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Advertising Agency
Beijing Agenda Advertising Co., Limited
广告代理
北京爱见达广告有限公司
Telephone／电话：5941 5499
Advertising Hotlines/广告热线：5941 0368

Managing Editor	Mina Yan
Deputy Managing Editor	Cindy Marie Jenkins
Editor	Julie Wolf
Contributors	Yiran Huang, Pearl Kasujja, XueFei Liu, Julia Wang, Grace Zhang
CEO and Founder	Michael Wester
Owner and Co-Founder	Toni Ma
Marketing Director	Victoria Yang
Marketing Team	Echo Wang, Kris Wei
Art Director	Susu Luo
Production Manager	Joey Guo
Graphic Designer	Michelle Zhang
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Sales Team	Gladys Tang, Crystal Yue, Sharon Shang, Alex Wang, Liu Yue, John Nuega, Morandi Liu, Dora Wang
Content Marketing	Robynne Tindall
IT Team	Alexandre Froger, Yan Wen
Finance	Judy Zhao, Vicky Cui, Susan Zhou
HR & Admin	Tobal Loyola, Cao Zheng
DM Logistic	Cao Zheng
General Inquiries	5941 5499

Contact:

General Information: info@beijing-kids.com
Magazine: magazine@beijing-kids.com
Sales: sales@truerun.com
Marketing: marketing@truerun.com
Digital & Magazine Marketing: DCmarketing@truerun.com
DM Logistic: distribution@truerun.com
Directories: listings@beijing-kids.com

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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

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".

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!

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.

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.

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.

Grace Sun
Hailing from Sydney, Grace is a true blue Aussie who was always curious about her Chinese heritage. After working in Taipei, Seoul, and Hong Kong for many years, she moved to Beijing in 2016 and hasn't looked back since. In between being a mother of two and working in luxury hotel design and management, she is also founder of the bespoke DCA studio for interior design and art. Contact her at gs@designcollabassociates.com.

A NOTE TO OUR **READERS**

Our annual Home and Relocation Guide has been the expat family's go-to resource when it comes to preparing for a new life in Beijing. Just ask our Deputy Managing Editor Cindy Marie Jenkins! Before her family relocated to Beijing, she did a massive amount of research on the city with the help of our website (www.beijing-kids.com) and previous copies of our Home and Relocation Guide. Reap the benefits of her experience in our Before You Move Section (P 8)

In prior years, we covered everything from choosing the right school for your kids to finding out which neighborhood suits your needs and lifestyle. But this year, we're going in a different direction because, let's face it, with the latest Covid restrictions, fewer people are able to relocate from abroad.

Instead, we're focusing on the great things to do in Beijing this summer since, for many of you, this will actually be the first summer spent not traveling overseas with the family. Call this issue a Home and Relocation Guide with a Summer Twist – aka The Summer Fun Guide!

In this issue, we take a look at Beijing's coolest water parks for the family to frolic around in (P 26), and also amazing weekend (slightly) getaways like white water rafting and bungee jumping, which are sure to keep your adrenalin pumping (P 28).

For families looking to sign their kids up for summer camps, this year's Summer Fun Guide serves as a summer camp bible, where 14 of our favorite summer camps are profiled so you can get a quick glimpse of all the options in one convenient location (P 30). For more camps, visit our website!

For those of us looking to simply lounge around the city this summer, our street food bucket list courtesy of Lost Plate is a great tool for exploring Beijing's *hutongs* and the local street food culture (P 22). If down-to-earth eateries aren't your thing, we've also listed some of the city's best terraces where you can enjoy the sun with a drink in hand (P 24).

So my fellow Beijingers, pack away your winter clothes and dig out your sunnies. Let's make this summer in Beijing the most memorable one yet, filled with stories, experiences, and memories for years to come.

Mina Yan
Managing Editor

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ON THE COVER:

Seven year old Harry, nine year old Freddie, and their mom Hannah Sanders love discovering all the great things about summers in Beijing.

Photographed by Uni You.

SAY HELLO TO BEIJING'S SMALLEST

Share your new arrival and scan this QR code!

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

Amelia Boulet Kerins
American
Born Nov 23
to Danielle Yang and William Francis Kerins
at Oasis International Hospital

Theodor Palme
German/Chinese
Born Oct 9
to Ying Dou and Thomas Palme
at Oasis International Hospital

Eline Rosenthal
German/Mexican
Born Dec 15
to Evelyn Figueroa and Oliver Rosenthal
at Beijing United Family Hospital

Yize Liu
Chinese
Born Nov 18
to Ami Zheng and George Liu
at Sixth Medical Center of PLA General Hospital

Zhang Peng Shuo
Chinese
Born Jan 30
to Li Xiaoman and Zhang Jing
at Beijing Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital

What's New

We'll Miss You!

It breaks our hearts to say good-bye to our Deputy Managing Editor Cindy Marie Jenkins. Jenkins has been an important part of the team and has truly embodied all the core values of True Run Media, and then some. We wish her all the best as she and her family embarks on their next big adventure! We love you, and we'll miss you!

Hex-a-Dex: Harrow Beijing's New Game Offers UpPhonics Fun

It's all fun and games until your child learns something! But with this new card game Hex-a-Dex, they won't want to stop. The game design was led by Yaqi Zhao in Harrow Beijing's marketing department and it's a fun skill based game for kids ages 4 and up. Hex-a-Dex offers families three separate games to involve parents in their child's phonics learning. Scan to watch our test run!

Say Hola to Spice

The annual Spicy Fest was yet another hit with Beijing's spicy food lovers! Although it only lasted one day, foodies from all over the city challenged their palates with the spiciest food the capital has to offer! It was a food and fun-filled day for all, and for those who didn't get a chance to experience it, stay tuned for more events organized by our sister publication, *the Beijinger*.

Universal Studios Opens in Beijing

Beijing's getting a brand new world-class attraction! The long-awaited Universal Studios is set to open soon! The park will include a Transformers Metrobase, Kung Fu Panda Land, Minion Land, Wizarding World of Harry Potter, and Jurassic World Isla Nublar. What's more, the latest announcement offers a peek into the wild attractions, from rides like the Decepticoaster, Minion Mayhem, and Flight of the Hippogriff, to the movie-magic-come-to-life spectacles that separate Universal parks from your run-of-the-mill coaster junkie funland, such as the much-anticipated Jurrasic World Adventure as well as large-scale live demonstrations of how movie magic is achieved, courtesy of Lights, Camera, Action!

PHOTOS: VIVIENNE TSENG-RUSH, UNI YOU, PEARL KASUJJA, SPIKEBALL, PEXELS, CINDY MARIE JENKINS, UNIVERSAL STUDIOS, HARROW BEIJING

Jingkids Welcomes Vivienne

Although we're sad to say goodbye to our current Deputy Managing Editor Cindy Marie Jenkins, we're excited to welcome her replacement Vivienne Tseng-Rush to the team. Hailing from Singapore, Vivienne has made her home around the world in Indonesia, Dubai and the US, where her husband is from. Wherever she's at, she finds adventure and true connection to others. Fitness, food and fun pretty much sum up her purpose in life. Everyday, she hopes her cheeky son will grow up well to join a kinder, happier society.

What Can Teachers Do This Summer?

So traveling is pretty much out of the question. What are some ways teachers can make the most of their summer in Beijing? Our editor Julie Wolf shares a few suggestions on how you can use this time to invest in yourself. Scan the QR code to read the full article.

Spikeball is the New Cool Sport

Originally founded in 2008, Spikeball has become a popular recreational pastime with four million players globally and more than 150 tournaments played every year. Inspired by volleyball and four square, Spikeball features two teams of two players, positioned around a circular, bouncy net on the ground. Similar to volleyball, a rally begins with one team serving a small yellow ball off the net. Their opponents have up to three alternating hits – ideally a bump, set, and spike – to return the ball onto the net. Spikeball's mission is to bring people together through competition and fun and has the added value of being accessible for a wide range of ages, is super easy to learn, and yet fairly difficult to master. To join in on the fun, contact WeChat ID cdracz16 to be added to the Spikeball Beijing group.

Pearls of Wisdom

Pearl Kasujja has an interesting way of talking about parenting. Born in a small town in Uganda and resident in a small town in Belgium, home is whatever city her family live in every few years. She is a mother of two who loves traveling, reading, writing and yoga. Kasujja isn't afraid to share the nitty-gritty side of mom-life, always with a dash of humor. We're so excited that she's officially joined our team to add her unique voice to *Jingkids*.

THE BIG RELO BINDER FOR FAMILIES

Everything You'll Need to Move That 3-ring Binders Can Contain

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

I am a binder person. When we decided to host somewhat of a destination wedding at a beach, I created a sizeable binder full of information for people traveling there and an even thicker one for the wedding party.

So it isn't entirely shocking that when I was faced with the task of relocating our family across the world, I took the 30-odd page packet the company provided and turned it into an all-encompassing binder. After all, for every topic they sent us one page of information on, I needed five-plus pages of research (most of which was torn from the pages of previous issues of *Jingkids*).

Here is a peek into what most families should get in order before they relocate.

SUPPLIES

- ☐ 2-3 inch 3-ring binder
- ☐ Binder dividers
- ☐ Transparent sheet protectors
- ☐ 8.5x11 sealable folders that have 3-ring hole punches
- ☐ Envelope-sized sealable folders
- ☐ Loose-leaf paper
- ☐ Small blank labels and labels with family members' names
- ☐ Business card holders
- ☐ Your own cards (put a WeChat ID and QR code on it as soon as you get one)

SECTIONS

Please note that every single document and receipt should also be scanned with an app and properly filed in a cloud storage system you can easily access.

☐ **Visa photos (in sealable envelope):** Keep these handy and always get more than you think you'll need. Make sure you understand the measurements required of each country. If you go to a general store where they don't often take photos for a China visa, they may not know that their computer has an entire menu of options for different countries. You might need to help them find it.

☐ **Reimbursements:** Keep all the receipts in a folder that's handy. I had one for reimbursements I needed to input into the system and ones that had already been inputted, along with a log of when I had inputted them.

☐ **Calendar:** Track important dates and milestones here.

☐ **Notes section:** Keep this handy and updated, even if you are tracking your to-do list elsewhere. I use it as a way to track all our phone calls, emails, and questions to ask, in one place.

☐ **Visa info:** Moving anywhere is complex, but moving to China has its own uniquely charming series of complicated paperwork. Keep copies of everything in one place so you don't have to start over every time paperwork needs to be redone (and it will).

☐ **Home sale/Rental:** If you have a house to sell or rent while you're gone, keep the major items related to it here. Include all the renovations or unknowns.

☐ **PO Box rental:** Contracts referring to a PO Box if needed.

☐ **The move:** Important dates, general info, business cards.

☐ **Packing prep:** Lists of what you can bring, contracts for air or sea shipments, and storage units (if you need them) go here, along with a spare key to your unit. Leave one key with a trusted local friend.

☐ **Maps:** All the different kinds of maps you collect in one place.

☐ **Schools:** Here is where I pulled out all the pages from our Jingkids School Choice Guide with my notes, questions, and tracking of correspondence, all somewhat neatly stored in a transparent sheet protector for each of our choices.

- **School documents:** All the reports from your child/ren's schools and applications to Beijing schools.

☐ **Home:** Maps, pamphlets, our notes for and from the look-see trip – here is where we kept everything related to where we were going to live.

☐ **Temporary housing:** You may have a transition period between home and host country. Keep all that information here.

☐ **Look-see trip documents:** I found it easier to keep this in a separate spot, especially since I needed a notarized letter allowing our babysitter to administer – or give permission for – health-related matters for our kids while we were gone.

- **Receipts:** This trip is often reimbursed separately or differently than normal relocation information, so I kept it in a separate envelope. You'll be a little more scatterbrained during your trip, so maybe keep this in your bag and file it away in the binder later.

☐ **Quarantine documents:** This is now a reality of traveling to China. Keep lists handy of snacks to prepare and toys that easily pack down for a minimum 7-21 day quarantine. Then you'd keep the check-out documents and Covid test results here as well.

☐ **Covid vaccine and test results:** Originals should be in an easily accessible envelope as you travel, but keep photocopies here.

☐ **Insurance:** Documents and info packets on your insurance.

☐ **Medical records:** My kids both have their own massive folder of every paper we've received from a doctor since they were born, but a copy of the most recent vaccination record and physicals go in there. Copies, not originals.

- Does anyone in your family wear a medical ID? Get it translated ASAP and order new bilingual ones. RoadID is a good resource for US residents.

☐ **Language learning:** Resources, ideas, etc. for learning the language. It should go into its own place once you start learning in earnest.

☐ **Utilities/apps:** Info on your phone situation, apps to download, app tutorials (some in this very magazine), and any other necessary utility information.

☐ **Banking:** I couldn't keep track of where our physical checks were when we lived in the US, never mind when overseas. But once in a while you do need a real check or scan for something back in your home country. So I kept our unused bank checks and stamps in the back in a sealed envelope.

☐ **Important documents:** We mostly kept our originals in a lockbox; however, it quickly became obvious that you need those originals so often that at a certain point I moved them to a sealable document envelope in the back of the binder. All originals in one section, then copies of additional originals or photocopies separated by family member in the other.

Color scans of (carry multiple in binder sleeves and saved on shared drive):

- All photo ID
- Birth Certificates
- Passports
- Visa page on passports
- Marriage license if applicable (to prove name change)
- Social security cards

☐ **Work documents:** Contracts, items I would need for a work visa, and more are kept here. Anything directly related to the job.

PHOTOS: CANVA

But Why Are We Really Doing This?

Questions Families Must Ask Before a Relo Adventure

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

When we announced our move to Beijing, the reactions were as vast as they were wide-eyed. You could tell who would never understand and who was jealous, who was inquisitive, and who was in denial (*cough cough*, my own mother).

No matter the reactions of family and friends, however, you and your family unit must understand what embarking on this adventure means for every single member. What are you giving up and what does everyone want out of it? Even when your kids are young, honing in on everyone's perspective will go a long way towards maintaining open communication. And truth be told, that is the key to making any relocation run as smoothly as possible: communication. You and your spouse must talk to each other and listen to one another, even – and especially – if they are saying things you don't want to hear. It's one thing to jump into an adventure with an open mind and an open heart; it's another to have completely different expectations of the journey than your spouse.

That goes double for your children. They have the least amount of say in these decisions. Continually check in with them and find out how they're feeling. Let them know it's okay to be scared and excited; it's fine to feel grateful and resentful, sometimes simultaneously.

I know some families who barreled through without telling their kids anything, and others who made decisions specifically based on how it would affect their kids. I know employees who never involved their spouse in the relocation talks, such that they arrived in a new country without so much as an emergency contact in the company or the foggiest idea of how to pay for something.

Many of these questions will inevitably lead to other questions, but it's a strong start. For the sake of ease, we're going to assume that the two adults in question are married, and we'll refer to one as "the employee" and the other as "the supportive spouse," rather than using the sometimes insulting term "trailing spouse."

- Why does the employee want the job?
  - What will it do for their career?
  - What will the employee have to give up to take the job (friends, extended family, favorite gym or brewery, etc.)
- What will the supportive spouse have to give up to take the job? (their own career, trusted babysitters, friends, social unit...)
- Are there ways to make up for that somehow?
- What will the supportive spouse do while they are here?
  - Are there chances for them to work in China?
  - Are there opportunities to work remotely?
  - Is there a passion project they want to develop?
  - Are there courses they want to take or higher education to pursue?
- What are the benefits of taking the job and moving that the supportive spouse can enjoy?
- What will the kids give up to move? (friends, a familiar school system, predictable social norms...)
- How do your children adjust to change?
- How can you help them through the process?
- Are you all up for an adventure or just want to "do your time" until the assignment is over?
- How invested are you in learning the language?

- How can the whole family stay involved and progress in language proficiency?
- What are the major historical sites you want to see?
- What are the cultural experiences you must take part in?
- Do you want to learn a traditional craft from the host country?
- Who is in charge of the visa processing, paperwork, etc. needed to make this happen? (Even with a company moving you, the paperwork for relocating to Beijing is dense.)
- What are the priorities in choosing a school?
  - How does that affect where you want to live?
- What are your priorities in choosing a place to live? (location, amenities, services, proximity to the subway, or outdoor space...)
  - Are your children small and not of school age?
  - Will you hire an *ayi*? Full or part-time? Through an agency or referral? (see P. 14)
- Do you have savings goals from this assignment?
  - How can you achieve them?
  - Who is the responsible party in the household for ensuring those goals are met?
- How much travel will the employee need to do once you're moved to the host country?
  - Is the supportive spouse comfortable with that solo time?
- Do you own a house in your home country?
  - Will you sell it or rent it while you are gone?
  - What are your financial goals for either scenario?
  - What renovations or repairs do you need to do before that happens?
  - What does that mean for your return?
- What will you do with any cars you own?
- Do you need a storage unit in your home country?
  - Who in the home country will have a spare key in the event that you need to get into it?
- Will you need a PO Box in your home country?
- Will your phones work in your host country?
- Does the company help facilitate getting a phone account and setting up other utilities?
- Who is the main contact for the company relocation guide?
  - Can supportive spouse be cc'ed on communication when necessary?
  - Can the supportive spouse be the main contact for some areas of the relocation?
- Does the company provide air filters and water filters?
- Does the company pay for international school at any age, or starting at a certain age?
- Who is in charge of the packing and interfacing with the shipment companies?
- Who is in charge of the reimbursements from, and during, relocation?
- Who is in charge of setting up the school tours?
- Are you able to have a look-see visit prior to moving?
  - Who will watch the kids?
  - Can the kids come with you?
  - How much control do you have over the housing and schools that you tour?
- What vaccinations are needed to enter the host country?
- What medical checkups or procedures are needed or preferred before moving?
  - Any dental checkups?
  - Is all medical, dental, and vision paperwork in order?
  - Do you need medical IDs translated?
- What is the repatriation plan?
- Can you repatriate to an area other than where you moved from?

Questions You Don't Really Want to Ask But Should

- Is the employee or the spouse prone to drinking alcohol in stressful situations?
  - If so, how will you, as a family, combat that?
- Do you have a support system in place for any medical or mental health emergencies?
- Do you have a Last Will and Testament? Do you need one?
- Does your company have a contingency plan if a close relative passes away during your assignment? Will you be able to return or are the borders still difficult to cross?
- Does your company have a contingency plan if someone in your immediate family falls ill?
- Are the employee and supportive spouse good at making new friends or is it difficult?
- What happens if someone in the family has trouble adjusting to your new city?

These questions are all just the tip of the proverbial iceberg that is relocating an entire family for the job of (most likely) one family member. Every single question here should lead you to other questions, and not all can be answered in one sitting. Moving is one of the most stressful situations any family can undertake together, but it is a journey to take together. It's important that every family members' perspective is taken into account and that an understanding is reached. Talk about it over coffee if the morning is the time when you have a clear head, or make a point to discuss one aspect of it at dinnertime for a month. However you go about it, take the time to communicate, and everyone in your family is much more likely to have a positive and realistic attitude towards relocation.

WECHAT, YOUCHAT, LET'S ALL CHAT

Setting Up Your Account and Must-Join Groups in Beijing

By Cindy Marie Jenkins and Julia Wang

SET UP YOUR WECHAT

No matter how you feel about social media, as long as you're living in China, you're going to be using WeChat. Whether you're paying for goods, booking tickets at the park, setting up a playdate, or reading the latest hot gossip, it's happening on WeChat. So whether you're new to China, or somehow managed to get by for any length of time here without an account, we present a helpful step-by-step guide to setting up a profile.

Note: *This guide is based on the Chinese system, however, you can always switch your phone's language and follow the English instructions.*

1. First and foremost, all WeChat accounts must be registered using a cell phone number, so go ahead and pop that in. Then add your username, phone number, password, and select the country or region in which your phone number is based.

2. Next, do what people in the 21st century do best and blindly click on the box that says, "I've read and agree to the WeChat Software License and Service Protocol" without reading a single word of it. Then click "Register."

3. Next, to prove you're not a malicious robot, you get to fit the last piece into a puzzle.

4. Again, blindly agree to something you haven't read, i.e. "I've read and agree to the WeChat Privacy Protection Guidelines."

5. Next, you'll be asked to send a super-secret code (in this case, zc96) to a not-so-secret number, and then it's off to the races!

6. And by races, we mean you get to enjoy the wonderful world of WeChat because your registration is complete! Pro tip: If you want to change the platform's language, click Me – Settings – General – Language.

WHY JOIN A WECHAT GROUP?

Especially if you're just moving to Beijing, it might seem like joining the groups is something you can handle once you get here. But even if you're one of the expats with a company relocation firm behind you, they're not as helpful finding you that brand of cereal your kids really want as they are in other areas.

What I've learned from these groups is that there is no stupid question when it comes to living in a new place. As long as you've tried to find the information by searching the group archives or the internet beforehand, it's a more direct line when you're in a group with people who can just shoot you a name card of the exact person who can help. In this way, I've gotten bunk beds neatly separated, found my favorite brand of toothpaste, learned how to use Meituan and Dianping, and even found one of my first friends in Beijing when I asked about a good coffee shop where a parent can work during school days.

Beijing Parenting and Beyond
Truly one of the more useful groups on WeChat. Admins are long-term Beijing residents and you can find all you need from pet supplies to medical referrals to location pins.
How: *WeChat Shareehebert and ask to join*

Family Events Only Jingkids
Although many groups are a combination of events and advice, this group is run by our founder Mike Wester and sticks strictly to events that kids can attend. This way you don't have to comb through event posters and decipher via Google Translate if that tea tasting requires a babysitter or you can take the kids.
How: *WeChat mwinchina and ask to join*

Beijing Dads Group
Don't forget the Dads! Although all parents are welcome into most of these groups, it must be nice to have a spot where Dads can let loose. From what I hear, it's a lot of memes but also quite good discussions and help when needed.
How: *WeChat mwinchina and ask to join*

WellWomen
"We believe that each of us can make small choices each day towards a better self and a better planet." The WellWomen group is part low-key therapy, part encouragement to make a better life, and part health challenges with your new favorite girlfriends.
How: *WeChat becstarnz and ask to join*

Family Fun in Beijing
This group is another helpful resource for family-related questions in Beijing, or to share your own helpful advice for anyone looking to navigate the city.
How: *WeChat Amelie_Dali0318 and ask to join*

Bumps2Babes Beijing
This group is for parents and soon-to-be parents where you can ask questions without judgment on anything baby-related. This group also has smaller sub-groups broken down by the age of your children. Ask the admin to be added to those.
How: *WeChat liviahoffman and ask to join*

FamFriendlyEats Jingkids
When you're a parent, your criteria for restaurant recommendations becomes a bit different than when you were single. This group is for parents who love to eat! While there are plenty of great restaurants in Beijing, not all of them are suitable to bring children to. In this group, you can ask other foodie parents for recommendations and share your experiences on great family friendly finds.
How: *WeChat Wilhelmina87 and ask to join*

PHOTOS: JULIA WANG, UNSPLASH, CANVA

HELP! *AYI* TO THE RESCUE!

Our Annual *Ayi* Survey Answers All the Big Questions

By Mina Yan

Without a doubt, the top three things on any expat's must-do list when relocating to the capital are downloading WeChat, finding an apartment, and finding an *ayi*. Almost every Beijinger who has the means will hire an *ayi* – whether it be part-time or full-time, live-in or not, daily, weekly, monthly, etc. – to assist with their day-to-day lives. Because, let's face it, living and working in a bustling city like Beijing can be exhausting, and if we can afford to hire someone to help, why not?

That's why each year we send out our *Ayi* Survey, to find out the latest updates and most vital information about the *ayi* scene in Beijing. Of course, you can always ask your friends how much they pay their *ayi*, or the scope of their responsibilities, but we've gone ahead and taken the guesswork out – and added in the honesty that comes with anonymity – and surveyed a sizable swath of Beijing.

There are different types of *ayis* with very different job descriptions. There are those who'll only clean, those who'll clean and cook, those who'll watch older kids, and those who will care for babies full-time. The training they receive is different, as is the salary that you'll want to pay them.

First thing's first, however...the interview! Here are a few of the most common questions to get you started.

1. Find out why she's leaving her current family. Is it because they're moving or is it because of an altercation? It's always great to have a previous employer's recommendation, but since that's not always possible, ask as many questions as you can to get a full picture.

2. Does *ayi* speak English? If so, how well? Always confirm their language level rather than accepting a simple "yes" or "no."

3. Has she worked with foreign families before? If so, where were they from? Sometimes agencies will classify all foreigners together, regardless of cultural differences.

4. Is she certified in CPR or first-aid? If so, for what age? Infant CPR is very different from adult CPR.

5. Be specific about what her duties are. Never assume that just because you've had an *ayi* who voluntarily did laundry for the family, all *ayis* will.

6. How old were the kids she previously cared for? How many families has she worked with?

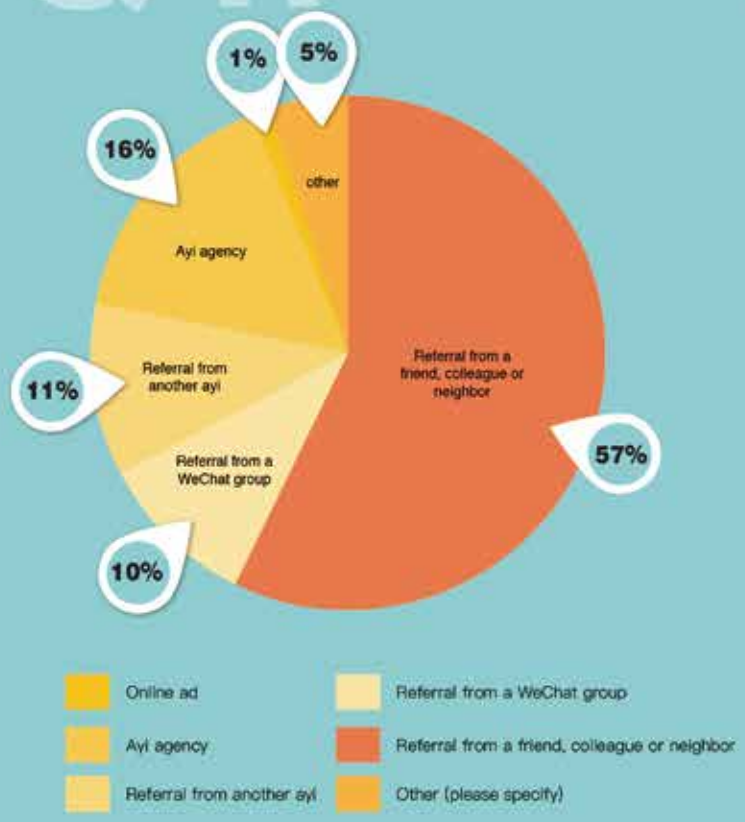
7. Will she work on weekends? If she's not living with you, will it be a problem if you need her to stay late from time to time?

8. If you have pets, does she have experience working for a family with pets or does she have any allergies?

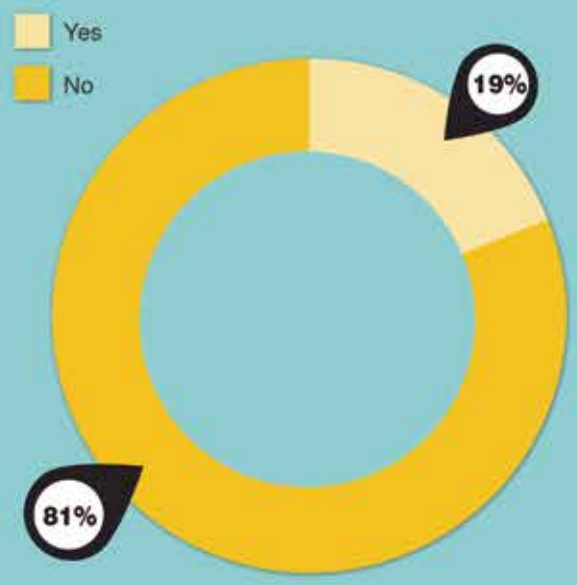
9. Is she trustworthy? Was she recommended by someone you know? If not, can she provide you with a copy of her ID card and health check certificate? If they can't or won't then it's a definite red flag!

10. If you're planning on hiring a live-in *ayi*, ask her specifically about what she's expecting her living situation to be. If you can, do the interview at home so she can also ask questions about your family's lifestyle.

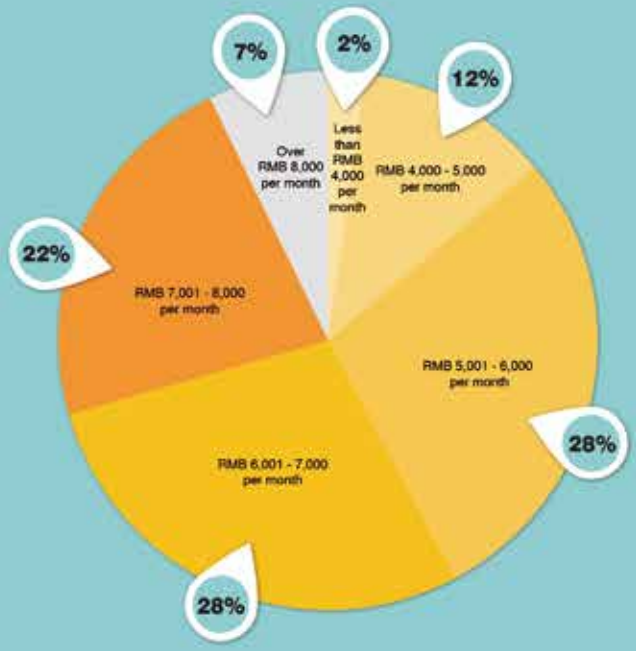
Q1. HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR AYI?



Q2. DOES YOUR FULL-TIME AYI LIVE WITH YOU?



Q3. HOW MUCH IS YOUR AYI'S MONTHLY SALARY?



Q4. WHAT TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES DOES YOUR AYI HAVE?

Visit our website at www.beijing-kids.com to see more answers!

PHOTOS: JINGKIDS, PEXELS

Springtime Self-Care

This New Mom Relaxes into Her Familiar Look with a Twist!

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

Time isn't money when you're the mom of a newborn; it's a luxury. So it's hard to use the few hours of childcare you have a week to make sure you take care of yourself. And for Christina Wacko, who also just returned to Beijing after being stranded until she gave birth, every minute of her day counts.

That's why it was such a joy to offer her the chance to spruce up her roots and highlights, giving renewed life to her already pretty stunning hair. Wacko and her husband moved to Beijing in 2018 but last winter were stuck in Nepal, then the UK, keeping up on a new pregnancy in the meantime. When they missed the window to return before the baby was born, her blossoming family traveled to Canada, where her husband has citizenship, to welcome their new daughter.

But their family's story has a happy ending – or new beginning, in this case. They returned to their home in Beijing last January as parents, ready to embrace a whole new view of their host city – and laden with the usual baby items in tow!

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

So here we find Wacko, six months out from her last hair treatment and looking forward to new highlights for a brighter spring than she had last year. Laurent Falcon stylist Max and his assistants took their time to get to know her hair and understand the processes it has already been through, then talking with Wacko in depth on her desires. It was determined that they needed to strip the bleached areas even lighter in order to attain the color she had previously, and everyone set to work while their subject relaxed into the chair.

A morning of self care quickly turned into lunchtime, however, and the clock started ticking down to when Wacko's part-time *ayi* was due to leave. But we all know that if there's one thing mothers learn, it's how to meet challenges. That includes rearranging plans when a hair appointment goes longer than expected and your seven month old has to come for a visit. All parents must figure out how to integrate their child into everyday activities as needed; I myself remember how I had to cleverly time a haircut with my toddler's nap, the stylist going snip snip snip as the child snoozed happily in a Björn with the apron as an umbrella.

And so Wacko and her beautiful child figured it out; her little one enjoyed the bright new sights of the studio and gained an early insight into the mechanisms of hair stylings. She enjoyed the many mirrors and sounds all around her, taking short breaks in between the bleaching process to nurse. As long as she was near her mom, her baby was happy, content, and comfortable.

Wacko herself got a bit nervous the longer it went on, as Laurent Falcon's artists worked the steps in a different order than she was used to. But once her hair was rinsed, the

relief of the beautiful look was evident in her face. She'd brought a stunningly long floral dress that, paired with her new bright hair and incredible brown eyes, created the look of a goddess. Add to the picture her adorable, happy child, and our subject turned into a vision, a retelling of the Madonna and child that would fit in well at any art gallery. Everyone who saw our photo shoot had to simply stop and stare at the personification of happiness, the proud look of a very happy mama and her child.

Laurent Falcon,
French Style Salon

New location at Hello Mart 城市市集
2F 48 Liangmaqiao Road, Chaoyang District
朝阳区亮马桥路48号
www.laurent-falcon.com
135 0137 2971

The Parental Mile High Club

Travelling with Babies and Potty Trainers

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

If you've spent any time in parent groups, every few weeks a panicked parent jumps in to ask, "We're about to take our baby/toddler/potty trainer on a plane/train/long car trip – is that nuts?!?!" And now that domestic travel is easing up, with international travel seemingly on the horizon, you're sure to see those posts more frequently, or even consider it yourself.

There is very little about parenting that I'd consider myself an expert on, but traveling with kids is one. Seven years ago (*gulp*) I bundled up my four-month-old for a solo cross country trip, and even repeated it when he was potty training and his brother was only six months. Ever since, there have been multiple long car trips, train rides, seven international airplane trips… Let's just say that even with the oddness that was 2020, they've traveled more since birth than I had by high school.

But I totally get it. No one wants to be that family on the plane, or to be seen bribing your kids in front of a line of people impatiently waiting at the airport. So let's tackle the most challenging years of our traveling lives: with babies or potty trainers.

The Prep

Once you book your tickets, start talking to them about it. And please don't pull that "how much do babies understand" crap, because the more you talk to them about things, the more they understand. Maybe they won't completely connect the picture book of airplanes with what is transporting them, but they'll recognize your soothing voice and you'll start to create verbal rituals that help them stay calm.

I love the airplane books that really show the whole process; these are listed in order of age range:

That's Not my Plane… by Fiona Watt, Illustrated by Rachel Wells
Airplane Flight!: A Lift-the-Flap Adventure by Susanna Leonard Hill
Amazing Airplanes by Tony Mitton and Ant Parker
Planes by Byron Barton
Richard's Scarry A Day at the Airport by Richard Scarry

So no matter the age, we read our favorite airplane books and watch videos about how planes work for older kids. One time when I took a potty trainer along with his older brother on a solo international trip, we even drew out a map for how the whole check-in process would go, up until the moment we boarded our plane:

Supplies

Babies

80% of the time, babies are the easiest age to bring on a trip. They don't need their own seat, you can both fit in the teeny bathrooms, and hopefully they'll sleep most of the time.

Essentials to pack? One comfy blanket, one favorite stuffy, three touch and feel books, portable roll up diaper pad, and bottle necessities. If you use powder formula, make sure you can conveniently remove it for security, if needed.

Essentials to Meituan or order for delivery to your destination? Diapers and wipes for the trip, food if they're on solids, more formula.

Carrier (Babybjörn, Moby wrap, etc)? Absolutely, one for each parent. This was the only way I survived our first few trips. Carriers are especially good for ninja nursing!

Stroller? Only if it's easily packed down and you know the places you'll go are stroller-friendly. Otherwise, I'd stick with a carrier and grab a cheap umbrella stroller if they're big enough. One time I was stuck at an airport for an extra hour after midnight because they lost my stroller. It was eventually found, but only worth the aggravation while navigating the airport itself.

Car seat? See if you can borrow one at your destination. I never used one on a plane but that's a personal choice. I did bring a car seat that locked into a stroller when I knew I'd be using it for both the stroller and the rental car, to get to the airport and at our destination. If you can just rent a car seat at your destination, do it. I have seen foldable car seats and also harnesses that may be good alternatives, especially if your plans involve areas with rough terrain and don't want to deal with a stroller.

Crib? Go as minimal as you can with the crib, without sacrificing safety. If your child needs the containment, ask if the hotel has a pack and play. If they don't, that might go to your delivery list. Otherwise, little ones may only need a side sleeper that attaches to the bed.

Loveys? Stick to their favorites and a backup. Only the barest of creature comforts, because honestly, they'll mostly just get in the way of adventure.

Potty Trainers

I can honestly say that for me, potty training was one of the most stressful parts of parenting little kids. The amount of baggage – quite literally – that I had to carry everywhere, separating the dirty from the clean supplies, wrangling both kids while one was training and the other was bored, never mind what had to happen when I had to pee… Oh, and did I mention the separate bag for snacks?

Having said that, don't fear traveling with a potty trainer. It can be done!

Essentials to carry-on/have nearby:

· One complete outfit for every two hours you will be away from your home or hotel. This does not include clothes for the rest of the trip.

· Plastic bag or reusable sealed bag for dirties.

· Hand laundry soap for the hotel.

· Pants and shorts with an elastic band and pull ups for an easy change, no matter how small the transportation's bathroom is.

· Wipes, wipes, wipes, wipes, and more wipes. I was a reusable wipes person at home, disposable throughout potty training.

· Books to capture their attention and keep them on the toilet. If you can stomach it, knock-knock-jokes are pretty great for this.

· Entertainment downloaded onto your phone and/or tablet if that keeps them on the toilet. No shame.

· Hand sanitizer (although that's a no brainer post-2020).

· Hand sanitizer spray (I found small bottles that work like a charm when there's no soap in a public bathroom)

· Toilet bowl adaptor: my oldest didn't need this but my youngest did. He had to have a relaxed bottom in order to do his business, and holding onto the sides of a toilet so he wouldn't fall in just didn't cut it. So a toilet bowl adaptor with the accompanying cleanable bag was necessary.

· If you have a boy, I'd always keep an empty cup with a lid handy – think camping cup, or something similar. Seriously. It saved me on many a group van trip from a Chinese tourist destination to our hotel.

Overall, stay calm, and know you are not the first family to attempt traveling with a young child. Take and do what you need to be comfortable, and keep Meituan or Taobao handy for emergencies!

PHOTOS: CANVA, CINDY MARIE JENKINS

EASING THE EARLY YEARS TRANSITION AT BSB SANLITUN

New Tun Building Makes Learning Tonnes of Fun

By Robynne Tindall

The start of the spring term was extra exciting for Year 1 students at the British School of Beijing (BSB), Sanlitun this year. Not only were they returning to school after school holidays and online teaching, but they were also returning to a brand-new space: the Tun Building. This new addition to the campus fits seamlessly into the city center campus, forming a trio with the existing San and Li Buildings.

The Tun Building is a bespoke learning space designed to ease the transition between early years and primary school. A number of studies have shown that this can be one of the most tricky periods to navigate in a child's early education. Developmentally speaking, there is little difference in the way a four year-old or five year-old learns (although your five year-old would probably be horrified to hear you compare them to a four year-old). Therefore, the issue for schools is how to keep kids motivated and make sure learning is still fun as they move into a more structured curriculum. "The main challenge is delaying the more formal aspect of primary education and focus on the development of learning skills," John Brett, principal of BSB Sanlitun, tells *Jingkids*.

"The idea of developing skills and capacity and character as opposed to filling children with facts about things [is widely accepted nowadays], but how do you actually do that?"

In order to answer this question, the BSB Sanlitun team looked to the successful example of the Li Building, which has always been well received by the school's younger children,

PHOTOS: BRITISH SCHOOL OF BEIJING, SANLITUN

as well as information and experiences from other Nord Anglia schools around the world. They then worked with a team of architects to realize their vision.

Upon entering the two-story Tun Building you are greeted with a light and airy atrium that blends soft play areas with maker spaces to keep learning fun and pressure-free. Teachers can use this space for everything from break-out sessions with smaller groups to one-on-one reading practice. There are two classrooms on each floor, separated across a corridor by bifold glass doors that can be closed or left open depending on whether teachers want to make the learning environment more formal or more interactive.

The Tun Building is also home to BSB Sanlitun's programme for native speakers of German in Years 1-6. The school devised a special curriculum for the programme that runs in parallel with a German education to ensure that children can seamlessly integrate back into education if and when they return to Germany from Beijing.

This all fits into BSB Sanlitun's — and, by extension, Nord Anglia's — wider educational philosophy. "We want children to see education in the round, so they don't just see education as sitting down and learning English and maths, although that is very important, they see it as developing a whole range of skills and capacities," Brett says. As a result, the school is dedicated to avoiding the idea of a 'one size fits all' curriculum, instead leveraging the facilities of the Li and Tun buildings to allow children time to explore music, drama, dance, STEAM, and more. As Brett explains: "if your strength isn't in one area, you're bound to find something that you really do like, and if you can hook onto that when you're young, that's fantastic."

This bespoke approach to education has also proven to be a good fit for BSB Sanlitun's international cohort. As their families move around the world, many children don't stay at the school for the entirety of their primary education, so the curriculum not only has to be instantly accessible but also adaptable, particularly during the key years of a child's early education. "We take a lot of time to get to know your family, your story, what it is you're looking for," says Brett, and there is a dedicated admissions enquiry space within the Tun Building just for that purpose. Of course, this is also a major advantage of attending a Nord Anglia school, as wherever in the world life takes your family, you will most likely find another Nord Anglia institution.

The Tun Building is another way in which BSB Sanlitun realizes its goal of helping children "learn to be really good at learning." By making the transition from early years to Key Stage 1 a constructive one, children develop a positive attitude to learning that can last them a lifetime.

BITE-SIZE BEIJING

Eating Your Way Through the City's Street Foods

By Mina Yan

I'm a foodie and there's nothing I love more than street food. Every time I travel, I'm always on the lookout for the most unique local eats. Nothing puts me off more than a chain restaurant with a bilingual menu.

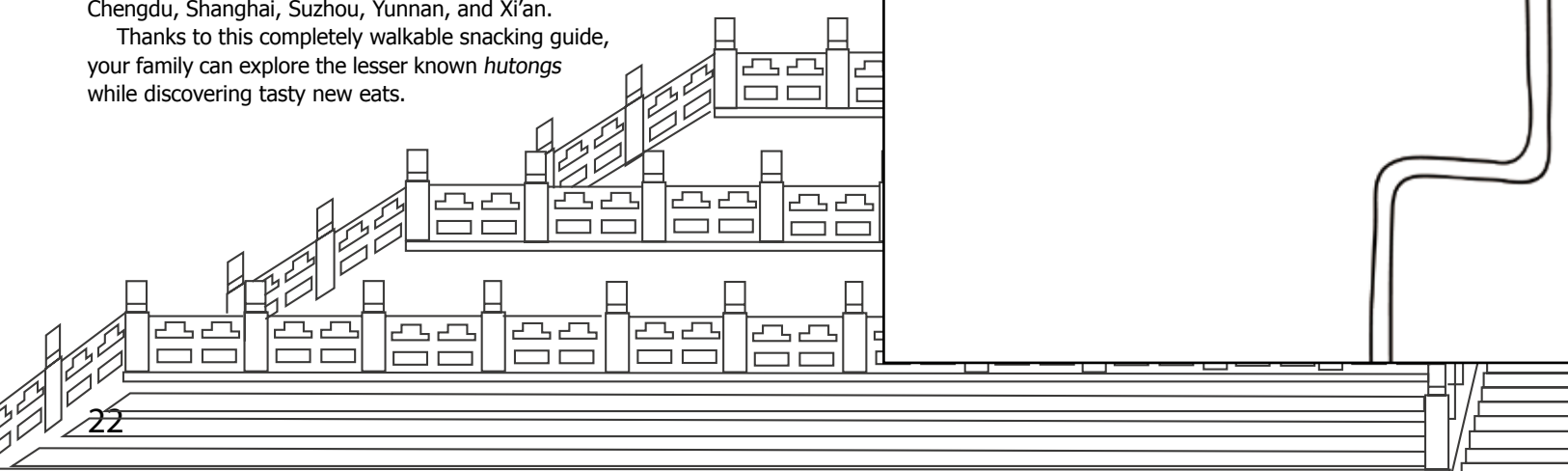
But I don't judge those who've never experienced real local eats. Being in a completely new city and getting stuck behind the dreaded language barrier can make culinary explorations truly scary. You don't know which stalls are safe to eat at, which streets boast the best options, or sometimes, what you're even eating.

So we've made it easy for you and turned the idea of Beijing street food exploration into something of a local food scavenger hunt, with a little help from our friends at Lost Plate.

Lost Plate is the recipient of TripAdvisor's Travelers' Choice Award for Best Foodie Experience in the World. They take small groups to family-run shops off the beaten path, where you'll not only find real locals tucking into an authentic meal but also learn all about the folks who are cooking it. We've drawn on their expertise to put together a tasty guide full of all their must-try recommendations.

Follow the map for a tasty day out in the *hutongs*. If you want to get in touch with Lost Plate for one of their guided tours, visit their website at www.lostplate.com. Lost Plate is currently running tours in Beijing, Chengdu, Shanghai, Suzhou, Yunnan, and Xi'an.

Thanks to this completely walkable snacking guide, your family can explore the lesser known *hutongs* while discovering tasty new eats.



@mina.thefoodie

North 2nd Ring Road

北城兄弟 老北京铜锅涮肉

Hours: 11.30am-10.30pm (weekdays)/ 11am-11pm (weekends)
Address: 鼓楼东大街东公街胡同27号
Recommendations: 清汤锅底配秘制麻酱和现炸辣椒油 Clear Broth with Sesame Paste and Fried Chili Oil Dipping, 高钙羊肉 Lamb, 精品肥牛1号 Beef

马氏门钉肉饼

Hours: 11am-11pm
Address: 车辇店胡同6号
Recommendations: 门钉肉饼 Door Nail Meat Bun

Jiaodaokou East Street

Dongzhimen Inner Street

Jiaodaokou South Street

大华煎饼

Hours: 6am-1pm
Address: 北剪子巷21号悠惠万家超市内
Recommendations: 招牌双蛋煎饼 Signature Double-Egg Jianbing

Di

Zhangzizhong Road

Dongsi 10th Alley

增盛魁小吃

Hours: 6am-9pm (Pro tip: Many of the breakfast items are sold out by 10am)
Address: 大佛寺东街26号
Recommendations: 糖油饼 Sugary Pancake, 豆腐脑 Jellied Bean Curd, 牛肉包子 Beef Baozi, 豆馅炸糕 Fried Red Bean Cake

Meishuguan Back Street

Dongsi North Street

Scan the QR code to come along with us on this food tour.

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

Momma Needs Some "Me" Time

Recharge With a Drink on the Terrace

By Mina Yan

While we love our family, sometime we just need some R&R on a terrace with a side of peace and quiet. Here are a few of our favorite go-to places in Beijing for summer outdoor dining to recharge those batteries.

Xian

Sunken garden next to the one and only Craft Beer Container in the city. It's the place to unwind and relax if you want to feel like you've gotten out of the city without actually doing it.

1/F, EAST Beijing
22 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
朝阳区酒仙桥路22号东隅北京酒店1层
Open from 5pm-late
8414 9810

Union

Union has an outdoor terrace that's the perfect place to people watch in peace. Sit in the middle of Taikoo Li with a glass of wine and relax as you watch the hustle and bustle of the city go by.

1/F, The Opposite House, 11 Sanlitun Nan Lu
三里屯街道11号三里屯太古里北区瑜舍酒店
Open from 11am-1am
6410 5180

Terrace Garden at Grand Mercure Hotel

When Gulou and Houhai get a bit overwhelming, the Terrace Garden of the Grand Mercure Hotel is the place to rest your feet. Soak in the zen vibes of the bamboo and enjoy a cold glass of Jing-A craft beer and local snack foods or afternoon tea.

Ground Floor of Grand Mercure Hotel
101 Jiaodaokou Dajie, Dongcheng District
交道口大街101号北京东方美爵酒店一层
Open from 8am-11pm
8403 1188

Atta BJ

Atta BJ's China World Mall location is a favorite for those who want to dine while enjoying a view of the CCTV tower. Their latest location has a completely different vibe – with a stunning private garden right in the middle of the city that offers peace and tranquility.

Ground Floor of Ritz-Carlton Hotel
83 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District
建国路93好丽思卡尔顿酒店G层
Open from 11.30am – 10pm
5908 8089

Hulu by TRB

When the weather is nice Hulu in Sanlitun is one of the most popular destniations for those who want both great food and some fun in the sun.

3/F, Taikoo Li South, Sanlitun
三里屯太古里南区三楼
Open Sun-Thu from 11am-11pm, Fri-Sat from 11am-midnight
167 1009 0452

PHOTOS: UNI YOU

北京顺义国际学校
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF BEIJING

International School of Beijing has space available in our Dual Language Program!

This optional program promotes **High Academic Achievement** and **Cross Cultural Understanding.**

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Visit us online at isb.bj.edu.cn

Bikini Tan Lines, Ahoy!

Splish Splash in Beijing's Water Parks

By Pearl Kasujja

Beijing winters are legendary. They are long and bone-chillingly cold. We all fervently wait for summer to come. When it finally does (and at the risk of sounding like a whino) the heat can be as relentless as the harsh winters with temperatures in the high 30s. The scorching heat makes us all want to stay indoors with a functioning air conditioning system turned to full blast.

This year, people are being cautiously advised against travel outside China due to the ongoing Covid-19 travel restrictions. So, if we can't travel to Hawaii, let's bring Hawaii to Beijing!

Time to put those bikinis and swim trunks on (no monokinis please). Time for some exciting fun in the sun with family and friends. And Beijing has plenty of that on offer.

Here, we look at some of the best water parks in Beijing for water games, surfing, sand castle building or just a good ol' swimming session.

TUANJIEHU WATER PARK 团结湖公园

With its easy accessibility, popular wave pool, clean water and numerous slides, Tuanjiehu Water Park is so popular with families during the summer months. It has an artificial beach that's all the rage with beach volleyball enthusiasts (and yes, it does get crowded in the summer months - still worth it). There are also free lockers for all visitors.

Address: 16 Tuanjiehu Nanli, East Third Ring Road, Chaoyang District
朝阳区团结湖南里16号 东三环东星期五餐厅对面
Tel: 8597 3603 / 8597 4677
Open Daily from 10:30am-8:30pm. RMB 60 (weekdays), RMB 80 (weekends)

WATER CUBE (HAPPY MAGIC WATER CUBE WATERPARK) 水立方嬉水乐园

Located inside the Water Cube at National Aquatic Centre in Olympic Park, the Water World is the largest and most advanced themed water park in Asia. Comprising the prized Tornado slide, the world's first Ridehouse, Asia's first Aqualoop (an impressive 76 meters long) and some of the world's top slides, it is a place fun dreams popping with live corals and many colorful fish.

Address: Inside Water Cube of Olympic Park, Beisihuan Middle Road, Chaoyang District
朝阳区奥林匹克公园天辰东路11号水立方嬉水乐园
Tel: 5610 7643
Open Daily from 10am-9pm. RMB 30

CITY SEAVIEW AT XIEDAO RESORT 蟹岛城市海景水上乐园

Another beach-themed water park is the City Seaview at Xiedao Resort. Spread over 60,000 square meters, this is the largest man-made seaside themed resort in China (by 2021). It is choke-packed with facilities and activities that everyone can enjoy. Take a stroll on the beach, enjoy a spot of surfing, ride the big waves or - just sit under a coconut tree, and enjoy a bite or cold drink at the Water Bar. When you are just not ready to go back home, rent a seaside log cabin and stay an extra day.

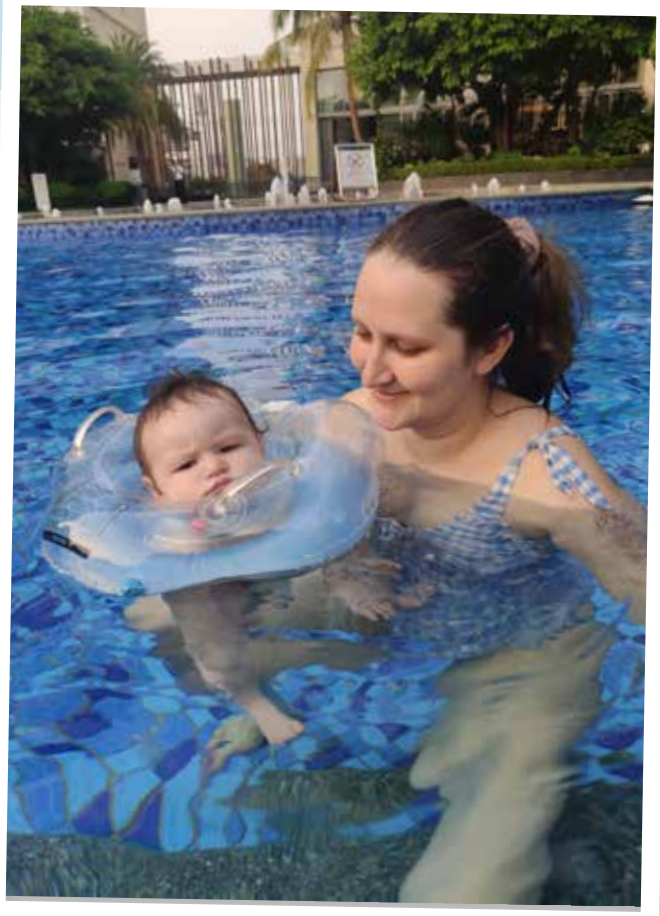
Address: 1 Xiedao Lu, Chaoyang District 朝阳区蟹岛路1号蟹岛度假村内(近机场高速苇沟出口)
Tel: 8433 9191
Open from 9am-8pm from May 27 to Sep 4. RMB 60 per person

CHAOYANG WATER PARK / SUN PARK BEACH THEME PARK 朝阳公园阳光沙滩主题乐园

Chaoyong Water Park is considered one of the best water parks in Beijing and it's easy to see why. Nestled right in the heart of the famous Chaoyang Park and was used as the venue for beach volleyball at the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, it is host to plenty of families looking for some fun in the sun.

There are designated swimming lanes in their 2,000 square meter swimming pool, for those who want to swim laps. For the wee ones, the park has fairground rides, pedal boat, remote-controlled boats, balls and bumper cars that can be rented. There are also two beach volleyball courts and one beach football court

Address: 1 Nongzhanguan South Road, Chaoyang District 朝阳区朝阳公园南路1号
Tel: 6595 3608/ 6506 5409
Open from 9am-9pm. RMB 90 (weekdays), RMB 60 (6am-9pm on weekdays),
RMB 140 (weekends)



MORUI WATER WORLD 摩锐水世界

With over 35,000 square meters of indoor recreational facilities, Morui brings Hawaii to Beijing. It is one of the largest water parks in Beijing, boasting an über cool water-curtain film, dizzyingly high water slides, man-made waves, slate baths, spas, as well as plenty of child activities like a paddling pool and castle.

Address: Inside Tulip Garden Resort, Dongwei Road, Chaoyang District 朝阳区东苇路金盏郁金香花园
24-Hour Ticket Booking Hotline: 5610 7643

PHOTOS: SVETLANA ORE

WATER WORLD AT QINGNIANHU PARK 青年湖公园水上世界

Another exciting water park spread out over 1.5-hectare. It features slides of various shapes and height, ideal for both adults and children. This water park is slightly smaller than the other parks but that doesn't lessen the fun here. In fact, it is less crowded and cheaper than many others and ideal for a a few hours of cooling down in Beijing's summer

Address: Andingmen, Dongcheng District 北京市东城区安定门外
Tel: 6423 6141 / 8411 1485
Open from 9am - 9pm. Jun 1 - Sep 1. RMB 30, RMB 20 for kids shorter than 1.3 meters

XIEDAO WASA CITY WATER PARK AT XIEDAO RESORT 蟹岛瓦萨城大型室内嬉水乐园

Located inside the Xiedao International Exhibition Center and with an operational area of around 10,000 square meters, Wasa City Water Park is reportedly the largest and one of the most advanced indoor water parks in Beijing. Most of the facilities inside the park are imported from German. There's plenty of thrilling water activities to do here

Address: East Gate at Xiedao Resort, 1 Xiedao Road, Chaoyang District 朝阳区蟹岛路1号蟹岛景区东门
Tel: 8432 5388 / 5979 0481

PHENOMENAL WEEKEND FAMILY FUN

Awesome Places Around Beijing for Quality Family Fun

By XueFei Liu

Yay, it's finally Friday. The clock inches forward, and you prepare to bolt from the office as soon as it hits 5pm. Then you realize nothing special is planned for the weekend. Nothing special means another Saturday trying to put up with your kid's tantrums and figuring out where to go with the whole family squabbling. Suddenly, the weekend doesn't seem that magical anymore, and your head's already having a massive migraine from thinking about it. Don't fret, the travel guru is here! Read on, and you'll fix up your weekends in no time!

十渡野三坡漂流 WHITE-WATER RAFTING

Address: Sandu Village, Zhangfang Town, Fangshan District 房山区张坊镇三渡村
Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday 8am-4pm
Approx. Price: RMB 50

Although this is not the Colorado Falls, white-water rafting is still fun in the outskirts of Beijing. This team sport can help your family bond for hours. It gives everyone a chance to learn more about their strengths and weaknesses, and your kids can learn about working in a team. Without modern-day distractions like smartphones, you can have much more outdoor bonding fun while overcoming the rapids. So, store away those devices this weekend, book a trip, and prepare to get wet. Word of advice: remember to bring an extra change of clothing because you do not want to walk around after the activity soaking wet.

拒马乐园 JUMA PARK

Address: Jiudu Village, Shidu Town, Fangshan District 房山区十渡镇九渡村
Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday 8am-6pm, stop entry at 5pm
Approx. Price: Free

Ready for some thrilling outdoor fun? Then this park is made for you. Don't be fooled by its dull name because this park has it all. The most famous one is the Canyon Flying Man, where you fly off a canyon on an enormous zip line. They also have bungee jumping that goes as high as 48 meters! Talk about adrenaline. Other awesome attractions are cable cars, rock climbing, and even a haunted house! A jam-packed day for all members of the family. While the bigger kids can go all out, the younger kids enjoy the safer slides. Just remember to bring extra cash since some attractions do require fees. Happy Weekend!

幸福草莓园草莓采摘 STRAWBERRY PICKING

Address: No. 78-81 Planting Greenhouse in North Tugou of Future Science and Technology City 未来科技城北土沟种植大棚78–81号（未来科技城中央绿地）
Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday 8am-4pm
Approx. Price: RMB 171
Phone Number: 185 0059 3598 / 183 0139 2448

Strawberries! The smell of summer and everyone's favorite fruit. Why not skip the supermarket this time and head straight for a strawberry greenhouse? The fiery red color and juicy taste right off the vines is a perfect start for summer. And there's a variety of strawberry breeds to choose from. Go all out for the 1,500g picking or pick 500g of different types. Whatever type you choose, there's fun for everyone. The friendly guides there will show you around and take you to greenhouses that cultivate various breeds. So, get out your wellies and be prepared for some down-to-earth harvesting for the weekend! Best of all? Your kids can munch on the already picked strawberries if they're hungry.

北京凤凰岭 FENG HUANG LING

Address: 19 Fenghuangling Road, Sujiatuo Town, Haidian District 海淀区苏家坨镇凤凰岭路19号
Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday 7am-5.30pm
Approx. Price: RMB 25

Feng Huang Ling, home to the famous Ling Long Tower and Long Quan Temple. One of the most traditional scenic parks just located in the outskirts of Beijing. If you're down for some Beijing culture and history, take everyone on a scenic hike in the parks. The twisty paths with the blue skies and greenery around you will take your breath away. And for those kids who say history is boring, drag them along, and the beauty of this park will make them take back their words for sure. Just make sure to bring some sandwiches and fruits since you may be wandering inside this park for quite a long time!

孤山寨风景区 GU MOUNTAIN SCENIC PARK

Address: Qidu Village South, Shidu Scenic Area, Fangshan District 房山区十渡风景名胜区七渡村南
Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday 8am-5pm, stop entry at 4pm
Approx. Price: RMB 50

Trekking under the forget-me-not sky with rays of sunlight shining down on you makes a perfect weekend. This scenic park offers more than that. It has waterfalls, different rocks, mountains, and peach blossoms. Every corner is filled with nature as soon as you step through the gate. Your kids can even rent horses and ride on them to go from one scenic spot to the next. The hike is not very tiring, with the mountains reaching towards the clouds. So why not take the whole family there for a day in nature? You'll be surprised to see what the Beijing outskirts can offer.

PHOTOS: PEXELS

SUMMER CAMP PROFILES

All the Fun for Kids to Have in the Beijing Sun

By Cindy Marie Jenkins

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Ages 18 months – 6 years

Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB) 101 Kindergarten Creative Camp

Who: Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB)
What: Fun-filled phonics learning through creative arts
Where: Canadian International School of Beijing (CISB)
When: Jun 21–Jul 9, Jul 12–Jul 30, field trip on Jul 22
Ages: 18 months to 6 years old
Prices:
Half-day Program RMB 6,500 - 18,150 (2-6 weeks)
Full-day Program RMB 9,650 - 26,600 (2-6 weeks)
** 15% discount for CISB, ISNS, and CCSC students*
** Fees include Summer Camp uniform, tuition, all materials, nutritious snacks, and lunches*
** School bus service can be provided for limited routes based on the number of students*
About: CISB offers classes ranging from Montessori Nursery (18 months) to Grade 12 in two downtown campuses: the main Liangmaqiao Lu campus and the new Jianguomen Kindergarten.
More info:

Ages 2-7

Natural Play the Montessori Way at Mammolina

Who: Mammolina Children's Home Model Montessori Kindergarten
What: Immersion in an authentic bilingual Montessori learning environment and a brand new "Natural Playground"
Where: Mammolina Children's Home Model Montessori Kindergarten, Liyuan Xiaoqu No 36, Maquanying
When: Jul 19-Aug 20
Ages: 2-7
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:4
Prices: RMB 3,500-4,500 per week
About: The camp will be run by experienced Montessori Lead teachers and experienced Montessori Native English teachers.
Montessori education emphasizes learning through the senses. Children in Montessori environments learn at their own pace and according to their own choice of activities and task at hand. A natural playground is designed to make use of existing topography and natural materials to create an open-ended outdoor play area for children to make discoveries and interact with their environment.
More info:

Ages 4-12

The Courtyard Institute & Black Sesame Kitchen Present a Royal Summer Camp

Who: The Courtyard Institute and Black Sesame Kitchen
What: A Royal Summer Camp: Learning about Emperors & Empresses in China and Kings & Queens around the World
Where: 28 Zhong Lao Hutong, near the east gate of Jingshan Park and steps away from the Forbidden City
When: Jun 28-Aug 27; Exact dates of camp subject to change. The camp will be organized into three 5-day Monday-to-Friday sessions; children may join for a minimum of 5 days (starting any Monday) with flexible morning drop-off time after 9am and pick up by 5pm.
Ages: 4-12
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:5
Prices: TBD, contact for more information
Curriculum: This curriculum draws on both Chinese and Western educational models.
Conclusion: There's a half-day cultural heritage volunteer program in each camp that will give each child a volunteer certificate from Beijing Cultural Heritage Protection Center.
About:
Black Sesame Kitchen is a cooking school, restaurant, and events company in the heart of old Beijing.
The Courtyard Institute is an educational company founded in 2014 that aims to promote a better understanding of traditional Chinese culture, for both children and adults, through lectures and salons, art and craft workshops, heritage field trips, and winter and summer camps.
More info:

Ages 5-10

Beijing International Bilingual Academy (BIBA)'s English Summer Bridge Program

Who: BIBA's experienced foreign teachers
What: An interesting and useful advancement program to help enrich your child's English reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
Where: Beijing International Bilingual Academy – Beijing Campus
When: Jul 5-16
Ages: Elementary KG-Grade 5
Teacher to Child Ratio: KG to G1 – 1:7, G2-G5 – 1:10
Prices: RMB 9,800-15,800
Curriculum: Reading and Writing Workshops, National Geographic Learning: Reach into Phonics
Conclusion: Student performance at the end of the camp. For example, a song, play, speech, debate, reader's theater, etc; a published piece of writing to showcase each student's learning; BIBA English Summer Camp completion certificate.
About: Foreign English-speaking BIBA teachers will employ BIBA's English class models to help the students improve their English, step-by-step, over a two-week period.
More info:

Ages 5-15

Camp Greenwoods

Who: YMCE Group (Camp Greenwoods), China's first and only American-owned summer camp operator since 2010. Experienced foreign and local Camp Directors and staff.
What: Camp changes your life: Our life-changing American-style overnight summer camps in the great outdoors will teach a child life skills to use for a lifetime!
Where: Beijing, Shanghai, Qiandaohu (Hangzhou), Kunming, Chengdu
When: Jun 20-Aug 28
Ages: 5-15 (7 & up for overnight camp, 6 and under for day camp)
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:4 Staff to Camper ratio
Prices: RMB 9,999-21,800
Curriculum: Their program consists of scheduled activities in the morning and individual choice in the afternoons. "Electives" are chosen at the beginning of the week and are a skill the child will do consistently in that time block every day that week. "Flex" is chosen daily and is inspired by staff and sometimes the children. Individual choice activities are not limited to those above, but are a sample of a common program.
More info:

Ages 6-14

Uruguay Football Club Summer Camp

Who: Uruguay Football Club is managed by Global Magellan Cultural Sports Events & Auction Limited, a foreign-invested company in Hainan. The company signed a tri-party agreement with the Uruguay Ministry of Sports (& Uruguay Ambassador to China) and the Hainan Provincial Government to create the Uruguay Football Club. Uruguay FC Summer Camp is a multidimensional program formed by a partnership between the Ministry of Sports of Uruguay – with support from the Uruguay Embassy in Beijing – and the Hainan Provincial Government.
What: Multidimensional Football Camp in Hainan with Latin American culture exchange immersion
Where: Haikou City, Hainan Province
When: Weekly/Bi-weekly from Jul 4 to Aug 28
Ages: 6-14
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1 international coach per 12 kids
Prices: RMB 8,058/week and RMB 14,433/two weeks (if signed up more than 30 days before start). An extra discount applies if more than one participant signs up together.
Conclusion: Kids will receive a completion certificate indicating their participation in Uruguay FC Summer Camp signed by the head coach/project director during the Closing Ceremony.
More info:

Ages 6-16

Jingwu Kungfu School Shaolin Camp

Who: Jingwu Kungfu School
What: Live and train with real Shaolin monks!
Where: Songshan Shaolin Temple, Zhengzhou City, Henan Province
When: Jun 28 to Aug 7
Ages: 6-9 & 10-16 (children under 6 must be accompanied by their parents)
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:5
Prices: RMB 6,800/week per person.
Curriculum: Foundational skills of Shaolin kungfu, beginner boxing skills, calligraphy, taichi, qigong, outdoor team games, temple visits, hiking, kungfu performance show, and more.
Conclusion: Participants will be assessed under the supervision of the Shaolin Chief Instructor of Martial Arts and receive a certificate of completion.
About: Master Leo is the founder and lead instructor of Jingwu Kungfu School. Along with all of his carefully selected instructors, he is a graduate of Shaolin Temple and spent many years growing up and training with the Shaolin masters.
He has a wealth of experience and accolades including working as the head coach of foreign students in the International Department of Shaolin Wushu and serving as the coach for multiple national teams including New Zealand, Israel, Japan, and Yugoslavia at the first World Traditional Martial Arts Festival.
More info:

Ages 7-12

Mad Science: Decode Superpowers with Science

Who: Mad Science
What: Superheroes Science
Where: Crowne Plaza Near Air, No. 60, Fuqian Street, Shunyi District
When: Jul 12 – Jul 16 (9am-4pm)
How: Scan QR code
Phone/WeChat: 185 191 3810
Age: 7-12
Price: RMB 5,980/person
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:6
Location: Shunyi
Curriculum: Interdisciplinary learning, deciphering the principles behind superpowers
About: Mad Science uses STEAM in camps, after-school programs, and more to foster a love of science and discovery in kids.
More info:

Ages 7-14

Pingo Space Survival Camp

Who: Pingo Space
What: Five fun-filled days of outdoor survival camp where campers learn skills to survive in the wilderness
Where: Huairou, Beijing campsite. At night campers bunk with one other person in an air-conditioned room with a private bathroom
When: Jul 19-23, Jul 25-30, Aug 1-6, Aug 8-13, Aug 15-20, Aug 22-27
Ages: 7-14
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1 Lead instructor, 2 assistant instructors, 12 campers
Prices: RMB 7,580-8,980
Curriculum: Fire building, water filtration, building rafts, building shelter.
Conclusion: Survival camp completion certificate
About: Well-qualified outdoor guides with wilderness first aid certifications. This is the third year Pingo Space has been running this camp. All staff and instructors are highly experienced.
More info:

Ages 8-13

Action Movie Summer Camp with Flips & Kicks Plus and Jackie Chan's Stunt Team

Who: Flips & Kicks Plus
What: "Keep it Rolling"
Where: Tianjin at Jackie Chan's stunt team's training center.
When: Jun 21-25, Jun 28-Jul 2, Jul 5-9, Jul 10-16, Jul 26-30, Aug 2-6, Aug 9-13
Age: Group A: 8-13 y/o, Group B: 14-18 y/o
Price: RMB 4,000/block
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:7 (depending on sport or activity)
Location: Tianjin
Transport: Departure from ISB Shunyi 7.45am, arrival 8.45am; departure from training center 3pm, arrival 4pm
Transport fee: RMB 500/person/block. If fewer than ten participants, the transport will be canceled.
Food: Flips & Kicks Plus supplies water and fruit each day. Participants can bring their own lunch or order Chinese food at the venue.
Food fee: RMB 250/block.
Curriculum: Strength, conditioning, wushu, taekwondo, boxing, gymnastics, stunt work, and more.
Conclusion: Each camper will receive a certificate of completion at the end of camp.
About: Staying in Beijing this summer? Why not attend a unique summer camp in proud cooperation with Jackie Chan's Stunt Team. The camp is packed with gymnastics, martial arts, and basic stunt work training. Come and harness and develop your skills or just have fun with top international and bilingual coaches.
The camp is held at the amazing Jackie Chan's Stunt Team (JCST) Training Center in Tjianjin, a one-hour drive from Shunyi. Flips & Kicks Plus supply transport to/from camp.
More Info:

Ages 8-17

Tayrona Beijing presents Green Pastures Camps

Who: Tayrona (Beijing)
What: "Cycle, Feel Good, Be Safe & Have Fun"
Where: Beijing (Huairou and Miyun) and Qinghai Lake
When: July and August 2021
Ages: 8-17
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:5
Prices: RMB 6,900-19,800
Groups/Family Discounts and Scholarships: Discounts available for schools, for groups of 5 to 10 campers, and for siblings (if a family signs up two or more children)
Curriculum: The cycling camps teach and reinforce the following topics in theory and with lots of practical opportunities to develop the skills needed for a better cycling experience.
Conclusion: Certification for participation and a medal for achievement
About: Tayrona Beijing Ltd
Green Pastures Camp's philosophy is that "Everyone matters." They are inclusive, welcoming children and teens who need special accommodations or have special needs so they can participate in the camps. Camps are customized when needed and also include English Study Skills Camps, Fun English Camp, and a Gardening Camp.
More info:

Ages 9-14

Mountain Camp by Imagine

Who: Imagine
What: A weeklong road trip away from home, traveling to three epic mountainous regions in Hebei and Miyun for mountain biking, horse riding, wild hiking, and camping.
Where: Miyun, Chongli, and Fengning (Hebei)
When: Jul 19-23, Aug 9-13, Oct 2-6
Ages: 9-14
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:6
Prices: RMB 7,320-9,380. (Range according to discount options)
Curriculum:
Day 1: Miyun Baihe – Rock Climbing, Fire Cooking, Camping
Day 2: Epic Valley Hike, Navigation Practice, Archery Tag, Journey to Legend Ranch (Fengning)
Day 3: Legend Ranch (Fengning) – Horse Riding, Journey to Chongli
Day 4: Chongli – Biking Skills, Mountain Biking
Day 5: Mountain Biking
Conclusion: Students will complete the camp feeling accomplished, with new skills and knowledge in mountain biking, rock climbing, horse riding, camping, navigation, fire cooking, and other outdoor skills. They will have fresh inspiration to continue to pursue active and adventurous lifestyles!
About: Imagine Camps was founded by British outdoor sports professional Pete Tupper in 2014. As an established and specialized adventure activity brand, the company has continued to design and operate an exciting range of innovative and adventurous activities, camps, and international school trips in Beijing, around China, and overseas, from survival training courses to ski trips, and from water sports to mountain biking. All instructors are highly trained and speak fluent English, creating a fully immersive English-language environment. The company's mission is to "Inspire Development through Action and Adventure" and the team strongly believes that getting kids outdoors is vital for character-building.

Ages 12-17

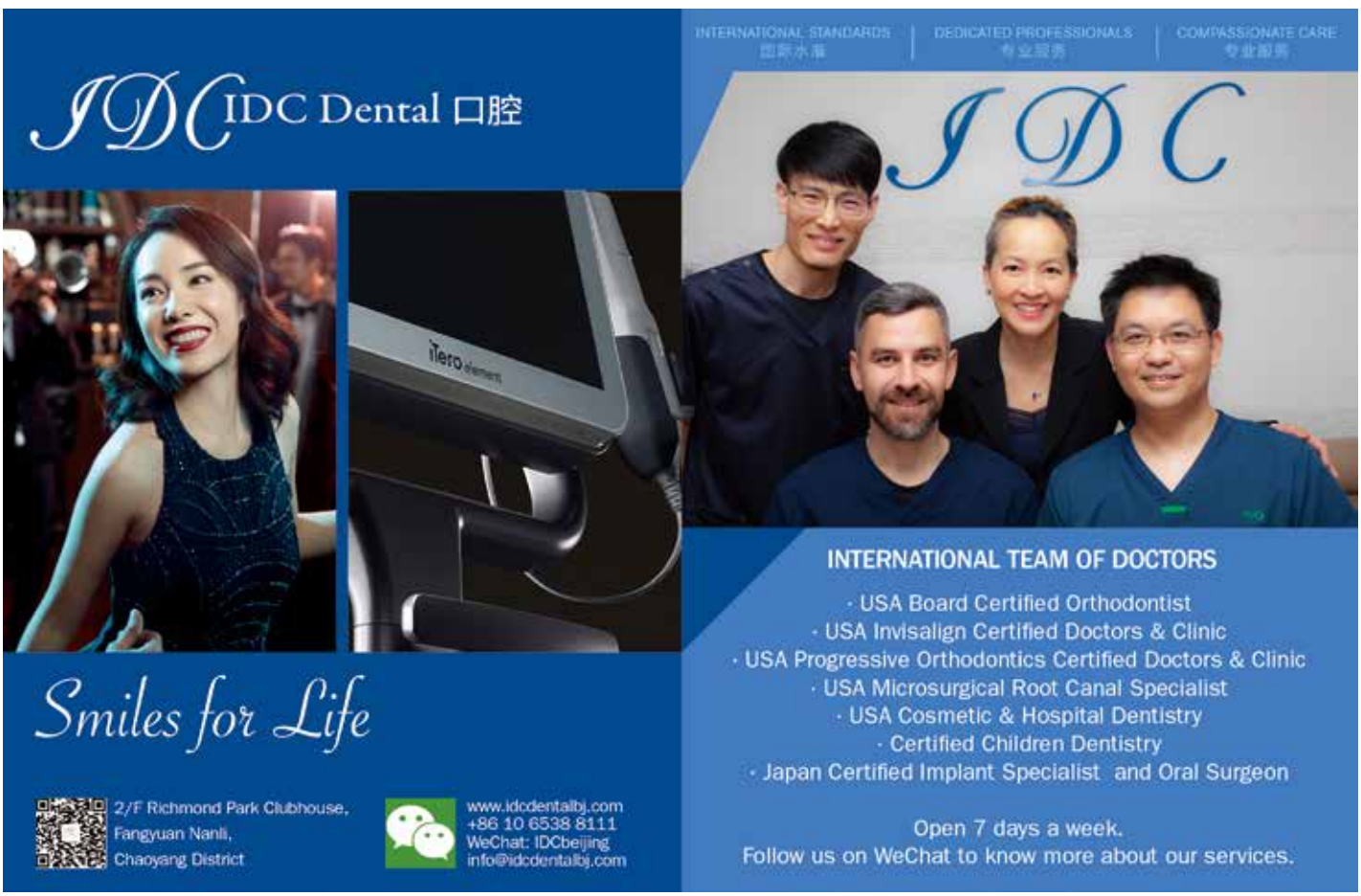
Get Your UN On With The Dewey Center and WildChina

Who: The Dewey Center and WildChina, endorsed by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova
What: Reimagine the urban communities of Beijing and "greenness" to make green space a more integral part of urban areas, everyday life, industries, and nature.
Where: The Dewey Center's new international center in Beijing
Xidawang Road Aigongchang Wenhua Keji Ronghe Chanyeyuan
When: Camps will run in July and August; more details forthcoming
Ages: 12-17
Prices: RMB 10,500/student including room and board, meals
Curriculum: The Model United Nations curriculum of the Dewey Summer Program gives students the opportunity to present their thoughts and have in-depth exchanges about the SDGs with former UN Deputy Secretary-General Kim Won-soo, UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova, former US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State James Keith, amongst many other esteemed international and Chinese experts and scholars in the field.
About the Dewey Center:
Eponymously named after the world-renowned educator Dr. John Dewey, the Dewey Center and its programs encapsulate Dr. Dewey's philosophy such as "Learning by doing," and "Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself."
About WildChina:
The execution partners for the Dewey Center's Summer Programs, WildChina Education have been recognized by National Geographic and the Global Youth Travel Awards for its creativity in experience design. They are curators of experiential learning experiences for the world's leading institutions such as Harvard, Stanford, Columbia, Dulwich, Nord Anglia, Wellington, Harrow, and many more.
More info:

Ages 14-17

Your UK Summer in China at the University of Nottingham Ningbo China

Who: University of Nottingham Ningbo China
What: An international, English-language university experience in China this summer.
Where: University of Nottingham Ningbo China
When: Jul 19-Aug 6
Ages: 14-17
Teacher to Child Ratio: 1:30 (various expert teachers for the different workshops and classes)
Prices: RMB 32,000
Curriculum: Two courses:
A: STEM
B: Business and Social Sciences
Students choose one of these two options when they apply. They will undertake projects which will serve as "taster sessions" to various subjects within these areas.
Projects include (subject to change):
STEM: Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, Electronic Circuits and Drones
Business and Social Sciences: Language and Linguistics, Marketing, Economics
Each course will also feature 40 hours of academic English classes and 3 bonus IELTS classes run by former IELTS examiners.
Conclusion: All students will receive a certificate for completing the course. There will also be awards available for the best performers according to certain criteria which will be laid out in the student handbook given to students before the course. Tied to these awards will be personalized letters of recommendation from professors, which students can use to support their applications to overseas universities.
About: With a beautiful campus designed in the image of the University of Nottingham UK, British-style teaching, and a multicultural environment with 284 foreign academics and students from all across the world, UNNC Summer School is a truly authentic representation of a British-style university.
More info:



THREE STEPS TO CHOOSING A NEW DENTIST

IDC Dental Walks Us Through Your Arrival Checklist

By Robynne Tindall

Moving to a new country or even a new city can feel like you're living through one endless checklist. With all that running around attending school orientation sessions and getting home broadband set up, it's natural for a few things to get lost in the fray. However, one thing you absolutely should not neglect is finding and getting to know a new dental clinic for your family.

Whether you are just visiting for general checkups or continuing a specific course of treatment, your dentist should be as much a part of your healthcare planning as your family doctor. Oral health is a window to your overall health, especially in relation to your respiratory and digestive systems. But given that a trip to the dentist isn't most people's idea of a fun day out, how do you go about choosing a dental clinic?

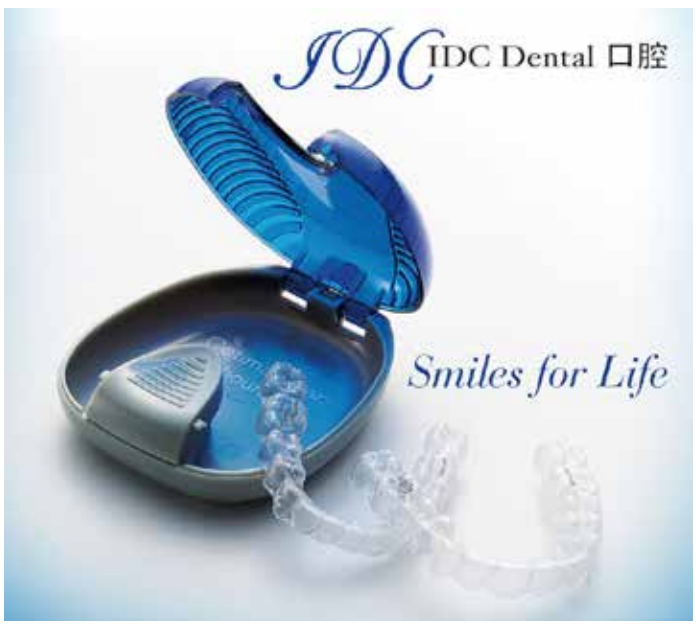
According to Dr. Jaclyn Dam-Laute, CEO and chief dental surgeon at IDC Dental, there are three main factors to consider when choosing a dental clinic: "comfort, expertise, and facilities and technology." What does that mean in practice? At the most basic level, a dental clinic should not just be clean and sanitary but also have a calming environment that puts you at ease, something that Dr. Laute and her team pride themselves on. You also don't need to worry about trying to learn a bunch of orthodontics-related Mandarin; IDC Dental's internationally-trained, multi-lingual staff speak English, Japanese, Russian, Ukrainian, and more.

With regard to the latter two factors, it's important to consider whether you have a specific condition or are undergoing a continuing orthodontic procedure, in which case you should choose a clinic with the specialist knowledge and facilities to make sure you receive the care you need. For example, IDC Dental, the team not only includes experienced generalists, but also specialists in surgery, orthodontics, periodontics (focusing on the gums, bones, and other supporting structures around the teeth), and endodontics (focusing on the treatment of the dental pulp). IDC Dental employs the latest advanced technological diagnostic tools, and the team is trained and certified to work with international brands like Invisalign for orthodontics.

IDC Dental can work closely with your previous dentist to coordinate your treatment, either taking over as your main care provider or providing support during your stay in Beijing. The English speaking team can communicate directly with doctors wherever they are in the world. They will also work with you to adjust the cost of your treatment depending on what stage you are at — your needs and your treatment come first.

While for adults going to a new dentist may be a simple matter of organization, for children, it is a different story; Dr. Laute compares the process to starting a new school. She recommends that parents help children to foster a positive mindset about going to the dentist from an early age by treating it as just another part of everyday life, rather than something that only happens after a scary or painful emergency. IDC Dental's team are highly experienced in working with children, especially Dr. Tiger Gong, who has worked with infants as young as six months old.

Whatever your age, Dr. Laute's goal at IDC Dental is to provide you with the most comfortable, effective dentistry experience possible. And at a time when our overall health is more important than ever, that is definitely something that should be on your checklist.



NOT PRETTY IN PINK

Can You Get Pink Eye from Public Pools?

By Mina Yan

Let's face it, this summer, we're not traveling anywhere outside of China! Sure, there are a few sunny domestic destinations such as Sanya, but for most of us, it looks like we'll be spending the entire summer right here in Beijing. And there's nothing wrong with that! The capital is jam-packed with fantastic historical and modern sites just waiting to be discovered. However, summertime isn't all about learning and cultural enrichment, it's also about relaxing and having fun.

So with pools, picnics, and floaties in mind, we head into summer prepared for fun in the sun.

I've always been a bit of a germaphobe, even before Covid. The idea of jumping into a pool that's possibly got a higher pee-peeH level than I'd like is still pretty icky to me. As such, in my mind, family-friendly pools are all but synonymous with pink eye.

Seeing the world through rose-colored glasses is great. Seeing it through rose-colored eyeballs… not so much. To find out more about this ghastly virus, we consulted Dr. Joy Oreto, a pediatrician at Oasis International Hospital who cleared up a few common misconceptions about pink eye.

Most everyone knows that pink eye comes from contact with fecal matter. It's exactly how it sounds. Essentially, pink eye is the result of getting poop in your eye. But it's also not that simple. "Bacteria or viruses that cause conjunctivitis (pink eye) can spread through hand-to-eye contact, [it's] transmitted by hands or objects that are contaminated," explains Dr. Oreto, adding, "Having contact with infectious tears, eye discharge, fecal matter, or respiratory discharges can contaminate hands." Simply put, going to the bathroom and not properly washing your hands afterward, and then proceeding to touch a bunch of different surfaces, is one surefire way to get pink eye.

While we might not be able to count on the cleanliness of every surface we touch, pools are thoroughly chlorinated and that kills bacteria, right? "Even if the pool water is chlorinated it does not guarantee that it is germ-free," says Dr. Oreto. "It is still possible to spread the infection through chlorinated water. Also, if you have conjunctivitis it could further worsen your eye condition."

Okay, so you're going to start – if you haven't already been – washing your hands with soap after every trip to the bathroom. Likewise, you may even be considering avoiding pools altogether this summer. Does that mean you're safe from contracting pink eye? Not quite. Pink eye is highly contagious and, as mentioned, it's spread by contact. The first time I heard this I thought to myself, "Well, what are the chances that someone else's eyes will get in contact with mine?" but it's actually more common than one would expect. It spreads when an infected person gets their eye secretion onto another surface – any surface… Think door handles, towels, pillowcases, etc.

Fear not, though! To prevent yourself from getting pink eye, a few simple measures can make a world of difference. Don't share tissues, handkerchiefs, towels, or bedding with anyone you think might be infected. If you're traveling, it's never a bad idea to bring your own towels or buy a set of single-use ones that you can throw away. If you're out and about, keep your hands clean and away from your face. Always wash your hands and when a sink isn't available, a quick hand sanitizer rub will kill most bacteria.

What should parents do if their kids get pink eye?

- Consult your doctor about appropriate treatment.
- The safest approach to avoid spreading viral and bacterial conjunctivitis is to let your child stay home until there is no longer any discharge from the eye.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces.
- Change towels and bed covers.
- Teach kids proper hand hygiene.

PHOTOS: PEXELS

SENIA to the Rescue

Resources for Parents and Teachers Working with Differently Abled Children

By Julie Wolf

It's hard enough being an expat parent. Helping your child adjust to a new environment, school, friends, food, etc. is a hefty task under the best circumstances but being an expat with a differently-abled child offers some unique challenges.

The same is true of expat teachers. Navigating the social customs in a foreign school, designing a new curriculum, and figuring out how to function in your day to day life while still providing the best possible resources to your students and families takes on an entirely new layer when you know one of your students requires extra attention and support.

These are not complaints. Parents and teachers do what they do out of love and a desire to give all of our children the best possible life and education. But everyone needs a little help once in a while. That is where SENIA can be an invaluable resource to anyone working with children.

SENIA is a nonprofit Special Education Network and Inclusion Association. It is a global network of educators, professionals, and parents on a mission to advocate, support, and provide resources to differently-abled individuals. There are more than 25 chapters including one here in Beijing. They provide newsletters, specialist listings, events, and networking opportunities.

In addition to the conference, SENIA Beijing has a WeChat group for parents and educators to stay current on resources and happenings as well as find support among like-minded Beijingers. You can find them on WeChat under the group name SENIA-Beijing!

One of the most difficult things about moving a family with a child who requires extra attention is keeping care consistent. It can be difficult to find a specialist at all much less one your child likes. Luckily Beijing is a cosmopolitan city with resources…if you know where to look. Possibly the most beneficial part of the SENIA program for parents is their professional directory. A multi-tab spreadsheet found on their website lists professionals in education, medical and mental health. They list not only their area of expertise and the region of Beijing/hospital they practice in but also the languages they speak and contact information via email. The latest version can be downloaded from the website for easy reference.

As an educator I was curious about the resources available to teachers and Dr. Gerald W. Anthony, Chairmen of the SENIA-Beijing board of directors had this to say about the impressive program. "SENIA-Beijing provides many resources throughout the year to support teachers such as the SENIA Happy-Hour podcasts, book recommendations, and making our community aware of upcoming events, awareness activities, and like-minded local organizations such as the Best Buddies Program.

Our "calling card," however is our annual conferences. This is where we create local conferences for the over four hundred local members to come together to network, exchange ideas and develop as not only a city but as a shared community."

In addition to all of this SENIA also offers award and scholarship programs. If you know of a worthy individual, you can nominate them for the World Changer award for individuals in the community that make a difference in the area of inclusiveness and a Student Award is available that provides a scholarship for a differently-abled student on their website (www.seniainternational.org/beijing/).

PHOTOS: SENIA

ALL SORTED

Families From Different Cultural Backgrounds Discuss Garbage Classification

By Julia Wang, Mina Yan, Grace Zhang

The Kennedys are a true expat family, having lived abroad for 16 years, the last six of which have been spent in Beijing. Mom, Amy, works for the Girl Scouts and dad, David, is an IT manager. Meanwhile, their oldest, Avery, is busy studying at university, and their two younger kids, Claire and Luke, attend Western Academy of Beijing.

How did the whole family learn about garbage classification?
Our housing community introduced the new garbage classification system through notices, and we informed ourselves with the signs put up around the new sorting trash bins.

What do you do for garbage classification at home?
We have a bin for non-recyclables, and we also have a bin for recyclables in our home. We usually use a bowl when we have food waste so we can bring it to the community food waste bin.

What questions did you encounter during the process of garbage classification? Which garbage is the most difficult to sort?
Plastics can be difficult, and food-takeaway containers, as they can't always be recycled if they are contaminated with grease or food residue.

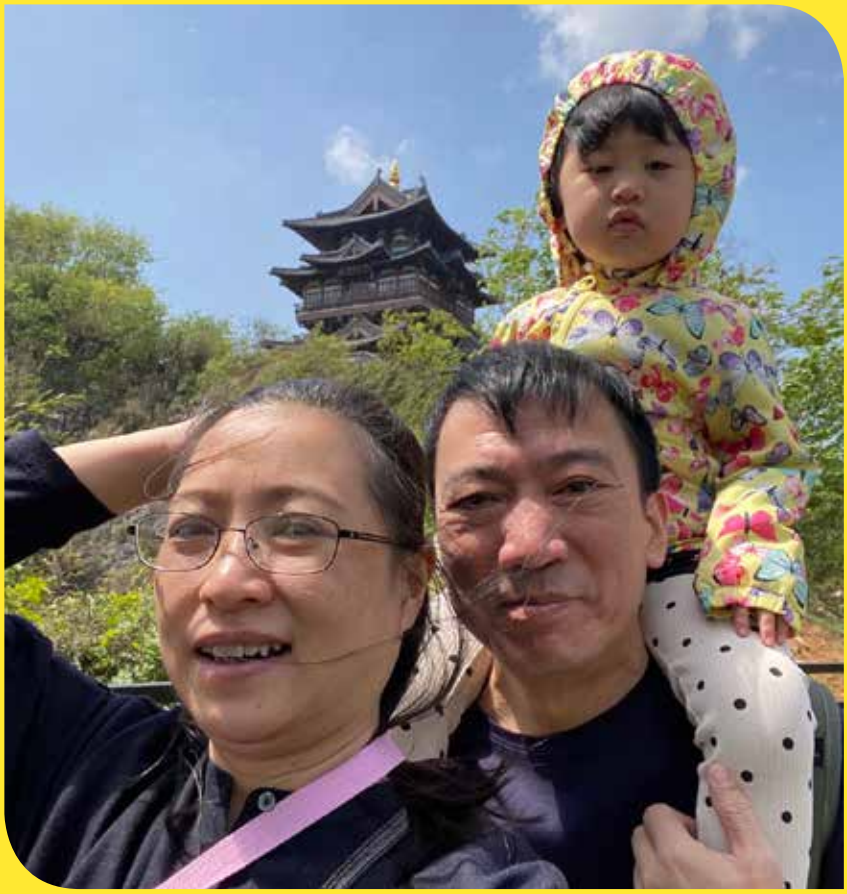
What efforts did the children put into sorting garbage at home?
Our children participate in sorting their garbage within our home system, and they take turns bringing our bins to the community sorting bins when they are filled.

How is the garbage classification done in your own community? What needs to be improved?
It has improved a lot since the implementation of the new sorting system in Beijing – before there were only two bins, residual and recycling. A lot of people still aren't very aware of the system here. There are some areas where the only option for trash is a residual waste bin with no other options. It would be helpful to have the variety of waste bins for sorting in all key areas around the compound.

Will you talk about environmental protection with your children? What do you talk about?
We try to be conscious of teaching them to pick more sustainable options when possible, and not get unnecessary things that will end up being thrown away quickly. We all make an effort to use reusable storage containers instead of plastic bags for packing food, to reduce our non-recyclable waste.

Have you and your children participated in activities that support environmental protection?
My husband and son are involved in Boy Scouts and they participate in trash clean up events. They are going to be planting trees at a camp-out soon to help efforts to reforest areas. We participated in a clothing swap organized through the Girl Scouts a few years ago, and we always donate or pass on outgrown kids' clothes. As a family, we try to incorporate a lot of vegetarian meals into our weekly meals, in an effort to reduce our environmental footprint. We would like to start learning more about household composting. We could definitely always be doing more, but we try our best with the little things.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF CLAIRE KENNEDY



Dad Lixian Zhang is a book editor and publisher who usually likes to read and watch Sci-Fi movies. Mom Lei used to be a teacher and is now a stay-at-home mom. Their daughter Muhe is an outgoing and cheerful girl who likes swimming, outings, listening to music, playing with friends, and also loves to eat big strawberries.

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ZHANG FAMILY

How did the whole family learn about garbage classification?

As parents, we are very concerned about the impact of the environment on our children, and sticking to the environmental protection has always been a required course for family members. In May last year, Beijing began to implement the garbage sorting. We read some articles about it, and watched some short videos about garbage sorting with our daughter to first let her know the different color and logo about garbage bins. Since she is only three years and five months old, she can't fully understand many environmental concept, but it doesn't affect her to remember some simple classification of garbage.

What do you do for garbage classification at home?

We play games to practice garbage sorting, such us putting vegetable leaves, fruit peels, batteries, water bottles and old stuffed toys together, and then sorting them out by kitchen waste, recyclable waste, hazardous waste and other waste, to see who can do it correctly.

Our family uses the sorting method of "two cans and one bag" where two trash cans are used to put kitchen waste and other waste respectively. Recyclable waste and harmful waste are put in plastic bags, and then put into their own trash cans in different categories, which is convenient and also can save space.

What questions did you encounter during the process of garbage classification? Which garbage is the most difficult to sort?

It's true that there are some confusing parts of the garbage sorting process, such as corn cob, bones left over from soup, and nuts. Most of the time we regard them as kitchen waste, but they actually belong to other waste. Then we found a rule: garbage that is not biodegradable in a short period of time belongs to other garbage so it's easier to think about it this way.

Another one hard to sort is used dirty towels. We think towel is recyclable, but if the towels have been contaminated, we need to put them into other waste. There is also a small formula to share with you: those in blue bin can be sold, those in green bin are easily rotted, red bin is toxic and harmful, none of the above belongs to gray bin.

What efforts did the children put into sorting garbage at home?

Muhe became interested in throwing away rubbish when she was very young. She would throw orange peels into the trash can in the kitchen and put the water bottles into the recycling bin while playing in the park. Now she has gotten to know more garbage classification method and she would put useless battery of electric toys into a small box, then we took her to throw the battery into harmful red dustbin until she collected enough batteries. Every time I throw away my mask, she reminds me to fold it inward because "otherwise, the virus will get out."

How is the garbage classification done in your own community? What needs to be improved?

Our community's garbage sorting is very good. There are all kinds of garbage bins line in a row, each bin has small rod for you to open the lid without touch it, which is convenient and clean. If you don't know which bin to throw, there will be an officer ayi to help you sort it, and also introduce some sorting methods.

If there is something to be improved, I think they can post a special notice on the the publicity column in front of the trash can, for those garbage that is easy to be confuse, so that it is clearer at a glance.

Will you talk about environmental protection with your children? What do you talk about?

Muhe is very fond of marine animals, "The Octonauts" is her favorite. She's always wanted to go to the sea for diving and visit the sea friends she's known for a long time like whale sharks, seahorses, jellyfish, hermit crabs, flying fish, walruses, etc.

What we've been talking about recently is the effects of face masks on marine life. According to a report released late last year by Oceans Asia, a marine conservation group, about 1.6 billion face masks will be found in the oceans by 2020, posing an irreversible threat and damage to marine ecology, as a single mask can take up to 450 years to decompose. But it won't go away. The main material for masks is polypropylene, which is a non-degradable plastic. It decomposes but continues to circulate in the human food chain as the form of microplastics, and then it easily finds its way into marine organisms. Most likely, we ate it. Let alone the mask carries a large number of viruses. Fish eat it, we make the fish into our dishes. So I told Muhe not to throw masks, because it will hurt those of your sea friends. Protecting your sea friends is actually protecting ourselves.

SUMMER vs SCHOOL

If They Aren't Studying, Are They Wasting Their Summer?

By Julie Wolf

Parents, gird your loins, it's almost the most dreaded gauntlet of the year…summer vacation! We just got them back to in-person learning and now they are boomeranging back to a couch near you. There are formal options to keep them off the PlayStation, of course. Camp is a long-standing childhood tradition and summer school programs are always debated by the highest achieving tiger moms. Many parents waffle between committing to a structured summer plan that will "guarantee" an Ivy League acceptance letter and a carefree summer of beach picnics and family vacations.

But a summer spent at home doesn't need to be an educational wasteland. Many parents around the world pay a fortune for their kids to spend a summer in a foreign country and enjoy an immersive experience. This could be a great adventure! It will require a little forethought and planning but it's doable and can be one of the most educationally profound experiences your child has; ultimately teaching them a lot about self-directed learning.

All of the suggestions below depend on age and resources. Teens will obviously be more involved in the planning and research phases while younger students might need more direction from you, and simpler, more hands-on projects. But the important part is that you include them in the process and help them make the most of their summer here in China.

PHOTOS: PEXELS

Start with a brainstorming session: What is your child interested in? Make a list of everything they can think of. Outer space, the mystery of the Terra Cotta Warriors, coding, animal conservation, why birds fly, coral reefs, speed reading… There are no wrong answers! Kids are naturally curious so find out what is currently producing wonder and sparking questions for them. I suggest choosing at least one local subject connected to China at large – or more specifically, Beijing – and one broader topic. For our example, let's say we agree to spend the summer learning about outer space and the Terra Cotta Warriors.

Next, research anchor events: Have older students help with this. What are some local activities that could be helpful in learning about these topics? Beijing currently has a space program exhibit at the China Science and Technology Museum. That's a perfect day trip for our space research! Likewise, Xi'an is the home of the Warriors and a short train ride away.

Set goals and pick projects: Let them choose a focal point to work towards. Something that they can point to at the end of the summer and feel a sense of accomplishment.

In our example, let's say they want to learn what makes a rocket fly and help plan the family trip to Xi'an where they can act as an informal tour guide, telling everyone about the Warriors.

Help them make a check list: All projects have smaller steps that lead to achievement. This is an invaluable skill to cultivate, so help them plan their own success. Their list might look something like this.

Rocket Objective: Learn what makes a rocket fly.

- *Go to the library (real or virtual) and check out books;*
- *Look up videos on the topic from reputable sources;*
- *Take a trip to the space museum and conduct research;*
- *Develop a hypothesis and construct an experiment to test it;*
  **Is a balloon powered rocket possible?*
- *Run the experiment and form a conclusion.*

Terra Cotta Warriors Objective: Take the family to visit the famous excavation site.

- *Research the history of the Warriors using books, videos, and social media content so the child can act as the family's guide;*
- *Create a short presentation to educate the family prior to your trip;*
- *Research train times, hotels, museum opening times, and list the costs to help create a budget;*
- *Submit a schedule and itinerary to the family prior to leaving.*

Decide how to document each project: At the end of the summer, you want the kids to have a tangible outcome for the work they did. That can be a written paper, a journal, scrap book, slide show, or short video from the trip – anything that helps them see how much they accomplished.

For example:
Rocket project: Daily scientific journal with notes and photos of the research and experiments.

Xi'an trip: Family slide show of your adventure to send home to extended family so they can enjoy what you did this summer too!

Make a schedule: Create a big calendar your child can look at each day.

The big deadlines first: The trip to Xi'an will happen on [this] day. The experiment will happen on [this] day, and the journal will be presented at a special family dinner on [this] day.

Larger day trips/special events next: Go to the science museum the morning of [this] date and the last day to buy train tickets is on [this] date, etc.

Finally, day-to-day tasks: Block out time for each day leading up to those milestone events. Make sure to leave plenty of time for rest, exercise, and fun. It is summer vacation after all.

A typical day's schedule might look something like this:

8-9am: Wake up, have breakfast, get dressed.
9-10.30am: Research and experiment time! Read, watch, and take notes that move you toward your goal.
10.30-11am: Record my progress on the rocket in your science journal and make a checklist of next steps/what to do tomorrow during your research time.
11am-noon: Get some fresh air. Go for a bike ride or play on the playground.
noon-1pm: Lunch break.
1-2pm: Rest period. Nap, pleasure reading, Lego builds, or any other relaxing activity.
2-4pm: Play date at the pool.
4-6pm: Unstructured play time. TV and video games are okay here but set the amount of screen time you are comfortable with in advance.
6pm: Family dinner.
8pm: Bedtime.

Obviously, be flexible. The point of this experience is to help kids learn the importance of balancing work and play. Life shifts and the schedule shifts with it. But having a guideline will help stave off the dreaded, "There is nothing to doooooo, I'm booooored!" and allow kids to learn how to structure their own time effectively.

Check in and follow up: There are no grades here. The objective is to have the child love the process of learning and see the growth that results from their efforts. You will need to check in by asking simple questions, offering appreciation, encouragement, and advice as needed.

- *What have you learned?*
- *I didn't know that!*
- *That's so interesting!*
- *What feels like a challenge?*
- *How can we solve that przoblem?*
- *Do you need some help/What can I do to assist you?*

are all excellent soft check ins so it doesn't feel like you are nagging them to do their homework.

Don't be shocked if your child goes off on tangents. It's not uncommon for their research to lead to something else that fascinates them. In fact, that's a great thing! It means they are enjoying the process. If that happens support the exploration but gently remind them to finish what they started. "It's amazing that Mars is similar to Earth in so many ways. Let's make a note of some books and resources we can come back to after you finish the rocket project!"

At the end of the summer, if the rocket doesn't fly or the Warriors were a bit of a disappointment, it's totally okay. Your child should feel that they learned something valuable and be proud of their work. To paraphrase John Henry Newman, the quest for knowledge is its own reward.

Camp Separation Anxiety

School Drop Off Was Fine, So Why the Sudden Clinging?

By Julie Wolf

Sure, when they first started school there were a few tears (for both of you), but now your little one happily skips into class every day with barely a backward glance and is full of exciting stories about the day's adventures when you pick them up. So why is it that all of a sudden, camp is causing separation anxiety?

The simple truth? Camp can be scary. Especially for young children, the change in routine, coupled with a new environment, teachers, and friends can be overwhelming. And whether they are acclimated in Beijing or brand new, one more change could be all it takes to cause anxiety. So even for the most confident expat child, separation anxiety can rear its ugly head. But there are a few simple things you can do to help your child relax and move past this phase, all but assuring that they have a positive, happy camp experience, and you can have a few guilt-free summer hours to enjoy some quiet time in Beijing.

- *Talk excitedly about camp:* A few weeks ahead of the camp's start date, talk about all the fun things they are going to do. Show them pictures online. If you can get photos of the counselors and their names beforehand, even better. Many of the camps profiled in this magazine are easily found on WeChat. Set the expectation that camp is really fun and you are excited for them to go.

- *Elicit their feelings:* Pose questions to them such as, "How are you feeling about camp?" once in a while. A quick check-in will give them an opportunity to share and will let you know if you need additional tools to combat anxiety or if they are in a good place. Try and avoid statements like, "I know you will be nervous..." as that can implant the idea that they should be nervous.

- *Countdown calendar:* The week before camp, have them cross off the days on the calendar before bed. When children know what is coming, they feel more secure and have time to process their feelings. It also gives them a chance to build some positive anticipation.

- *Books to read:* I suggest two books to add to the pre-camp reading list if your child is struggling with separation: *Llama, Llama Misses Mama* by Anna Dewdney, and *The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn. Young children can relate to the stories and it will give you an easy way to help them play out the sequence of events that are drop-off, camp, and pick-up. Just knowing there will be a reunion at the end of the day can help our littlest ones enjoy camp more.

- *Small replaceable tokens:* If a child is very nervous, give them a small token: something replaceable and of no monetary value, that they can easily keep in their pocket. Try and avoid bulky toys or items with a lot of sentimental value. If the blanket that Great-Grandma knitted gets lost or has paint spilled on it, you won't be happy.

  Believe it or not, the most effective token I ever saw was a parent's business card. Each day at drop-off, the dad would hand his son his business card and the child would slip it into his pocket. If he got nervous or missed his dad during the day, he would take out the card, give it a kiss, and put it back into his pocket. It was a simple reminder that his parents loved him and were coming back.

- *Drop-off ritual:* Decide on one ahead of time and tell your child what will happen. "I will take you to the door, you will give me a hug and a kiss. Then you will high-five your counselor and go inside." Keep goodbyes short. The longer you drag it out the longer they will stay in this sad moment instead of moving on to the fun times at camp. No matter how much they ask for one more hug, another drink of water, or any other tear-at-your-heart tactic they can come up with, simply give them a hug and a kiss and go.

Know that there will be some days that are harder to separate than others, and that's normal. Be consistent and as your child becomes more comfortable, the good days will outweigh the bad. There is no timeline. It could happen immediately, or it might take several weeks to have a tear-free goodbye, but it will happen. Final thought, it's camp and it's supposed to be fun. So, if this seems like too much for your child, don't push. There will be other summers for structured play and they can spend this one with you or *ayi* happily exploring this amazing city.

PHOTOS: UNSPLASH

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Are Summer Camps a Must Do?

Let's See if They're Really Worth the Money!

By Julie Wolf

For many families, camp is a rite of passage. Some go to the same overnight camp generation after generation while others enjoy sampling different options. And some simply avoid camps altogether. They might prefer to spend the summers traveling as a family or think summer school is a better use of their child's time and the family's resources.

Either way, many families want their child to have a camp experience but wonder if it is really worth the cost. When asked my opinion by anxious parents I usually respond with, "Well that depends, what do you as a family want to get out of camp?" Below are my suggestions depending on the answers.

"We want them to have a good time... just not in our house:" Hey! No judgment here! School is out, mom and dad need to work, and a full-time nanny is not an option. A good general day camp with lots of activity options is a great choice. Just make sure you do your due diligence. Many camps will hire teenagers to lead classes or worse, hire them as unpaid interns and put them in charge of a group of kids. Even the most responsible 16-year-old is still only 16! So, ensure that there is a qualified adult (or preferably adults) in charge of each group and that you are comfortable with the ratios.

"We want them to avoid the summer slide:" For those who aren't familiar with the term, "summer slide" is a well-documented phenomenon by which kids spend all summer playing and return to school in September having forgotten most of what they learned the previous year. A good STEAM camp can be a fun answer to this problem. A camp like this should be run by educators who know how to use the arts to make science and math approachable and fun. In educational circles, these are often referred to as arts integration specialists. The fun factor is really important on this one. Make sure your kids won't be sitting in lectures all day, that's just summer school by another name and most kids will hate it. Instead, look for project-based learning lead by competent teachers.

"They want to learn X:" If your child has a specific interest – theatre or space travel, for example – zero in on a specialty program. Look for a camp that is as hands-on as possible and run by people who are experts in their field. For instance, a good theatre camp will have people who were or are working actors, directors, and playwrights but are also educators. The best option will have the children actively creating a play from start to finish (although it may or may not culminate in a performance). Your student should have a hand in every step of the process, from writing and costumes to acting and directing. Be warned though, these will be the costliest if they are any good. Experts and specialized products like lights and stage make-up are heavy budget line items that the camp needs to pass on to stay in business.

"We want them to gain some independence:" For the right child overnight or stay away camps are great. I particularly think these are worth the cost when combined with a specialty program from above. An emotionally prepared child will do really well in an immersive environment where they are distracted from the normal nerves of being away from home by learning about something they love. However, for a child who is not ready, overnight camps can be awful. If your child is not ready to be away from you long-term in a strange place don't push it. College will come soon enough. If that's the case, start with a day camp and arrange a sleep-over or two this summer.

A note on cost: You get what you pay for. Camps are expensive because the underlying costs of operating one are expensive, and the camp only has so much time to recoup the investment. Renting a safe space in a convenient location for a short-term day camp isn't cheap. Good, knowledgeable staff don't work for free, and even basic supplies like playdough and construction paper cost money. If your child is fed lunch or snacks the camp probably had to contract with a caterer, not to mention needing a license, insurance, and support staff to run the desk, answer phones, and do the massive amount of paperwork required to keep your child safe and the camp following government safety protocols.

It compounds with sleepaway camps. They pay rent and maintenance on the property and facilities, plus salary for a skeleton staff all year but can only charge for three or four months' worth of services each season.

So, if a camp's per week price is drastically lower than its competitors, ask yourself where they are cutting corners. When was the last time the pool or the zip line were properly inspected and cleaned? How well is the staff trained? Is the food safe and nutritious?

I know family budgets are tight, but your child's safety is not the place to cut corners. Don't pay more than is necessary, but I strongly advise against bargain-basement deals as well.

PHOTOS: PEXELS

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The family's favorite place to eat is Jazz-ya. The restaurant has so much variety that the first time they went, it took them 20 minutes just to narrow down what they wanted to try. For a span of about two years, they would go almost every weekend... until they moved to another area in Beijing.

Dad's favorite thing about mom is her dedication and determination to provide a great upbringing for Emily, and of course, her delicious home-cooked meals.

Emily's favorite thing about living in Beijing is the food! There's just an endless amount of variety and good food to try. They have a running joke in the family that even though Emily is Swedish by blood, her appetite will forever and always be authentically Chinese.

Mom's favorite thing about Emily is that she knows what she wants out of life and will do everything in her power to achieve her dreams – even if it means sacrificing short-term happiness for long-term success.

Mom's favorite thing about dad is his dedication to the family and how he wholeheartedly supports her passions and is her biggest cheerleader.

Three words to describe the Hellqvist family: supportive, comical, loving.

Family Favorites!

Photography: Provided by the Hellqvist family

The Hellqvist family is multicultural to the core. Dad, Niclas, is a Swedish Viking, mom Angela is a subdued Chinese Tiger Mom, and their 16-year-old daughter Emily grew up in Beijing, and is currently a student at the French International School of Beijing (LFIP) with plans to return to the US this fall. The Hellqvist family treats each other as equals, so the family dynamic often feels akin to living with siblings or best friends. They love to joke around and they never back down from a little friendly competition.

The family's favorite thing to do together is travel and eat good food. Almost every pre-Covid vacation that was longer than a week was spent overseas in different countries eating authentic traditional foods. Simply put, they're a family of adventurous foodies.

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