be exposed to screens and other forms of tech as early as possible? Certainly sounds like it. But before you prop your six month old in front of a screen, Wong has a disclaimer for you. "According to the American Academy of Pediatrics: for zero-two years, screen time should be avoided. Try to keep your child engaged in activities that will help them reach physical and developmental markers. For two-five years, your child should limit their screen time to one hour of their day. This screen time should be used on high-quality, educational apps or children's viewing programs. While for six-year-olds and above, limit screen time to two hours per day," explains Dr. Wong.

### Warning signs for screen addiction, according to Dr. Wong.

- If you have tried cutting back on their screen time and they were very resistant.
- If they are more interested in screen time than any other activities.
- If they only talk about things they see on their screens.
- If your child isn't communicating and socializing because they want to bring a screen to every social gathering.
- If they get in a better mood when you allow them unlimited screen time.
- If they lie or try to deny their obsessive amount of screen time.

### But My Child Is Different!

Some parents might find this conservative approach far too extreme, possibly offering personal anecdotes of their own children's extended screen exposure and how relatively harmless it has been to the child. But therein lies the problem. Extended screen time could work insidiously to negatively affect your child's overall psychological and even physical health, going so far as to affect their information acquisition capabilities. As Dr. Wong warns, "Too much screen time has been



linked to poor social skills in children. One of the major skills children learn as they grow is how to communicate with others. The brain is wired to learn language from actively listening to adults (which doesn't happen when the child is focused on a screen) and engaging in in-person interactions and conversations. When a child is looking at a screen, they aren't looking at other people hence they are missing out on picking up nonverbal cues and learning how to read others' faces." And the negative effects don't quite end there. "According to a recent study, increased screen time in young children is associated with negative health outcomes such as decreased cognitive ability, impaired language development, mood, and autistic-like behavior including hyperactivity, short attention span, and irritability," explains Dr. Wong.

Children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) are particularly vulnerable. According to Dr. Wong, "Screen time — particularly the interactive kind — acts as a stimulant, and children with autism are often sensitive to stimulants of all kinds. Stimulants tend to make children with autism irritable, weepy, over-focused, more obsessive-compulsive, and unable to sleep."

So what can parents do to ensure that screen time is an enriching experience?

#### Wong has some useful advice.

- Preview programs, games, and apps before allowing your child to view or play with them. Better yet, watch, play, or use them with your child.
- Seek out interactive options that engage your child, rather than those that just require pushing and swiping or staring at the screen.
- Use parental controls to block or filter internet content.
- Make sure your child is close by during screen time so that you can supervise his or her activities.
- Ask your child regularly what programs, games, and apps he or she has played with during the day.
- When watching programming with your child, discuss what you're watching and educate him or her about advertising and commercials.

Ultimately, there is no steadfast rule when it comes to screen time and children. The same amount of exposure is likely to affect each child differently. Some children might seek out extended screen time as a coping mechanism, or to fill a void. In the sage words of Dr. Wong, "Don't add to the problem by using devices as a babysitter for your kids. Get outside and spend time with your kids. Connect and make memories together. Sometimes kids are just filling their hours with entertaining activities, but they may also be trying to fill a need for a deeper, more meaningful connection. Kids need time with their parents every day and simply being available is one of the most powerful ways that you can combat a screen addiction in your child."



Scan here for tips to wean kids off screen time post-COVID.

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# SCREEN TIME ISN'T ALL BAD

Educational and Social Lessons to be  
Mined From Mario, Minecraft and More

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

I spent the entire summer between seventh and eighth grade trying to beat Super Mario Bros. My best friend and my sister's friends worked together to teach each other the ways to beat every level, from the first castle to the last, from Princess Daisy to Princess Peach, from Bowser Junior to the villain Bowser himself.

When alone, I played Tetris, Dr. Mario — all those puzzle games that challenged my brain to move quickly and fit various shaped blocks into the right formation, building towards the time when four lines in a row were all complete and could disappear. That “whoosh” sound that signified a “Tetris” washed over me like a warm ocean wave: a signal of both success and accomplishment, turning my little corner of preteen chaos into order and achievement.

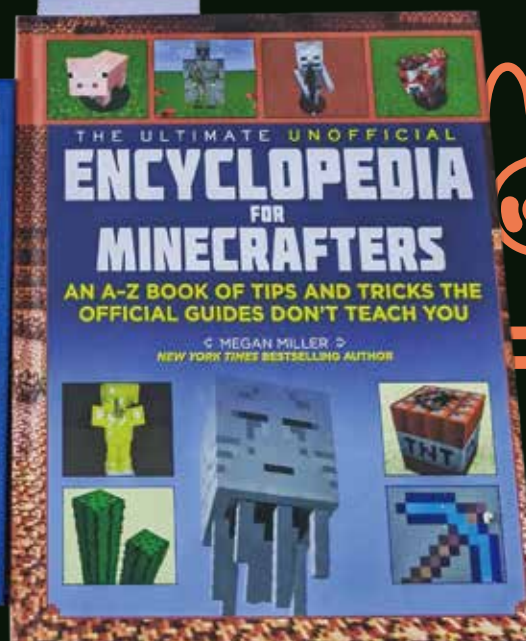
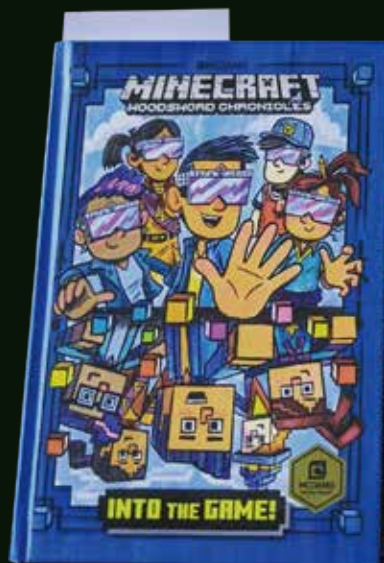
That's probably why I was never scared of my kids eventually playing video games. After all, I enjoyed gaming as just another activity among many. It's hard sometimes to separate the parental stigma of screen time and video games with very real lessons my kids learn from their games. I've witnessed real life social, developmental, and educational skills that children learn while playing video games like Minecraft, Roblox, Civilization, and more. Lest you think I'm just trying to soothe my own screentime soul, I also asked teachers and influencers to weigh in on this topic.

## ► Social skills

Taking turns, playing fair, and teamwork: these are constant reminders for anyone playing video games. We don't use the word sharing as often as we encourage kids to “take turns” and that is exactly what they must do in gameplay. Oftentimes it's forced on them, but that rhythm of letting go after you make mistakes and lose a turn follows into a child's daily life.

## ► Persistence

How hard is it to win some of these games?



**Let kids read what they love and they'll never stop!**

It wasn't until I tried to play my old standbys twenty years later that I remembered just how hard some parts are. We use their game time to explore how hard it is to stay persistent and try your best, understanding that your best only gets better the more you practice.

Mr. Devreaux Poole, Primary Learning and Teaching Coordinator at Yew Chung International School of Beijing (YCIS Beijing), also believes that games “offer a safe environment [for children] to explore and challenge themselves. They're able to build self-confidence as they are able to ‘reset’ when making mistakes,” and in addition, “Delayed gratification is taught (acquired) as the ‘main reward/goal/prize’ is usually only achieved after completing several levels.”

## ► Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

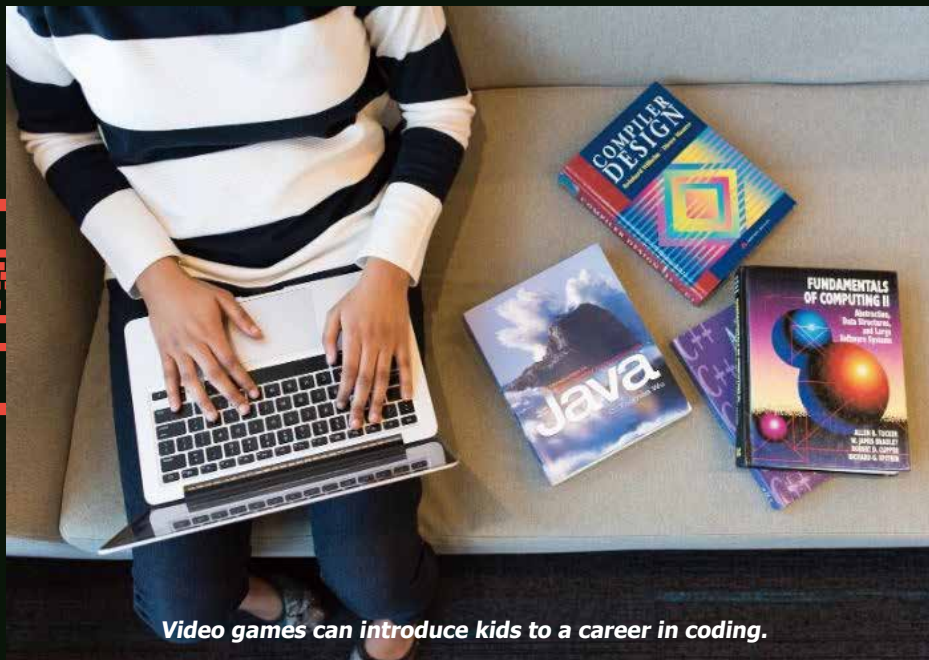
Poole also adds that “Many video games require critical thinking and problem solving

skills and also stimulate creativity.” I couldn't agree more! There's no counting the number of times when my or another child will explain a secret to beating this level, or suggest a different way to tackle an obstacle in a game, and they're right! Sure, sometimes they learn from watching gamer playthroughs, where you literally watch someone online play through a certain level or part of a game, but more often than not I see them apply knowledge they saw to a different problem and are able to move ahead in the game on their own merits.

## ► Community

Blogger and influencer Sally Tian works in the software industry and sees huge social benefits from gaming through her roommate's experience, among others. “He came from a small city in China before getting into a top tier university, and the online gaming community provided a good window and perspective to the outside world that he wasn't able to find





*Video games can introduce kids to a career in coding.*

## ► Self Expression Through Video Production

It is inevitable that starting a game will lead to watching tutorials and playthroughs of that game. Poole sees gaming playthroughs as an extension of a world we adults might already understand: "Gaming is seen as a sport these days, therefore, watching a playthrough is similar to watching a recorded sporting event such as football, basketball, rugby, tennis etc." I tend to lean on the website Common Sense Media to learn which gamers are family friendly and which are more mature, but even more inevitable than watching these is that a child will then want to create their own playthroughs and have their own video channel. We used this curiosity to teach our kids the basics of operating a video camera, and how to apply the presentation skills they learn in show-and-tell towards being an on camera host. I know older kids who taught themselves camerawork through online tutorials, then researched video and audio editing to create better gaming videos.

Kids can still learn a lot of these skills with LEGO bricks and board games; however, it's good to know how to see the nuances in how video games help with a child's development so we can lean into their interests instead of always fighting it.

in his town. That's why I think games are a good way to not only learn factual knowledge about the world but also help kids develop stronger social bonds and create a sense of community."

## ► Money and Math

Another aspect of Super Mario Odyssey, Mario Party, and many more games is that you must earn a certain number of points, coins, etc before you can purchase items in game that give you more powers or costumes, whatever the case may be.

There were times when I couldn't get my kids to watch a Zoom math class, yet also couldn't keep them away from an online course I found based on "Mario Math," who used characters and concepts from the Super Mario world to help them understand ways of approaching math and problem-solving that make their in-classroom learning better today. Minecraft activity books and Minecraft encyclopedias as well as fictionalized stories of the world are how I kept their attention on English concepts through quarantine, and still do today.

## ► Digital Citizenship

Poole also believes that playing video games can aid in "developing of transferable Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills." By starting them down the road of playing games within communities and privately, kids are introduced to concepts like keeping your passwords safe, public servers versus private ones, usernames, and how one's identity online must match behavior offline for people to continue wanting to play with you.

## ► Pranking

Because we watched a lot of Minecraft gamers' playthroughs, my oldest was introduced to the idea of pranking early in his gaming career. Through Minecraft he learned quickly that some people don't want to be pranked, especially when that means your supposed partner in the game hacks down a house you've spent hours building inside the game because that's what he's seen his favorite gamers do to their friends. We had a pretty serious sit down talk after that incident, explaining the subtleties of pranking and how both parties need to be "in" on it if it is to be a fun prank. I've watched him handle his gaming maturely and remove that pranking concept from offline playtime.

## ► Society

Tian is not a big gamer herself, but has "observed that some of the smartest, most creative people had learned about the world through video games." One game she does play is Civilization, where a player, through making a series of choices, aims to grow his or her country from a rural nomadic tribe to a futuristic society. "The game is incredibly complex and has taught me so much about how society, technology, economics, and even philosophy can be shaped," says Tian.



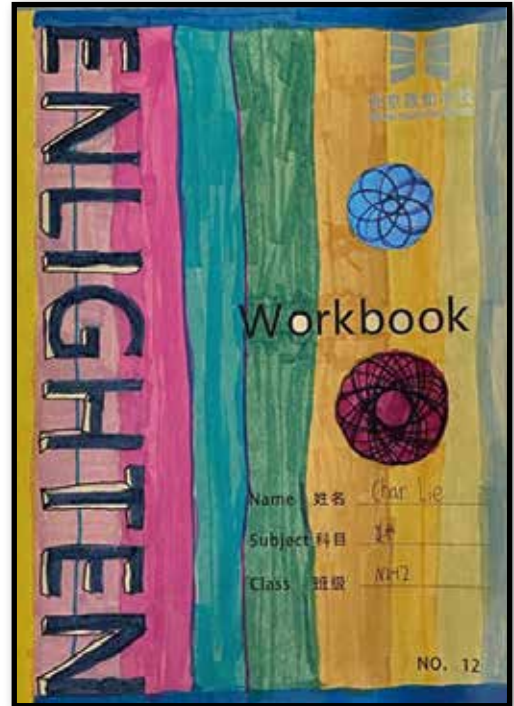
*Many teenagers teach themselves how to use technology to be part of their favorite gaming worlds.*



# Exploring All the Possibilities

Students From Beijing Enlighten  
School Incorporate Art Into  
Every Part of Their Lives

By Mina Yan



**Char Lie (Grade 6)**

"This is a painting on the cover of my exercise book.  
It represents infinite possibilities."



**April Hao (KG)**

"I looked up many pictures online and chose a painting of space  
to paint myself. It took four days to complete."



**Bradley Johnson, Maverick Johnson, Richard Wang  
(KG and Grade 1)**

"We worked as a group to create this piece. We painted  
the sections before decorating each part in a unique way."



**Snow Yang (Grade 4)**

"I originally wanted to draw a night sky but I wasn't happy with the result so I stuck some decorations on top of it."



**Bradley Johnson (Grade 1)**

"I painted mountains and trees, and the earth, which are made up of many colors."



**Cindy Gao (Grade 4)**

"I drew this painting because I wanted my schoolmates to better understand me and I like art, so I drew myself with watercolor. The background is blue because I like swimming and I drew a cat because I have a cute cat."



**Hanya Suo (Grade 4)**

"This is my handcrafted gift for my teachers."





# SPARKING CREATIVITY THROUGH TECH AND SCIENCE

How This Teacher's Personal Journey Inspires His Students at Journey Academy

By Mark Allan Karanja

When it comes to having the right teacher for their children, most parents would hope for the teacher to see teaching as not just a job but a serious vocation, a calling even. But the reality of the matter is, just like most people in long-term careers, some teachers simply fall into it, and develop a passion for their new paths through years of tireless service and experience. Ari Perela, a teacher at Journey Academy, falls squarely in the second category, and after more than 20 years' experience, it is hard to remember a time when this wasn't his passion in life. "[The] teaching profession was not my original plan. I was

hoping to work with something related to sports and athletics. I don't even remember. It just happened... Destiny or something," Perela wistfully recalls. But after working as a kindergarten teacher, before completing his master's degree in Education and Special Education Teachers Studies, Perela fully settled into his role as a teacher, focusing on natural science, physical education, reading, and handcrafts.

Perela isn't part of the old guard in Beijing's education world, only having started at Journey Academy in February of this year. This was right before anyone could foresee the havoc

that COVID-19 would wreak on learning. Never have science and technology teachers been more essential to explain, most especially to the youngest of learners, the state of the world, and why the old way of doing things has had to change so dramatically. This is one of the many learning responsibilities that Perela, as Lead Teacher, Head of Science and Nature Learning at Journey Academy takes on with gusto. He is the first to admit the new status quo is as new to him as it might be to his students. "At school, we are using Smartboards and iPads in lessons. I am originally not very good at using devices as I am more like

PHOTOS: JOURNEY ACADEMY

**“There is science everywhere: in the garden, in the kitchen, in the city or the countryside.”**



an “old school” teacher. Yet I understand it is necessary to follow the technological trends of development and inspire our children to use them. Technological devices and apps can offer many new opportunities for effective learning,” explains Perela.

Science and technology are no longer just buzzwords or something in the fringes of education, but important facets that are increasingly being incorporated in early childhood education. As Perela puts it, “We used to think of science as something that scientists do in their white jackets in a laboratory. That is something unreachable for us, the normal people. I prefer to try to make science less serious as science and technology are becoming a normal part of our daily life. It’s important to wake up children’s curiosity in tech and science above rote learning from text.” And this push for tech awareness among young learners goes far beyond them merely understanding technology, but also what technology can do. Perela has taken the initiative to teach his students about science and technology with an environmentally conscious twist.

“I am working with small children and I need to make sure they can follow and understand instructions. For example, I use stories to steal their attention. I tell them a story about animals who are suffering because they don’t have pure water to drink. I will give my children their soft toy animals and dramatize the scenario to let them feel empathy.

We will then solve the problem together by building a water purifying machine. We use recycled materials (empty water bottles) and I demonstrate to them how we can make dirty water clean and clear again by using filters,” elaborates Perela, “Children participate in the action by changing clean filters and pouring dirty water. They can see how the mechanism works and this is the basis of technology. I combine nature, science, and technology in my classes, show and give children examples of what they can do, explore, and search in nature.”

Perela does admit there are a few differences between parents in Finland, his home country, and parents here in China when it comes to encouraging learning in their children. “Chinese parents are usually worried about their kids and how they do in anything. In Finland, parents are more relaxed and if their child cannot do something yet, they will think ‘Oh, they are still so young. They will learn that later.’ I understand the competitive environment in China that every parent wants only the best for their children. Yet, I sometimes think some parents try to push their children too hard and I struggle if that is the best way,” Perela muses.

When he is not occupying himself with the momentous task of shaping future scientists, Perela allows himself the pleasure of exploring his new home. “I like Beijing and the people here; great food, parks, and biking lanes to run. In a big city like Beijing, there is always something interesting happening: I like Hutong and mountains, and I have visited almost all of the great tourist attractions in Beijing,” says Perela. As to whether this will



**“Almost every child will find nature, science, and technology very interesting, and I believe it is the teacher’s job to guide them in the right direction.”**

be his home in ten years, he is as yet unsure. But he is certain about wanting to pass on his knowledge and experience to the next generation of educators. “Professionally, I believe I would be interested in sharing my teaching experiences with new teachers or teaching adults or parents in the future.” offers Perela.

And whether you are a more hands-off or hands-on parent, Perela believes we should all have more faith in young learners. As Perela puts it, “When they are interested in some issues, they will find out how to do it and the hidden message, if someone has given them tools and inspiration,” so it is our job as parents and the society to ignite the spark of creative inspiration.





# #PARENTING

## Parents From Different Cultural Backgrounds Share Their Views of Tech at Home

By Pranav Sundararajan, Mina Yan



Dad Terry Zhang is a local Beijinger. The former competitive fitness champion now works at Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) as their Athletics and Activities Admin and Liaison Officer, organizing after school activities for its students. Mom Wanna Song works in a travel company as the finance manager. The couple spends as much of their free time as possible with their 14-year-old son Luke Zhang.

### When did you (or will you) give your child their own cell phone?

We gave our son his first phone when he was ten years old.

### Do you think that having access to phones helps or hinders your child's mental development?

Nowadays phones have many functions and features. We realize that it not only expands the connections and interactions between people and societies, but it is also a platform to continuously learn new things and update

ideas. For young people, it's a way of obtaining information and knowledge.

### Are you concerned about them spending too much time on their phone? What's your solution for this?

I feel that encouraging more face-to-face communication and reading of books can help reduce time spent on the phone. Excessive internet browsing and phone usage will 1) severely impact visual health, 2) discourage people to attend face-to-face, outdoor social activities, and 3) promote negativity and unhealthy practices.

### Do you believe there are child predators online? If so, how do you deal with them?

I believe that child predators exist both online and offline.

### Did you (or will you) talk to your kids about the dangers of posting personal information online?

Yes.

### Do you have a social media account? If so, how many hours a day do you spend on it?

Yeah, I am on it for about six hours a day.

### Do you post photos of your child on your social media account? Do you think it's safe?

Not regularly. Posting on social media isn't a way for us to experience happiness as a family. More importantly, posting photos of children can create an environment for criminals and child predators to thrive in.

### Does your child have a social media account? If so, are you concerned about the content they post on there?

Yes, and in fact, I do not object to my child registering for and using social media platforms. I often discuss with him some of the latest social media apps and websites currently on the market. However, I do realize that there is content out there on the internet that is not particularly suitable for teenagers, and parents really need to guide their children with regards to safe content online and communicate with them psychologically about posting on social media.

### Did you install parental control apps or limits on your child's phone? If so, which one do you recommend for other parents? If not, why?

No, I have not installed parental control apps or limits on my child's phone.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF TERRY ZHANG



Mom Sherri and dad Tom Pedrick are both teachers at Beijing International Bilingual Academy (BIBA). The couple has three children, Lincoln (age 14), Harry (age 12), and Quincy (age 9), who are all students at BIBA. The Pedrick family is originally from New Hampshire in the US and have been in Beijing for over a year now.

#### **When did you (or will you) give your children their own cell phone?**

We gave Lincoln a non-smartphone at the age of ten because he and Harry were in a play with a local theater group and we wanted them to be able to call or text when they were finished with rehearsal. Lincoln got a smartphone on his 12th birthday. Harry also has a phone now, but leaves it at home and only uses it for games or talking with his family and friends.

#### **Do you think that having access to phones helps or hinders your children's mental development?**

I think that having access to phones with limits helps your children's development. It teaches communication, problem-solving, and self-control. Every app that is on our kids' phones has been checked by us, and we monitor the webpages our kids go to and the messages they send.

#### **Are you concerned about them spending too much time on their phone? What's your solution for this?**

We have strict limits on how much time our kids use devices, both during the week and

on the weekends. They can earn additional time by doing extra work around the house or helping another family member. We also make sure they complete their homework, spend time outside, and read each day.

#### **Do you believe there are child predators online? If so, how do you deal with them?**

Yes, we believe there are child predators online. We teach our kids about internet safety and teach them to be responsible digital citizens to protect them.

#### **Did you (or will you) talk to your kids about the dangers of posting personal information online?**

Yes, we have talked many times about posting on social media. We will continue to discuss these dangers as social media changes frequently.

#### **Do you have a social media account? If so, how many hours a day do you spend on it?**

Both Sherri and I have social media accounts, but we spend no more than 30 minutes a day on them, sometimes much less.

#### **Do you post photos of your children on your social media account? Do you think it's safe?**

Yes, we post photos of our kids and our adventures on Facebook. But we know all of our friends well, and ensure that our privacy setting is set so only those people can see our photos. We do feel safe posting pictures of our children.

#### **Do your children have a social media account? If so, are you concerned about the content they post there?**

Our children don't have social media accounts, and they will not have social media accounts until they are much older. We think a digital footprint is an adult responsibility with unforeseeable long-lasting outcomes and not one that a child is able to manage.

#### **Did you install parental control apps or limits on your children's phones? If so, which one do you recommend for other parents? If not, why?**

We don't use parental control apps on our kids' devices. We physically monitor their phones and devices rather than trusting an app; that way they make good choices where ever they are instead of relying on software to monitor usage. We also feel like we protect them by educating them about proper use and safety when it comes to technology. We recommend to other parents that they have positive ongoing discussions with their kids about social media.



# SO YOU WANT TO BE A KOL

Keep Your Content Creating Kids Safe

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

"Do you know I have a YouTube channel?" It doesn't surprise me anymore when kids under 10 say this. As they start to play video games, playthroughs are entertainment, and gamers their heroes. "Don't forget to subscribe" and "follow me on Twitter" are the new playground goodbyes in some circles. Even YouTube seems old school now as Instagram and TikTok take over the space of influencers and key opinion leaders (KOLs).

As someone who rarely uses her kids' names online, the issue of privacy immediately sets off little alarms in my head when six year olds tell me their channel names. Yet creating content online offers kids a great way to learn new talents, including photography, video production and editing, and storytelling. I asked parents, teenagers, and influencer Sally Tian how kids can express themselves creatively

online while also keeping themselves safe from trolls and predators.

Tian says that teaching kids the lessons they need to be strong digital citizens "can only be done by creating a really healthy environment at home and instilling a sense of self worth in kids that is separate from their looks, the number of followers they have, and where they have traveled to or what shoes and bags they have."

Having been through the influencer model herself, Tian leaves all parents with some great advice on approaching content creation as an ongoing conversation. "If children grow up believing their worth is tied to their intelligence, character, and they have a strong support system at home and with healthy friends, I think they can avoid the superficiality of social media while enjoying the benefits of digital citizenship."

Let's see how some parents and teens talk about it together.



**Author Andi Dien** and her 12-year-old son talked in detail before he started a TikTok account over the summer, where he mostly shares stories about cool cars. "I've always had the viewpoint that it's better to be open about the dangers of online activity rather than prohibit or limit access. We've had a lot of conversations over the years about things that can go wrong when you put yourself online." She checks his account weekly, and he doesn't post personal information or engage with any suspicious accounts. They also set a strict rule not to post pictures of family members, though she jokes that as a teen "he has no interest in doing this anyway."

**Christina Dorn McKeeby**, the mom behind @glutenfreefamily-adventures and a photography business, saw her eight-year-old daughter's interest in photographing her dolls (seen here) as a natural progression of watching her parents work.

"Her account is set up on my phone, which allows me to have control over the time she uses it as well as access to her account. We also create content together and discuss appropriate photos and text to use. Her images are solely of doll fashion. She is not allowed to post personal images or information about herself," McKeeby says. When people do send suspicious content, they tackle it together: "We do not shield her from these messages but instead use them as an opportunity to teach her how to block and report inappropriate material."



PHOTOS: AVA KOMONS, ANDI DIEN, VALERIA FALLAS, CHRISTINA DORN MCKEEBY



Beijing teenager **Ava Komons** posts photos like the one above to her Instagram account to have fun and stay in touch with her friends from all over the world. She understands how careful she needs to be, even setting her account to a Business one to control who can message her. "I stay away from posting pictures of me or my friends in any less clothing than would be allowed at school. I keep my content friendly for all my followers, young or old. I have not gone through precautions to protect my identity in terms of my name or where I live, but I never post personal information like my address or phone number." Even though Komons is an ambassador for an athletic wear company, she still gives her own self worth great consideration. "I have made sure to not make my happiness depend on likes or followers. I don't want to fall down a path that causes me to be dependent on social media to make me feel valid."

Student **Valeria Fallas** (below) knows this firsthand, from when her Instagram account was public. "I would get a lot of people making fake accounts with my pictures on them. I was hurt and frustrated with how other people were portraying me to be and using my pictures to lie and manipulate others. Because of these incidents I changed my account to private." She still has over 2,000 accounts following her adventures in Beijing, and more safely now.



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# TECH RULES

## The Ins and Outs of Handing Tech to Small Children

By Julie Wolf

**N**o screen time before age two, or is it age five? Only two hours a day if you're under age 12, right? Should they be on social media before age 16? Can I post their photos on my social media? I heard they need special blue-light-reducing glasses. I heard computers are ok but no TV between 4pm and bedtime. Give them a cell phone but have parental blocks on it. No, don't block their access but monitor their activity with parental spyware. Wait, is that an invasion of their privacy? Is screen time making our kids fat/mean/lazy? Be an unplugged household, be a plugged-in household, live in a yurt, and run your electronics off of kinetic energy you create from the stationary bicycle in your backyard! Heeeeeeeelp! Someone stop the madness!!!

Seventy-four years ago, The RCA Corporation sold the first mass-produced television set and ignited a debate about screen time. From the very beginning, opinions about what this new device would do to our brains, bodies, and families have been intense and loudly proclaimed by parents, politicians, preachers, and everyone in-between. Since then, myriad new screens have entered our lives from home computers in the '80s, smartphones in the '90s, and, of course, the rise of social media to populate all those devices in the '00s. Screens are now ubiquitous and an unavoidable part of our lives. Technology's incredibly fast evolution has only ratcheted up the rhetoric as we try to figure out how to navigate this new world. Every parenting blog, vlog, and magazine (yes, I'm pointing the finger at myself here) claims to have the answer and it's all completely contradictory. So, what's a parent to do?

The truth is no one has the answers. We don't know what the ramifications of screens will be in six months much less in 60 years. But they are here to stay and, unless you move to Antarctica, you and your child will probably need to interact with them most days. Like most parenting conundrums you will need to decide, usually through trial and error, what is best for your child and your family. Below are some of my thoughts and suggestions as an educator. They will not apply to everyone, so my hope is that you will use what you find helpful and disregard what doesn't work for your family.

### IT'S OUR SAVIOR/IT'S OUR DOOM

Throughout history, any new technology has been met with both of these bold pronouncements. The printing press was simultaneously lauded as a beacon for enlightenment and derided for discouraging memorization which (it was thought) would cause the human mind to literally shrink. The truth is most tech is a tool. And like any tool, it can be used to build something or destroy something. Teaching our kids how to use tech to build is probably a better use of our time because...

### THEY WERE BORN WITH A SMARTPHONE IN THEIR HANDS

Our generation thought home computers were a luxurious curiosity, dial-up was "so convenient" and Facebook was "totally game-changing." For this generation of kids, tech is not a novelty. It just...is. There are TV screens in the subway, touch screens to check you out at the supermarket, and instant access to breaking world news... in our pocket!

Screens are just a part of a child's world and they intuitively know how to use them. That means...

### CONTENT MATTERS

A Caldecott book does more for their brain than a comic strip so what they read or watch on that screen makes a difference. Encourage them to look up answers to questions like "why does the sky turn pink when the sun goes down" instead of streaming endless unboxing videos. Not that there is anything wrong with the occasional YouTube binge. But think of them like chocolate: enjoyable but not the bulk of the meal.

### LIMIT BUT DON'T DENY

To continue the food analogy, if you tell your kids they can never ever have evil sugar, it's likely that the first thing they do when out of sight is to eat a box of cookies. Teach responsible moderation. Laugh over the frolicking puppy video together but then switch over to watching a cool science experiment!

### START VIRTUAL AND THEN TAKE IT ANALOGUE

After you watch that amazing baking soda volcano erupt on screen excitedly ask, "should we try it in our kitchen?" Encourage screen time

PHOTOS: PEXELS

as an enhancement to an experience instead of the experience itself and children are more likely to view it as a positive tool to inspire and inform life in the real world.

### MODEL BEHAVIOR

Watch your own intake. If every time your child sees you, you are checking your feed or posting pictures, that sends a message. If the main form of communication between you and your friends is text or WeChat, that will be their idea of a relationship. So, if you want them to learn to have deep, meaningful, in-person conversations, model putting the phone away and laughing in person over lunch. Let them see that Instagram FOMO is not a reason to miss out on what's happening in front of them.

### CONSEQUENCES

You and I grew up seeing the instant results of our words. If you said something cruel on the playground, you saw the tears of your friend and immediately knew you had crossed a line. But now most of us receive a delayed reaction if we see a reaction at all. Whether it is video chats with family members across an ocean or posts read by thousands of people we have never met, there is a screen between the communicator and the recipient. That means we often do not get instant non-verbal feedback.

So how do we let children see that there are real-world responses to online events? How do we make them understand that there are real people on the other side of the screen? I suggest a 30-second rule for many parents. If your young child wants to send a text or post a message they can type/dictate it to you but they have to wait 30 seconds before hitting send. Set a timer and ask the child to think about how they would feel if they received these words or images. If they can respond positively to that question then, at the end of the

waiting period, they can hit send. If they say it would make them feel bad or sad, ask them if they still think they should send it.

Even in the digital age grandma's advice is still valid. Think before you speak!

### BE FLEXIBLE

No matter what guidelines your family settles on, there will be exceptions to the rules. You will be driving cross country and need 30 minutes of relative peace. It's ok to let them watch "Peppa Pig" even if it pushes you over the allotted screen time for the day. If Uncle Mark, seven time zones away, calls during dinner, it's fine to make an exception and answer even though the dining table is a "no-tech zone." As your family grows and changes the rules will need to evolve too. That's normal and healthy.

### BOTTOM LINE

Tomorrow there will be a new gadget, app, or hologram that requires us to rethink everything and it will change our schools, businesses, and relationships. But somehow, the human race will survive! Use the stuff that makes your life better and let the rest go.



#### About the Writer

Julie Wolf is the Director of First Five Early Education Centers in New York and Director of International Education for Newhatten Early Education Centers in China. She has been working with children and parents for over 18 years as a teacher, arts integration specialist, curriculum designer, and staff development expert.



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# InstaParents

## Should We Post Pictures Of Our Children On Social Media?

*By Pearl Kasujja-Van de Velde*

If you have a running internet connection and don't live under a rock, chances are you are part of at least one social network. So the question is not if to use social media, but how. And more to the point: how should we be protecting the privacy of our children, who don't (but should) have control over what we post about them.

Naturally, as parents, we take precautions to protect our children: We endlessly caution them on 'stranger danger', online safety, and how to be alert for people with bad intentions. I monitor my daughter's Amazon Fire tablet and iPad like a hawk, controlling everything she's watching and everyone she may be chatting with.

When it comes to social media, most of us post pictures on our social media accounts and we shouldn't necessarily apologize for this. We are adults and we make these conscious choices about what we post. But when it comes to children of non-consent age, a line has to be clearly drawn.

With our first daughter, I've been guilty in the past about posting pictures of her on my own social media account. I shared and updated baby bump pictures, our birth announcement, holidays, her first-year party, and other pictures. Until one day, I was 'digitally

kidnapped', an experience that totally changed my perspective on social media. I was with a mama friend in Belgium, who wanted to view a picture on my Facebook account. She opened the app, then asked me "which of my two accounts" to view. "Two accounts?" I asked, puzzled. There it was – a clone of my account, down to the name and almost all of the pictures I'd ever posted. Someone was impersonating me on Facebook.

The 'kidnapper' had used all of the pictures of my daughter, and strangers were liking and commenting on them. I could hardly believe what I was seeing. Needless to say, I promptly reported the account to Facebook and it was closed. But that was enough for me to ask myself what the heck I was thinking in the first place, posting pictures of my child who had no clue some random people were viewing her pictures.

I closed my Facebook account and for a while, I went off social media completely (and what a really quiet nice time that was). I've since gone back on a few social media platforms but I use them strictly for professional reasons and I don't post pictures of my children.



## FOUR GOOD REASONS NOT TO SHARE PICTURES OF YOUR CHILDREN ONLINE

- Posting specific information about your child online, like their full name, age or school puts them at risk of being kidnapped. If a stranger knows all this information, it will be easy for them to locate your child.
- There are many cases in which innocent photos and videos have made their way to explicit adult-oriented, pornographic sites. Furthermore, with today's technology, reality can be distorted. Most of us have seen the deep-fake pictures and videos that are so high tech you can't tell what's real anymore. Imagine your child's face being superimposed on another person's body... the damage is done.
- You may think that your account is set to private or to only-friends makes it safe but this doesn't prevent those pictures you share being re-distributed amongst friends of your friends' friends.
- Finally, some believe that flaunting your family and its supposed perfectness to all and sundry may attract wrong "energy", which actor Priyanka Chopra describes as the Evil Eye. "Beware of it and if possible, take care of your precious ones, or else someone out there is waiting to be in your place". Remember, social media fame is like being rich in Monopoly. There's nothing real about it.

## WAYS TO SHARE IMAGES SAFELY

If you really desperately want to share pictures of your children, here are a few tips for doing it safely:

- Create a private album on a cloud drive and share it with only trusted family and friends, ensuring they know not to distribute the photos anywhere else.
- If you share on social media, don't share your location.
- Although this is not a sure way to avoid pictures ending up in the wrong hands, try to set up your privacy controls before you share pictures so you can limit who can view the pictures.
- Avoid posting pictures of your children in bathing suits or in the bathtub, even on accounts you think are for only "friends and relatives".

It's little wonder that the possibility of kids being able to sue parents for having shared their image without their consent is becoming a real prospect.

This isn't limited to Instagram and Facebook, but includes all kinds of social networks including WhatsApp and WeChat. I recently got a WhatsApp message from a relative who had set her profile picture to a pic of my daughter. When I asked her where she'd got the picture and why she had it on as her profile picture, she jovially announced she had taken a screenshot of it when I had it on as my profile picture. Now her friends and their friends could easily do the same and I had absolutely no control over it.

Social networking sites and tech companies must take a big portion of responsibility and blame for nefarious online activities, as do legislators. Although they do their best and employ hundreds of people to review content to make sure it is safe, it's still alarming how much heinous content gets through the cracks.



This isn't about preventing anyone from posting anything online about their children. It's about educating yourself and your children about the darker side of social media and taking some necessary steps in ensuring online safety for your family and loved ones, especially the young ones. Technology is an amazing thing and the power of social media, when used correctly, is undoubtedly hugely beneficial to individuals and companies.

So, the next time you are 'oversharenting' (oversharing about your children on social media) or cross-posting (posting the same pictures simultaneously on your different social networking platforms) pictures of your adorable chubby cheek cutie, you may want to rethink ... not everyone is looking at them with the same lens.

These days, instead of spending hours posting pictures of my kids on social media, I dance with them like no one is watching, because frankly, no one is watching: everyone's busy on their phones, posting on social media.



### Pearl Kasujja-Van de Velde

With a professional background in development work, I am first and foremost a mum. When I'm not busy being a mum of two - and singing the HokeyPokey song ten times a day - I copyedit and proofread documents for people who don't believe in spellchecks. I enjoy writing, reading, traveling, yoga, gossiping with family and friends around the world, and pretending to be Nigella Lawson in the kitchen. Visit my website at [www.pearlkasujja.com](http://www.pearlkasujja.com)



# JUST AN APP AWAY

How the new age of social media friendships might negatively impact your child

*By Mark Allan Karanja*







**Teenagers around the world are some of the most avid and regular users of social media platforms.**

Long gone are the days when the only social media sites that everyone talked about were Facebook and Instagram. Now, there are apps for virtually every kind of user forum imaginable, and it doesn't take much tech savvy to find them, install them and be a part of these online communities, with all the attendant consequences.

With all these new possibilities, it is increasingly imperative for parents to ensure their children's security online. Teens in China have a limited number of options when it comes to social media platforms and apps they can use, with 84.6% of minors in China using WeChat as their primary social media platform, an increase of 35% in just four years. This is according to the Bluebook of Teenagers published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS).

Although the current generation of kids were born into the age of social media, and thus may be very comfortable in the online world, their actions are not without peril, warns Glenn Lacon, guidance counselor at Dulwich College, Beijing. "It is a fact that teenagers and kids are preoccupied [with] using social media and gadgets in this present age as their hobbies and leisure, which parents and significant people need to be aware of,"

explains Lacon, adding, "In the year 2017, based on a study published in the Journal of Abnormal Psychology, more than one in eight Americans aged 12 to 25 experienced a major depressive episode. There are so many contributing factors that cause this mental health problem among the youths."

**Where does this data leave these young social media users, especially when COVID-19 necessitated the use of social media to maintain friendships in the age of social distancing?**

For Beijing-based teens Chloe C. and Belle P., social media comprises of two to five hours of activity on a daily basis. Both also admit to having joined these social media platforms as a result of some form of peer pressure or because others in their friend group were using them. And when asked if they would ever consider deleting their social media platforms permanently, Chloe admitted "I would feel really upset and annoyed about that. I have been relying on social media so much that I don't think I can even live normally without it. They don't only provide entertainment but also other functions that are essential for my living. For example, WeChat pay is already part of my life." Moving away from the inherent usefulness of some of the social media apps, a reliance on these platforms for not only entertainment, but for interpersonal relationships

could be of great concern to most parents.

Granted, in a post-COVID-19 Beijing, social media platforms have been a great coping mechanism for kids and teens the world over, when unable to attend school as normal and thus, cut off from their social groups. Says Lacon, "One way to cope with anxiety and stress is through social media. We can use various social media platforms to chat and call our friends, loved ones, and family members. This has been a great support to connect with many people who felt emotional distress because they were away from their families or stuck in a particular place for months. Social media has been a good tool to express one's feelings and make friends and rekindle relationships with others."

**There is still a looming spectre of danger lurking around every proverbial corner, however.**

"One scenario that teenagers need to be consciously aware of these days is the fake accounts of people they make friends with." Lacon cautions to be wary of possible black-mailers, who are "often asking for money, phone numbers, and pictures in return. These situations lead to serious problems that cause youths to feel depressed and carry anxieties with them. Being trapped in this case, their school performance, family relationship, and self-esteem is greatly affected," warns Lacon. So how can parents help?



PHOTOS: PEXELS

**"Adults need to set a good example for the younger generation. This starts at home and the foundation of values each parent has to establish in their kids. Parents have to be responsible for their actions and must be present in the lives of their children. Daily communication, knowing their friends and activities are essentials for guiding these growing kids," Lacon suggests.**

Even with that, some parents might worry about their children's cyber security when they are away at school. And according to Lacon, schools too have a major role to play when it comes to safeguarding young social media users. "Schools have to design and implement activities and programs that can help the students understand the proper use of social media. This is a growing concern and must be prioritized. Administrators and the student support team need to work together to encourage healthy social media interaction and teach young kids its essential use," further elaborates Lacon.

The age of social media and online friend-



ships is here to stay. There will always be a new app the 'kids' will flock to, and children will always find new ways to outsmart their parents while trying to gain as much autonomy to use these apps. Despite this, it might be up to parents to find ways not only to curtail social media use, but to enrich their children's 'real life' experiences. Lacon puts it best when he says, "despite the advancement of technol-

ogy and social media's convenience, personal connection to people is still important. There is always a need for people to get along and experience the world. Everything will go back to its routine, social media and technology will still be there, and people will surely do the things they miss doing with their family and friends."

# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING

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# Don't Forget to Follow and Subscribe...

How Plugged-in are  
the Teenagers of Beijing?

*By Ashley Liu*

**It comes as no surprise that teenagers nowadays spend a tremendous amount of time on their phones, whether they like it or not.**

Especially in a community full of international students that have made friends from all over the world, social media is the only way to communicate with your friends who are thousands of kilometers away. However, everything comes with a price. I sometimes catch myself mindlessly scrolling through my Instagram explore page before I realize an hour has passed by. And I'm not alone. Beijing's teens are all plugged into social media, but how plugged in are we?

I set out to interview three of my peers and it quickly became the consensus that Instagram is our preferred platform for everything online. Josephine, age 16, said how she really enjoys the "permanent highlight reel to look back on. It's like a digital scrapbook. All the different mediums such as the polls, votes and explore page makes Instagram a more versatile app." George, age 18, mentioned how the majority of Instagram's users were English speakers so "there's less of a language barrier and helps [me] stay connected overseas." Just like everyone else, I use Instagram the most not only for artistic inspiration, but also to easily communicate with my friends outside of China. I definitely feel like Instagram has really worked hard to maintain its relevancy after all these years compared to Facebook and Snapchat, two apps that passed their peak a long time ago.

**"I feel bad that I'm addicted to [social media]..."**

Josephine admits: "It's harmful but also necessary in present day life ... to stay in the

loop," says Josephine as she admits to how much time she spends on social media. She committed to a "two-week social media detox" and felt so left out on everything after being 'gone' for only two weeks. Josephine's feelings aren't uncommon. Unknowingly, most of us have become so dependent on our phone and on social media to feel connected to the world that it's actually become an addiction and walking away from it for as little as two weeks takes genuine effort and willpower to achieve. George admitted to spending "a couple hours a day" on social media, but how they do not "spend much effort" on their own accounts because they are "not trying to build a social media presence". Thanks to the smartphones' feature where you can see your screen time, I realized I spend around an hour a day on Instagram and two hours on WeChat. But to be fair, I always use WeChat to call my oversea friends which is one of the reasons for my high screen time.

**"Social media's harmful effects are largely ignored, which is worrying."**

I could not agree more with George, quoted above. He adds that "it's less about the screen time itself but more about how kids are having their self-worth evaluated constantly by the number of likes or comments they get." What is even more sad is that I know many people who have spent their parents' money to buy followers and likes to pad their profiles. It's ridiculous to judge your own self worth by a number on the screen or by the validation of strangers online. Anyone reading this must be reminded that they are worth so much more than that.

"Humans weren't wired to live knowing what everyone is doing at every moment and what everyone thinks of them," George

continued. "Social media has the potential to be terrible for our mental health."

Hailey, age 18, commented on how teenagers must be weary of cyberbullying. "It's mean and can follow you forever ... like when you are apply to a job in the future." George also stated that social media "companies need to be held accountable ... and design their apps in more ethical ways that do not exploit human psychology to maximize profit."

However, social media is a great way for people to receive advice, suggestions, and gain exposure for their blog or business. I know so many teenagers that are making money through sponsorships for blogging and it's just so cool how we now have so many different outlets for side hustles and to show off our creativity to the world.

**At the end of the day, it's important to remember that there is so much on social media that is fake.**

Photos are often photoshopped or even staged and there's a tremendous difference between the way bloggers portray themselves online versus how they really live in real life.

Make sure you love who you are naturally and take everything you see or hear on social media with a grain of salt. Confidence is the only way we are able to show the world how we want to be treated. Do not let your insecurities get the better of you!



#### About the Writer

Ashley Liu is a Candian born Chinese currently undergoing her senior year of high school in DCB. You will either find her tied to her piano composing and singing or in the kitchen baking vegan food.





# SCHOOL NEWS



## 9th Innovation Talent Forum Successfully Held at Beijing AIDI School

The 9th Innovation Talent Forum was successfully held at AIDI School on September 26, another step towards AIDI School's mission of international education. The Innovation Talent Forum is an exchange forum on "International Innovation Talent Training Mechanism and International Comparative Research" jointly initiated by Beijing Leadership, Peking University, Cambridge University, and Harvard University. It has been successfully held eight times. This time, principals and leaders of the most representative international schools from different regions gathered together to discuss the future of international education on the platform of innovation development and learning exchange set up by AIDI School.



### Harrow Beijing Announces New Head of Upper School

Harrow Beijing is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Thomas Nolan as the new Head of Upper School. Mr. Nolan is a strong advocate for a diverse and student focused approach to learning and has a track record of driving improvement and change in a variety of educational settings.



### AISB-Hope International's new campus is open!

Located in the east Chaoyang District, AISB-Hope's 4,500 sqm building includes a state-of-the-art library/media center, science labs, and arts, music, and dance rooms. Their new sports complex includes a soccer pitch, badminton, volleyball, basketball, and tennis courts.



### Ivy Education Group Adds New Pre-School Campus

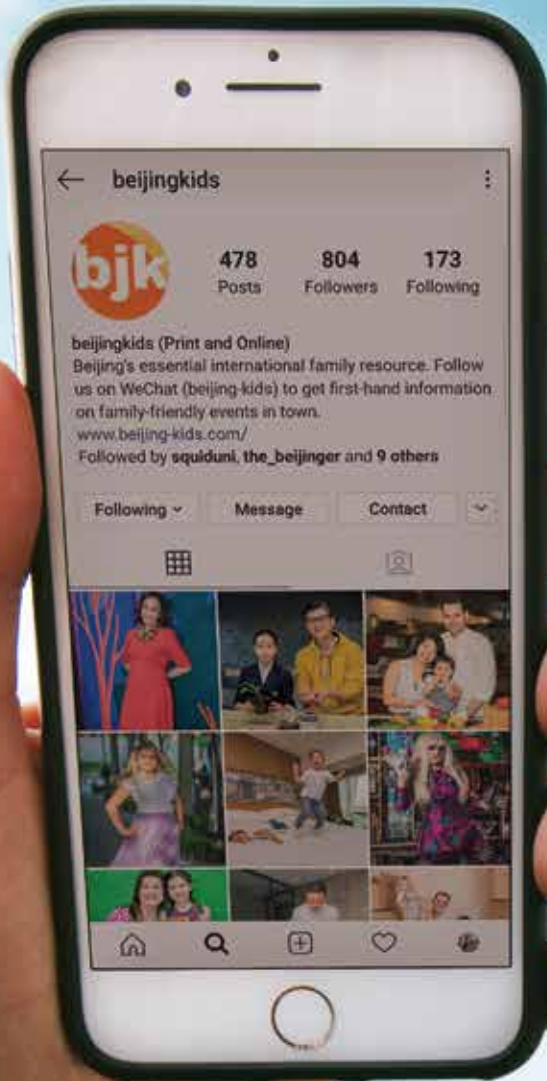
With the start of the 2020-2021 school year, Ivy Education Group has added a new campus. The former House of Knowledge Quangfa Campus located in Maqanying, Chaoyang District, now joins Ivy Education Group, as Day-star Academy Early Learning Center, focusing on providing multiple early childhood education programs to children 2 to 6 years old. So far, the total number of Ivy Education Group's campuses has increased to 15, covering five cities across the country, providing high-quality education services of international standards to more families.



### BIBA Welcomes New MS Principal

Tracy Lloyd has held several positions as Principal throughout his 18-year education career in New Zealand, Vienna, and China. He values creating a school culture of collaboration, empowerment, ownership, and diversity. In addition to his achievements in educational leadership, Lloyd enjoys pursuing personal challenges, such as climbing to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, trekking to Anapurna Base Camp in Nepal, and climbing to the Everest Base Camp, in China.

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# FRIEND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



The Circuit is a chance to check out what's happening in the Beijing community. Want to see your event on these pages?



#### Western Academy of Beijing (WAB) Winter Bazaar To Happen This November

WAB's Winter Charity Bazaar is Saturday, November 21, from 10.30am to 3.30pm. It will have a new location this year, Beijing Riviera Country Club, 1 XiangJiang North Road Beijing. But it will retain all of the holiday festivities, international spirit, family fun, great shopping, and global tastes of previous years! This is one of Beijing's biggest and best holiday bazaars, and features dozens of charity organizations, professional vendors, and custom handicrafts, as well as WAB student and parents. This year the Charity Bazaar will support various charity initiatives suggested by WAB students.



#### YCIS Beijing Early Childhood Education Open Day

YCIS Beijing has recently opened a new early education class and is inviting parents to join the open day to be held on campus on November 21. The session will include presentations by the school's academic team and coordinators who will shed light on the foundational values of a YCIS ECE Approach and a day in the life of our preschoolers.





Send an email with the date of your event, a brief description, and high-resolution photos (at least 1MB each) to [magazine@beijing-kids.com](mailto:magazine@beijing-kids.com)



#### Hooray for Reading at BWYA

On a rainy Wednesday at Beijing World Youth Academy (BWYA), the primary school was filled with lively literature and everyone's favorite storybook characters, as students celebrated Hooray for Reading day, all part of bringing books to life for the young learners. Not even the damp weather could bring down their spirits.



#### Happy Birthday to YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten!

The YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten is one year old! Since the opening of the kindergarten, the "floating" rooftop has witnessed children's joy and growth, and the experience of living and learning in this blended environment of ancient and modern has become an important memory for the children. As a non-profit member institution of YueCheng Education, the YueCheng Courtyard Kindergarten opened on October 8 in 2019 and provides high-quality, internationalized education for children aged 1.5-6 years.







### Come to Grow with Your Child

In September, the Learning Frontier specialists provided a series of two-day parent workshops called "Grow With Your Child" on the topic of early childhood developmental milestones to over 100 parents of kindergarten age children. The workshop was well received and parents showed great interest in the services and programs provided by the Learning Frontier. Founded in 2017, The Learning Frontier is dedicated to providing personalized support services for children and families in Beijing.



### The Halls are alive with the sound of music!

Students at the British School of Beijing (BSB) Shunyi are thrilled to be making music together, developing techniques on their instruments and exploring composition skills. Their performing arts curriculum was developed in collaboration with the Juilliard School of Music.







### Journey Academy (JA) Launches House System

On September 25, Journey Academy launched their House System. Spring Yuan Green, Summer Heng Red, Autumn Li Yellow, and Winter Zheng Blue are the four colors of JA Houses. The Western House System in JA is a new concept that also integrates Chinese cultures and values, will cultivate students' wellbeing, and help them to become unique global citizens and lifelong learners.



### 3e Upper Elementary Sit the ISA Exams

On October 8, 3e International School's Grade 3, 4, and 5 students sat the International School Assessment's (ISA) English reading comprehension and mathematical literacy examinations. Following the examinations, ISA results provide parents, teachers and the school descriptive information about what students know and can do, and areas for improvement.

3e Head of School Mr Gary Bradshaw facilitated the tests and observed, "The Grades 3, 4, and 5 did a great job on their ISA testing. A few were a little nervous having not completed something like this before, but they did very well. We sat a Math Test in two parts and also a Reading Test. When we receive the results, we will reach out to families to go through the reports and explore how we can use the information to improve learning for each student."



**Dad's favorite restaurant in Beijing is** Steak House in Solana, but he also loves to cook and will bake cakes and cookies for the family almost every week as long as he has time.

**Their favorite place to shop is** Solana. It's within walking distance from home and has almost everything the kids and grownups could want.

## Family Favorites!

*Photography by Uni You*

**D**ad Thilo Butter is from Germany and mom Wang Jin is a Tianjin native. The couple has been in Beijing since 2018. While both parents work as mechanical engineers in German automobile companies, mom is currently taking the fabled German extended maternity leave (three years for each child) to accompany dad to Beijing. The couple has two daughters, Vivien (age 4) and Anabelle (age 2) who are both students at House of Knowledge International Kindergarten in Beijing.

**Their No. 1 house rule is** cleanliness and hygiene at home. Always washing hands and changing clothes when coming back home is a top priority and also, putting away your toys before going to bed.

**Mom's favorite restaurant is** Schindler's Tankstelle for German food. But when it comes to Chinese food, mom prefers to cook herself.

**Their favorite family activity is** to do puzzles together.

**Their advice for new families to Beijing is** to have the courage to discover the multi-cultural environment that's unique to this city. Many foreign families will limit themselves to their international business circles but it's actually more fun to dig deeper and get to know the city, like trying a local market instead of always going to one of the import supermarkets. For foreign children, try not to let them lose their own culture and languages. Putting your kids in an international school where they can make new friends from different countries with diverse cultures all while growing up in a trilingual environment like House of Knowledge lets them fully take advantage of their time in Beijing.







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# 中国女性 WOMEN

《中国女性(中文海外版)》是由全国妇联主管、全国妇联网络信息传播中心(中国妇女外文期刊社)主办并出版的国家级女性主流刊物。创刊于2001年,16开本全彩印刷,发行几十个国家和地区以及国内大中小城市。

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