

# North Shore Children & Families

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**AUGUST 2016**

## Family & Friends

# Ladybugs (Love Bugs)

by Suzanne Provencher, Publisher/Editor



Last Friday, I got to spend some special time with my BFF's daughter. Tyla left us just over a year ago, and I am committed to being there for her daughter as much or as little as she needs and wants. This is a good connection for both of us because we share so many memories and experiences – and this incredible loss. And when we are together, we feel happy and connected – to each other and

to Tyla. Our union is a healing and joyful one. I had a few little treats to share with Lenyx – so we decided to enjoy lunch by the pool. This is the same pool I swam in with Tyla as a child. Needless to say, Tyla is everywhere when I visit this special place.

Tyla called her daughter and me, "Lovebug". This was her special term of endearment for us. So when I was in Connecticut a few weeks ago and found a ladybug garden chime at the very garden store that Tyla liked to visit – I bought one for her resting place. And then when I found the "Love Bug" necklaces, complete with a ladybug – I knew I had to get one for Lenyx and me.

So on that Friday morning – I opened an email from a new advertiser. Their logo had a ladybug on it... I think this is the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in over 9 years that I have seen a ladybug on my pages. And then I checked Facebook, and the first post that appeared was a photo of...yes, you guessed it – A LADYBUG!

So I told my graphic designer about it and she said that she had just helped a ladybug get back outside when she found it in her house that morning. It reminded me of that scene from *Under the Tuscan Sun*:

*"How are you ever going to be happy if you keep wallowing? Listen, when I was a little girl, I used to spend hours looking for ladybugs. Finally, I'd just give up and fall asleep in the grass. When I woke up, they were crawling all over me."*

These signs told me that Tyla knew about our pending visit – and the ladybugs were her silent cheers of delight. She knows I am there for Lenyx and she found ways to show me on the very day I was sharing ladybug gifts with her daughter. On the drive over, Tyla was very active – as sign after sign after sign seemed to pop up in front of me. It made me smile and laugh. This was all beyond coincidence. And then some jerk stopped short in front of me. My first thought was to curse – until I noticed the license plate bore her birth date. More smiles and laughter. "I see your signs, Tyla!" She was once again riding shotgun with me, her BFF and partner in crime.

So, you see – signs are everywhere if we only pay attention. While the rest of the world was searching for *Pokemon* – I was seeking ladybugs – or love bugs. Or rather they were seeking me.

After our visit, I stopped by Tyla's resting place and I put the stake bearing the ladybug – or Love Bug chime into the ground among the other mementos and tokens left by those of us who love and miss her. I was startled by a sudden breeze on that hot day that played the chime – and then smiled because I knew this was her "thank you". You're welcome, Ty Ty. Love you to the moon...wooba gooba.

*Until Next Time ~ Suzanne*

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## 10 of the Most Common Mistakes Parents Make on Summer Vacations

by Dr. Kate Roberts

It seems like eternity since the last summer vacation when things were great fun. And yet, think back for a moment and you may remember that there were some ups and downs. Most every family vacation has its moments when someone thinks or says “never again”. This reaction during times of momentary stress is normal and natural. Taking some time to recall what went wrong last time may allow you to avoid those pitfalls this vacation.

If you have an August family vacation planned, it's never too soon (or too late!) to learn from past mistakes. Here are 10 common ones:

**1. Being unrealistic.** People don't change personality because of vacations. If you have a child who's difficult at home, he or she will have that challenge while on vacation. Expecting temperament



transformations to arise out of a change of scenery is unrealistic.

**2. Not planning schedule and budget far enough in advance.**

Take the time to plan a well thought schedule and have an idea with your partner of what you both agree on for activities. Don't overspend, causing financial stress at a time when you are supposed to be relaxing. Winging it is difficult for the kids to tolerate and spending time arguing through last minute decisions about what to do is a drag for everyone.

**3. Not saying “no”.** Keep the same expectations of your children while on vacation as you would at home. If kids are not whiners and are able to follow directions and keep track of belongings at home, vacation is no exception. Kids may test and expect the “world” because they are on vacation. Decide not to waver when

*Continued on page 4*

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## Vacation Mistakes

*Continued from page 3*

they whine that they “need” an extra souvenir. They don’t and you *know* it.

**4. Only vacation with enjoyable others.** If you’ve been on dreadful vacations in the past with friends and/or family members, take a break from them this vacation. As adults, you can choose who to vacation with. If the obligation gets the best of you, keep the vacation time limited and call it a family commitment, instead of vacation. Protecting your family’s vacation time teaches kids that immediate family is the priority over making others happy out of obligation.



**5. Allow for transition time.** Kids going to an unfamiliar place, eating new food and sleeping in a new place may struggle with adjusting to the unfamiliar. Don’t react to the kids’ negativity or reluctance to embrace what you think is fabulous. Allow them time to experience things for themselves and to grow into the new experiences.

**6. Don’t over schedule the vacation.** Keep a realistic pace whether you are sightseeing in the city, playing on the beach or climbing peaks together in the mountains. Cramming too much in because you want to maximize your time only makes for bad moods and exhausted kids.

**7. Don’t over pack.** Be able to say “no” on bringing too much stuff for yourselves and your children. Set an example of going with simplicity. The kids should have the amount of belongings that they can realistically be responsible for. If they are old enough (7 and up), have them manage their own stuff using a checklist of their belongings that they can refer to as they pack up at the end of your stay.

**8. Plan ahead for your family needs.** Arrange in advance for comforts to make the trip easier as traveling is natural stress for many people. Plan comforts like snacks, seating, travel breaks and activities in advance.

**9. Leave early on the day of your departure.** When traveling as a family, it may create a setback to arrive late at night, even though you’ll gain an extra day. Getting kids to wind down after a long trip is difficult and dealing with a sleep deprived child at the start of a trip can be a negative tone setter.

**10. Co-parent with peace.** Whatever it takes, do not argue about petty stuff on the vacation. Many parents will not have been together for this amount of time since their last vacation. Decide together, in advance, to not react to differences in parenting styles and to talk through conflicts at night after the kids are asleep. You’ll have more chances than ever to put each other down in front of the kids. Kids hate this, so don’t do it.

*Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist and family therapist with offices in Salem and Wenham. She specializes in technology management, cognitive-behavior therapy, family therapy, anxiety and learning disabilities. She can be reached at [kate@drkateroberts.com](mailto:kate@drkateroberts.com) and [www.drkateroberts.com](http://www.drkateroberts.com).*



## Ask Dr. Kate

## Q&amp;A for North Shore Parents

### Answering the Question: *Will we be attacked on vacation?*

**Q: We are planning on traveling this summer and my children are afraid of terrorism. Help!**

**A:** Asking how can you handle children who are fearful after learning of another terrorist attack is a great question. First, it's important to carry on. Despite the reality that terrorism can occur during festive and crowd-filled activities, and in places where people vacation, or during travel, do not limit your planned activities because of a far away terrorist attack, if possible. Stick to the U.S. State Department travel guidelines.



Second, carrying on means managing your own reactions. Parents set the tone for how their children react. If parents act like terrorism is knocking on the door, children will sense that fear and become afraid. If you are okay with keeping the travel plans, and children feel this, they should follow your lead.

Third, I can't stress enough the importance of limiting access and exposure to TV, social media and "suggestible" discussions. If you aren't a parent who tends to limit web

surfing and internet exposure to keep kids off tech, consider limiting tech time to keep them feeling safe. Exposure to scary images of terrorist attacks will increase a child's sense of danger.

Fourth, discuss how you can make the world a better, maybe even happier place during your travels. If you can't do something of impact while on vacation, do it beforehand. This empowers your children to feel control. It's true that you may not be able to help the victims of the latest terrorist attack, but you can help sick people at your local hospital or others in need. Encouraging your

children to help others allows them to feel empowered that they *can* do something.

Fifth: Don't allow your children to blame one ethnic group or to stereotype

groups of people as a result of an attack. Use this as a teachable moment. Explain that terrorists are people who harm, kill and threaten others, not an ethnic group.

Sixth: When children react to terrorism, that's normal. Terrorism is a horrific event that deserves discussion and that creates upset. When a child does experience upset, sadness, confusion or fear after learning of a terrorist attack, let your child know it's okay to have these feelings and that they pass.

*Dr. Kate Roberts is a licensed child and school psychologist, parent coach and family therapist with offices on the North Shore. Questions can be directed to [kate@drkateroberts.com](mailto:kate@drkateroberts.com). We may anonymously publish your question and Dr. Kate's answer in a future issue.*

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## Healthy Eating – More Stone Fruits

## Peaches, Nectarines, Apricots &amp; Pluots – Oh, My!

by Mary Higgins

Summer fun is filled with activities: swimming, sailing, water-skiing, camping, horseback riding, summer camp and picnics. It's a time for foods that offer refreshment, and juicy stone fruits such as peaches, nectarines, apricots and pluots complete the picture. Grab them now, as they have a short growing season. Stone fruits, two of which you may recall from the May issue when we featured the cherry and the prune, are now in season. This month let's look at the benefits of the other members of this stone fruit family.

Naturally low in calories, with barely any fat, stone fruits are carbohydrate foods with their soft flesh and central inedible seed. You will find your produce department overflowing with fuzzy peaches - freestone or cling - and their sweeter cousins, nectarines, which lack the fuzz but provide just as much vitamins C, A and E. We also cherish apricots with their yellow skin and flesh, and red to purple pluots. These are a cross between the plum and the apricot, with plum dominance. The stone fruit group also includes the plum, that when dried becomes the prune, the fruit with identity confusion – and the aprium, which is a cross between an apricot and plum, with apricot dominating.

With their abundance of polyphenols, many with the ability to stop or prevent inflammation, stone fruits are naturally sweet from fructose which varies from 3 grams of sugar in apricots to 15 grams of sugar in pluots. These provide energy to walk the dog, to run and to race the children down that water slide.

**Replace that Potassium**

Stone fruits, with their stores of potassium, offer the heart and cardiovascular system many benefits. They reduce blood pressure and lower the undesirable LDL fraction of cholesterol, which when elevated causes thickened artery walls, making it harder for blood to flow. In order for our hearts to beat in a rhythmic fashion, potassium is required to coordinate its many nerves and muscles telling it when to contract and relax.

With prolonged periods of sweating during hot summer months, the electrolytes, sodium and potassium, are lost and need replacing. Healthy children can afford to eat a diet higher in sodium. What tastier way to provide potassium than to offer a juicy sweet fruit?

**Keep Allergies at Bay**

Found in stone fruits as well as the peel of citrus fruits and apples, the nutrient, *quercetin*, is a natural anti-histamine. Histamine is the culprit behind itchy, watery eyes and runny noses as well as some headaches. Histamine is also released during allergic reactions. Did your child come home with welts from stepping near poison ivy plants? Does she sneeze when she is near honeysuckle or goldenrod? Quercetin prevents the mast cells from releasing histamine - all without any of the side effects of taking prescription or over the counter anti-histamine pills and syrups.

**Replenish Vitamin C**

Humans, being primates, are not able to manufacture Vitamin C in our bodies and need a supply from the foods we eat. The amount we need for good health far surpasses the DRI of 60 mg., which you see listed on your bottle of multivitamins. This tiny amount is recommended only for the prevention of scurvy. However, Vitamin C has multiple benefits including helping to form the protein-rich collagen matrix of skin and keeping it young looking. Collagen not only contributes to the scaffolds of both skin and hair, but all our connective tissues, including ligaments, tendons and cartilage as well as bone. You lower your risk of heart disease and cancer with an immune system strengthened by anti-oxidant/Vitamin C-rich peaches, pluots, plums, nectarines and apricots.

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Vitamin C also dilates capillaries and keeps them from hardening and becoming blocked by plaque. Some practitioners advocate taking as much as a gram (1000 mg.) or more of Vitamin C. Of course, it's best to check with a professional to find out what is best for you, but food sources of nutrients are always safer than taking supplements.

### Fill Up on Fiber

Stone fruits, with their luscious, juicy flesh, also contain fiber which keeps the digestive tract running smoothly. You will find about 2 grams of fiber in a peach. The soluble fiber found in stone fruits also lowers total cholesterol. One other good thing about fiber: it creates that nice feeling of satisfaction from eating a meal so that when you bring the children to the beach this summer, you won't be so ravenously hungry that you need to run across scorching hot sand in your bare feet to track down the ice cream truck. The fiber also works in weight reduction strategies.

### Fight Metabolic Syndrome

A diet high in vegetables, fruits and whole grains, along with exercise, can go a long way in lowering the risk of dying from heart disease and stroke associated with Metabolic Syndrome. According to the NIH, 34% of adults are diagnosed with this cluster of risk factors for heart disease, stroke and diabetes. While one risk factor is never a good thing, a group of them multiplies the risk. If you have three or more of these: high blood pressure, low HDL cholesterol, too much abdominal fat, high blood sugar or high triglycerides, then you or your family member are at risk of serious disease. You may be advised to lower both your calorie and salt intake and to boost your intake of potassium rich foods. In addition to all the leafy green vegetables that you are making salads with, add a few slices of stone fruits, with their rich supply of anti-inflammatory compounds. Start the children off with healthy foods to keep them out of the high risk range.

### Protect Eyes

Lutein and Xeaxanthin: These pigments, found in orange-fleshed fruit, are found in the lens of the eye, protecting our eyes from diseases such as macular degeneration and cataracts. Lutein and xeaxanthin, being fat-soluble nutrients, are best absorbed with a little fat such as the dollop of whipped cream served atop those peach slices, or 1/2 cup of full fat organic yogurt with those diced apricots. You may also add pluots to salads dressed with an olive-oil based vinaigrette for a salad with plenty of color and texture.

### Stone Fruits, Anytime

At breakfast, slice a nectarine on those crunchy cereal flakes. Add sliced plums and pluots to a prepared tart. Enjoy apricot jam on your toast or English muffins. Decorate the kids' pancakes and waffles with a mixture of sunny apricots and summer-fresh peaches. Dice peaches and nectarines and add them to smoothies and milkshakes. You can also add them to stir fries at the very end of cooking or grill them. Drizzled with some maple syrup, they make a yummy dessert. And plain old chicken breast made with a salsa of peaches and tomatoes comes alive.

When it comes to visiting the seashore, tuck a few plums and pluots in with the sand pails and shovels. Juicy and likely to drip and stain upholstery, the kids can eat and enjoy both plums and pluots, then rinse themselves off at the beach. Whatever you decide, enjoy the plentitude of stone fruits waiting in the produce aisles and at farm stands for you and your family to explore and enjoy.

*Mary Higgins, M.Ed., is a nutrition educator who writes about food for several websites. She has a Bachelor's degree in both Nutrition and Education. She studied exercise science and received her M.Ed. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. She has worked as a Sports Nutritionist and personal trainer at YMCAs in the greater Boston area and is certified by both the American Council on Exercise and the American Academy of Sports Dietitians and Nutritionists. Mary is also the author of Daddy Trains for the Marathon, a book written about the Boston Marathon and available on Amazon.com.*

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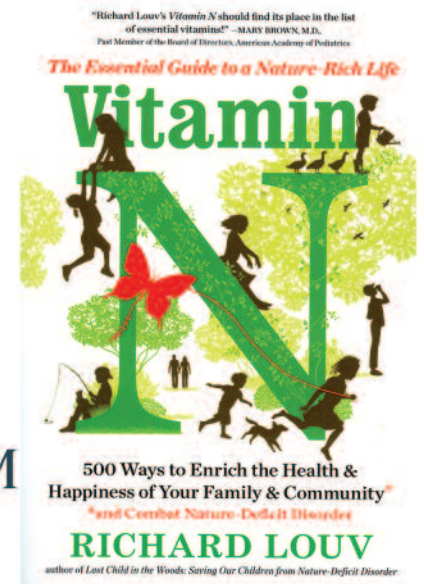
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#### End of Year Celebration

by Leah Okimoto

This year's **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Ice Cream Celebration** was held on Saturday, June 18, at Phillips Academy, Andover. It was an appropriately gorgeous day to celebrate the **286** kids, ages 7-14, who spent time thinking about others, coming up with a plan to help or serve them in their own unique ways and carrying out

**105** creative, generous projects that benefited over **14,000** people in the North Shore area this year! Thank you to Mad Maggie's Ice Cream, Phillips Academy and so many local businesses and individuals who gave their time and resources to make this a day filled with joy and hope.

Twenty children, one parent and



two teachers volunteered to speak about their experiences. And with so much pain and distress in our world right now, their words of empowerment and their commitment to giving, helping and adding good to the world gave us all a dose of much-needed hope.

All of the kids' speeches were written by themselves. We thought we'd share some of their words with you:



*"Aaron's Presents."* – Vivian, 8th grade, Lowell Community Charter Public School

"I have been working with Aaron's Presents since the very beginning and I can say that it has truly changed my entire life. Since 6th grade, I hadn't even considered the fact that I could help others until Mrs. Leah Okimoto came along and gave me that opportunity. The projects I've done have helped impact so many, from homeless children to my classmates, and I had a great time full of memories in the process. I may be going to high school next year but I will continue to volunteer, inspire others and give to the world. So thank you,

"I like Aaron's Presents because you get to help people and Aaron's Presents also makes you feel good about yourself. This year, a couple of my friends and I gave food to people who couldn't afford it for Thanksgiving. Michael, my younger sister, Mia, and I are going to do another project called R.A.K.I.N.G. RAK stands for Random Acts of

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Kindness. We are going to give food and household items such as blankets, pillows, spoons, knives, forks, applesauce, evaporated milk, apples and more. I recommend Aaron's Presents because, like I said, Aaron's Presents makes you feel good, and everyone likes to feel good, right?"  
 – Ella, 4th grade, Sanborn Elementary School, Andover

young or small you are, you, too, can make a difference, and all it starts with is an idea."  
 – Leah, 8th grade, Lowell Community Charter Public School

Thank you to this publication, *North Shore Children & Families*, and its Publisher & Editor, Suzanne Provencher, for so generously giving us a way to share the kind, thoughtful efforts with all of you each month, and thank you for encouraging the children around you to believe in

their unique capacity to make a positive difference in the world at every age, exactly as they are right now. They are our hope, and it's a privilege to know them.

Please visit [www.aaronspresents.org](http://www.aaronspresents.org) to learn more about how a child you know can apply to participate, to donate resources to support next year's kids and projects, or to express interest in volunteer opportunities!



**Congratulations to Aaron's Presents & All Participants for Another Great Year of Helping Others!**

*Leah Okimoto is the Executive Director of Aaron's Presents, a 501(c)(3) youth development organization providing a unique child-initiated, child-led and non-competitive program that inspires and empowers children in 8th grade and below to give of themselves for the benefit of others in their own way. She founded Aaron's Presents in memory of her infant son, Aaron. Kimberly LaBonte-Kay is the North Shore Regional Director. Feel free to contact Leah at [lokimoto@aaronspresents.org](mailto:lokimoto@aaronspresents.org) or (978) 809-5487 or Kim at [kimberly@aaronspresents.org](mailto:kimberly@aaronspresents.org) with any questions or to schedule a presentation for your school, youth program, team or troop.*



The first time I did an Aaron's Presents project was in 6th grade. I was part of a group that helped make birthday boxes for the homeless. Aaron's Presents changed me and made me into the person I am today. Now I want to help and give to others. Truthfully, before Aaron's Presents, I was the person who thought about problems but didn't do anything to fix them. Now, thanks to Aaron's Presents, I know that no matter how

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## Adjusting to a New School

# 8 Tips to Help Your Child Adjust to a New School

by **Cindy Jett, LICSW**

Starting a new school can be very frightening for a child, particularly if the child is introverted or shy. Here are a few tips to help ease the transition:



1. If the new school offers an orientation, plan to attend with your child. For elementary age children, it also might be a good idea to arrange a meeting with the child's teacher before he/she begins school. The teacher can tell your child a little about the class, and answer any questions.
2. Discuss any fears that your child may have about a new school. Help to calm his/her fears by either giving him/her more information, or explaining why his/her worst fears are unlikely to be realized.
3. Practice social skills with your child. Demonstrate how to introduce himself/herself to new

people, and then let him/her practice. Show how he/she can start a conversation with a peer by making a positive comment about something the peer does or says.

4. Visit the school's website, or get a brochure with information on extracurricular activities. Go through these materials with your child and see what piques his/her interest.
5. Remind your child how he/she has successfully started other "new" things without knowing people. Perhaps it was his/her last school, a summer camp or a scout troop.
6. Create a consistent routine during the first several weeks of school. This gives your child a sense of stability during the adjustment phase.
7. Welcome new friends into your home and encourage your child to invite classmates for play dates.
8. Get involved with the new school yourself. Volunteer to be the teacher's helper, go on field trips or join the PTA. It will make your child feel more at home to see you involved at the school. In addition, you will be better informed when your child talks to you about what is happening at school.

*Cindy Jett, LICSW, is a psychotherapist and author of Harry the Happy Caterpillar Grows, an acclaimed picture book that helps children adapt to change. [www.ArticleCity.com](http://www.ArticleCity.com)*



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### 2016 PUBLISHING SCHEDULE

Issue	Ad Space Deadline* (for ads that need production help)	Ad Space Deadline (for completed ads**)
September	noon, 8/24	noon, 8/26
October	noon, 9/21	noon, 9/23
November	noon, 10/19	noon, 10/21

\*Also the due date for ad materials/ad copy changes for ads that we produce or revise.

\*\* Completed ads are due the Tuesday following the final, Friday, ad space deadline.

To explore your advertising options or to secure your space, please contact Suzanne at 781.584.4569 or [suzanne@northshorefamilies.com](mailto:suzanne@northshorefamilies.com).

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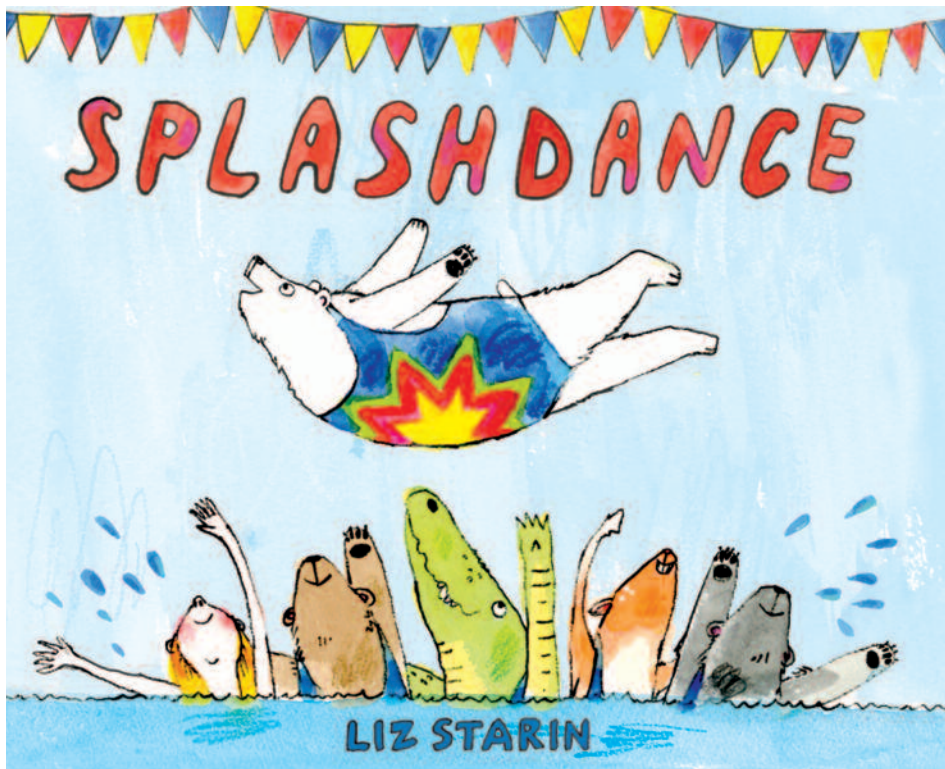




# Splashdance

Written & illustrated by Liz Starin  
(Farrar Strauss Giroux \$16.99, Ages 4-7)

by Cathy Ballou Mealey



Has your family tuned in to watch the excitement of international competition and the thrills of outstanding athleticism during the *Rio Olympics*? Perhaps your kids are now clamoring for gymnastics lessons, or hoping to try fencing, table tennis or beach volleyball. To supplement any newfound interest in sports, or simply deter them from leaping on their beds while practicing for the high-jump, reach for **Splashdance**, a silly spin on sports, practice, perseverance and teamwork.

One MILLION dollars! That is the prize awarded to the winners of the water ballet competition at the community pool. So Ricardo, a mustachioed, knobby-kneed gentleman, and his water ballet partner Ursula, a well-groomed but furry polar bear, practice their routine diligently. All at once, a new rule bans bears from the pool, and Ricardo summarily ditches Ursula for a new partner, a giraffe named Hortense.

Ursula is devastated at the betrayal and heartbroken to lose her chance in the competition. After all, she really loves water ballet! Eventually Ursula dons a striped bikini and she sneaks down to the community pond for a quick dip. Alone, she executes her best double back albatross and half twist chanterelle in the weedy green swimming hole.

Then one day Ursula arrives at the pond only to meet a large group of water ballet enthusiasts practicing their routine. They, too, were cast out of the pool due to their ursine members. This group - this TEAM - has stuck together and continued to practice. Ursula is inspired to join them, and she devises a plan to ensure that they can participate in the water ballet championship after all.

Starin's text is smart, vibrant and playful. A balanced mixture of short and long sentences filled with cut-to-the-chase emotions keeps the storyline popping along. Young listeners will remain eager to turn the page and discover what happens next. Starin's illustrations are spectacularly funny, inventive and ridiculous, adding implausible wacky details that appeal to the eye and the funnybone. Clever signs, wild bathing costumes and a hilarious menagerie of swimming critters mix together to produce a divinely humorous tale.

Ursula finally gets to perform her impressive triple banana flip in the water ballet competition – but will it be enough to win the million dollars? Or is there an even bigger prize at stake? **Splashdance** is a lighthearted, gold-medal winner from beginning to end.

Cathy Ballou Mealey is a picture book writer and mom to two great kids. She lives in Lynnfield and shares book reviews through Twitter via @CatBallouMealey. Cathy borrowed **Splashdance** from her local library, where she discovers wonderful new stories every week.



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