

# EATING HOME & LIFE D SHOPPING FIT HEALTH & SELF KIDS

EXHILARATING SLIDES,  
BUILDABLE ROBOTS, AND A MUSEUM  
THAT MAKES MATH FUN.

## Clothing

**LES PETITS CHAPELAIS**  
146 Sullivan St., nr. Prince St.  
212-625-1023

As the Upper East Side moms who trek down here will tell you, this French children's boutique strikes the perfect balance between Bonpoint-quality cuts and recess-friendly fabrics. Owner Dominique Simonneaux just moved from her cozy—but admittedly disorganized—shop of six years to a sleeker, bigger space around the corner. Now racks for newborns to 12-year-olds are neatly subdivided by age and gender; emerging European lines (bright organic-stretch-cotton rompers from Tromppo, reversible quilted overalls by Toit de la Lune) mix with upscale staples (knit-cotton Petit Bateau onesies, graphic tees by Ten) ranging from \$30 to \$200. Front and center is an array of stitched leather Pom d'Api shoes, exclusive in New York to Simonneaux, including rubber-soled gladiator sandals and sheepskin-lined baby biker boots (from \$70).

## Indoor Playground

**KIDS PLAYHOUSE**  
34-17 Steinway St., Astoria; 718-806-1288

This colorful little playpen may not have generated the buzz of bigger, flashier Frolic! in Williamsburg, but it doesn't come with its \$83-a-month price tag either. Here, three hours of play cost just \$7—no membership required. Squealy fun-inducers include an elaborate two-story maze, double racing slides, a carpeted toddler area exploding with toys, an arcade jammed with tween-friendly claw machines, the requisite pizza bar, and—hallelujah!—free Wi-Fi for parents. The one catch: no drop-in times on the weekend, when the space is reserved for private parties.

## Futuristic Toys

**THE MAKERBOT STORE**  
298 Mulberry St., nr. Houston St.  
347-457-5758

Technology's hottest new toy—the 3-D printer—is made accessible to

kids at MakerBot's first brick-and-mortar retailer. Purchasable desktop printers called Replicators spin brightly hued plastic collectibles right before kids' widened eyes. Pedestals display imaginative designs, like flexible wristwatches (\$60) and MP3 players shaped like cassette tapes (\$39), alongside gum-ball machines dispensing knickknackish apples, cupcakes, and robots (\$5). Beyond the wall of filament spools is the store's pièce de résistance, a 3-D photo booth that prints golf-ball-size multidimensional renderings of your tot's (or your) likeness (\$25 to \$65).

## Analog Toys

**NORMAN & JULES**  
158 Seventh Ave., nr. Garfield Pl.,  
Park Slope; 347-987-3323

Parents tired of blinky, bleepy, techie toys will find nothing of the sort at Norman & Jules. The old-world shop, opened by Slope parents Avi Kravitz and Courtney Ebner, forgoes the usual primary-colored glut of battery-operated plastic for eco-conscious wooden stacking towers,

plush mobiles, and pint-size musical instruments. Here, moms and dads watch children bang and strum on handcrafted glockenspiels and ukuleles, snuggle with cashmere monsters stitched by local artisans, and rearrange furniture in the hand-carved dollhouses from the German wood shop Norbert Verneuer. For the rare kid not content with toys, the owners' dachshund-Chihuahua, Addi, trades cuddles for kisses.

## Movie Series

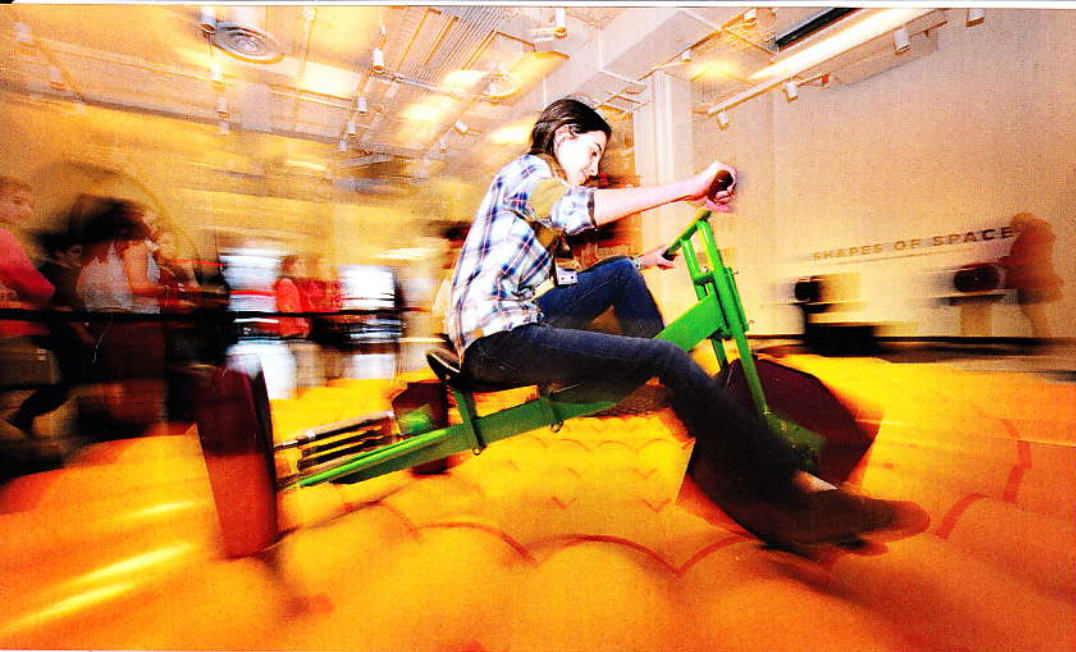
**FILM FORUM JR.**  
209 W. Houston St., nr. Sixth Ave.  
212-727-8110

Disney has always been a little pedestrian for this city's precocious children. So when Film Forum launched a kids' program in January, it seemed like a natural fit, as weekly sellouts attest. Every Sunday at 11 a.m., cinephiles 5 and up pay \$12.50 to watch classics like *King Kong* and *Young Frankenstein* and get introduced to Charlie Chaplin, Fred Astaire, and Betty Boop. Shown in 35-mm. or DCP, they are movies adults would gladly









Museum of Mathematics

see on their own; contests and sing-alongs sweeten the deal for their charges. Best of all, the smart programming never talks down to young ones: There are even foreign and silent films in the mix.

## Museum

### MUSEUM OF MATHEMATICS

11 E. 26th St., nr. Fifth Ave.; 212-542-0566

If the mention of algebra or geometry puts your kids in power-save mode, they're not associating math with laser beams, memory games, and riding a square-wheeled tricycle. That's the beauty of former hedge-fund analyst Glen Whitney's MoMath: 19,000 square feet of interactive, often awe-inspiring exhibits

driven by—you guessed it—mathematical concepts. The 30-plus stations let kids design 3-D images in a Colosseum-inspired computer studio, scatter across a digital floor that lights the shortest distance between each person, and glide a Plexiglas cart over acorn-shaped rubber balls (matching diameters make for a surprisingly smooth ride). Consider the toppled-over ticket machine (admission is \$9 to \$15) a hint to check all preconceptions at the door.

## Over-the-Top Birthday Parties

### RED CARPET KIDS

231 E. 62nd St., nr. Second Ave.  
646-678-4563

Is your 4-year-old already writing her Oscar acceptance speech? Perhaps her fifth birthday party should be at Red Carpet Kids. The month-old company, founded by an actor-and-event-planner couple, organizes authentic, if extravagant, "movie premiere" parties, during which the host child and fifteen to twenty guests are ushered through a *faux* film shoot and glittery premiere (from \$4,500). Held on five floors of a swanky Upper East Side brownstone, the affairs start with a red-carpet walk (including interviews and photo ops), followed by costume selection and hair-and-makeup styling in the wardrobe room. Next comes filming in the green-screen room, then a wrap party (a.k.a. lunch and cake). The finale is a screening of the seven-minute flick they just made, viewed from

the comfort of former Radio City Music Hall theater seats. There's popcorn and candy, Oscar statues and acceptance speeches, even swag bags and autograph books. And for parents: a first-class cocktail lounge.

## Skate Park

### 5050 SKATEPARK

354 Front St., nr. Prospect St.,  
Staten Island; 347-857-6007

As the city's only indoor skate park, 5050 doesn't have any direct competition. But owners Ed Pollio and Angelica Popolano aren't just investors who saw a hole in the market; they're veterans of Staten Island's thriving BMX scene who called in their brethren to help design the 8,000-square-foot romper room. Thrill-seekers on bikes, skateboards, and kick scooters travel from all five boroughs to take advantage of 5050's street-mimicking choppy concrete, textured-wood ramps, and all-inclusive vibe (the youngest regular is 4; the oldest, 56). Weekday session rates are \$12 and weekends \$20, but for the hard-core, \$600 buys unlimited access for a year.

## Zoo Alternative

### THE WILD BIRD FUND CENTER

565 Columbus Ave., nr. 87th St.  
646-306-2862

In less than a year, this nonprofit rehabilitation and education center on the Upper West Side has helped save the lives of more than 1,500 local and migrating birds. The real lucky ducks in this story, however, are the kids and

## BEYOND BUILD-A-BEAR

For your kid's every DIY interest, there's a hands-on workshop.



### ASPIRING AUTHORS

#### Scribble Press

1624 First Ave.,  
nr. 85th St.  
212-288-2928

After shuttering its Upper West Side and L.A. branches last year, this make-your-own-book studio significantly expanded its flagship space and programming. Children 4 and older can drop in to write and illustrate their own tomes, which are then professionally bound, or design calendars, journals, and puzzles. Most projects are in the \$10 to \$29 range.

### BUDDING FASHIONISTAS

#### Hiho Batik

184 Fifth Ave., nr.  
Sackett St., Park Slope  
718-622-4446

An ancient art form gets a modern revival as kids 5 and up use hot wax and colorful paints to create one-of-a-kind batik designs on T-shirts, tote bags, and more (from \$40). The process is fairly easy, but since the staff must handle the final dyeing step, items aren't ready for pickup for about a week. Drop-ins are welcome as long as the studio isn't hosting a party, so call ahead on the weekends.

### TINY TINKERERS

#### ConstructionKids

Brooklyn Navy Yard,  
63 Flushing Ave.,  
nr. Adelphi St., Building  
92, Unit 130, Ft.  
Greene; 718-522-2902

The former Lefferts Garden program has relocated to a new state-of-the-art studio in the Navy Yard, where kids 2 to 14 can craft wooden skateboards, go-carts, and toy cars and trains. After-school programs (from \$375 per semester) and day camps (\$125 per day) demand a long-term commitment, but Curious Georges can test the waters at open houses (\$35).

### ANDROID MAKERS

#### Brooklyn Robot Foundry

303 Third Ave., nr.  
Carroll St., Gowanus  
347-762-6840

At educational technology expert Dave VanEsselstyn and mechanical engineer Jenny Young's DIY workshop, children ages 4 to 13 learn simple circuitry while building their own moving, blinking creations out of old tin cans and boxes. Weekly 90-minute drop-off classes start at \$40; after-school programs, day camps, and a Robot Girls' Club are also available.

### DESIGNERS-TO-BE

#### Maker Space

New York Hall of  
Science, 47-01 111th  
St., Corona  
718-699-0005

Inspired by the Hall of Science's annual Maker Faire, this space is outfitted with a range of high- and low-tech tools, like 3-D printers and handsaws. Weekend workshops target inventors as young as 18 months and cost \$8 (plus \$8 museum admission); more involved programs—like a build-your-own-skateboard spring-break camp (\$350)—are steeper.

PHOTOGRAPH: NEWS/COM (MUSEUM OF MATHEMATICS)





## SAY NO TO BOZO

*A survey of the best new birthday entertainment.*

### HAUTE BALLOON ART

#### Brooklyn Balloon Company

Latex twister Robert Moy's wearable oeuvre includes necklaces, rings, backpacks, butterfly wings, and Darth Vader masks. His designs are so chic he's made clients out of Marc Jacobs and Isaac Mizrahi. Rates start at \$350 an hour for ten kids. (brooklynballooncompany.com)

### PERSONALIZED PIÑATAS

#### Jing Yu

Sculptor Yu makes custom piñatas in the visage of your choice—whether it's the birthday kid, Taylor Swift, or the Wicked Witch (starting at \$250). As a final touch, she stuffs each destructible masterpiece with specially tailored favors, like candy wrapped in your child's favorite colors. (bunnycorpse.org)

### HEALTHY PARTY TREATS

#### Freshmade NYC

This catering company and cooking school for kids specializes in organic, vegan, and otherwise virtuous eats for unsuspecting children. They drop off a single dish or create a soup-to-nuts themed celebration—say, a tea party or Mexican fiesta. Catering starts at \$1,500 for up to fifteen kids and covers setup, cleanup, and basic decorations. (freshmadenyc.com)

### DIY JEWELRY

#### Lost Wax Studio

This Nolita jewelry boutique offers children 9 and older workshops on making chic leather-wrap bracelets strung with a rainbow of beads. For groups of four or more (from \$95 a head), an instructor hosts two-hour sessions anywhere in the city. (lostwaxstudio.com)

### CUTENESS PARADE

#### Puppy Paradise

For \$150 an hour, a handler from Marine Park pet store Puppy Paradise shuttles four pint-size pooches to your party (and cleans up after them on the way out). Depending on the shop's current selection, requests can be met for hypoallergenic dogs, as well as specific breeds like puggles and Poms. And yes, impulse buys are welcome. (puppyparadise.com)

teens who volunteer at the center and attend its special events. Seasonal open houses give children a chance to meet rehabbers and their feathered patients, like a kestrel recently found in Hunts Point with a concussion. Family memberships start at \$250 and include nature-inspired crafts and storytelling sessions (best for kids 7 and up), as well as bird walks with borrowed Orvis binoculars. Volunteering is another way to indulge Dr. Doolittle-ish leanings. Teens must be high-school age to participate; they start by cleaning cages and eventually graduate to feeding baby birds.

## Ice-Skating Rink

### VAN CORTLANDT PARK

Broadway and 242nd St., the Bronx  
718-432-1492

Two years in the making, the Bronx's first outdoor ice rink is worth the trek north. Located less than a block from the 1 train, the 13,600-square-foot rink is inexpensive (\$5 on weekdays, \$8 on weekends, plus \$5 skate rental), has a snack bar run by Riverdale's legendary Lloyd's Carrot Cake, and offers public skating hours every day of the week. But it's even more desirable for what it doesn't have: no spectator fee, long lines, tourists, or Olympic pretensions. It's a family attraction through and through, which explains why you see just as many children gliding by as adults.

## Sweet Shop

### SUGAR AND PLUMM

377 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 78th St.  
212-787-8778

An innocent candy-store stopover can turn from fun to frightful when narrow aisles, blaring music, and too many choices lead to overstimulation-induced meltdowns. Sugar and Plumm, by contrast, makes treat shopping less overwhelming with a carefully curated bulk-candy inventory that includes malt balls, caramels, rock candy, gummy bears, nuts, and chocolate-covered raisins. For \$12 a pound, kids can fill miniature paint cans with their favorites, then dig in while seated at one of the shop's tufted banquettes. Also under the same roof: a bakery run by Pichet Ong, a truffle-shilling chocolate bar, a sleek gelato counter, and shelves stuffed with Scylling sock monkeys and other toys. A bistro dispenses sliders and corn dogs for kids, crêpes and short ribs for parents, and Wonka-whimsical sundaes and shakes for all.

## Kid-Friendly Eatery

### MONK BAR & PIZZERIA

291 Kent Ave., at S. 2nd St.,  
Williamsburg; 718-782-8810

When your little darlings chuck their cutlery to the floor or launch into a wrestling match, wait staff often respond with thinly veiled contempt. Not so at Monk. That's because the restaurant, run by father of eight Felipe Avalos, actually *likes* kids. (His own brood, ages 6 to 21, are always hanging out.) Children under 12 eat free from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday and all day Sunday, but there are other reasons this isn't your average toddler-tolerant restaurant: Tables are dressed with crayons and paper, chalkboards inspire impromptu doodling, waiters

turn a blind eye when kids hula-hoop mid-restaurant, and the kitchen happily whips up custom dishes for vegetable-hating or otherwise fussy eaters. For the adults, there are nuanced pastas, a well-rounded wine list, and the distinct feeling that—for once—your family isn't a detested dining presence.

### BLOGGER'S CHOICE

## PINS & NEEDLES

1045 Lexington Ave.,  
nr. 75th St., second fl.;  
212-535-6222

*"The mother-and-daughter lesson (\$220 plus materials) at this tiny sewing shop is a private session in which kids get to make their choice of three skill-appropriate projects, such as a ribbon-tie dress or faux-fur vest. I'm all thumbs and zero patience when it comes to sewing, but the staff worked closely with my daughter to help her select a fabric she loved and made her feel involved in every step."*

—TARA MANDY, founder of StrollerTraffic

Sugar and Plumm



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE VENDOR