

suburban life

Kidology Inc.,
the dynamic brand
founded by Luba
Patlakh Kaplun,
provides special
education
and pediatric
therapy designed
to give children in
the Philadelphia
area and beyond
the support
they need to
thrive.

pg. 38

+
**Also
Inside:**
Power women,
back to school,
and more





Poised for Growth

Luba Patlakh Kaplun has many aspects of her identity: mother, daughter, speech language pathologist, empath, immigrant, risktaker, someone who was raised to make a difference in the world. Each aspect of her life inspired her as she created Kidology Inc., a thriving therapeutic enterprise serving the needs of local children and families.

Since its founding in 2014, Kidology has grown to provide pediatric therapy and child development services at locations in Southampton and Northeast Philadelphia. Kidology specializes in instructive therapy—speech, physical, occupational, behavioral, and myofunctional—to address an array of developmental delays, including fine motor, speech, feeding, and mobility issues. Although Kidology works with children from birth to age 21, most of the children it serves are between the ages of 3 and 7 years old.

“I feel very grateful to have a role in building a community around helping other people,” says Kaplun, who was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, and came to the United States with her family as a toddler. “It’s so fulfilling to see parents who come to us and talk about how grateful they are because we have helped them establish a path for

Kidology Inc.,
the dynamic brand founded
by Luba Patlakh Kaplun,
provides special education
and pediatric therapy
designed to give children in
the Philadelphia area and
beyond the support they
need to thrive.

by **Bill Donahue** | photos by **Alison Dunlap**

their child, or because their child graduated, or because their child has a safe place to grow.”

Energetic, ambitious, and ever resourceful, Kaplun has assembled a team of like-minded professionals with advanced degrees who care

deeply about children and families.

“When I was creating Kidology, I wanted a special place where children can grow, staffed by motivated, caring, and empathetic people,” she says. “Our team is made up of highly educated professionals, all licensed by the state of Pennsylvania. We are here to lend a hand and a shoulder and create a better foundation for the future.”

“Play” accounts for a big part of Kidology’s approach. Each location has a Kidology Play-space, a state-of-the-art sensory play gym designed to help children have fun while developing essential skills.

“My personal caseload is much smaller these days, but play is the way I help kids with therapy,” she says. “If I’m working with a non-verbal child, just sitting with them and singing ‘Roll, roll, roll the dough’ will help a nonverbal child learn to speak 99 percent of the time. When you’re having fun, there’s less pressure to accomplish anything. Play helps us learn without realizing it.”

While Kidology treats children primarily out of its Southampton and Northeast Philadelphia locations, Kaplun has created a flexible model

designed to “meet children where they’re at.” Every child begins the process of moving forward with a thorough evaluation at a Kidology location, though families can elect to have services at a clinic, in daycare, or in the comfort of their own home. Also, the Kidology Mobile Therapy Bus travels to parks or other central locations in Philadelphia and Delaware counties to deliver one-to-one therapy for children who cannot get to either of Kidology’s brick-and-mortar locations.

“I’m looking to help as many people as possible as soon as possible,” Kaplun says. “Every day is an opportunity to make progress. If people aren’t able to come to us, there’s no progress being made. That’s why we go to them, when and if needed.”

Having a capable team behind her has enabled Kaplun to step back from her direct casework and spend more time growing the business, including creating new ways to connect with families. Through a nonprofit initiative known as Kidology Thrive Nonprofit Classrooms, for example, Kidology addresses gaps in education for young children with autism. Children may attend full-day (up to seven hours a day) or half-day (two and a half hours) sessions. Developed in partnership with the state of Pennsylvania, the classrooms provide a structured and supportive environment modeled after a traditional daycare setting, with the goal of preparing children to transition to kindergarten.

Other examples of Kaplun’s outreach include *The Growth Lab* podcast and a recently published children’s book titled *Bobo Wears a Bowtie*. For the book, she found all the inspiration she needed in her late mother, Angela, an incredibly hard worker who encouraged her daughter to achieve anything she set her mind to.

“My mother never told me, ‘You can’t do this or you can’t do that,’” she recalls. “Instead she said, ‘OK, how are you going to do it and what’s next?’ She had the biggest heart, and she showed it through food, hugs, and a lot of motivation.”

Bobo Wears a Bowtie follows a bear cub who sometimes feels scared and overwhelmed

“
We are here
to lend a
hand and
a shoulder
and create
a better
foundation
for the
future.”

—Luba Patlakh Kaplun,
Kidology Inc.



by new experiences. A magical bowtie helps him find his bravery. The bowtie, Kaplun adds, is a metaphor for a positive mindset.

“Many years ago, my husband and I were living with my parents,” she says. “He bought a bowtie that he really liked, and he felt really good about himself when he wore it. A couple weeks later, when some things were going wrong—you know, life was happening—my mom told him, ‘You go upstairs and put on that bowtie.’ Basically, she was telling him to come back with a different attitude.”

“I wrote the story then but didn’t do anything with it,” she continues. “I always wanted to publish it, and finally the time came for that to happen. The experience taught me that no matter what’s on your to-do list, if you really want to make something

happen, you can if you put your mind to it. You just have to continue to believe in yourself.”

Kaplun’s successes suggest that her words are not only well-meaning, but also quite true. While she expects to open more locations in the city and suburbs in the near future, Kidology will soon gain footholds in towns and cities across the country. She always envisioned Kidology as a national brand, and her vision will soon become reality through the magic of franchising.

“We’ll be launching to certain states in September,” she says. “I didn’t plan for this, but you meet some people along the way who help you get to where you want to go. It’s going to be awesome to be the Chik-fil-A of my category. I’m excited for the expansion of the brand, but to be able to give this opportunity to someone else—and to be able to help so many people across the country because of something I created—is just remarkable.” ■



Kidology specializes in instructive therapy to address an array of developmental delays. Each location has a Kidology Playspace to help children have fun while developing essential skills.



Kidology Inc.

kidologyinc.com | (215) 330-4116

928 Jaymor Road, Unit C-150
Southampton, PA 18966

2810 Southampton Road
Philadelphia, PA 19154