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# Experience Gifts, Yes!

By Deborah Pratt, M.A. in Music Education



If your child asked you what you want for your birthday, would you prefer a pretty sweater you've marked in a catalog or a weekly one-on-one time with your child?

I know what I would say. Give me the time together!

There has been discussion about experience gifts for a number of years now, and I think it's a good shift in thinking. Kids will always enjoy getting physical gifts and I would never want to completely replace them with experiences, but I'll bet that there are others in your family who will shower them with

toys, books, clothes, or gift cards.

Experience gifts are valued for a reason. They make memories and provide time for connecting and bonding with your child. Material gifts are often enjoyed for a moment and then abandoned for the next new thing.

However, material gifts have one advantage. Material gifts, especially ones that are very special to your child, can be used or played with again and again, bringing you to their mind over and over. This happens for me! Every time I use a certain coffee mug, I think fondly about the thoughtful student who gave it to me a few years ago.

So, are there experience gifts for kids that can happen over and over again?" Yes! . . . Mommy and Me classes! (or Daddy and me, Grandma and me, Grandpa and me...) A gift card for a Mommy and Me class is a great gift to suggest when grandparents, aunts, and uncles ask for birthday gift ideas. They might even want to be the one to spend that special time with your child!

Mommy and Me classes are generally scheduled weekly or monthly for an extended period of time. They offer an opportunity to spend time with your child that is focused on doing something together and enjoying the shared experience. These experiences can take many forms.

Being a music teacher, Kindermusik classes are the first ones I think of, but there are a wide variety of classes you could consider including music, swimming, dance, and others.

Southern Oregon School of Music, where I teach, offers weekly and monthly Kindermusik classes. Child and adult participate together during the entire class with infants to age three, and the classes for those from four to seven years old include a sharing time for the last 15 minutes when the adults (and siblings, too) participate in the class. This sharing time is very special to the children and they love your involvement in the final activities of the class.

The close relationship that develops out of these shared experiences will impact your family life for years to come. Memories of special times with you

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Children grow up so fast. It won't be long before your child will be off on all of their own adventures. So when considering a gift for your little ones for their birthday, include an experience gift that gives your child (and you) the best gift ever -- each other!



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## Next issue: April-June Summer Camps!

Deadline March 20th

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# A VERY DIFFERENT way to CELEBRATE at your next Birthday Party



**W**ho doesn't enjoy a birthday party? Friends and family getting together for a get-together to celebrate that SPECIAL person on their SPECIAL DAY!

And.....there are LOTS of ways to celebrate at a party!

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For 18 years now, folks have been celebrating their SPECIAL DAY with the help of the BUG GUY and BUGS, Reptiles and Amphibians, Spiders, Owl pellets, Bats, Dinosaurs, etc.

A birthday party is one of those special events parents can both look forward to and dread all at once. Seeing the look of joy on those faces as they open presents and eat cake is a gift in itself, but the planning, preparation and cost that can go into a homemade party can be a HUGE downside!

You can make your Birthday unique! It's not every day that you get to pet AMAZING creatures and then EAT them, too. Eating BUGS is a VERY popular part of our BUG-THEMED parties....just ask!

When you contact us about a party, please have 2-3 ALTERNATE dates and times as we do A LOT of parties each year!

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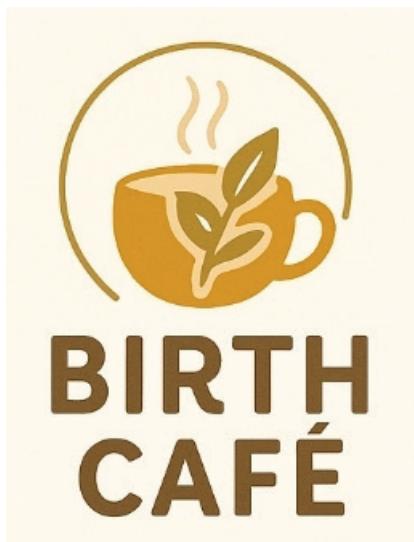
**March 23-27 COLOR CHEMISTRY CAMP**



**April 18 EARTH DAY CELEBRATION**



[scienceworks.org](http://scienceworks.org)



# Creating Space for Birth Conversations in Southern Oregon

**B**irth Cafes are free, informal gatherings created to offer space for open conversation about birth, parenting, and the many transitions surrounding the arrival of a baby. Hosted as part of the Birthing Community of Southern Oregon, these gatherings bring families together in a relaxed, welcoming environment where questions, stories, and experiences can be shared without

judgment or agenda.

Unlike traditional childbirth classes or presentations, Birth Cafes are conversation-based. There is no lecture, no expectation to participate in a particular way, and no single philosophy of birth being promoted. Participants are invited to speak, listen, or simply be present. Common topics include preparing for labor, navigating medical systems, emotional well-being, postpartum realities, partner and family support, and the wide range of ways birth can unfold.

Birth Cafes are gently facilitated to ensure the space remains inclusive, respectful, and supportive. They are not affiliated with hospitals or medical practices, and they do not replace medical care. Instead, they serve as a community complement—offering connection, shared knowledge, and access to local support.

An important aspect of Birth Cafes is connecting families with resources available in the Rogue Valley and surrounding areas. Through conversation and community presence, participants often learn about local birth workers, educators, lactation support, mental health resources, and family-centered services. This organic sharing helps



Birth Cafes in Southern Oregon are held monthly on the second Thursday from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. at Hyperion Coffeehouse in Talent, and on the second Friday from 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. at the Lonely Pine Café in Grants Pass. These gatherings are free to attend and open to all.



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## SIGNS OF A POSSIBLE GAMBLING PROBLEM IN KIDS



- Asking for or borrowing money from the family
- Gambling-related "stuff" at home (Lottery tickets, betting sheets)
- Unexplained debts or windfall cash/new items (like clothes or jewelry)
- Spending unexplained time away from home, work or school
- Behavior change (seems distracted, moody, sad, worried, nervous, etc.)
- Withdrawal from the family
- Less involvement in outside activities
- Money or valuables are missing from your home
- Overly upset at conclusion of sporting match
- Telephone calls from strangers and higher phone bills
- Bragging about winnings
- Intense interest in gambling conversations
- Playing gambling type games on the Internet
- Unusual amount of time spent watching sports on TV and/or reading magazines having to do with sports

If you think your child might have a gambling problem,  
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 for free and confidential help.  
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[pearblossom@pearblossomparade.org](mailto:pearblossom@pearblossomparade.org)

All participants will participate in the Pear Blossom Parade on April 11th!  
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**50th Annual  
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April 11, 2026**



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This entity receives HRSA Health Center Program grant funding under 42 U.S.C. §254b and has been deemed a Public Health Service employee for purposes of certain liability protections, including Federal Tort Claims Act coverage, under 42 U.S.C. §233(g)-(n). Siskiyou Community Health Center is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



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