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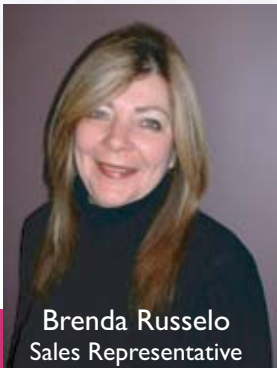
INSIDE:

CK's Most Adorable  
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Contest is BACK!





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# Welcome to the 2014 Fall Issue of **CK Child!**

CK Child is a hip, local parenting magazine for those raising their children in Chatham-Kent. Our goal is to unite our community by offering various viewpoints on topics relating to all stages of parenthood.

CK Child also highlights the many, valuable locally run businesses in our region & local family-friendly events occurring in C-K. Be sure to check out our new website too at [www.ckchild.ca](http://www.ckchild.ca)

## Letter from the Editor



Photo by  
Fairytale Photography

*Here we are, starting another new school year. It's amazing to me that my little girl is starting grade 4. Yikes! But I must say that, even though time seems to pass by far too quickly, I am so very proud of the person Chloe is turning into. She is loving and thoughtful and beautiful inside and out. So it makes me think, that even through all the Mom guilt (that seems to be never ending), I must be doing something right!*

*I am very excited to announce the newest CK's Most Adorable Munchkins Cover Photo Contest! I've had parents asking me to run another one for a while now, so I thought why not! So get those cameras out and get your creative juices flowing - the winning photo will be featured on the 2015 Spring issue. Can't wait to see what you all come up with!*

*Tammy*  
Tammy Chouinard  
Owner & Editor

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Please Note: Articles within CK Child Parenting Magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor.

CK Child is an independent publication created by a parent for the parent and caregivers of Chatham-Kent.



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The cover of this issue of CK Child was photographed by Cindy Ewing Photography

Our super cute models are siblings, Paisley and Corson.



*The years you spend with your family and friends, seem to go by a lot faster than expected. Photographer, Cindy Ewing has been professionally trained to capture the special memories you share with the people you love and has evolved over the years with her experience.*

**For more information and to see more of her work, visit her website at: [www.cewingsphoto.com](http://www.cewingsphoto.com)**

## *How Much is that Doggy in the Window?*



Choosing the perfect pet can be a confusing experience. What breed or physical attributes to select, how much to spend, how to determine if your new pet will be healthy?

As a veterinarian I receive these questions a lot, from friends. But in my clinic I'm generally seeing owners with the new pet once they've already tackled these tough decisions. Sometimes these new

pet parents 'confess' they based their decision on impulse or something that was perhaps not the best logic.

Regardless of how you choose your pet, they become a part of your family for the rest of their life! And there is no right or wrong way to choose a pet. Or foolproof!

Depending on your preference and expectations there are certain sources for pets that will better meet your needs. Some of the different options include:

### **BREEDERS**

Pets from breeders are intended to have predictable physical and personality traits. Different types of breeders have different goals.

The goal of some breeders is to maximize profit by producing as many babies as possible, (on a large scale this might be a puppy mill). When profit is the goal, health and welfare of pets may not be optimum.

Some individuals breed their pet (unintentionally or on purpose) because they feel they have a great pet, one who would make nice babies and benefit from the experience. Typically these pets are well cared for, but the breeders may not be very knowledgeable. Mate selection is typically not based on a pedigree (family tree). Pets are unlikely to have genetic disease screening and without a pedigree the physical, health and behavioral traits of the babies may be not be predictable. These breeders are often referred to as back-yard breeders.

Designer breed breeders intentionally produce mix breed puppies or kittens, by selecting parents with traits that would be 'improved' upon by mixing with the other breed. Several common examples are cockapoos (poodle x cocker spaniel), labradoodles (poodle x Labrador retriever) and puggles (pug x beagle). The idea that pets will be healthier than purebreds and still have predictable appearance is not always the case. These pups may come with a big price tag, but not necessarily genetic testing or pedigrees.

Pedigree breeders have litters with the intention of keeping the breed 'true' and improving upon it. Breeders may focus on improving performance (for example hunting dogs or sled dogs),

conformation (appearance), and minimizing genetically linked diseases. They rely on expertise, knowledge of the breed, and the pedigree (family tree) to choose parents. Their babies are often registered with a breed club (Canadian kennel club etc), and the parents have often obtained championship titles.

### **RESCUE**

Many non-profit organizations exist that rescue unwanted pets. Some, like the OSPCA (Ontario Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), are provincially mandated and investigate crimes against animals, in addition to rescue and adoption services. There are numerous private rescue groups, some that focus on a particular breed, like Bassett Hound Rescue of Ontario, or geographic area, like CK Animal Rescue. Rescuing a pet can be very rewarding, especially when getting an older pet is desirable. But sometimes health and behavioral concerns can accompany these guys.

### **RETAIL**

Some pet stores still sell puppies and kittens. There is general distaste for this among the public as the source of the pets are often not known and suspected to be puppy mills. Also many of these pet purchases are impulsive and accompanied by buyer's remorse! – who can resist a puppy in a cage?!! Although I know many sweet, healthy pets that were pur-

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**Ella Minnow Pea**

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UPPER LEVEL INSIDE DOWNTOWN CHATHAM CENTRE



by Emily Durbin BSc, DVM

chased at pet stores it is important to clarify they are not a rescue! Some non-profit organizations will work cooperatively with retail pet stores to show case their pets available for adoption. But this is very different than purchasing a pet from a pet store.

Before you pick out your pet, some important decisions to make include:

- Do you have a preference for baby, young adult or mature pet?
- How much time can you dedicate to grooming, exercise and training?
- Is there a particular appearance or personality you are looking for?
- What sort of activities do you envision doing with your pet?

These questions can help you narrow down the breed of dog/cat that would make a good fit for your lifestyle. Try to meet some pets belonging to that breed if possible. Take a list of questions to rescue group or breeder and be prepared to interview and be interviewed. It is a good sign if they are more interested in how you will care for the pet than how you will pay for the pet! Some helpful websites to reference are the Canadian Kennel Club [www.ckc.ca](http://www.ckc.ca), and the Canadian Cat Association [www.cca-afc.com](http://www.cca-afc.com). An easy web search will generate a list of questions to ask breeder or rescue group, based on breed.

Book a pre-purchase appointment with your veterinarian. These appointments should involve the whole family, prior to getting the pet. Not only is your veterinarian an expert on pet health and behavior, but they see first hand everyday the benefits of matching the ideal pet and owner, and some easy pitfalls to avoid when selecting a pet.

Every different source has its own pros and cons. I have had great experiences getting my own pets from a variety of places, humane society, private rescue and pedigree breeder. The best source really depends on your expectations and criteria for a pet. Make sure you ask lots of questions. Ask to meet other pets on site, not just the one for sale. Get references for people that have gotten pets from the same place to hear about their experiences. Trrrry to not be impulsive. It's so hard to set down that adorable puppy, that is licking your nose, but be sure you're making a decision on a pet that will fit your lifestyle before caving in! Most importantly trust your gut! If you get a creepy feeling about a situation, walk away!

*Dr Emily and her husband, Tony, moved from Saskatchewan to Chatham-Kent in 2003. Dr Emily recalls, "I moved here to be part of a fantastic team, at this exciting progressive veterinary hospital. And now we love it here! The people are friendly and have small town values. It means a lot to be able to raise my children in a place they can benefit from both rural and urban community".*

**Nancy Matteis**  
Star Director  
519-351-7523  
[senseofsmell27@yahoo.com](mailto:senseofsmell27@yahoo.com)  
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## *Does Coffee Come in Bucket Size?* SOME THINGS ARE WORTH DRIVING FOR



My brother has been calling me every weekend since summer started. The conversations go something like this:

Brother: You gotta get Kiddo #2 on skates this fall.

Me: Ok.

Brother: No, I mean, you gotta do it. Look at him. He's gonna be 6 foot 7 and 260 pounds of muscle. If he learns to skate, he'll write his ticket to the NHL.

Me: Ok.

Brother: No, you gotta get him on skates.

Me: I feel like you can't hear me.

This, by the way, is a pretty typical conversation—I agree with everything he says and he still feels the need to pitch it to me. Brothers! Ha. Then, because I clearly needed more convincing, he followed up with:

Brother: The Mites program where I live is amazing. I mean, really amazing.

Me: Ok.

Brother: I think you should put him in up here.

Me: Ok.

Brother: No, I mean, just sign him up. I'll come out and do the one-on-one with him.

Me: Ok.

Brother: No, like, I'll do it. I've stepped back from the Mites program this year, but I'd come out for Kiddo #2.

Me: Ok

(see? Totes typical.)

The only caveat was pitching it to Captain Fiscal Responsibility, AKA Awesome Husband. While I was on board, I wasn't sure it was going to be an easy sell to drive an hour to where my brother lives, just for Kiddo #2 to learn to skate; it's not like we don't have 5 arenas offering the same lessons, just without my brother. The gas alone would be reason enough to say nay. The hours of driving on the weekend, plus the cost of getting equipment... You see where the logic leads here, yes?

So I approached Husband while he was eating (which is the best time to convince him of things).

Me: Hey, so my Brother wants to teach Kiddo #2 how to skate.

Husband: Ok.

Me: Well, like, in the Mites program in Brother's town.

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by *Elizabeth Sunnen*

Husband: Ok.

Me: Well, I think it'd be great for Kiddo #2.

Husband: Ok.

Me: Seriously, how cool would it be for Kiddo #2 to learn to skate from his uncle?

Husband: I said OK. Let's do it.

I signed us up online, paid the 4.5 billion dollars for the various fees and equipment (holy geez, seriously!?) and off we drove to the first session this Sunday.

Kiddo #2 was super stoked to get on the ice with his hockey gear and learn to skate with his Uncle. So excited, in fact, that he talked non-stop about the cool things he was gonna do once he got his gear on. For an hour. All the way to the small town where my brother lives, we heard about how my son is going to "shoot pucks and get scores" and "use his green stick" and "go really fast" ... I won't go on because while it was super cute and endearing for us, I'm sure you're gagging at the sucralose.

Off Husband and Kiddo #2 went to the dressing room while Kiddo #1 and I hung out in the lobby (mostly because we didn't bring our portable space heaters and arctic winter jackets to the arena today). And the most amazing things happened...

First off, Kiddo #2 spent 90% of the skate time crying.

And wailing.

And refusing to move.

And turtling on the ice from falling down.

And refusing to get up.

And refusing to roll over.

And using his extra-long tongue to try to keep the salty snot from dripping off his chin.

We didn't find out that last part until afterwards though, or I might have puked all over the arena. In all honesty, the only thing Kiddo #2 DID do was listen. He listened to every word Uncle Brother said; he flat out refused to do any of it, but he listened.

Secondly, while Kiddo #2 was doing all that, there was my brother, with the patience of Job, coaching him. He was literally on the ice on his belly, showing Kiddo #2 that it's ok to fall. And he was literally on his back, showing Kiddo #2 how to get up. He skated away with his back to Kiddo #2 to see if that might motivate my stubborn son to take a step or two closer just so Uncle Brother could hear him flat out refuse to skate. And every parent around me went on and on about how lucky that kid was that was working with my brother.

It would've been sickening if I wasn't so dang proud.

I mean, we knew why we'd driven the hour there and back to have my brother teach Baby Thor how to skate, but man was it cool to hear the other parents saying the exact same things. I

stopped counting how many times I heard "Oh! There's Coach! He's so excellent with the kids!" "He's the best!" "He doesn't care how he looks, he just wants the kids to learn to skate and be happy." "He taught my eldest and middle child. I hope my youngest gets him, too."

It was like having Brad Pitt as your brother, and you know Brad Pitt's brother goes around saying "Yeah, Brad Pitt is my brother."

So, I'd say, "Oh, yes, he's my brother." And the compliments would start pouring out like a fire hose. "He's here for the kids," "He's not interested in politics," and "He's so patient and gets the kids to do stuff that no one else can do."

It would've been sickening if I wasn't so dang proud.

When the session was done, Uncle Brother (which sounds like a toothless banjo player should be playing every time it's said, but you know what I mean) brought Kiddo #2 off the ice and he and Husband hit the change room.

And when the trio emerged, Uncle Brother was high-fiving my son, my son was giggling and having a great time. My husband was smiling... it was like an 80's gum commercial without the blonde twins on bikes.

Like, really? Was this the bawling, snot-faced kid who went in? Miracle of miracles, here was my son loving life, bragging about how hard Hockey is but that he'd been skating and a good listener and that next week he's surely gonna "get some scores" with his green stick. "Momma, my uncle is AWESOME!" he shouted.

It would've been sickening if I wasn't so dang proud.

*Elizabeth is a teacher and writer who takes motherhood one laugh at a time. She grew up in C-K and is thrilled to be back in such a great community. For more great reading, check out her blog at [www.DoesCoffeeComeinBucketSize.blogspot.com](http://www.DoesCoffeeComeinBucketSize.blogspot.com)*





*It's Back!*

## *CK's Most Adorable Munchkins Photo Contest*



### **THINK YOUR CHILD IS A COVER STAR?**

Starting October 8th, we are running our fourth Cover Photo Contest starting this FALL and we want to see all of CK's adorable munchkins! We will be running our contest on Facebook again and cannot wait to see your entries.

Haven't 'liked' our page yet? Well do that now! We will post more details on our contest, give you tips on what we will be looking for, ideas for shooting a Spring cover when the weather is cold and be the first to hear about the latest details on our newest contest. It's going to be the best one ever and more prize details will be released this Fall!

So get your cameras out and your munchkins ready - they could be the face on our 2014/2015 Spring cover!



**STEP 1** October 6th, 2014 @ Noon (12pm): Official Launch! Enter your munchkin(s) by filling out our Entry Form on our website. Enter online or print out a form (from our Facebook group) and mail it in!

**STEP 2** October 27th, 2014 @ 11:59pm: Entry Deadline

**STEP 3** October 28th @ Noon (12pm), 2014: All Entries are showcased on our Facebook Group and voting begins! Encourage all your family & friends to vote by commenting 'VOTE' under your Munchkin's photo or by mailing in a ballot (which can be downloaded via our Facebook group).

**STEP 4** November 14th @ 11:59pm: Voting Closes

**STEP 5** First week in December: TOP 30 REVEALED in the 2014/2015 Winter issue of CK Child! The 30 entries that receive the most votes will be announced as our TOP 30 and will be featured in the centre spread of this Winter issue.

The Top 30 Munchkins will also later be showcased on our CK's Most Adorable Munchkins Facebook Group. We know that December is a busy month so we will be laying low for this month and having a couple giveaways for those participating (entrants, voters, etc). Entrants can now

**STEP 6** HAPPY NEW YEAR!! Starting January 5th we will be opening up comments for anyone who wants to support the TOP 30 Munchkins.

The judges on our Judging panel will decide from the 30 Munchkins chosen by our Facebook viewers who the Grand Prize Winner will be! But for now, our viewers have the chance to convince our judges which entries should now moved into the TOP 10. Viewers can now post on Facebook why they feel their favourite entry should make it into the finals!

**STEP 7** February 2nd @ midnight: Comments are now closed

**STEP 8** February 9th @ noon: The TOP 10 is revealed ONLINE (Facebook). Comments are once again opened

**STEP 9** WINNER REVEALED! The Grand Prize winner will have their photo featured on the cover of the Spring 2013 issue of CK Child which will be available at the beginning of March! Our runners up will also be revealed in the inside spread of this issue.



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## *The Kids are Alright:* LADIES WHO (MAKE) LUNCH

by Karen Green



One down, 200-and-something to go.

That was my thought last night as I assembled the first school lunches of the year, with the help of not one, but two eager, picky participants.

"I want cucumbers," said my six-year-old. Awesome. Cucumbers, coming up. "NOT LIKE THAT," she screamed as I cut the cuke into rounds. Apparently, she was expecting spears.

"I would like a wrap, please," my polite nine-year-old said. And so I started rolling.

"Is there cheese?"

"Yes."

"Havarti or cheddar?"

"Havarti."

"I only like cheddar."

Last year, she only liked Havarti, but I guess I missed whatever imperceptible shiver of a butterfly's wing made her change her entire outlook on cheese. So I sighed, fed my husband an unexpected snack for which he was entirely more grateful than my children, and went back to lunch preparation. Actually, I missed a step. First I poured myself a glass of wine.

Now, before you roll your eyes and tell me that my six- and nine-year-olds are certainly old enough and capable enough to make their own lunches, let me set the record straight: I agree.

But take away the first eve-of-school micromanaging, and man - it's just so much easier, faster, and cleaner if I make the lunches myself. With five years of school-lunch-making behind me, I have lunch-making down to a science. An art. I am a school-lunch-making boss. I have tricks and rules and go-to's and my process starts long before school does.

To whit: I begin planning lunches long before school starts. I begin with equipment that makes life better, like lunch kits that open, close, and clean up easily (we use Planet Box kits); water bottles that can't be broken, bitten or chipped without a greater effort than my kids are willing to put into wrecking stuff, and a list of approved foods that my kids and I assemble on a pre-school reconnaissance trip to the grocery store. Grapes? Check. Carrots? Check. Celery sticks? Negatory. Turkey breast? Yes from one, no from the other. I start a second column.

Then we look online for school lunch ideas (check out my School Lunch Pinterest board at [www.pinterest.com/karen-greeners](http://www.pinterest.com/karen-greeners)) like wraps, dips, muffins, etc. and then I tack up the entire list of approved items in a clear and visible location so that I can refer back to it whenever my kids say they didn't like

something I put in their lunch. Like Havarti cheese. Which is not on the list. My bad.

Then, for my own sanity, I make lunches at night (usually after the kids are in bed because I prefer not to work under a dictatorship), and I even include a little note, something simple like a joke or an I \*heart\* you with a sticker or something, but I mainly do this to justify the fact that I do not work outside of the home.

And then I wait for the lunches to come back half-eaten anyway, because they didn't have enough time, or they got a special treat due to so-and-so's birthday, or they just like to see me weep.

Regardless, with this system in place, I do enjoy having a few more precious moments available in the mornings so that I can take care of the truly important things, like drinking coffee and checking Twitter. But like the skilled opportunists they are, my children will sense my moment of downtime, and pounce.

"So mum, if you're not busy with making lunches, think you can make my bed?"

I laugh and take another sip my coffee.

*Karen Green is a mother, freelance writer, and Toronto ex-pat. She has been blogging at [www.karengreen.ca](http://www.karengreen.ca) since 2006, and is a writer for Bell's TheLoop.ca. She is the former parenting columnist for Canadian Family magazine, and her writing has been featured in Canadian Living, Today's Parent, and many other online and print venues. Karen's first two books for early readers were released in February 2013.*

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## *Dad Around Town:* PINT-SIZED PICKERS - FAMILY FUN AT PARKS BLUEBERRY FARM



"I am a blueberry-picking-machine," Ethan, my four-year-old, announced at the breakfast table, as we planned a family trip to Parks Blueberries in Bothwell to turn some blueberry picking farm work into a bit of fun for Ethan and his three-year-old brother, Jonah.

"That means," Ethan continues, "I can eat blueberries while I pick them." I expect that's frowned upon by the owners, but we liked his enthusiasm and would only allow the occasional

taste test to maintain quality control. On the 20-minute drive from Chatham, we reminded him we were going to the farm to bring blueberries home as a takeaway option, not eat as we picked for an on-farm dining experience.

"But I'm a blueberry-picking-machine," he repeated.

At least with this attitude we were hopeful that his productivity would be plentiful. To gauge that productivity, once we arrived at the welcome station on the farm, each of us were handed a bucket to collect and weigh our yield. The staff let

us taste samples of the six different varieties currently in bloom – Northland, Bluecrop, Nelson, Reka, Duke, and Legacy. Some were sweeter, some a bit larger, some tarter. We were told the sweetness of the Northland would convert any picky fruit eater. This was helpful because we were in the market for a remedy to appease a picky eater. Jonah has a poor track record with liking many fruits.


We decided to try Northlands first, hoping to get a good selection for Jonah. Getting children involved in their food choices, by planting backyard gardens or cooking meals together, helps them be more receptive to a wider selection of food. We were hoping that harvesting our own supply of blueberries might have this effect on Jonah.

The blueberry fields cover 50 acres and a tractor-pulled wagon delivered us over bumpy fields to the Northland section. Overhead were swathes of netting, fifteen feet off the ground, covering all the blueberry acreage. The ceiling nets overhead and the mesh walls around the perimeter of the fields were put up when the berries start to appear in June to keep out birds that would help themselves.

We puttered along the fields past endless rows of tiny blue specks as far as the eye could see. Some of the bushes were chock full of berries; more than I've ever seen in my family excursions to Algonquin Park where I first encountered the blueberries that grow wild in the Canadian wilderness. With these larger domestic bunches, it was best to cup your hand underneath, wiggle your fingers like you're tickling the underside of the berries, and sprinkle them into your open palm. They just tumble into your hand in piles. Our boys were more adept at picking the berries one by one, but even with this slower approach they were wildly entertained by dropping the berries in their buckets.

We kept checking if Jonah had tried any as he was picking, but his usual response was, "I can't." Translation being that he is persistent in refusing to try new fruit. We certainly wanted Jonah to like them, given the nutritional stature of such a small fruit, but only time will tell. They are a powerhouse fruit with higher levels of disease-fighting antioxidants than any other fruit. Even though Jonah was adamant in his refusal to eat them, he was overly exuberant about picking them. I thought it might seem daunting, those diminutive fruits having to fill a bucket to feel like you've gathered anything that will be worthwhile later. But for our pint-sized pickers, it was a task they didn't seem to tire of for many hours. Even though Ethan was calling it work, it seemed to be fun work for the time being.

But the few hours we spent is nothing compared to nearly 40 years the Parks family has been farming this 70 acre farm when Bill and Diane Parks first planted the blueberries in 1978. They discovered early in their farming career that part of their land had very acidic soil not suited for many types of cash crops, but




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★ I'm a Chatham Super Kid! ★



by *Darin Cook*

blueberries would thrive in such conditions. The U-pick side of the business was introduced in 1983 and can be enjoyed by locals for the entire blueberry season from early July to September, with different varieties appearing during different times of the summer.

The farm is also home to a country store and café, which is filled with blueberry baked goods of all sorts: scones, muffins, Danishes, turnovers, waffles, pancakes, coffee cakes, and award-winning pies. But it doesn't stop at that. This café has blueberry everything! There are jams, smoothies, salad dressings, teas, blueberry-infused maple syrup, and blueberry chicken salad sandwiches. It's a little bit of heaven for bakers, not only with fresh and frozen berries and pie crusts, but also blueberry-covered oven mitts, coffee mugs, and tea towels.

Given their expertise in the world of blueberries for almost forty years, the Parks family has been sharing recipes in an annual brochure. There is also Mrs. Parks' Blueberry Cookbook, co-authored by Diane Parks and her daughter Holly Ford, with over 200 blueberry-themed recipes for preserves, marmalades,

cheesecakes, tiramisu, sorbets, margaritas, juices, smoothies, waffles, granola bars, and trail mix. There are even a few non-culinary beauty products using natural ingredients, such as Blueberry Facial Scrub.

Blueberries picked by the staff are available fresh or frozen, with prices in the store being approximately \$5 per litre. This is double the price of those picked by your own hands, meaning the extra work is fun and profitable at the same time. At the weigh station, we ended up with 9.08 pounds, costing \$23.00. Back at home, these two buckets amounted to a pancake breakfast, one big delicious pie, and endless handfuls on yoghurt and ice cream. Not to mention the occasional sweet burst in our mouths every time we passed the bowl on the kitchen counter for the next few days. For most of us, that is; Jonah is still to this day on his blueberry moratorium.

*Darin is a freelance writer who works and plays in Chatham-Kent, and is becoming a Dad around town by taking in children's entertainment and family-oriented attractions with his wife, Jennifer, and their sons, Ethan and Jonah. Share in more of his experiences at [www.darincook.ca](http://www.darincook.ca)*



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## **PURE** *Perspective:* TURN TO THE ARTS TO BOOST SELF-ESTEEM



As parents, you do everything to help your child navigate through the ups and downs of childhood and survive with self-esteem. You praise his every accomplishment. "You tied your shoe!" "You finished that book!" "You made your bed!" You encourage him to make friends with other children who support him and have similar interests. You probably even sign him up for after-school activities to keep him physically active. You

might register him for music or dance lessons and listen to endless recitations of his part in the school's play. And all of this is great—essential, even.

But did you know that activities, especially arts-related activities, are important for so much more than just keeping your child busy? They've been proven to boost a child's self-image.

Whether in an individual setting or as part of a group, arts education improves a child's confidence. For example, studies have shown that when children participate in art activities with peers, the feedback they give to each other builds self-respect by helping them learn to accept criticism and praise from others. And that's not the only way it can improve self-esteem, though. Here are five other ways the arts help your child on the road to a better sense of self.

The arts instill pride. When your child puts his heart and soul into an art project—and spends hours working on it, cultivating it, and making it beautiful—he'll feel an enormous sense of accomplishment when it's complete. "The arts are a great leveler, as we are all in the same boat, learning to create and succeed in new and unexpected ways," says Dory Kanter, an educational consultant and arts/literacy curriculum writer and teaching trainer. "Children not only become appreciators of each other's work, but also develop skills of self-reflection in the effort to bring their personal vision to fruition."

The arts help your child develop real-life skills. Depending on the specific arts activity your child chooses to become involved in—whether it's music, drawing, acting, or dance—he's sure to learn important real-world skills including critical and creative thinking, hand-eye coordination, motor skills, and social skills like taking turns, sharing, and negotiating. "In my experience, students make a personal connection to a subject through the arts, and as a result, they deepen their thinking through a creative response," says Kanter. "In addition, students learn persistence and higher level thinking through creative problem solving when given the opportunity to spend time creating a completed, invested work of art."

The arts lead to higher test scores in the classroom. Self-esteem increases when a child feels confident in the classroom. Skills learned from studying the arts including concentration and dedication, affects classroom values and test scores. In fact, a

2005 Harris Poll found that 93 percent of Americans agreed the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children. In another 2009 study, 12 years of data was collected for the National Educational Longitudinal Survey to look at the effect of education, visual, and performing arts on the achievement and values of children. The study found that students who were highly involved with the arts outperformed less-involved peers, even within low socioeconomic groups. Music, in particular, helps provide children with improved classroom skills, including critical thinking, creative problem solving, team work, and effective communication.

The arts increase opportunities for self-expression. Another benefit of arts education is giving children a way to express themselves, especially in a classroom setting. When students are working towards a common goal, they appreciate that their "voice" and interests are heard and understood by others. This joint effort creates a sense of secure acceptance that is critical to their self-esteem.

The arts increase an individual's sense of belonging or attachment to a community. Community art programs help introduce your child to new people and experiences. This attachment encourages your child to engage in social and creative activities while feeling part of a larger community. Your child will learn about trust and develop interpersonal skills and friendships.

Arts-related study, no matter the art, is critical to building a child's self-esteem—whether in a studio, classroom, or playground. Speak with your child. Learn more about their creative interests and provide the resources and opportunities for them to grow and thrive.

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Source: Cheryl Lock, ArtsEdge.org (<http://www.pbs.org/parents/education/music-arts/turn-to-the-arts-to-boost-self-esteem>)



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