



HomeschoolNYC Newsletter

Celebrating Child-led Learning

Vol. IV, issue 2
April, 2013

April is poetry month! Every month of the year is a good time for poetry, but there is something about the newness of spring that sets our hearts racing, our feet dancing, and our minds dreaming. We seek the outdoors and new inspiration. Take the learning outside and don your poet persona. Here I share seven favorite poetry games, which you can play inside, outside, or even in the car. Happy spring!



[Laurie Block Spigel](#)

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Poetry Games at HomeschoolNYC

Seven Poetry Games

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Quote by William Blake

**AERO Conference 2013~
Laurie's AERO Workshop**

Seven Poetry Games



April is poetry month, and cause for celebration in the home and classroom. As a poetry teacher, I have participated in beatnik café experiences, publishing and bookmaking events, group readings by professionals and children, and played countless poetry games. Here are seven games that you can play with all ages, sure to result in lots of fun poetry! [***READ MORE***](#)

More Poetry Fun



[Read poems by Laurie](#), including *Fairytale Class in the Park*, about teaching a group of homeschoolers.

[Read poems by Laurie's students.](#)

Scroll down for collage poetry, mistake poems, recipe poems, spell poems, acrostics, and more.

[Make a Word Box.](#)

[Make a Stick & Elastic Book](#) (there is a tree poem on this page).

[Read Laurie's article *What is Poetry For?*](#)

[Laurie's Favorite Poetry Books for Children](#)

Poetry Field Trips in NYC



Spring is the perfect time to take a walk in the park to read or write poetry, but there are several other places where you can find workshops, readings, and inspiration.

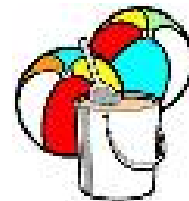
[Click here for a list of field trips and special events to celebrate poetry!](#)

Summertime for Homeschoolers

Thinking about what to do this summer? Check out these resources.

[Camps recommended for homeschoolers.](#)

[Camps especially for families.](#)



Quote by William Blake
from the introduction to *Songs of Innocence*

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book, that all may read."
So he vanish'd from my sight,
And I pluck'd a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stain'd the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

~William Blake (1757-1827), English Poet, Painter and Printmaker

Read Blake's plea to parents as he warns them about school in *The School Boy*,
another poem from his [Songs of Innocence](#).

AERO Conference 2013 near NYC



What Works!

The 10th Annual AERO Conference
May 23-26, 2013 - New York City Area

Featuring Alfie Kohn & More!

Conference workshops are listed on-line, and some of the presentations sound fascinating. This is the first major conference on alternative education to take place near New York City! AERO's theme this year is "What Works!" Keynote speakers include: Alfie Kohn, Peter Gray, and representatives from North Star, a student-directed homeschool learning center in western Massachusetts. It is a line-up that offers us guidance, wisdom, and a vision of the future.

This year the conference will have more of a focus on homeschooling than ever before. Workshops and speakers include Pat Montgomery (founder of Clonlara Home Based Education Program), Peter Bergson (founder of the pioneering homeschool center in PA, Open Connections), Wendy Raver (historian, educator and homeschooler), Amy Milstein (NYC Unschooler), a panel of homeschool resource people from the NYC area, as well as my own presentation on the personalization of education.

Laurie's Workshop at AERO

An impersonal education is rigid, standardized, and uniform. In his AERO keynote speech of 2012, Sir Ken Robinson declared that the key to transformation in our educational system, and in our children, is personalization. These words echo my own experience.

A few years ago a family visited me, sat at my kitchen table, and asked me why their children's education wasn't working. "How can I motivate my child to write?" asked the concerned father of 14-year-old twin girls.

"Simple," I answered. "Make sure they are connected to the material and that it's meaningful to them. Encourage them to put *themselves* into their writing."

"But schools don't let us do that!" his daughter cut in. Both girls hated writing. They felt completely disconnected from it.

Two homeschooled years later, at age 16, the girls were happily working on essays: an eight-page illustrated essay on wedding dresses in different cultures around the world, and a ten-page research paper explaining how different responses to a child's mistakes helps or hurts the child. Each teen had chosen her

own topic, worked at her own pace, found her own resources, and developed her own style and approach. The result was outstanding, riveting work.

While homeschooling may offer the greatest potential for freedom and personalization, it is entirely possible to achieve the same results in a classroom setting, and in every subject. Join Laurie as she shares specific techniques and curricula that she has developed, working in classrooms and with individuals, resulting in highly personalized, outstanding results for her students.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Education Uncensored

Here's what people are saying about Laurie's book:

"You made me laugh, you made me cry, and you inspired me. I can literally hear your voice, and love your storytelling and your wisdom and just the whole package. I'm stimulated and filled with ideas for my own teaching."

~ Dr. Bonnie Shulman, professor of mathematics, Bates College

"I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciated meeting you and reading your book. It is terrific, and for me, the best part was its New York perspective. I know no other book available to homeschoolers that so overtly references an urban perspective."

~ David Albert, author of *And the Skylark Sings with Me* and other books

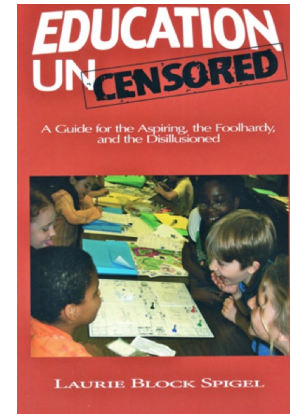
"Laurie's evolution as a teacher and life-long involvement in the world of education has given her a profound understanding of the problems that plague today's schools. This book offers an insightful look at how an increasingly standardized system is robbing our children of their individuality and passion for learning. Additionally, it provides innovative how-to curriculums for anyone involved or interested in educating children."

~ Ellen Labiner, homeschooling parent and special educator

[Read excerpts here.](#)

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E-mail comments and suggestions to Laurie@HomeschoolNYC.com.



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