

*May 2020*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**The Magic  
of Violets**

**Making  
May Day  
Baskets**

**More  
Ways to  
Enjoy  
Nature at  
Home**

**Seasonal  
poems,  
activities,  
nature  
journal  
pages &  
more**

# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

## Welcome May

What a challenging time we're all in around the world right now! I hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe, and that you've been able to spend time in nature one way or another. We know that nature is very important for our physical and emotional health. Luckily, nature is all around us wherever we are, so we can find a way to benefit from it in just about any situation.

Like many families, our family has been staying at home most of the time lately. We are lucky that we have a yard to spend time in and natural areas to hike and forage in. Three of our kids and I got sick recently and we used nature in part to help us get better. We got sunlight on our skin on sunny days to help our bodies make vitamin D (a hormone that we make from sunlight that helps our immune systems fight sickness and keeps us feeling happier) and we used some plants like elderberries that we had foraged last year to help with our healing (of course, we also took advice from our doctor and other health authorities). The kids got better pretty quickly but it took a little longer for me. My husband took one of our kids and our dog, Moose, hiking and foraging many days and picked stinging nettles to make me nettle tea every day.

Nettles are some of the healthiest wild plants on earth but you have to be careful because they sting before they are cooked or dried! It felt nice to have that hot tonic from those fresh picked leaves that most people consider a pest.

I've put together a simple magazine this month because I'm just recently feeling up to working on Wild Kids, but I hope it helps you find some fun ways to enjoy nature this month. I've been thinking about you lots and am sending lots of love,

*Alicia*



Our son, Jack, and our dog, Moose

### Why is Wild Kids free?

Kids (and their grown ups) need nature, and nature needs us! Our family believes in the importance of sharing & helping each other, and of passing on skills to help our world and each other. As long as we are able, we plan to produce Wild Kids to help do this for families who find it useful.

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Contact: [alicia.bayer@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.bayer@gmail.com)

Find lots more links, information and fun to accompany this month's themes at  
[www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids](http://www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids).



# Go Wild in May

## 10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Draw, paint or photograph the sky each day this month

Make May Day baskets and leave them on neighbors' doors (we show you how in this issue)

Draw 3 bugs you find outside (or even inside, like on a windowsill)

Hang a homemade wind chime by a window and then let lots of fresh air inside

Make a list of 10 wild places you want to visit someday

Whistle with a blade of grass and try to play a tune (notice how different sizes sound different!)

Learn about a new wild plant to forage

Use (unsprayed) dandelion petals in homemade pancakes, muffins or cookies

Write a nature poem and send it to Wild Kids!

Listen at night for all the animals you can hear outside and look for constellations in the sky



# May Day Baskets

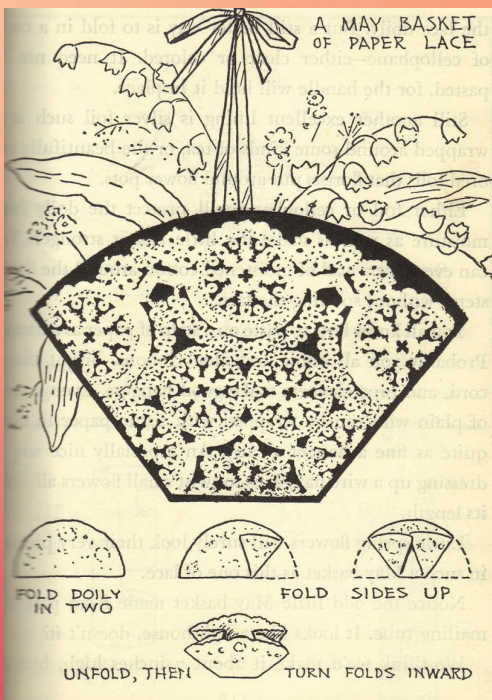
Brighten neighbors' days with this floral tradition



In the "olden days," lots of families took part in the tradition of making paper baskets for May Day (May first) and filling them with fresh flowers to leave on their neighbors' front doors. They would hang the baskets on the doorknob and then ring the doorbell and dash away, so their surprised neighbors could find the pretty presents.



This is a lovely way to let elderly neighbors in particular know that you're thinking of them. You can use any flowers that are blooming in your yard right now or just make some pretty paper flowers.



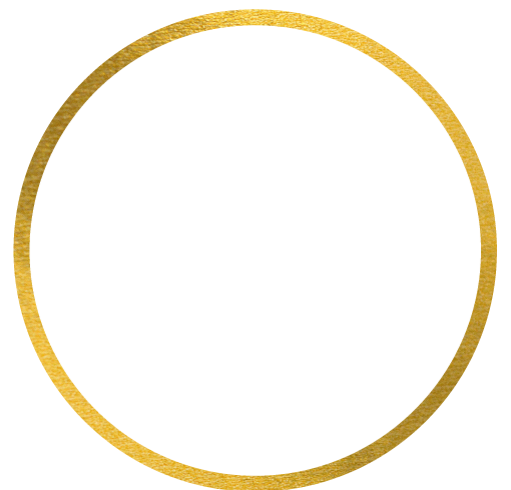
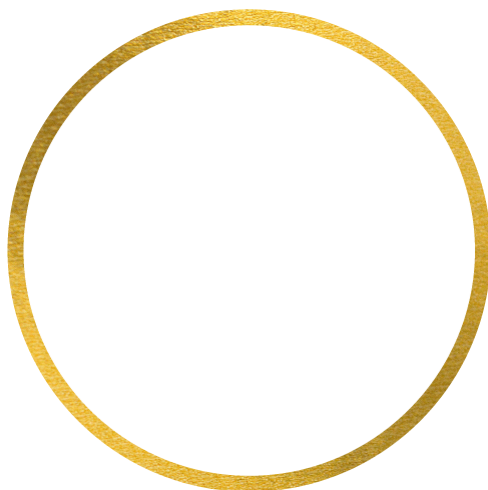
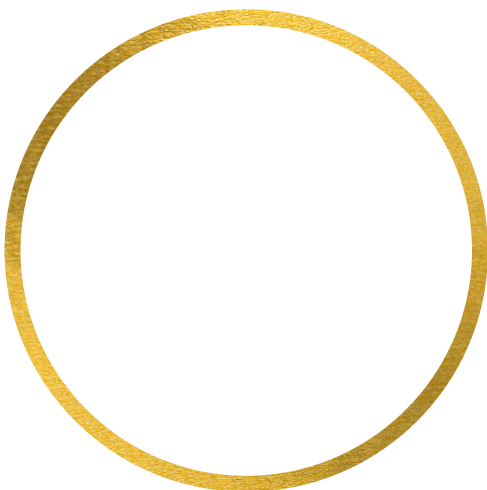
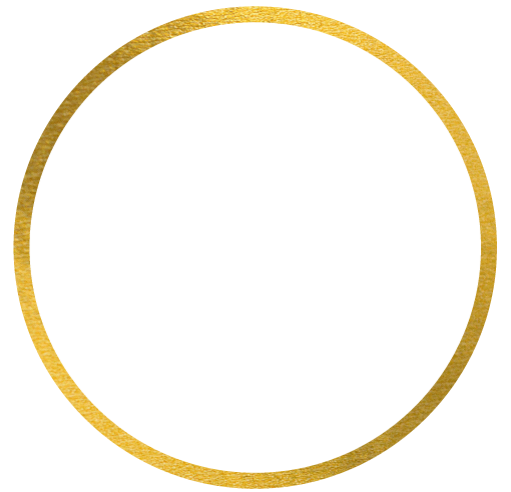
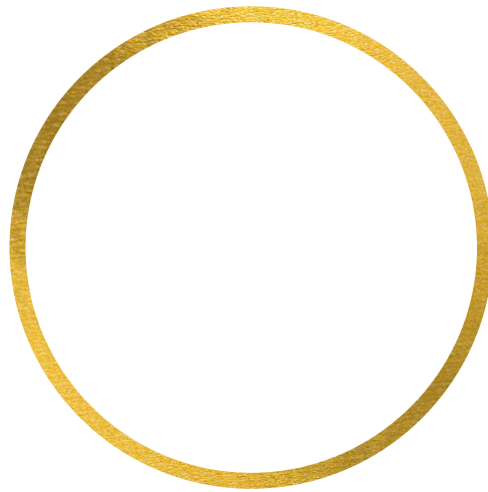
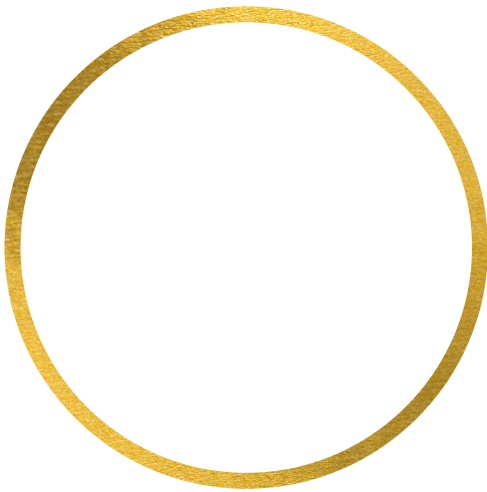
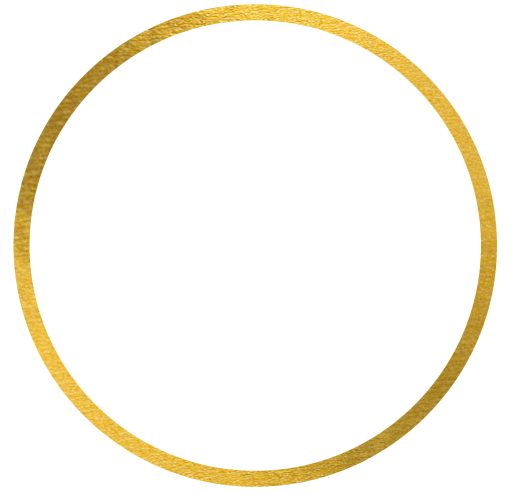
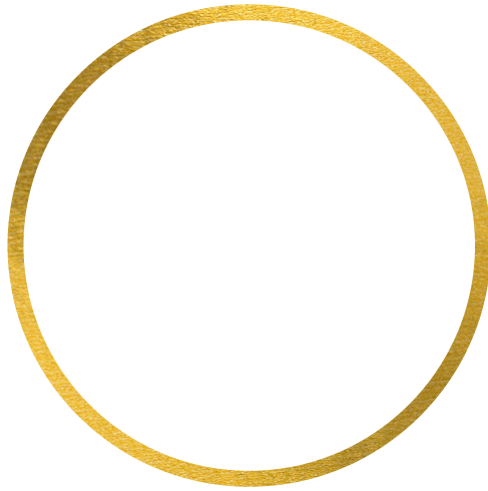
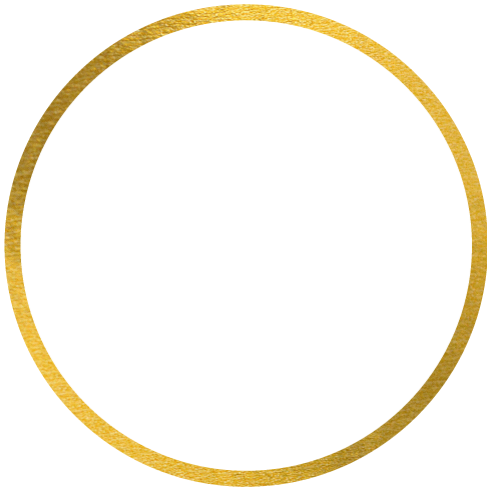
To make the basket, just roll a piece of paper into a cone shape and tape or staple it shut. Attach a paper strip or ribbon for the handle. You can also use this idea for a vintage basket, or you can just use a paper cup with a ribbon.





# May Snapshots

Draw a cool bug you spot, paint a pretty sunset, write a poem about the weather or just make a note of when the first flowers bloom.



*By Fiona Bayer*

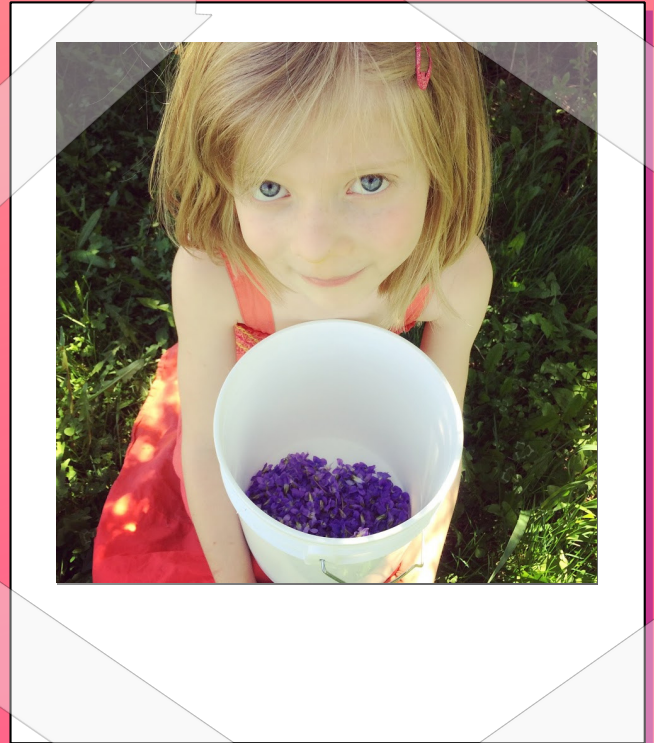
# Violets



Violets are fun to forage because you can almost always recognize them and they're so pretty.

You can make violet syrup that changes colors when you add the lemon juice.

You can make purple sugar when you grind violets and sugar. You can also make candied violets and use them to decorate pastries.





**LATIN NAME:** Viola odorata

**OTHER NAMES** Sweet Violet, Garden Violet, English Violet, Dooryard Violet

**SEASON:** Spring

**WHERE FOUND:** Lawns, parks, Disturbed areas

**PARTS USED:** Leaves, Flowers

**TIPS:** Do not eat African violets, which are a separate species

These pages are unfinished works in progress from "Foraging With Fiona," a book 8 year old Fiona has been writing with my help for a while about her favorite plants to forage. We hope to have it finished soon!



## pH Magic! A note from Fiona's mom

Violets are great for learning about science because they are pH indicators, meaning violet liquid will change color depending on how acidic or alkaline the liquid is. If you steep violets in boiling water for violet syrup, the liquid will probably be a shade of blue or purple (or even green if your tap water is very alkaline and there's not a lot of color in your violets). Add lemon juice and watch it turn hot pink!



# VIOLET

*Viola*

Plate 59.



*March Violet*

*Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.*

1 Flower

2 Fruit

3 Seed Vessel & Seed

*Viola Martia*

From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*  
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737



# BALM (LEMON BALM)

*Melissa officinalis*

Plate 27.



Balm

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1 Flower with its cup  
2 Flower Separate  
3 Cup  
4 Seed

*Melissophyllum*

From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*  
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737

# Poems for May

*"The world's favorite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May."*

-- Edwin Way Teale

May

The wind is tossing the lilacs,  
The new leaves laugh in the sun,  
And the petals fall on the orchard wall,  
But for me the spring is done.

Beneath the apple blossoms  
I go a wintry way,  
For love that smiled in April  
Is false to me in May.

- Sara Teasdale

*When April steps aside for May,  
Like diamonds all the rain-drops glisten;  
Fresh violets open every day:  
To some new bird each hour we listen.*

- Lucy Larcom

Ode in May

What is so sweet and dear  
As a prosperous morn in May,  
The confident prime of the day,  
And the dauntless youth of the year,  
When nothing that asks for bliss,  
Asking aright, is denied,  
And half of the world a bridegroom is,  
And half of the world a bride?

- William Watson, 1880

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds, and bowers:  
Of April, May, or June, and July flowers.

I sing of Maypoles, Hock-carts, wassails, wakes,  
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of the bridal cakes.

- Robert Herrick, Hesperides, 1648

In Early May

O MY dear, the world to-day  
Is more lovely than a dream!  
Magic hints from far away  
Haunt the woodland, and the stream  
Murmurs in his rocky bed  
Things that never can be said.  
Starry dogwood is in flower,  
Gleaming through the mystic woods.  
It is beauty's perfect hour  
In the wild spring solitudes.  
Now the orchards in full blow  
Shed their petals white as snow.  
All the air is honey-sweet  
With the lilacs white and red,  
Where the blossoming branches meet  
In an arbor overhead.  
And the laden cherry trees  
Murmur with the hum of bees.  
All the earth is fairy green,  
And the sunlight filmy gold,  
Full of ecstasies unseen,  
Full of mysteries untold.  
Who would not be out-of-door,  
Now the spring is here once more!

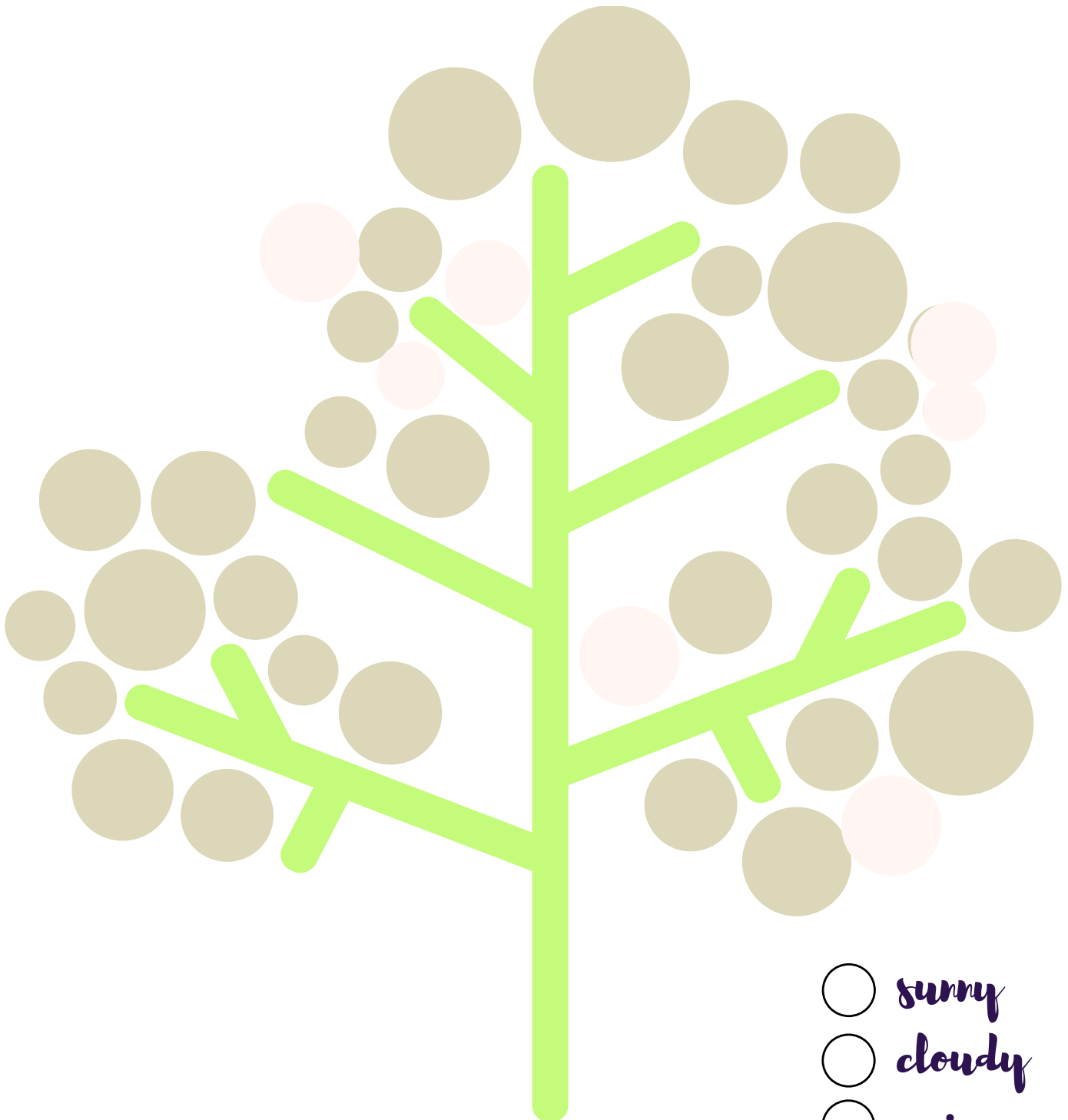
Bliss William Carman



*My Nature Journal*

*May*

# May Weather Tree



- ☐ sunny
- ☐ cloudy
- ☐ rainy
- ☐ snowy
- ☐ stormy



# May Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# May Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# MAY NATURE NOTES

Record any interesting discoveries here -- plants you identify, foods you forage, outdoor activities, cool nature projects, nature books read, or just notes about what it's like outside this week!

Week 1 Observations

Week 2 Observations

Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations



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CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS



Want to see your stuff in Wild Kids?

We welcome articles, photos, artwork and other submissions from kids and their grown ups.

Visit [magicalchildhood.com/wildkids](https://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more.