

TODAY'S **family**

April 2024

Lake Geauga

FREE!

**Torchlight
Youth
Mentoring
Alliance**

Mentors needed

**Child Abuse
Prevention
Month**

**Earth Day
celebrations**

**Mommy
Chronicles**

**Take time to
notice the joy
in your life**

Cover Story

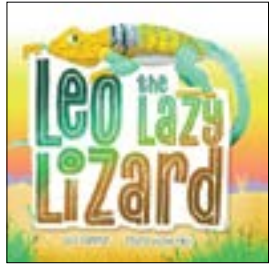
**Early
intervention**

**Providers like Broadmoor
School help children thrive**

**Preschool
Guide**



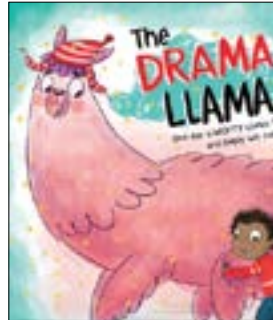
Today's Family **BOOK** — CLUB —



Leo the Lazy Lizard

Ed Shankman – Author
Dave O'Neill – Illustrator
\$17.99 | Ages 5-8

Leo the lizard spends his days relaxing in the desert sand, gazing at the sky, and basking in the sun. The other desert animals think Leo is lazy, but the roadrunner isn't so sure. Could it be that Leo has learned something the others have not? Leo the Lazy Lizard invites readers of all ages to discover the beauty of quiet moments—to smell every scent, feel every breeze, and love how they feel.



The Drama Llama

Rachel Morrisroe – Author
Ella Okstad – Illustrator
\$18.99 | Ages 4 to 8

Alex, like lots of children, sometimes worries about things. But unlike lots of children, every time he worries a real-life llama appears! And the more Alex worries, the bigger Llama grows... which starts getting him into all sorts of trouble!

Will Alex ever learn how to control his worries and get rid of this pesky llama?

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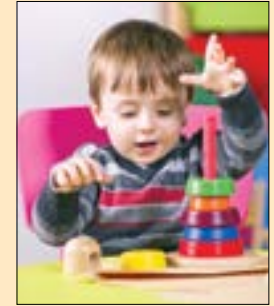
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Early intervention is key for developmental delays

Local providers such as Broadmoor School in Mentor help children advance and thrive

By Ante Logarusic

Nothing was wrong but she knew that something just wasn't right.

Jamie Kamensky's son Teddy was very good at communicating what he wanted but he wasn't verbalizing it.

"We noticed initially that he was making appropriate sounds leading up to his first birthday," said Kamensky, "However, once he turned one and continued to grow, he wouldn't use words or noises, he would only point to things or go get them himself."

Jamie recognized the warning signs. Her older son Alex had been diagnosed with speech delay, but that diagnosis was delayed due to COVID. His all-important 9-month and 12-month visits were virtual, and by the time he had his next in-person appointment at 18-months, it was suggested that his speech development be monitored. At 24-months, his pediatrician suggested Alex be screened.

"We didn't have in-person doctor visits that would have helped us to screen Alex's speech delay sooner and we also weren't around any of our friends and family that had children around his age to notice there was a need for support," she said.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one in six children in the United States experiences at least one developmental delay which could include an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas.

When a development delay or behavior is flagged by a pediatrician, some parents might be apprehensive about exploring early intervention or have fears when presented with a potential need for intervention.

Family support matters.

"Our family was a bit taken back when we told them that we were going to get Alex evaluated because they didn't truly understand or see that he wasn't communicating appropriately for his age," says Kamensky, "When we told them that we thought Teddy also needed support, they agreed because of our

previous experience with Alex. They were very supportive throughout the whole process."

Early intervention is key in assessing, identifying, and assisting children with developmental disabilities and helping kids make progress at an earlier age which ultimately results in greater success. And Kamensky should know - as a special needs educator, she understands firsthand that children who have received intervention at an earlier age experience more progress and growth than students who don't receive early intervention.

"When Alex was first diagnosed, we were initially shocked. It felt like a punch to the gut," adds Kamensky, "When Teddy started to show signs of speech delay we were a bit sad to see that he wasn't meeting age-appropriate milestones but it was easier to process his needs. We knew how to react and use available resources."

Guidance and resources are provided to their children through Broadmoor School in Mentor, which is a part of Lake County Board of Development Disabilities/Deepwood. Children ages 0-3 years in Lake County who have been evaluated and referred through Help Me Grow are eligible to receive services through Broadmoor School for early intervention.

"The support network is deeper than you might expect. A team of professionals at Broadmoor are assigned to meet the specific needs of children in their programs in order to help children and their families flourish," said Liz Miller, director of children services for the county board and Broadmoor principal.

Broadmoor's early intervention program is grounded in the philosophy that young children learn best from familiar people in familiar settings. Every family has a team that consists of an Ohio early intervention service coordinator, providers, and the family of the child. The team engages with the child in their home or other places the family spends time.

"We try to imbed everything into a routine and empower the family



Alex, left, and Teddy Kamensky were both diagnosed with speech delays. Through early intervention, both are well on their way to accomplishing their goals. **ON THE COVER:** Jaxson Crookall, 2, is enrolled in an early intervention program as well. Photos by Prelude Photography.

since they are truly the expert on the child. What we have learned is that the earlier the involvement, the greater the success," added Miller.

The results speak for themselves. Teddy has been receiving early intervention services through Broadmoor School since August 2023. Now, just shy of 3, he has accomplished his original goals of calling family members by their names and using words to make requests. He is currently working on combining words while playing with his family and peers. Older brother Alex receives speech services at Broadmoor Integrated Preschool.

Jamie relates that each family has their own journey, and that each child has their specific needs. She urges those in need to never be afraid to seek support. Those with questions about their child meeting milestones should reach out for help through the county or through their family's pediatrician.

"We learned quickly it takes a

village to raise your kids and we have been fortunate to have such a good village," she said, "The LCBDD/Deepwood has helped our family become closer and understanding of our children's needs and ways. It has given us support so life isn't as stressful as it could be. It has established early intervention for our children to help them grow and develop into successful and happy people. It has shown us a support system and that we aren't alone. Ultimately, we are beyond grateful for the support we have received and continue to receive. We feel as though our family and lives are now much better off."

Anyone can call to make a referral to be evaluated for children zero to age 3 years. Best of all, it's free. If you think something just isn't right, call 1-800-755-4769 or visit helpmegrow.org.

Learn more about Broadmoor School and the Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood at <https://lakebdd.org>.

Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance helps create lasting bonds

By Deanna Adams

In 2019, the Big Brothers Big Sisters organization in Painesville changed its name to Torchlight, and some wondered why. “We really wanted to incorporate more fostering and group mentoring into our programs,” explains Torchlight program manager, Anna Marie Palmer. “We wanted to broaden our resources and offer more activities to involve kids who might be left out otherwise. And, despite the break during Covid, it’s been going great.”

The Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance organization has orchestrated thousands of nourishing relationships in northeast Ohio alone, and continues to preserve their mission to foster the development of youth with additional programs now available. Since the name change, they have expanded to meet the ever-growing needs within the community and have helped more than 350 children in Ashtabula, Lake and Geauga counties. Along with its traditional one-on-one mentoring, they offer other programs, such as the Foster Care Transition Program, After-School program, E-CITY (Entrepreneurship: Connecting, Inspiring and Teaching Youth), and the C.O.U.L. (Club of Unmatched Littles), where children waiting for their match participate in fun, staff-supervised events.

While the term, “bigs” and “littles,” have changed to “mentors” and “mentees,” the goal remains the same. The mentor spends quality time with the mentee a couple of hours each month to fill a void, enrich their lives, and in many cases, build a lasting friendship. Volunteer mentors are encouraged to seek out activities that require little or no money, such as shooting hoops at a park, watching movies, playing video or board games, or simply sharing a pizza with their chosen mentee.

Dan Bialek, 40, from Chardon, had heard of the agency’s need for more adult male mentors. “I always thought about getting involved,” he says. “My wife and I had decided that we didn’t want to have children, even though we really like them.

I still wanted a child in my life and thought this might be a great solution.”

Still, he had been putting it off until something unexpected happened. “One day in 2018, I had a lunch meeting with someone who happened to be on the board and we started talking and I finally got the ball rolling.”

After discussing it with his wife, he reached out to Palmer, who conducted the standard interview. After questions on both sides, and a background check, they determined that Dan would make a good mentor. He considered several on their waiting list of 30 boys, based on common interests, similar personalities, and close location to each other. He chose to meet 8-year-old, Javier.

Javier’s father had died not long before and young Javier was struggling with not having a male role model in his life. The two hit it off, not only because of their shared interests, but because they introduce each other to new ones.

“At first, he was into video games and movies, so we just hung out and talked,” Dan recalls. “He wasn’t that into sports but when he learned that I was, he opened himself up to going to some games and now he really likes baseball.” He adds that he recently signed up Javier to a baseball league this summer, a new experience for him.

“Dan and Javier have developed a special bond over the years,” says Palmer. “They spend time together regularly and Javier and Dan consider each other family. Dan is so proud of the young man he’s turning into and hopes their relationship lasts a lifetime.”

Dan is sure that it will. “I’ve never try to be a dad substitute,” he says. “I just try to be a good role model for him, and just be buddies. The best thing he’s ever said to me was recently when I picked him up and he told me that he’d had a bad day. Then he said, ‘Ya know, Dan, I don’t know what I’d do without you in my life.’ That felt great to hear, and believe me, it goes both ways. I’ve had some stressful days myself and he always turns a bad day into a good one. He’s got the best sense of humor and we have some of the best laughs.”

Want to make a difference in a child’s life? If



Dan Bialek, 40, of Chardon has been a mentor to Javier since he was 8 years old. They have developed a special bond and consider each other family. Contact Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance to start your journey of mentoring a child.



you, or someone you know (all ages, 18 and over, are welcomed) is interested in becoming involved, there is always a great need for more mentors throughout the Lake/Geauga/Ashtabula county areas. Currently, the organization has 30 children, ages 6–15, on their waiting list. They are in most need of male volunteers.

The Torchlight Youth Mentoring Alliance is located at 8 N. State Street in Painesville. Learn more about all their programs in their website, www.torchlightyouthmentoring.org or call 440-352-2526.

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PETE MORAN: Head coach of John Carroll University.
PAT MORAN: Assistant coach of John Carroll University.
MATT MORAN: Head coach of Lake Catholic.
MARK CHICONE: Former head coach of both Lake Catholic boys team and Mentor High School girls.
TONY REDDING: Head coach of girls at St. Martin de Porres.
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Total solar eclipse celebration

Lake Metroparks Farmpark • April 8

Join in at Lake Metroparks Farmpark on April 8 for a FREE day filled with excitement leading up to the total solar eclipse! The event will feature hands-on experiments, interactive activities, music, planetarium shows and more to build your anticipation to the total solar eclipse. For about four minutes in mid-afternoon, the day will darken into night, stars will emerge and animals will think dusk has fallen early. Solar eclipse viewing glasses will be provided for guests in attendance while supplies last. Parking is limited. Food vendors will be on site. Visitors are welcome to bring a picnic to enjoy. Weather in April in northeast Ohio is unpredictable, so please dress accordingly.

The total solar eclipse event will take place April 8 from 9 am to 5 pm at Lake Metroparks Farmpark. For more information and a schedule of activities, visit <https://goto.lakemetroparks.com/solar-eclipse>.

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Child abuse or neglect affects more than three million children annually and causes the deaths of about four children every day. Preventing and reporting child abuse is one of the most important things a community can do for its children. Child abuse can include the following:

Physical abuse – an act inflicted against a child.

Sexual abuse – any sexual activity involving children who are not of the age or developmental capacity to consent to such activity. This includes verbal sexual harassment, fondling of sexual organs, penile or digital penetration, pornography, and exposing a child to sexualized objects and/or materials.

Emotional abuse – chronic acts that interfere with the psychological development of a child.

Neglect – another form of child maltreatment and occurs when a parent or caregiver fails to act on behalf of a child. A child who does not receive adequate food, shelter, clothing, medical care, safety, or education may be neglected.

Abuse is preventable. Reporting children who



may be at risk doesn't mean you're getting someone in trouble. You could be offering them a source of support and resources they desperately need.

So if you suspect something isn't quite right, or you're just concerned a family needs help, pick up the phone and call one of the numbers below. You can be a hero for a child by speaking up.

Lake County Department of Job and Family Services
440-350-4000 (then press 1)
440-918-4000 (then press 1)

Geauga County Job and Family Services
440-285-9141

Cuyahoga County Children and Family Services
216-696-KIDS or send an email to Protecting-Cuyahoga-Kids@jfs.ohio.gov

Photo by Ellie Benedict

GEAUGA PARK DISTRICT'S 2024 summer camps

Photo by Sonny Williams

Ready to explore? Sign up for an exciting week of adventure, exploring Nature and/or enjoying activities like biking, kayaking, archery and more!

WEEK-LONG NATURE EXPLORER DAY CAMP
for youth entering grades 3-4

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for youth entering grades 5-7

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for youth entering grades 5-7 and 8-10

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Space is limited • 440-286-9516
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Why parenting teenagers wears me out

By Katy M. Clark

How I recall those sleepless nights when my kids were newborns. Those nights morphed into long days carrying chunky toddlers, then chasing precocious preschoolers. Yup, parenting little ones wore me out.

As my kids grew, things settled down a bit when they entered elementary school. Still, they kept me moving with endless birthday parties and after-school activities like scouts and art class. I even recall a six month stint playing goalie in front of our backyard soccer net as they practiced their skills.

So it was with great anticipation that I envisioned a rest when they reached their teen years. They were more independent and less helpless after all. Welp, I was wrong! There are countless ways that nurturing

my teens into adults exhausts me, physically and mentally. Here are all the ways that parenting a teen wears a parent out:

They keep me moving

I take way more than ten thousand steps a day as the mother of teens. There are the steps I take behind a cart loading it with more (and heavier) groceries that my teenage son consumes in just a few days. And all the walking I do behind my teens as they cruise the stores at the mall.

I'm always burning calories trotting to their events, too, whether it's a concert in the school auditorium or claiming a seat at a game. Not to mention lugging snacks, water, or costumes as well as a chair or blanket, depending on the activity and the weather.

Then I pace the sidelines, jump



up and down when something good happens, or stand and clap during an ovation. I wear out my voice cheering, not to mention my heart as it bursts with pride over whatever amazing thing my teens did just on the court or stage.

Around the house

They say your home should be your sanctuary, but as the mother of teens, sometimes it feels more like an exercise class. I'll stand and bend dozens of times in as many minutes picking up the cups, plates, and silverware left on their desks or bedroom floors. I scoop up that wad of

clothes that hasn't moved from the corner of their room in a week.

I'm the one taking items, like the new pack of toilet paper, up the stairs that I'd left on the landing, hoping against hope that my teens would do it first. Plus, there's putting the mountains of groceries away, cooking the plethora of groceries for meals, and wiping down the kitchen, day in and day out. Sure, I appreciate the times my teens pitch in, but mostly I'm the captain of this ship we call home, hustling to keep them fed, clothed and alive. Phew!

See *TEENAGERS* page 8

Join Our Team To make a difference in someone's life—and your own.



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Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities / Deepwood
EMPOWER | ENGAGE | ENRICH

Teenagers from page 7

Driving me crazy

There are long drives to tournaments, concerts, or taking them to or from college. Early morning rides to workouts and late nights sitting in a dark car waiting for your teen to finish social events after which you can finally take them—and yourself—home to bed.

And let's talk about how exhausting it can be teaching them how to drive. My hand hurts from clutching the passenger door and I think I've worn out my jaw from all the clenching. My right foot and calf muscle are tired from pushing the nonexistent brake pedal from where I sit on the passenger side while my teen practices driving.

Then there is the worrying that driving produces. Will my teens be safe? What about the drivers around them? How about when they ride with their friends? I have a permanent crease wedged on my forehead as the parent of teens. Forget sleep, too, as I lie awake in bed listening for them pull into the driveway.

Mental workout

Raising teens is mentally exhausting for sure. There are so many emails from their schools to digest, not to mention

apps for their activities and portals for their healthcare.

And their requests, too, like for the trendiest shoes or phones. Not only do they want things, but my teens are smarter, savvier and more persistent about begging me than when they were little. Sometimes I feel like I'm a lawyer arguing for the defense!

Then there's the mental load that comes from loving your teen and wanting what's best for them every day. Do they have friends? Like their classes? Why aren't they talking more? Oh, wait, maybe that's because they are tired, too.

The best kind of tired

Of course, while parenting teens wears the heck out of us, it produces a good kind of tiredness, too. I might not have the energy to leave the house, but I feel content knowing I've loved and cared for my teens. And I might not want to get up off the couch at the end of the day, but I still buzz with happiness when my kids are under my roof, at college or in the real world knowing all the care I've poured into them. Yup, parenting teens wear us out, but loving them makes it all worth it.

Celebrate Earth Day at Wildwood on April 20

Join the Mentor Natural Resources Division and the Wildwood Cultural Center on Saturday, April 20, 2024, from 10 am to 2 pm as they celebrate Earth Day.

Guests can explore the splendor of Wildwood on a spring ephemeral wildflower hike with a natural resource specialist, embark on a bird walk with an avian expert to observe local and migratory species, and test their skills at a nature scavenger hunt.

Specialists will deliver presentations on monarch butterflies as well as the importance native plant species serve in our Northeast Ohio ecosystem. A variety of crafts and activities related to natural themes will be available as well.

Local, eco-friendly vendors including Rabbit Food, We are Fat Rolls, Margery Ray Alpacas, Ogden Maple Farm, Papa Franks Workshop, Percy Homestead, Elderberry by Jen, Well Rooted Plants, Pirnat Garlic, and Weaver Bird Houses will be on hand with



products available to purchase.

Free parking and admission. The Wildwood Cultural Center is Mentor's finest cultural gem and hosts a broad array of cultural arts programming. The manor house was built by the John G. Oliver family in 1908 and purchased by the city of Mentor in 1980. The 34-acre estate, filled with stately trees and beautiful gardens, includes hiking trails, barrier-free restrooms, picnic and wildlife area.

The Wildwood Cultural Center is located at 7645 Little Mountain Road in Mentor.

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10 am–3 pm
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\$45 adult
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Balloon Artist
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Reservations Required

EventBrite.com

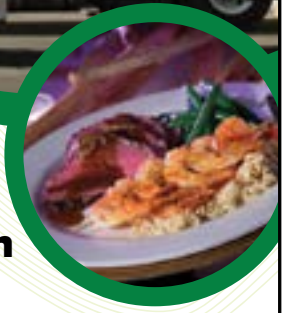


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2024 Entertainment Schedule

\$10 cover for band nights

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 4/24-Kenny and Dolly Tribute | 8/2-DJ Studio Entertainment |
| 5/16-Shania Twain Tribute | 8/22-Tony Bennett Tribute |
| 5/24-Sumrada | 8/23-After Math |
| 5/31-Nick Costa | 8/30-Chance Band |
| 6/1-Mary Faktor | 9/06-Bluesdeville |
| 6/7-DJ Gaz* | 9/13-Polka Night/Bob Kravis |
| 6/14-FM77 | 9/20-DJ GAZ |
| 6/20-Phase 5 Motown | 9/27-Sumrada |
| 6/21-Nitebridge | 10/25-Abby Rodeo |
| 6/28-Stan Miller Jazz Band | 10/25-Rebeat |
| 7/5-R.Desantis Big Band | 11/20-Rat Pack Christmas |
| 7/12-Long Time Gone | 11/28-LaMalfa Thanksgiving |
| 7/19-Surf Side | 12/21-Nitebridge/lcampagnoli |
| 7/24-Lights Out Tribute | 12/31-Pieces of 8 |
| 7/26-Tom Todd | |

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For more information, menus, entertainment schedules or to make reservations please visit eventbrite.com.





Finding the right PRESCHOOL for your child



By Jan Pierce

When it's time to search for the perfect preschool for your little one, you want to be sure you're making the right decision. If you're lucky enough to have friends who've done their research and are happy with their choice, you're fortunate. You'll have first-hand recommendations.

Be aware of the difference between daycare and a functioning preschool. Daycare facilities provide custodial care, but don't always offer an educational curriculum. Daycares often

take children of all ages and offer extended hours. A preschool usually has limited hours and may or may not offer before- and after-school care. In a daycare children of all ages may be grouped together while a preschool offers segregated age groups.

Where to begin

There are many considerations before choosing, but be sure you start your search early. Many excellent preschools have long waiting lists. In general you'll be looking for a school that provides the following:

- The convenience of proximity to



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Pre 3 - (2 half days-T,TH)

*must be 3, 4, 5 years old by
September 30 of the school year



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- Clean, well-kept facilities with adequate indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Qualified, caring staff.
- Stimulating curriculum and age-appropriate toys.
- A philosophy and climate pleasing to you and right for your child's temperament.

The NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) has a database of accredited preschools you can access at families.naeyc.org/find-quality-child-care. This site lists currently accredited day cares and schools all across the nation and is updated weekly. Spend a little time on their website for top-notch thinking about early childhood education.

Questions to ask

You'll want to do your homework to find the right school for your family. Here are some questions to ask before narrowing your search and visiting several schools:

- Is there currently room for my child? Is there a waiting list?
- What are the fees? How and when are we billed?
- How do you communicate with parents? (phone calls, emails, newsletters, website, etc.)
- What is your staff to student ratio? (NAEYC recommends one adult to every four to nine children as optimal at ages 2-3 and one to eight to ten for ages 4-5.)
- Do your staff members have credentials and training? Are they background-checked? Up to date on CPR? Receiving ongoing training?
- What is your educational philosophy? (academic-oriented, exploration, faith-based, etc. Some distinct philosophies include Montessori, Waldorf, or Reggio-Emilia.)
- What health/hygiene standards are enforced? (immunizations, sick child rules, hand-washing, etc.)

- How do you handle discipline?
- Are meals and snacks provided? Are naps taken?
- What safety precautions are in place? (strangers on-campus, release policies, sign-in/out)
- Can you give me a list of references? (be sure to follow up and call them.)
- Can you provide a sample of your weekly curriculum and activities? How often do you change the activities?

As you gather information you'll be able to narrow your list down to two or three good choices. When you're ready, go ahead and schedule a visit to the school. Decide whether you want to do this with your child or on your own.

You'll be looking for all of the above qualities of a good school, but more than that you want to get a "feel" for the school. Do you feel welcome? Are the children busy and engaged in work or play? Is the facility pleasing to the eye and orderly? Do you get the sense that you'd feel comfortable leaving your child in this school's care? Are the children happy?

Jot down your first impressions and any new information you find during the visit. You may want to use the Preschool Visit Checklist on our website.

If for any reason, you don't feel comfortable with the school environment, trust your instincts and look for another school. It might be preferable to find a safe daycare situation and use that until you can locate a preschool of the highest standards.

You want the perfect preschool and your child deserves it. All the time and effort you put into your search will pay huge dividends in a happy, healthy, and well-cared for child.



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Year-Round Childcare

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Toddlers: 18 months to 3 years old

Preschool: 3 to 4 years

Pre-K: 4 to kindergarten

Children typically transition from preschool to pre-k in August and spend the school year getting ready for kindergarten in the fall.

All lesson plans for toddlers through pre-k align with the state standards and Step Up to Quality expectations and incorporate circle time, reading, art, small and large group activities for cognitive and physical development.

At Love's Learning Loft, we are proud to provide a caring, clean, secure, and safe environment for your children. By following our mission, vision and values, we create a nurturing, stimulating and welcoming learning environment for all children.

TWO LOCATIONS!

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6720 Center Street
(440) 534-1025

mentor@loveslearninglofts.com

Chesterland

7976 Mayfield Rd., Suite #200
(440) 688-LOVE (5683)

chesterland@loveslearninglofts.com



LOVE'S
LEARNING LOFT

www.loveslearninglofts.com

Starting 24/25 school year we will offer before- and after-school care in Mentor. Bellflower and Fairfax will be bussing to and from Love's. Bussing to and from Chesterland will continue.



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www.hl.center

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- Social engagement
- Self-care and life skills



Contact Us to Schedule a Tour or Observation



440-357-0918
info@Hershey-Montessori.org
www.Hershey-Montessori.org

10229 Prouty Rd., Concord Twp., OH 44077

PRESCHOOL

**HERSHEY
MONTESSORI SCHOOL**

10229 Prouty Road
Concord Township
(440) 357-0918

www.Hershey-Montessori.org

At Hershey Montessori School, classrooms are called “communities” where students work in multi-age groups so they can learn from and interact with others of diverse ages and interests. These programs include the Parent-Infant Program (2 months to 12 months), the Young Child Community (12 months to 36 months), Children’s House (3 to 6 ½ years), Elementary (6 to 12 years) and Adolescent Community (12 to 18 years). Students are given blocks of uninterrupted time to figure out a problem, to ask questions of their teachers, or share their passion for a subject with another student. They work and learn at their own pace and make choices regarding which activities they want to take part in. When children are given a choice, they are naturally more engaged, interested, and happy to go to school.

For more information call (440) 357-0918, email admissions@hershey-montessori.org, or visit www.Hershey-Montessori.org.

**HORIZON CHILD
DEVELOPMENT CENTER**

www.hl.center

Mentor

8303 Tyler Boulevard
(440) 205-8420

Euclid

1050 E. 200th Street
(216) 481-3830

Cleveland

2285 Columbus Road
(216) 344-3000

Horizon offers a program for children 6 weeks to age 13. They have an enhanced preschool and pre-K program that includes Creative Curriculum. They are the only center in Lake County to receive a grant from ODE to provide free preschool, for qualifying children who are 4 years old, from 9:00 am–11:30 am, Monday through Friday. Their summer program stimulates enthusiasm through their piano lessons and educational field trips. They believe that given the right to progress, children become empowered

to achieve multiple tasks and develop a willingness to learn.

Whether your children are marvelous at math or adore science, Horizon empowers them to learn through their own curiosity and sense of wonder. They provide ongoing professional development by supporting an award-winning program. Contact their office for more information or to enroll your child.

LAUREL SCHOOL

www.LaurelSchool.org
(216) 464-0946

Lyman Campus

1 Lyman Circle, Shaker Heights
Butler Campus

7420 Fairmount Road, Novelty

Laurel School, founded in 1896, is a nationally recognized college preparatory, independent day school for girls, kindergarten through grade 12, with a coeducational early childhood program. Named the #1 all-girls school in Ohio by Niche.com, its traditional Lyman Campus is in Shaker Heights and its 150-acre Butler Campus is in Novelty. The Butler Campus is home to competitive athletics and outdoor experiential learning, including grades 3–5, northeast Ohio’s first outdoor prekindergarten class, and its new environmental justice semester for 10th- and 11th-grade girls from any northeast Ohio school.

Laurel’s Center for Research on Girls (LCRG) was established in 2007, drawing on the school’s long history as a site of pioneering research on girls. LCRG conducts and sponsors original research on girls, harnesses existing research to shape the day-to-day education of girls and connects Laurel parents and teachers with research findings relevant to raising and educating girls.

RSVP for the April 13 all-school open house at LaurelSchool.org/OpenHouse.



PRESCHOOL

LOVE'S LEARNING LOFT

www.loveslearninglofts.com

Mentor

6720 Center Street

(440) 534-1025

Chesterland

7976 Mayfield Road Suite #200

(440) 688-5683 (LOVE)

This year, Love's Learning Loft is offering in-house and off-site field trips. In-house field trips include things like a petting zoo, pony rides and a magician. Off-site includes a trip to the Children's Museum of Cleveland, Great Lakes Science Center, and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo just to name a few. Their goal for 2024 is to focus on family and to make Love's the most enjoyable experience for all children and their families.

Plus, Love's Learning Loft has year-round childcare for children 6 weeks through prekindergarten. There are individual lesson plans for infants. All lesson plans for toddlers through pre-k align with the state standards and Step Up to Quality expectations and incorporate circle time, reading, art, small and large group activities for cognitive and physical development.

Starting 24/25 school year they will offer before- and after-school care. Bellflower and Fairfax will be bussing to and from Love's. Bussing to and from Chesterland will continue.

For more info visit them online at www.loveslearninglofts.com.

MATER DEI ACADEMY LITTLE KNIGHTS PRESCHOOL

29840 Euclid Avenue, Wickliffe

(440) 585-0800

www.MaterDeiAcademy.us

Mater Dei Academy's preschool program for ages 4 and 5 strives to provide a creative noncompetitive environment for the young child. Interaction with other children and adults in an atmosphere of Christian love and concern, promotes the healthy development of each child as an individual. The philosophy is that learning experiences should encourage spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth.

The Little Knights' preschool program creates a setting where your child will develop a positive self-image and become aware

of the fact that he/she is a child of God and will grow in His love while developing skills, increasing independence and experiencing accomplishments. Small class size allows for individual attention while still allowing your child the enjoyment of being a part of a group and experiencing the opportunities to learn how to share and cooperate. Children develop math and early reading skills, and explore science through experiments.

For more information on The Little Knights' preschool program, please call the school office at (440) 585-0800 or visit their website at www.materdeiacademy.us.

ST. GABRIEL LEARNING LOFT PRESCHOOL & ST. GABRIEL SCHOOL

9921 Johnnycake Ridge Road

Concord Township

(440) 354-7574

www.st-gabrielschool.org

Part-time preschool (3/4/5 year-olds) with My Buddy & Me classes for 2-year-olds; full-time junior kindergarten for children age 4 by September 30.

St. Gabriel Learning Loft Preschool and St. Gabriel School have been preparing graduates for life through faith, learning, and love for over 60 years. With state-of-the-art facilities and one-to-one technology, the preschool offers developmentally appropriate practices for young children that facilitates a deep love of learning to build a strong foundation.

Through compassion, dedication, and expertise, their teachers ignite learning and see their vocation as a ministry. Their school is a second home where children learn about the world around them and most importantly their wonder, awe, and love for Jesus and His creation. The preschool has been voted #1 preschool in Lake County for four years in a row.

For part-time openings for the Learning Loft Preschool call for a tour at (440) 354-7574.

For full-time, 4- to 5-year-old preschool call (440) 354-7858 or visit St-GabrielSchool.org. Please note full-time program has a waiting list for 2024-25 school.



Laurel girls today. Leaders tomorrow.



At Laurel, girls are leaders in the classroom, on the field and on the stage. Through a demanding academic curriculum informed by our Center for Research on Girls, our unparalleled public-speaking coursework and our beyond-the-classroom experiences, girls at Laurel lead every day.

Come see how Laurel girls lead!

18 months-Grade 12 Open House

Saturday, April 13, 9:00-11:00 am

1 Lyman Circle, Shaker Heights

Scan the QR code to RSVP today!

LaurelSchool.org/OpenHouse



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LAUREL

LaurelSchool.org

Voted Best of Mentor Preschool!

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The Learning Loft has been a wonderful experience for our children! They have learned how to work and socialize with others, grow in their faith and have had so much fun! They have felt known and loved from the very first classroom experience and that has created a comfort level for school which we are so thankful for.

—Vince Bonacci, Parent 2024



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and watch them bloom!
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preschool opportunities!**

Call today!

440-354-7574

(part-time preschool 2-5 yr olds)

440-354-7858

(full-time preschool 4/5 yr olds)

Please note: Waiting List for
2023-24 school year.

**St-GabrielSchool.org
Concord**

Why do I need a water softener?

What are some things that you can look at to see if your current softener is working or if you need one in your home?

1. Do your faucets have watermarks, even though you just cleaned them?
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6. Do you have low water pressure?
7. Do your appliances break quicker than they should?
8. Do your dishes have watermarks and residue on them when they dry?

If you are experiencing any of these issues or concerns, a water softener may be right for you. Call today and they will send a water treatment specialist to test your water for FREE and then help you decide what kind of system will



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Geauga County Maple Festival April 25–28, 2024 • Historic Chardon Square

Join in the fun as Geauga County celebrates the coming of spring and the year's maple syrup crop. For visitors looking for fun there are all the traditional things a festival offers: rides, games, food, entertainment, bath tub races, lumberjack competition, kid's tractor pull, arts and crafts, live music, pizza eating contest, pancake eating contest, tug of war competition, clown, animal show, and so much more!

What makes this festival unique is all of the maple-related activities that take place over the weekend like the crowning of the maple queen, the "sap" run, bucket painting, maple candy carving, pancake breakfasts

(with pure maple syrup), and pancake eating competitions.

Area sugar bushes also put their syrup to the test with syrup and maple candy judging. Winning syrups are also auctioned off as part of the weekend entertainment. Food choices include maple candy, maple corn, and the popular maple stirs available at the log cabin on the square. Grand parades take place on Saturday and Sunday and showcase a lot of the community businesses and events. Admission is free.

For more info and to view the schedule of entertainment call 440-332-7055 email info@maplefestival.com or visit www.maplefestival.com.

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Old school pop culture references that my kids just don't get

By Katy M. Clark

I was sitting on the couch next to my teenage son. Growing cold, I reached out and grabbed the blanket that was near him.

That's when inspiration struck.

"Reach out, reach out and touch someone!" I sang as I leaned over. "Reach out, reach out, and just say hi!"

He looked at me as though I had purple spaghetti noodles coming out of my nose.

"What?" I asked.

He continued to stare at me with both bemusement and shock.

That's when it dawned on me. While I had plenty of attachment to the phone company's catchy jingle from the last millennium, my 14-year-old did not. It was just another example of an old school pop culture reference I used that he and his younger sister just didn't understand.

Here are nine more old school pop culture references that they don't get, either:

Just say no.

I pull out this phrase, made famous by Nancy Reagan, every time I talk to my kids about the dangers of drugs. Hey, it worked in the '80s!

Pardon me, do you have any Grey Poupon?

Yes, I say this at the dinner table when I want someone to pass the mustard. No, my kids have no idea what I'm talking about, especially because we literally don't have any Grey Poupon in the house.

Nanu nanu!

Why be a boring mom who just says hello to her kids when I can be a cool mom who uses this Orkan greeting made famous by Robin Williams in *Mork and Mindy*?

Sometimes you feel like a nut, sometimes you don't.

This Almond Joy-Mounds phrase is perfect for when you are snacking on nuts and offer some to your kids. That's because you can sing it whether they want some nuts or not. Kids, especially teens, just love it when their moms sing.



Schlemiel! Schlimazel!

Hasenpfeffer Incorporated!

Sometimes when I'm walking down the street I break into this catchy phrase and start bobbing up and down just for fun. Laverne and Shirley would be proud, even if my kids are mortified.

Plop, plop, fizz, fizz, oh what a relief it is.

I whip out this Alka-Seltzer ditty whenever I pour a fizzy drink. It also works when I'm relaxing in the tub with a bath bomb. Mercifully, now that my kids are older they are past the stage of following me into the bathroom.

Calgon, take me away!

Whenever life gets me down, I can escape from my worries by proclaiming this phrase just like they did in the Calgon commercials back in the day.

"Who's Calgon?" my son once asked.

Be kind, rewind.

There is a huge emphasis on kindness in today's schools. Perhaps us parents really started the kindness movement, though, because we were encouraged to be nice to our VHS cassettes. Just a thought.

Wonder Twin powers activate!

My kids are not twins. However, that does not prevent me from shouting this phrase out whenever I want them to work together. They should just be thankful I didn't name them Zan and Jayna after the original Wonder Twins.

There you have it, 10 old school pop culture references that my kids don't get. I still enjoy using them, though.

Like, totally. Gag me with a spoon.

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29th annual Market at the Food Bank

Featuring Cleveland's most delicious cuisines from nearly 40 restaurants

Tickets are on sale now for the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's premier event, Market at the Food Bank. The event is set to take place on Sunday, April 21, between 6 and 8:30 p.m. at the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's Partner Distribution Hub. The signature event benefits the annual Harvest for Hunger campaign, a 21-county food and funds drive, coordinated by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank.

The event welcomes guests and donors behind the scenes of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's 197,000 square-foot partner distribution hub, providing an exclusive look at how their contributions make the Food Bank's mission possible.

Hundreds of guests will spend the evening sampling superb cuisine and delicious drinks from nearly 40 of Cleveland's premier restaurants and beverage purveyors. There will also be a silent auction and bag pull, where guests can choose a surprise bag filled with at least a \$50 value. Guests will have the chance to walk



away with fabulous restaurant and unique entertainment packages.

General admission tickets to the event are \$125 per person and inclusive of all event food and beverage.

VIP tickets are \$200 per person and grants attendees access to all food and beverage as well as access to the party an hour earlier at 5 pm, a first look at the auction, specialty cocktails, private lounge and seating, as well as an intimate performance from Cleveland's piano man, Mike Petrone.

Visit www.GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org/Market today to purchase tickets.

Spring Discovery Days runs through April 7

Greater Cleveland Aquarium to spotlight smaller species

Did you know that eastern musk turtles are little "stinkpots" that emit a foul odor when threatened, or that three-inch-long Vietnamese mossy frogs are mini ventriloquists able to make it sound like their voices are coming from 10 to 13 feet away?

Join Greater Cleveland Aquarium in taking a closer look at these and other diminutive animals during Spring Discovery Days now through April 7. Tiny animal trivia, daily animal encounters (with special appearances by Nora the Explorer on Fridays from 11 am–3 pm), pop-up Discovery Cart activities, an I Spy Challenge and short spotlight videos round out the celebration of smaller species, included with regular Aquarium admission.

Housed inside a historic, brick powerhouse, the Aquarium's geographically-themed fresh and saltwater galleries include many floor-to-ceiling, overhead and free-standing, 360-degree habitats.

Get your tickets today!



SPRING DISCOVERY DAYS

Greater Cleveland Aquarium
2000 Sycamore St., Cleveland
216.862.8803
greaterclevelandaquarium.com

Now–Sunday, April 7
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\$13.95 ages 2–12;
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younger than 2

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Camp 2024 Registration Now Open!



APRIL IS NATIONAL
CHILD ABUSE
PREVENTION MONTH

We are pinning our hopes on you during the community's
BLUE RIBBON PIN & WRISTBAND CAMPAIGN!



Wear a blue ribbon pin or blue wristband every day in April to show your support for Lake County's children!

**Wednesday, April 10, 2024
is Wear **Blue 2 Work Day.****

WB2W is a statewide awareness campaign which encourages Ohioans to wear blue to work, school, or a community event as a show of support for preventing child abuse and neglect. We are hoping that you will still take a stand against child abuse and wear blue on April 10 wherever you are!

If you know of a child who may be abused or neglected, please call the Child Abuse Hotline at:
440-350-4000 or **440-918-4000** (then press 1)

**Lake County Department
of Job and Family Services**



Take time to notice the joy in your life

By Stacy Turner

When my daughter came home for her college spring break, she wanted help with filing her taxes. With myriad W2s from jobs in two states, finding and filing the appropriate local, state and federal tax documents wasn't something she wanted to tackle on her own. When we finally sat down to sort it all out at the end of the week, she complained heartily. "I'm just a poor college student -- I didn't even make that much money! And why do they make it so hard to figure out what I owe them?" she wailed.

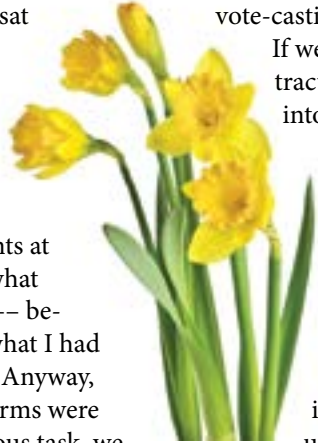
I remember making similar complaints at her age, as I made the realization that what I had been pushing so hard to achieve -- becoming an adult -- might not be quite what I had pictured through rose-colored glasses. Anyway, just three hours later the appropriate forms were filed. To mark the end of this momentous task, we laughed at late-night reruns of "The Office" and ate ice cream, because that's what adults can do when they finish something hard.

A wise friend shared a quote by Gary Haugen that says, "Joy is the oxygen for doing hard things." It's true that joy is essential, because at every age and life stage, life is chock full of hard things. Sleepless nights as new parents, the epic struggle

of wills over potty training, and eventually helping your child learn to operate a motor vehicle without losing your cool. Luckily, those moments are woven together with strands of incredible joy. Things like seeing that first toothless smile, watching your kid beam with pride after learning a new skill, and yes, even helping them become tax-paying, vote-casting adults.

If we're not careful, it's easy to get distracted by hard things, and fool ourselves into believing that's all there is. Like when you've started looking for a particular type of car, and then suddenly, you see it everywhere. The number of cars hasn't changed; but when your brain is subconsciously looking for it, you notice it more. Instead of seeing all the difficulties, why not train our brains to notice joy in the large and small ways it shows up in everyday life instead?

Like the bright red buds on the maple tree after the cold, gray winter, or the comfort of cold hands wrapped around a warm mug. Even amid rain and mud, daffodils and tulips reach skyward, ready to bloom. Grey skies and mud will persist, just like our struggles, both large and small. Luckily, so will our joy...as long as we make sure to notice it.



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History of Earth Day



The story of Earth Day is a story of collaboration and cooperation. Fifty-four years ago on April 22, 1970, an estimated 20 million Americans participated in “teach-ins,” marches, letter-writing campaigns and more to bring awareness to the problems of smog, polluted water, pesticide poisoning, and other environmental concerns. Activities were sponsored by local colleges, schools, and community groups, and while many of those involved were high school and college students, older citizens turned out as well from farmers to scientists, teachers to politicians from both sides of the aisle.

Behind the grassroots activities, though, was a bipartisan steering committee sponsored by Sen. Gaylord Nelson, a Democrat from Wisconsin, and Congressman Paul McCloskey, a Republican from California. Nelson had been working for conservation efforts in his home state for over a decade but

was inspired by two headline grabbing stories in 1969 to tap into growing environmental concern, the enthusiasm of youthful demonstrators, and the scientific community to affect political change. The two headline stories that motivated him were the Santa Barbara oil spill and the fire on the Cuyahoga River.

The combination of support by Nelson and McCloskey in Washington, and the local groups was a successful strategy. Earth Day activities empowered citizens to engage in actions in their communities, making it personal and relevant. Here in Cleveland there were “teach-ins” at Cleveland State University and nearby Baldwin Wallace College aimed at informing people of environmental issues. There were cleanups and tree plantings at Edgewater Beach, a Vote Against Pollution rally on Public Square, and an anti-pollution march in the Flats.

All of the above activities, along with thousands more around the country led to a concerted effort by Congress to pass legislation that could make real impact. The Clean Air Act passed in 1970 and the Clean Water Act in 1972. They adopted a proposal by President Nixon to create a plan to consolidate environmental responsibilities of the federal government under one agency, a new Environmental Protection Agency, which was adopted in December of 1970. But Earth Day activities continue to this day, encouraging everyday people to speak out and act to preserve and protect this planet we all love.

Search “Earth Day Cleveland Metroparks” for more Earth Day games, activities and info.



Earth Day 2024

Earth Day brings about an opportunity for change and a time to explore more about our planet. This year, discover what you can do to help restore our planet with a free event at Lake Metroparks.

- Eco-fair with local conservation organizations
- Earth Day Marketplace with locally-made and fair-trade merchandise
- Free tree for each family
- Wildlife programs
- Games and crafts
- Shop in The Nature Store
- Miniature train rides (1 to 3 pm, weather permitting)

April 21, 2024

Noon – 4 pm

Penitentiary Glen Reservation
8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd., Kirtland

Spring cleaning? Donate to Goodwill and change a life for **GOOD.**

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