

Parent Outlook

FALL - WINTER ISSUE
2011-2012

DISTRICT 86 PARENT MAGAZINE

➤ SEE HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE

C SINGLETON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Joel, Jayden, Cierah, Mayah, Ashley and Jakaila participated at the Singleton School Dedication.





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Parent Outlook is a local parent magazine
published since 2002 two times per year
focusing on education and parenting.

Dear District 86 Families:

I trust that you and your children had a successful start to the 2011-2012 school year. As your new school superintendent, I am excited about the opportunity to serve Joliet Public Schools District 86. I have over 30 years of educational experience. I bring a great deal of experience to my new role in District 86 and am confident that we can make a positive difference for the education of our children.

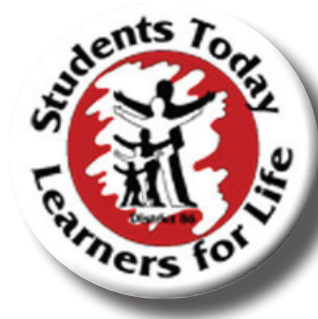


Dr. Charles E. Coleman

In order to be truly successful, education must be a partnership between schools, parents, students, and the community at large. I want to express my personal appreciation to you for entrusting us with your student's development. Working and communicating together, we will have an outstanding year.

District 86 encourages open, two-way communications between home and school. You are always welcome to talk with your child's teachers, school principal, or contact me as questions arise in the months ahead.

Sincerely,
Charles E. Coleman, Ed.D.
Superintendent



CALENDAR

2011

Thanksgiving Day, Day Before,
and Following – No School
November 23 – 25

Last Day of Classes
before Winter Break
December 21

2012

Classes Resume
January 5

Martin Luther King's Birthday –
No School
January 16

Parent/Teacher Conference Day –
No School for Students
January 27

Institute Day – No School for Students
February 17

Presidents Day– No School
February 20

Casimir Pulaski Day – No School
March 5

Spring Break
April 2 – 9

School Improvement Day – No PM
Class for Students
April 27

School Improvement Day –
No PM Class for Students
May 25

Memorial Day – No School
May 28

Last Day of School (Tentative)
May 30

Emergency Days (If Needed)
May 31 – June 6

DISTRICT 86

RECEIVES DONATED SUPPLIES



Thank you so much to all the generous individuals and companies who donated much needed school supplies for our students. Several local businesses adopted a school or held a supply collection drive at their business. When children have the correct supplies at school every day, it enhances their ability to learn. Please take the time now to make sure your child has the appropriate school supplies at school and also at home to use for homework.

This year's donors included:

- AT&T
- ComEd
- Community Christian Church
- Cornerstone Services
- Crossroads Christian Church
- Curves on Essington Road
- Daughters of Isis
- Everest College
- Faith Lutheran Church
- Fashion Bug
- First Presbyterian Church
- Golden State Foods
- Graphic Papers
- Joliet Junior Women's Club
- Metra
- Panera Bread
- PLS Loans Store



2011-2012

STRATEGIC PLAN



The Board of School Inspectors, Central Office Administrators, and the District Community Council worked together to review programs, monitor goals, and develop the District 86 Strategic Plan for the 2011-2012 school year. Input for the development of the plan came from parent surveys, parent and staff focus groups, and committee input. Below is a summary of the plan.

The District Community Council identified six goals and outcomes as a focus for this school year. Action items will be facilitated to meet the goals and outcomes.

GOAL I: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Students will meet or exceed state standards in all curricular areas as measured by State and local assessments.

Outcomes:

- Instruction in all curricular areas will be delivered utilizing research-based best practices and effective strategies.
- All children will have access to the general education curriculum with the appropriate supports and resources provided in the least restrictive environment.

- Intervention programs will be implemented for all students that are identified as at-risk through universal screening.

- Educational enrichment will be provided for all students who exceed the expectations of the general education curriculum.

- Consistently and effectively use a wide variety of formative and summative assessments results to differentiate instructional practices for individual students as well as groups of students.

GOAL II: TECHNOLOGY

Staff, students, and parents will utilize available technology as a teaching and learning tool.

Outcomes:

- Technology resources will be available for all students and staff.
- Technology training will be available for staff, students, and parents.
- Relevant usage of technology will be evident in all classrooms and curricular areas.
- Technology infrastructure, hardware, and software will be updated and maintained throughout the District.

GOAL III: STUDENT BEHAVIOR

Students will receive instruction in an environment that is conducive to learning.

Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate respect for themselves and others in all settings of the school environment.
- Students will demonstrate responsibility for their learning in all curricular areas.
- Students will attend school on a regular basis.
- Students will demonstrate positive character traits that minimize disruptions and increase the acceptance and understanding of another.

GOAL IV: HUMAN RESOURCES

Joliet Public Schools will hire, train, and retain highly qualified staff in all job categories.

Outcomes:

- Each school's staff will reflect the diverse composition of our student population and school community.
- Strategies for hiring and retaining staff will be consistently applied in all job categories.
- Ongoing professional development will be provided for staff in all job categories.
- New staff will be provided support and resources through an induction/mentor program.
- Staff will be evaluated and provided constructive feedback for improvement on an annual basis following the evaluation procedures approved by the District.



GOAL V: PARENT INVOLVEMENT

All parents will support and participate in the education of their children.

Outcomes:

- Parents will regularly receive progress reports regarding their children and their school.



- Parents will be given the opportunity to participate in parent and family activities that promote student achievement.
- Parents will be supplied with a variety of methods to provide input to the school and District for program improvement.
- Parents will be provided with workshops and written materials focused on methods for assisting with their child's education.

GOAL VI: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

All community members will have the opportunity to support and participate in the education of our children.

Outcomes:

- Community members will be given opportunity to provide input as to the focus of the District through survey and committee involvement.
- Community members will be asked to partner with District staff to provide programs and activities needed by our students.
- Students will be offered opportunities to interact with community members and organizations.
- Community members will act as positive role models for our children through their work within our schools.

The full plan is available on the District website at www.joliet86.org.



FOREST PARK BEGINS GARDEN CLUB

Forest Park I.E. School recently formed a Garden Club in cooperation with Cool Joliet at the school. The Garden Club provides third, fourth, and fifth grade students “hands on” experience working in the garden. The students recently planted flower bulbs in the newly constructed garden beds located at outside of the school. Forest Park School received a \$1,057.49 grant from the Joliet Grade Schools Foundation for Educational Excellence to purchase supplies for the garden.



THANK YOU BOARD OF SCHOOL INSPECTORS

Joliet Public Schools District 86 recently joined school districts across Illinois to celebrate School Board Members Day to recognize these community volunteers for their commitment and contributions to public schools.

“Our Board of School Inspectors serve without monetary compensation to make public education the best it can be for every child in our District,” said Joliet Public Schools District 86 Superintendent Dr. Charles E. Coleman, “They develop policies and make tough decisions on complex educational and social issues that affect the entire community and the lives of our students.”

“Preparing today’s students to be productive citizens and the leaders in a global economy is a tremendous task. As elected officials, school board members are the voice of our community, serving first and foremost the best interest of our students,” Coleman added.

Thank you to Board of School Inspectors President Jeffrey Pritz, Vice President Deborah Ziech, and Inspectors Natalie Coleman, Lorraine Guerrero, Tonya Myers, Gwendolyn Ulmer, and Demmond Dorris for serving the students in District 86.



Woodland Elementary

WINS \$50,000

Congratulations to Woodland Elementary School for winning \$50,000 in the U.S. Cellular's recent "Calling All Communities" campaign. Woodland is one of only 18 schools in the country to win. Representatives from U.S. Cellular made a surprise visit to Woodland informing the staff and students that they won \$50,000 in the promotion.

"Our community is extraordinary and the support that we have received from the Joliet area has been astonishing" said Woodland Elementary School Principal, Dr. LaQuita Carter. "The money will assist our students with additional resources that will support our academic programs as we strive to close the achievement gap for all

of our children."

During the month-long contest, teachers, parents, staff, and community members were encouraged to cast online votes daily for their favorite school. The top school won \$150,000 and the next 17 highest vote-getters received \$50,000 each. The money can be used any way the school sees fit to enhance students' learning experience.

This is the third year that U.S. Cellular has awarded \$1 million to schools through Calling All Communities. The campaign continues to grow with more than 1.5 million votes being cast this year for 2,700 schools nationwide.

JOLIET READS

BOOKMARK WINNERS



Joliet Public Schools kicked-off the ninth year of Joliet Reads, a citywide reading campaign to promote literacy, at a Joliet Slammers baseball game in August. Joliet Grade Schools Board of School Inspectors Natalie Coleman, Gwen Ulmer and Superintendent Dr. Charles Coleman recognized the winners of the annual Joliet Reads bookmark contest during the pre-game activities at the baseball game. The students' bookmarks will be given out during the school year to children and adults in the Joliet community to promote reading.

This year's student winners included:

Cain Almazan, Cunningham Elementary; Stephanie Bedolla, Culbertson Elementary; Xochitl Correa, Marycrest Early Childhood Center; Crystal Diaz, Thomas Jefferson Elementary; Shannon Doran, Washington Jr. High; Chloe Goron, Eisen-

hower Academy; Lyndsey Gudeman, Forest Park I.E. School; Alejandro Guzman, Washington Jr. High; Susi Hatz, Forest Park I.E. School; Josselyn Lopez, Taft Elementary; Liz Lopez, Pershing Elementary; Nathan Huerta, A.O. Marshall Elementary; Ailani Ortiz, Dirksen Jr. High; Bryssa Osaguera, Farragut Elementary; Mai Pena, Hufford Jr. High; Jennifer Rodriguez, Gompers Jr. High; Jonne Rogers, Washington Jr. High; Abigail Salas, Dirksen Jr. High; Jasmin Salcido, Marycrest Early Childhood Center; Luis Sanchez, Pershing Elementary; Kayla Schroeder, Washington Jr. High; Mya Stukel, Carl Sandburg Elementary; Neida Tobias, Sator Sanchez Elementary; Rebecca Verchimak, Eisenhower Academy; Emily Villafuerte, Taft Elementary; Linda Villagomez, Marycrest Early Childhood Center; Shametria Williams, Woodland Elementary; Klara Wilson, Pershing Elementary; and Hannah Wonnell, Lynne Thigpen Elementary.



Upcoming Joliet Reads book recommendations include:

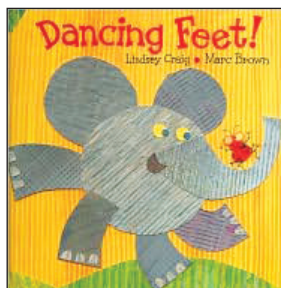
DECEMBER

Early Childhood/Kindergarten

Dancing Feet
by Lindsey Craig

First and Second Grades

Jackie's Gift: A True Story of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Jackie Robinson
by Sharon Robinson



Third Grade

Jackie's Gift: A True Story of Christmas, Hanukkah, and Jackie Robinson
by Sharon Robinson

Fourth and Fifth Grades

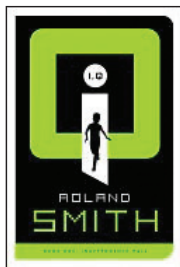
The True Gift: A Christmas Story
by Patricia MacLachlan

Junior High

Independence Hall
by Roland Smith

High School/Adult

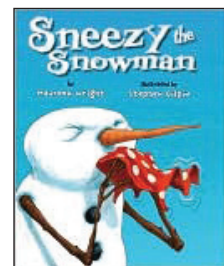
Spoon River Anthology
by Edgar Lee Masters



JANUARY

Early Childhood/Kindergarten

Sneezy the Snowman
by Maureen Wright



First and Second Grades

Pierre the Penguin
by Jean Marzollo

Third Grade

I Wanna Iguana
by Karen Orloff

Fourth and Fifth Grades

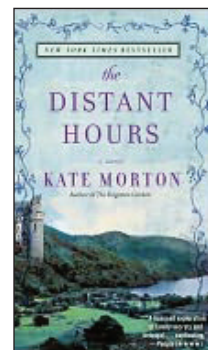
The Giant Slayer
by Iain Lawrence

Junior High

Students on Strike: Jim Crow, Civil Rights, Brown, and Me
by John A. Stokes

High School/Adult

The Distant Hours
by Kate Morton



JOLIET GRADE SCHOOL DISTRICT 86 OPENS NEW SCHOOL



Pearl Singleton

Nearly 200 people including Joliet Public Schools District 86 Board of School Inspectors and administrators, elected officials, and Joliet community members joined family members of the late Isaac Singleton to dedicate Joliet's newest school – Isaac Singleton Elementary School on October 3, 2011.

Deborah Ziech, vice president of Joliet Public Schools District 86 Board of School Inspector, served as Mistress of Ceremonies of the event. Participants in the program included Superintendent Dr. Charles Coleman, Illinois State Senator A.J. Wilhelmi, Mt. Zion Baptist Church Pastor David Latimore, Daughter of Isaac Singleton Valerie Singleton, Assistant to the Mayor of Joliet Jim Murphy, President/CEO of the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry Russ Slinkard, Son of Isaac Singleton Pastor Chuck Singleton, Granddaughter Minister Chevez White, and representatives of Healy, Bender, and Associates. The Color Guard and Presentation of the Flag was made by members of the Veterans of

Foreign War Stone City Post #2199.

During the Dedication Ceremony, Isaac Singleton Elementary School Principal Linda Scott and students Joel Cana, Mayah Light, Cierah Moore, Ashley Orozco, Jayden Perez, and Jakaila Rancier presented Singleton's widow, Pearl Singleton, with a lifetime Isaac Singleton School Pass.

The school, located at 1451 Copperfield Avenue next to Gompers Junior High School, is currently home to 515 students, PreKindergarten through fifth grade. Joliet Public Schools District 86 currently serves 11,448 students at 21 different schools.

Dr. Singleton dedicated his entire life to making a difference for mankind and played a major role in the civil rights movement. Dr. Singleton was a strong advocate of education and a mentor to thousands of children, including many District 86 students. Dr. Singleton served as pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church for 47 years and retired in 2009. Dr. Singleton passed away on February 10, 2011.

Does Music Make my Child Smarter?

By Angela Smith

Scientific research on the neurological and developmental effects of music has fascinated educators and parents with the possibility of children's learning enhancement. Compared to the long history of research on language, our scientific understanding of music is new. Fortunately for parents, enriching your children's lives with music can be easily and pleasantly accomplished. From soft music in the nursery to musical toys and dance lessons, encouraging music involvement in a fun way strengthens children's educational, physical, and emotional development.

Here are a couple of reasons why:

1. Playing A Musical Instrument Makes You Smarter

Many studies have been conducted on the effects



of music to the brain. Scientists say that children, who are exposed to music, or those who play an instrument, do better in school than those who don't. Recent research suggests exposure to music may benefit a child's reading age, IQ and the development of certain parts of the brain. Adults can benefit from learning to play an instrument too because it helps

the mind to be alert and remain active eventually helping to sharpen the memory.

2. It Teaches Discipline

Learning to play an instrument is like learning to speak another language and it can be challenging at times. One of the qualities musicians possess is discipline. You have to be disciplined in order to master playing your instrument. You have to set time each day to practice, practice and practice some more.

**GEORGE KAY'S
MUSIC**
8 1 5 - 7 2 7 - 4 6 5 6

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BOOKS

MAKE GREAT HOLIDAY GIFTS

Each year 12,500 students from different regions of the United States read newly published children's and young adults' trade books and vote for the ones they like best. Below you will find a selection of recommended books that might make wonderful stocking stuffers.

Beginning Readers (Grades K-2)

"A Balloon for Isabel"

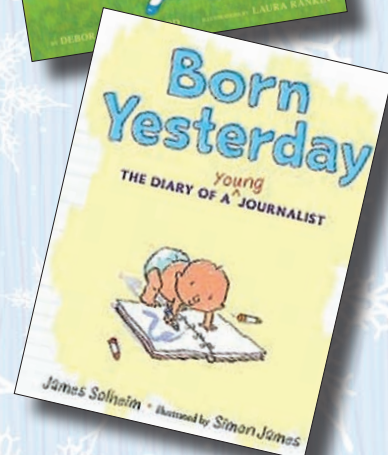
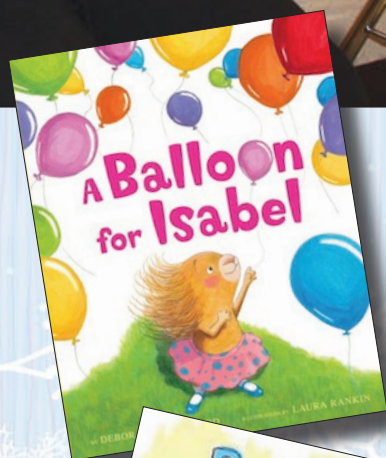
By Deborah Underwood and Laura Rankin

Isabel, a porcupine, wants a balloon for graduation but the teacher says no. She tries several amusing ways to get one until she is successful.

"Born Yesterday: The Diary of a Young Journalist"

By James Solheim and James Simon

This is a witty and insightful sibling tale told from a whole new perspective. A baby starts a journal and describes his view of the world.



Young Readers (Grades 3-4)

“Animal Rescue Team: Gator on the Loose!”

By Sue Stauffacher and Priscilla Lamont

Kesha Cater, and friends, family, and neighbors work together at Carters’ Urban Rescue to find an alligator a new home when it turns up in a swimming pool.

“Amazing Greek Myths of Wonder and Blunders”

By Mike Townsend

Common Greek myths become accessible and fun in this graphic format. The colors are vivid and the comic characters are funny, while following the action of the original myths.



Junior High (Grades 6-8)

“31 Ways to Change the World”

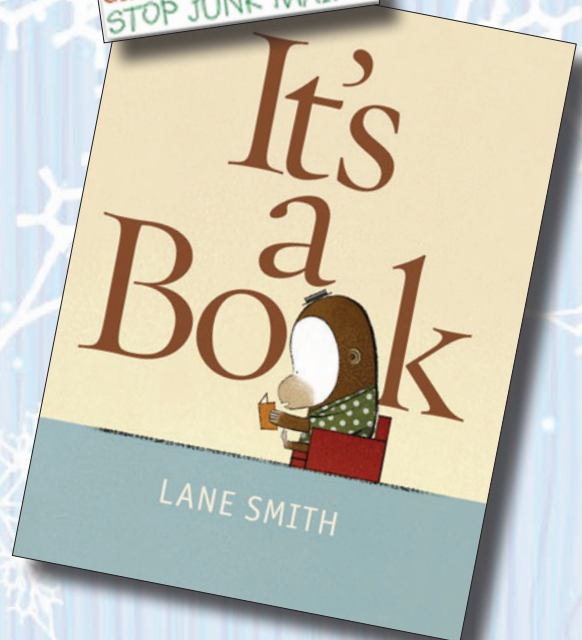
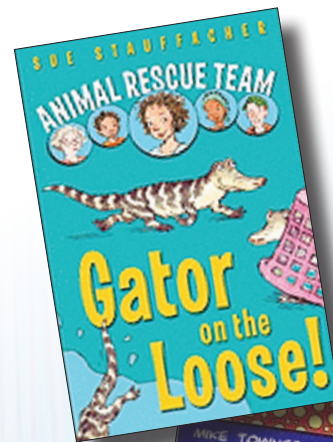
By We Are What We Do

The premise of this book is that everyone can do their part by taking positive action toward conserving energy, recycling, helping others, helping the environment, and educating themselves on issues. This book serves as a great starting place for raising children’s awareness toward making a positive difference in their world.

“It’s a Book”

By Lane Smith

Monkey introduces the concept of a book to the tech-savvy donkey who simply can’t fathom the idea. He asks, “Does it Tweet? Blog? Text? WiFi?” and more.





JOLIET CHAMBER NOW ACCEPTING GREAT TEACHER NOMINATIONS

The 2012 Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry Great Teacher Nomination Forms are now available at the Chamber office and at all Joliet District 86 Schools. The deadline to submit nominations is Monday, November 28 at 4 p.m. at the Joliet Chamber Office on Chicago Street. Applications are judged and the winners will be announced later in the winter.

FARRAGUT RAISES \$1,000 FOR AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY

Congratulations to Farragut Elementary School students and staff who raised \$1,000 for the American Cancer Society. The school, in conjunction with the American Cancer Society and Bill Jacobs Joliet/Plainfield sponsored a Driving for a Cure promotion at the school. Students, including fourth graders Araceli Vital and Roman Esquivel, who donated at least \$1.00 wrote their name on a pink ribbon decal and placed the decals on a 2012 Chevy Sonic automobile on display at



the school. Farragut principal Darlynn Terry and assistant principal JodiLyn Simmons-Machota also spray painted their hair pink during the assembly to show their support.

Here are some ideas to help you start a home library and get your kids more excited about reading:

- Make sure the books you get -- whether they're from the bookstore or on loan from the local library -- are appropriate for your child's age and reading level.
- Books should also be on your child's physical level, meaning where they can easily reach them. But you don't need a fancy child-size bookshelf -- a milk crate or "trunk of books" can suffice for most young ones.
- Just as adults are more likely to pick up reading materials that interest them, so are children. So stock your library with books, magazines and newspapers that encourage their natural interests. You don't have to limit yourself to print materials. Computer-savvy kids may enjoy reading classic stories online or on an e-reader, so let them.

• You don't need to spend a fortune to furnish your library. Garage sales and thrift stores are great for inexpensive classic tales and popular favorites. And look for special promotions in your area. For example, Scholastic Book Club is offering a book (up to a \$5 value) with the purchase of two specially marked Kellogg's products available exclusively at Walmart, such as Eggo waffles, Keebler snacks and other Kellogg's cereals.

So make it a habit to read to or with your children as often as you can. Their future depends on it.

Follow these 4 tips to boost your body's defenses:

1. Fend off germs. Get a flu vaccine and wash your hands a lot. The holidays are all about sharing, but some things you'll want to keep to yourself: forks, spoons, and drinking utensils. People can be contagious before they know they're sick, so even just a sip from someone's drink puts his or her germs in your body.

2. Eat healthy and be merry. Make it a priority to eat five or more fruits and vegetables a day (choose the whole fruit instead of juice so you feel full longer and avoid added sugar). Carry an apple or a bag of baby carrots so you always have a healthy snack available. And don't give your exercise routine a holiday. Exercise gives



you energy in addition to burning calories.

3. Get some Z's. Getting 8½ to 9 hours of sleep a night during the holidays

can help strengthen your immune system, give you more energy, and make you less vulnerable to stress.

4. Beat the blues. Holiday depression doesn't just happen in songs. For some people, it's seasonal, brought on by shorter days, longer nights, and colder weather. Other people are going through difficult life events like a breakup or a move. If you feel down, go outside, even if it's cold where you live. Sunlight and exercise are great mood lifters. Try a seasonal activity to put you in the holiday spirit, like ice skating or neighborhood carol singing. And don't hesitate to talk to someone you trust, like a parent or teacher, about how you're feeling.

Holiday recipe to make with your child

Old Fashioned Butter Cookie Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour, sifted
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup margarine, set out to soften
- 3/4 cups sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 egg, unbeaten
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

Old Fashioned Butter Cookie Directions:

1. Mix together the flour, baking powder and salt. Set aside.
2. Cream together well, the margarine and sugar.
3. Add egg, milk and vanilla. Mix together well.
4. Gradually add in the flour mixture. Add 1/4 at a time and mix together with a big spoon.
5. Chill dough overnight.
6. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.



7. Take chilled dough from the refrigerator and divide in two.

8. Roll out the dough to the thickness that you like for your cut out cookies. Use your favorite cutouts.

9. Put cookies onto ungreased cookie sheets.

10. Bake for 5 to 8 minutes, depending upon thickness.

11. Allow to cool.

Use your favorite frosting recipe and decorate with colored sugars and candy balls.

Gift Wrapped Children's Christmas Card



Materials:

- Camera and color print film
- Developing service
- Gift-wrapped boxes
- Copy services
- Rubber cement

Instructions:

1. Have your child decorate big boxes with shiny gift-wrap. Pose them for an outdoor photo and order 100 prints.
2. Have your child create doodles for the border of the card, which you then glue to a master template.
3. Make copies of the card template at a print shop, then glue the pictures to the cards using rubber cement.

Tips:

Glue the photo to your template before copying. Your card won't look quite as elegant, but you won't have to glue copies of the photo to each card.

HOLIDAY GAMES



Fill the Stocking

Supplies:

- Stocking, spoon and bowl for each team.
- Wrapped candy.

How To Play: Divide into teams. Have children line up at one end of the room. At the other end, hang a Christmas stocking for each team. Place a bowl of candy and a spoon in front of each team. Each child takes a turn taking a candy from the bowl with the spoon. They then carry the candy on the spoon to the stocking and drop the candy in the stocking. Race back to the next person in line, give them the spoon. First team to fill the stocking wins!

Three-Legged Stocking Race

Supplies:

- Oversized stocking that will fit two feet
- Tie
- Tape to mark finish line

How To Play: Pair up kids. Have each pair put a leg in the oversized stocking and tie it at top so that it won't fall off. Make sure you have plenty of space. Put all the pairs at one end and mark a finish line at the other. On your mark the kids race to be the first pair over the line.

Christmas Memory Game

Supplies:

18 items in box

How To Play: Show the items in the box to the children. Remove one or more items out of the box (without children seeing you). Have the children guess what items are missing. For older children put items on large tray or cookie sheet. Cover. Remove cover for 20-30 seconds and then remove tray from room. On your mark, the children are to write down as many items that they can remember from the tray before you yell, "STOP". Most correct answers wins.



Growing up Tips to share with your child



As parents, we will fill numerous roles in our child's life – from friend and caretaker, to chef, chauffeur, and cheerleader.

But one of the most important – and one of the most fulfilling – roles is that of a teacher.

Here are some of the best lessons
you can share with your child:

1. “You are important and loved, but you are not the center of the universe,” says Melanie J. Davis, M.Ed, author of *Sexuality Talking Points: A Guide to Thoughtful Conversations Between Parents and Children*. “Find something outside of yourself that will give your life meaning so that, when your life is over, the world is a little better place because you were here.”

2. Make sure child has a rule of thumb to give them pause when making choices. “Don’t do anything that leaves facial scars, a permanent record, or a good chance of death.”



3. “Never compare yourself with anyone who seems to have it better than you. Remember there’s always someone worse off than you are.”

4. Every child should learn to believe in himself. Make up your own rules, and don’t listen to anyone else tell you aren’t capable. That’s only true when you believe it is.

5. Kids who play the blame game should take heed of this advice: “Be careful when you point a finger at someone else. You’ll have three others pointing back at you.”

6. Control yourself – your emotions, attitudes and behaviors – in the face of adversity and you will be the most powerful person in the world.

7. Do right, because it is right. “You don’t do right because it will get you something, or because it will keep you out of trouble, or because you will sleep better. You do right simply because it is right, and then anything good that happens as a result is the icing [on the cake].”

8. “What you say and do matters, even if no one is watching. The choices you make from moment-to-moment shape who you are and the way people feel about you.” Happiness comes from making choices that reflect the real you – even if no one is looking.”

9. And, finally, a reminder for the tough times: “Everything that happens to you is teaching you how to get through it,” says parenting expert Bob Lancer, author of *Parenting With Love, Without Anger or Stress*. So look for the lessons in every experience – and apply them in the future.



Get Your Child Thinking About College



With this in mind, parents increasingly are looking to send their children to college or go back to school themselves. And since November is National Family Literacy Month, now is the perfect time to talk to your family about your or your children's college dreams.

"The transition to postsecondary education can be difficult for even the most prepared families," said Sharon Darling, president & founder of the National Council of Family Literacy (NCFL). "We need to ensure that more nontraditional adults are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and that parents are well prepared to inform and nurture the educational aspirations of their children."

Explore Your Options

It's never too early for children to start thinking about a future career -- or too late for grown-ups to consider a different career.

Make a list of what you or your child likes to do and brainstorm potential careers that match

College no longer is just a rich learning ground, but a prerequisite to many of today's jobs.

those skills and interests. Then explore books about careers, preferably with your children. Preschoolers may like "Career Day" by Anne Rockwell or "Caring for Your Pets: A Book About Veterinarians" by Ann Owen.

For elementary kids, try reading "Career Ideas for Kids Who Like Science" by Diane Lindsey and Lindsey Clasen and other books in this series. And you can engage your teen in exploring careers with "If You Could Be Anything, What Would You Be? A Teen's Guide to Mapping Out the Future" by Jeanne Webster.

Make it a Family Goal

One way to ensure that dreams come true is to set goals and implement the steps to achieve them. But some long-term goals, like buying

8 TIPS ➤

FOR FINDING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

a house or getting a college degree, take many smaller steps before you can accomplish them. Feeling supported by family while achieving smaller goals can help build confidence so that eventually, the larger goal is reached.

Families should also take advantage of free resources. For example, NCFL has released multimedia resources to help people unfamiliar with navigating the U.S. college system gain access to the information necessary for preparing and succeeding in college. The resource, produced with support from MetLife Foundation, is available free of charge in English and Spanish at www.famlit.org.



Get Involved

When parents are involved with their children's school and in their educational experiences, their kids are more successful -- not only in school, but in life. Develop a relationship with your child's teacher, ask questions when you don't understand what is expected of your child, and talk to your child every day about school.

By being involved, having frequent conversations about education and pursuing your own higher education dreams, you can positively impact your child's future. And isn't that what every parent wants?



1. Curriculum - Look for the schools that offer the right courses and facilities offered for the kinds of studies you want to undertake. If you're not sure yet, look for a school with a broad-based liberal-arts program. If you want science, make sure they have up-to-date labs, computers and other facilities.

2. Location - Decide where you want to go to college. If you need to live at home or just want to be close to home, or if you want to live in a big city with all its other attractions, limit your scope to that area.

3. Size - If you think you might be overwhelmed at a large university, look for a school with a smaller number of students. But remember, even at a larger school, after your first couple of years, classroom size gets smaller and you get to know the students in your major area of study.

4. Sports and Activities - A rich social life is an important part of college. Find out if the school you're interested in has clubs or other organizations you can participate in. If you like big-time athletics, make sure your college has the teams in the sports you want to watch or intramural programs you can play in.

5. Academic Standards - Find out what the average test score is for the accepted students at the college of your choice. If your scores aren't quite high enough, you might have to emphasize other attributes to the admissions officers.

6. Cost - Find out what the tuition, fees, room and board charges will be at your choices. You can also find out what the average student pays after financial aid is factored in. The results can be surprising.

7. Financial aid - Financial aid is available at every school you might want to attend. But some schools make aid more available than others. Private schools may charge more for tuition and other expenses, but they also tend to offer more financial aid. Get in touch with the financial aid office at your choices and inquire how they can help you.

8. Talk to Students and Alumni - Nobody knows as much about a school as students who are currently enrolled and alumni who have graduated. The students can tell you about campus life and academics. The alumni will tell whether a degree from this institution fulfilled their educational expectations and how it helped them in their careers.

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Do you wish for a little more time in your busy schedule to spend with the kids, friends or even just by yourself?

If you feel like your “me time” has been completely tapped out, Dr. Borba is offering some fresh ideas on ways moms can find time for themselves yet still teach, nourish and nurture their children:

- **Ask for help.** More than 60 percent of moms want help with parenting but are afraid to ask. If you opt out of the “supermom” myth, you’ll probably find that other moms feel just as stressed as you. And if you ask for help, you may be surprised by the friends and family members who come to your aid.
- **Synchronize activities.** Instead of sneaking off to check emails or Facebook, synchronize your online time with your child. A tech toy, like VTech’s web-enabled Tote & Go Laptop, will let your child emulate Mommy while having fun. And with 20 learning activities, online downloads and a pretend “social network,” this is a great way to teach your child about responsible tech habits.
- **Create a “mom-semble.”** Whether it’s your friends, your playgroup or the ladies you see at the coffee shop daily, most moms are going through

the same issues as you and want relaxation time with friends. Plan fun events and activities that act as a support system and let you have some girl time while the kids play.

- **Pool your resources.** Get a small group of moms organized to plan tasks weekly, such as dinner preparation. Everyone splits the ingredient list and takes turns hosting a cooking night. This way, each family gets a week’s worth of meals for their families! This is a great way to make tasty, healthy family dinners with a fraction of the effort.
- **“Edu-tain” after school.** Playtime can easily be repurposed as a learning opportunity for kids, but parents often ignore this in favor of traditional methods. Sometimes, kids need a break. When they return from school, let them de-compress with educational games and toys. For example, a realistic-looking children’s laptop with a color screen, like the Brilliant Creations Advanced Notebook, lets grade school children have fun while improving their skills in language arts, science, math, foreign languages and other areas.

For more fun learning ideas, visit www.vtech-kids.com.

By making learning fun, moms can have both smart kids and a happy home.



Here are some other tips parents can use to keep kids' minds sharp:

- Turn a grocery store trip into a math lesson by having your child compare prices and tell you the best deal.
- Change the classic road trip "Are we there yet?" question into a challenge by giving the vehicle's speed and remaining trip distance, and having your child estimate your arrival time.
- Enroll your child in a program that balances interesting and educational content with group play. For example, KinderCare Learning Centers created 12 uniquely themed camps like "Scienteriffic" and "Wilderness 101" that offer a balanced approach to learning and fun.
- Make meal and snack preparation a chance to practice reading (recipes) and working with fractions (have older children double or halve a recipe).
- Develop a reading plan with your child. Make weekly trips to the library and help your child create a list of books to read based on their interests.

Encourage

Your Child's Hobbies And Interests

Children, as much as anyone, need opportunities to rest and recreate. But parents should take note that long stretches of little mental activity can impede learning for children.

It's also a good idea for children to develop hobbies and interests outside of school. By being exposed to different environments, children learn how to adjust to new situations and people. They also have the opportunity to shine in areas that may not be offered in school, like wilderness training or rock climbing.

You can encourage your children's interests and hobbies by enrolling them in a learning center with themed activities, teaching them a sport, making a healthy picnic together to enjoy in the park, or taking them to museums.

In fact, an increasing stream of evidence supports the impor-

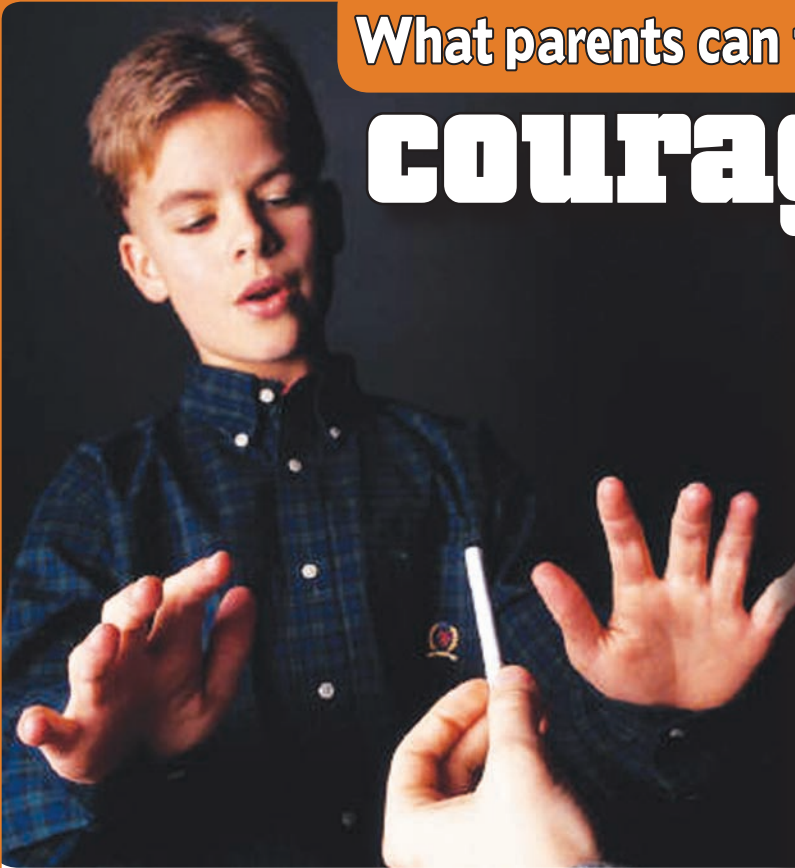
tance of keeping children's brains engaged in learning activities outside of school, according to a survey conducted by KinderCare Learning Centers, the nation's largest private provider of early childhood education.

"When teachers test children's abilities after summer break, we often see the steepest decline in skills like reading and math," said Megan Riede, senior director of education programs for KinderCare Learning Centers. "Fun and engaging extracurricular activities not only help boost learning, but can positively affect children's motivation, self-esteem, and confidence."

For more ideas on extracurricular activities that will boost your children's learning, visit www.kindercare.com.

Then make a plan to add more variety to your children's mental life. They'll thank you for it.

What parents can tell their children about **courage**



Courage is the willingness to do what's right even when it's not what's popular or easy," says Dr. James P. Marshall, assistant professor and family life specialist at the University of Arkansas.



Marshall gives the following examples of courage in children:

- A courageous child is one who stands up for others, and does not participate in the teasing of another child in his class, even when his friends and classmates are participating in the teasing.
- A courageous child is one who will turn down an offer to smoke, drink alcohol, or use drugs when many of his friends are doing it.
- A courageous child is one who will not cheat on a test or assignment, even though he has the opportunity to do so.

Courage, then, seems to be the wisdom – be it by “gut instinct” or by proper teaching – to do the right thing in a given situation. That may be as heroic as rushing into a burning building to save others, or as simple as saying no when peers are lighting up.

Actually, the term “courage” is an umbrella term, which covers four distinctive, and important, character traits: bravery, vitality, integrity and persistence. Bravery is the ability to do what's right even if it means risking personal safety or health. Every day, firemen and policemen exhibit bravery, as they are willing to do anything to save another citizen, despite the possibility of personal injury.

Vitality describes the way a person approaches a task. People who are truly courageous bring enthusiasm and energy to their duties. They focus on the positive and don't get discouraged by mistakes, or trading perfectionism for personal growth.

Acting with integrity means taking responsibility for yourself, without blaming others for your disappointments. True courage comes from overcoming obstacles without placing blame on others for your failures. A person with integrity gives his moral code more than lip service – it's something he lives each day.

Finally, a person with true courage is persistent. It's like that song that was popular a few years back: “I get knocked down, but I get up again. Nothing's going to keep me down.” Those with true courage endure obstacles, stick with their purpose, and see it through to the finish.

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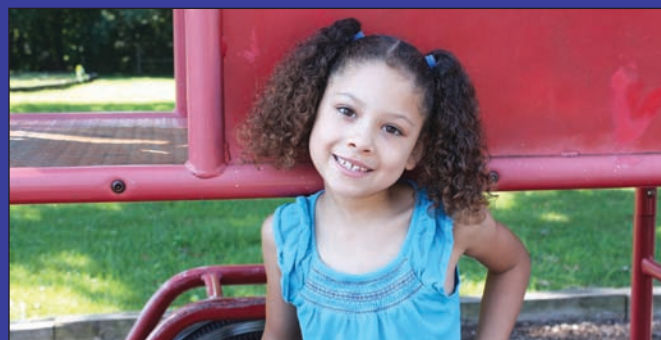
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