

TODAY'S family

April 2025

Lake Geauga

FREE!

Special Olympics
Lake County
Big Footer 5K

Market at the Food Bank

Annual event raises money to fight hunger

Fine Arts Association
Presents Disney's
"Newsies"

7 ways to extend kindness to a friend dealing with infertility

PRESCHOOL GUIDE

The great booger excavation

Humor essay:
Why kids pick their nose

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month

February article update

In the February 2025 issue we published an article about peanut allergies which included a section about signs and symptoms. We listed vomiting as a digestive issue, which is technically correct, but we have learned that vomiting (especially repetitive) should have been listed as a **severe reaction** which could need immediate medical attention. We are thankful that this was pointed out by a reader and have prepared the list below that goes more in depth of the symptoms of peanut allergies and what to watch for.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A PEANUT ALLERGY

Detecting a peanut allergy early can help prevent severe allergic reactions. Parents should be vigilant for symptoms, especially after introducing peanuts into their child's diet, as reactions often occur within minutes to a few hours of consumption. Common signs include:

Mild symptoms:

GUT: Mild nausea

SKIN: A few hives, mild itch

NOSE: Itchy or running nose, sneezing

MOUTH: Redness around the mouth, itchy mouth



Severe reactions (anaphylaxis):

GUT: Repetitive vomiting, severe diarrhea

SKIN: Many hives over body, widespread redness

THROAT: Tight or hoarse throat, difficulty breathing or swallowing

MOUTH: Significant swelling of the tongue or lips

HEART: Pale or blueish skin, faintness, weak pulse, dizziness

LUNG: Shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough

Anaphylaxis is life-threatening and requires immediate medical attention. Call 911 and tell the emergency dispatcher the person is having anaphylaxis and may need epinephrine when emergency responders arrive.

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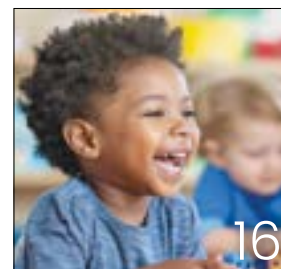
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Adobe Stock/by Oksana Kuzmina

The Fine Arts Association presents Disney's "Newsies"

Fun for the entire family!

The Fine Arts Association (FAA) is excited to present Disney's Newsies. Packed with nonstop thrills and a timeless message, Newsies is perfect for the whole family and every audience. The production will run through Sunday, April 13, 2025.

Set in turn-of-the-century New York City, Newsies is the rousing tale of Jack Kelly, a charismatic newsboy and leader of a band of teenage "newsies." When the titans of publishing raise distribution prices at the newsboys' expense, Jack rallies newsies from across the city to strike against the unfair conditions and fight for what's right.

Based on the 1992 motion picture and inspired by a true story, Newsies features a Tony Award-winning score by Alan Menken (Little Shop of Horrors, Sister Act) and Jack Feldman, and a book by Tony Award winner Harvey Fierstein (Kinky Boots). The production includes the now classic songs "Carrying the Banner," "Seize the Day," and "Santa Fe."



Ticket prices (not including processing fees):

- Child (10 and under) – \$19
- Student (11-18 yrs.) – \$27
- Adult – \$29
- Senior (60+) – \$27

The production is rated G and the running time is two hours and 30 minutes, including a 15-minute intermission.

The Corning Auditorium is barrier free. Free on-site parking available.

Visit www.fineartsassociation.org for production dates and times and to purchase tickets.

Father and son take big steps to support Special Olympics 5K

You might have heard that Big Foot was in the area as he made an appearance to show his support for the Special Olympics Lake County Big Footer 5K on March 23.

About 220 participants, of all ages and abilities, overlooked the chilly morning air to traverse the 3.1 mile course that runs through the serene Lake County Board of Developmental Disabilities/Deepwood campus in Mentor.

There was quite a unique finish this year as father and son duo, Josh and Isaac Brogner, were first and second place overall. The pair crossed the finish line at 18:11 and 18:34 respectively, beating last year's first place winner Ben Browngardt who came in third overall at 19:46 (beating his time from 2024).

This was the second year that Josh and his son Isaac participated in the 5K, and they shared that they plan to participate next year.

"Big Foot markers were placed throughout the route and Big Foot was available to pose for pictures and helped warm up the runners along-



Josh Brogner and son Isaac with Big Foot (center) at SO Big Footer.

side the many volunteers who helped make the day a success.

Event organizers have seen much success with the added elements of fun in recent years. Participants keep an eye out for Big Foot cutouts as they run and contest prizes are given out. Each participant received an original Big Footer design t-shirt, a wooden medal with the infamous Big Foot image, and a pancake breakfast.

If you'd like to learn more about Lake County Special Olympics, please visit <https://lakebdd.org/special-olympics-lake-county/> or call (440) 350-5119. More info about this and other local races can be found on www.greaterclevelandxc.com.

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7 ways to extend kindness when your friend is dealing with infertility

The other moms and I chatted while watching our kids' gymnastics practice through the glass. The small talk grew deep, and then awkward when one shared with some sadness that she wanted another child, but so far, it hadn't worked out. "At least you don't have to worry about birth control!" another mom offered. I cringed. I wasn't sure what the right response was but I was pretty certain the birth control comment wasn't it. Given the fact that one in eight couples experience infertility, if you haven't been on the receiving end of insensitive comments, you've struggled to find the right words to say to a friend who has been trying to conceive for months or even years.

There are, in fact, at least seven important ways you can support a friend with infertility. The following tips came from conversations with experts—a dozen women who experienced infertility and a clinical social worker.



Acknowledge the loss

Abby MacDonald, LICSW, an infertility specialist, says a vital part of helping a friend with infertility, is understanding that they're grieving a loss. While it may not be as concrete as a miscarriage or a death, the intangible losses are many; including privacy, autonomy, and the loss of

the narrative where pregnancy just naturally happens. She may also be struggling to reconcile her relationship with her own body, which she perceives as having failed her. Even if you're not sure what to say, your friend will appreciate your sensitivity to the fact that she's grieving.

Remember it's not about you

Particularly if infertility is something you haven't personally experienced, it is not perceived as helpful when you project your own feelings on the situation. For example, one friend cringed when friends would ponder the possibility of multiples as a result of fertility treatments, and be either excited by or terrified of it. "As a new parent, I have no idea how what having multiples would be like and I might feel excited or terrified. Either way, I don't give a darn how you feel about it. Nor do I care that you think I'm misguided for being excited or terrified. I'm allowed to feel how I feel about it." Sharing the fact that you would never be willing to go through IVF is also not helpful. As my friend said, "It's personal. People feeling so free to comment on what they would do in my situation was unsettling."

Unless you've been there, avoid giving advice

If you take nothing else from this post, take this: Friends don't tell friends who are dealing with infertility to just have a bottle of wine and relax. Nor do they say any variation on this. That includes telling the story of that couple who adopted,

only to find themselves pregnant immediately. "Tips" from people who've never been through infertility personally are not tips at all. At best, they are annoying. At worst, they are cruel and insensitive, no matter the intention. No one who has given hours of their life to scheduling doctors appointments and carefully timed shots wants to hear about the position you heard was effective, or your sister's friend's cousin's brother's wife, who got pregnant when she ate pineapple.

One woman recalled feeling insulted by a friend's suggestion that she supplement IVF with herbs. "The implication is 'You could do more.' And my response is, 'No, I couldn't. I'm at my limit. I took three injections a day for the past week and a half, my stomach is purple, I woke up early and went to the clinic four of the past six days, and I am done.'"

On the other hand, advice from someone who has been through it is comforting. One woman said she was grateful to hear her best friend, who had also struggled to conceive, break things down in a very matter-of-fact way. She recalled her best friend's warning. "There are only 24-48 hours a month that you are most likely to get pregnant. Time your ovulation and time sex. Don't leave it to chance."

Leave the wise sayings to Hallmark

Perhaps even less helpful than advice from the uninitiated are their theories on why this is happening. As MacDonald explains, "Comments like 'God has a plan,' while often offered with good intentions, and seemingly supportive of allowing faith to take a front seat during this difficult time, can reinforce questions someone has about why this bad thing is happening to an otherwise good person." Another cliché many women told me they did not appreciate: If it's meant to be, it will be. Let Hallmark handle the "encouraging" remarks. All you need to do is be there if your friend wants to talk.

Just listen

This can be easier said than done. In a culture obsessed with doing,

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FRIENDSHIP

staying quiet can feel like inaction. The opposite is true, however. Giving someone space to talk (or not talk) is among the most powerful gifts you have to offer. MacDonald says it is key to simply listen and offer reflections based on what your friend says. For example, if she says she feels hopeless, an appropriate response might be, "Given all you've been through, it's hard to expect anything will go to plan." MacDonald emphasizes the importance of stopping at that point to give your friend a chance to talk about her feelings, rather than filling any silence with a stock line about hope or positive thinking.

Be curious (but not nosy)

If you have to ask when or if someone is planning to have a baby, that's a pretty clear sign that it's none of your business. Nothing is more awkward or painful than having an acquaintance put their hand on your belly and ask why you're not pregnant yet, when you're privately tortured over that very same question.

But if your friend has been open

with you about her struggles, make sure she knows you want to support her, even if you're not sure how. Said one woman, "Even if awkward things were said, I appreciated getting to have the conversation rather than nothing being said at all." Says MacDonald, one way to show that you're curious and that you care is by taking the time to educate yourself. She and several other women I spoke with recommended connecting with Resolve, a nonprofit dedicated to providing support, advocacy, education, and community for people facing challenges in their journey to create a family.

Offer genuine support

Avoid offering vague support, (e.g. "Let me know if you need anything.") If you're compelled to offer more than a listening ear (which is plenty), give something specific (exceptions: advice, platitudes). Women who battled infertility recalled being grateful when friends:

- Called or texted just to say they were thinking of them.
- Reached out to their partner to get a drink.

- Sent a copy of the book "Things Fall Apart" by Perna Chodron.
- Educated themselves on infertility.
- Left flowers on the porch when they knew her period came.

Another gift you can give is a pass when it comes to attending baby showers or kids' birthday parties. MacDonald encourages people to be sensitive to the fact that holidays other than Mother's Day and Father's Day can be triggering. One woman expressed gratitude for a friend who only called when she was away from her kids, so she wouldn't hear the sound of babies in the background.

Supporting a friend through infertility is showing up, listening, and being sensitive. It's letting your friend feel her feelings. It's sharing a long pause instead of anecdotes or adages. It's asking, "How are you doing," and giving space for your friend to answer or a shoulder to cry on. It's saying, "I don't know what to say, but I want you to know I care." It's simply being a friend.

~Article by Pam Moore

~Photo: Adobe Stock/ By phpetrulina14



My teacher asked me to name an invention. I said, "The snooze button." Genius, right?

My math teacher said, "You'll need this in real life." Still waiting, Mrs. Johnson.

My PE teacher said I ran like a turtle. I said, "Turtles live longer."

My science project was a potato battery. The teacher called it "half-baked."

I tried to teach my dog to play dead, but he just gave me a "you first" look.



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**Ages
6–13**



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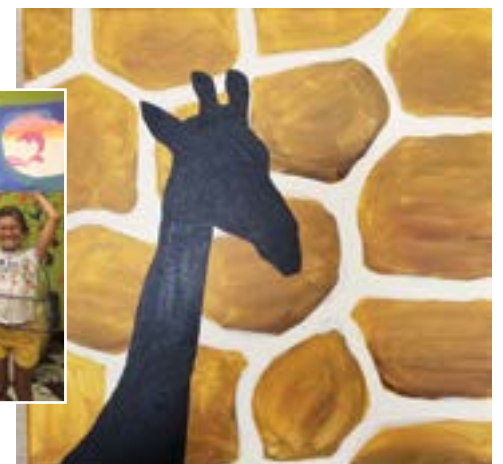
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Lake County Department of Job & Family Services sponsors pinwheels event for child abuse prevention

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, which was first observed in 1983 by a proclamation by President Ronald Reagan. It is a time in which the Children's Bureau strives to raise public awareness of child abuse and neglect, and enforces efforts and resources aimed to protect children, strengthen families, and promote community involvement.

Of course, we all need to be aware every day of this issue that affects not just families, but an entire community. So what do we need to know? "The first thing a community can do is be educated on child abuse and neglect and have an understanding of what an abusive, or neglectful, situation might look like," says Alison Tomaselli, administrator for Lake County Children and Adult Services. "Red flags or warning signs can be obvious at times: unexplained injuries, a child going without basic needs, or even a disclosure of abusive or neglectful acts. Yet, there are situations in which those red flags are not so obvious."

Tomaselli explains that abuse and neglect doesn't always result in an injury, and so it's also important to be aware of changes in a child's behavior. This could include a child suddenly losing interest in activities, or a socially active child suddenly becoming withdrawn or isolated. "It's imperative to be cognizant of situations that don't feel right, or explanations you're not completely satisfied with."

Child Abuse Prevention Month provides everyone an opportunity to

learn about the signs of child abuse and how to prevent it. Child abuse can take on many forms, and often occurs at the same time. They are:

- **Physical abuse.** When a child is purposely physically injured or put at risk of harm by another person.
- **Sexual abuse.** Any kind of sexual activity with a child, such as fondling, oral-genital contact, intercourse, exploitation or exposure to child pornography.
- **Emotional abuse.** Belittling or berating a child that damages a child's self-esteem or emotional well-being. This includes verbal and emotional assault, as well as isolating, ignoring or rejecting a child.
- **Medical abuse.** This can involve someone giving false information about a child's illness that normally requires medical attention. That is, putting the child at risk of injury and unnecessary medical care.
- **Neglect.** The failure to provide adequate food, shelter, affection, supervision, education, or dental or medical care to a child.

"Community members, including parents, teachers, neighbors and service providers, can make a report of suspected abuse or neglect to Lake County Children Services," advises Tomaselli. "Our department has a 24-hour hotline which allows the opportunity to report concerns any time they arise." She adds that oftentimes people may not think their concerns are enough to report, or that their information may not



Employees of Lake County Department of Job and Family Services outside the front of their building for the 2024 Pinwheels for Prevention event.

warrant agency involvement. She encourages them to make a report and let the professionals determine a decision.

If you come across a questionable situation, here is what you can do before calling authorities:

- Community members, such as neighbors and friends, and anyone working with children, can and should take the time to listen to what children say. Never minimize something that might be a possible warning sign.
- Don't simply turn the other cheek when a child is exhibiting disruptive behaviors.
- It's important to know that in many cases, child abuse is done by someone the child knows and trusts, such as a parent, relative, or caregiver. If you suspect child abuse, report the abuse to the proper authorities.

In honor of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Lake County Job & Family Services is sponsoring an annual Pinwheels for Prevention campaign, designed to enhance community awareness about child abuse and neglect, and encourage support for prevention. They will be displaying blue and silver pinwheels in front of their building, signifying the estimated number of children the agency serves throughout the year, as well as the number of caregivers (foster, adoptive, relative, kin) who were able to provide a safe home for some of these children.

"Pinwheels have become a national symbol for the prevention of child abuse," Tomaselli says. "They are typically colorful, bright and reminiscent of childhood, and have become an uplifting reminder of childhood and the bright future that

all children deserve.

The color blue, and blue ribbons, are recognized and associated with child abuse awareness, along with National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It originated in 1989, when a grandmother tied a blue ribbon to the antennae of her car as a signal to fight for the protection of children after her grandchildren had been abused and neglected.

Each year, Ohioans are encouraged to wear blue to school, to work, to an event in the community as a way to bring about awareness of child abuse prevention.

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

For more information on National Child Abuse Prevention Month visit www.childwelfare.gov. Promote the prevention of child abuse by using #NationalChildAbusePrevention-Month on social media.



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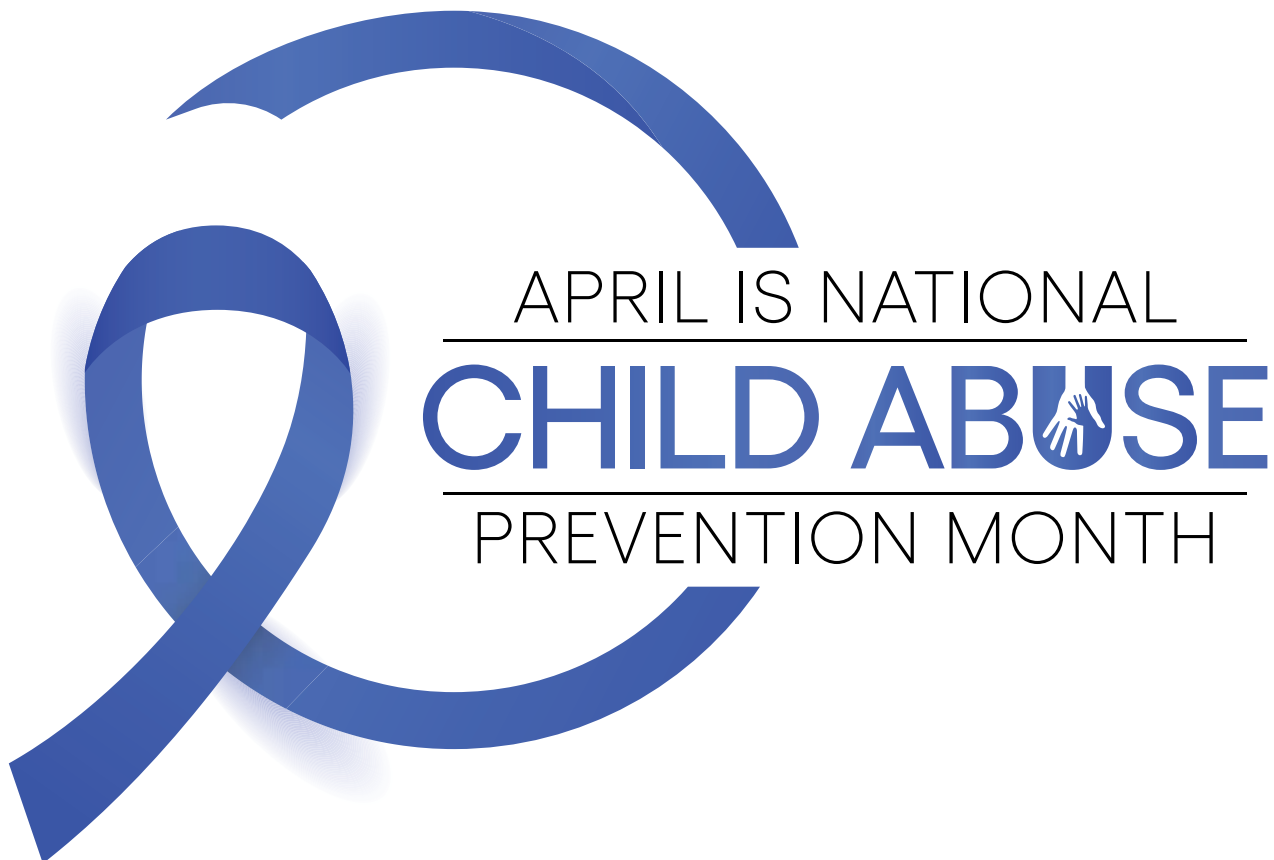
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**Wednesday, April 9, 2025
is Wear Blue 2 Work Day.**

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 9 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**





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30th annual Market at the Food Bank

Featuring Cleveland's most delicious cuisines and beverages

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 27 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 over 25 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 \$150 per person and inclusive of all event food and beverage.

VIP tickets are \$250 per person and grants attendees access to all food and beverage as well as access to the party an hour earlier at 5 p.m., a first look at the auction, specialty cocktails, private lounge and seating, and live entertainment.

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

Spring Discovery Days at Greater Cleveland Aquarium

Have you observed a dwarf seahorse's bony plate exterior or watched a poison dart frog tap its tiny toes? Did you know that a spade-like lower jaw extension allows hungry little central stonerollers to scrape up algae? Were you aware that fused pelvic fins let ping-pong-ball-like lumpsuckers adhere to rocks and kelp so they're not swept away by currents?

Greater Cleveland Aquarium is highlighting these and other diminutive animals during Spring Discovery Days, March 22 – April 27, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Daily animal encounters, small species shout-outs, a "Spot a Spotted" challenge, Splash Fund "Ohio Turtle Tales" popups, interactive Discovery Carts, a fill-in booklet and short videos are all part of this celebration of nature's hidden influencers and included with regular Aquarium admission.

While standing under 230,000 gallons of saltwater in the shadow of a massive sand tiger shark is a memorable part of any Greater Cleveland Aquarium visit, Curator Ray Popik



hopes Spring Discovery Days brings a little more attention to a few micro marvels and some of the features that help them make it in the big world—like the weedy seadragon's independently moving eyes, the spiny softshell turtle's pig-like snout or the pencil urchins blunt spines.

Tickets are \$19.95 ages 13 and older, \$13.95 ages 2–12, \$0 passholders and children younger than 2

Visit greaterclevelandaquarium.com to purchase your tickets.



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Earth Day: It's not just for tree huggers anymore

Every April 22, millions of people gather to celebrate Earth Day. For years, this holiday has been associated with tree-hugging, composting, and people who know far too much about which bin to put a yogurt cup in. But let's be honest—Earth Day isn't just for eco-warriors in hemp clothing. It's for everyone, including you, the person currently drinking from a plastic straw and pretending not to notice.

Yes, even if your version of “going green” is buying a basil plant that dies within a week, Earth Day is still for you. Here's why:

1. The Earth belongs to all of us (unfortunately)

There's no escape. Whether you drive a Prius or a gas-guzzling SUV named “The Carbonator,” we all live on the same planet. And while billionaires are busy planning their Mars escape routes, the rest of us are stuck here trying to figure out how to keep our air breathable and our oceans less... plasticky.

Sure, you may not be planting 500 trees in the Amazon, but even doing something small—like not throwing your gum on the sidewalk—makes a difference. It may not be as glamorous as chaining yourself to a redwood, but hey, every bit counts.

2. Earth Day is about survival (not just sentiment)

You don't have to be a hardcore environmentalist to appreciate clean water, fresh air, and a world where pigeons don't outnumber people. Earth Day is about keeping the plan-

et livable, which benefits everyone—including those of us who think the only thing “green” in life should be guacamole.

You might say, “But I recycle sometimes!” That's great! Even the laziest effort, like using a reusable bag that's been stuffed in your closet since 2015, is still something. Earth Day is a gentle reminder that we should try to do better—ideally before our cities start resembling scenes from a dystopian sci-fi movie.

3. It's a perfect excuse to judge people (productively)

Earth Day gives you 24 glorious hours to silently judge your neighbor's trash habits. Are they still using single-use water bottles? Gasp. Did they throw away an entire pizza box without breaking it down? The horror!

It's also a day to flex your own eco-consciousness. “Oh, you're still using plastic bags? That's so 2010.” Suddenly, your reusable tote collection makes you an environmental influencer, and that smug sense of superiority is completely justified.

4. Being green is easier than ever

Back in the day, caring about the environment meant wearing scratchy hemp shirts and knowing how to install solar panels with your bare hands. But now? You can be eco-friendly with minimal effort. LED light bulbs, meatless Mondays, walking instead of driving two blocks—it all counts. And bonus: most of these changes save you



money, which means more funds for important things, like coffee and online shopping.

5. It's a reason to go outside

Let's be real—most of us could use a little fresh air. Earth Day is a great reminder that nature is actually pretty cool. You can enjoy it without hugging a tree (unless you really want to). Take a walk, have a picnic, or just sit outside and appreciate the fact that oxygen is still free. For now.

Earth Day isn't about perfection; it's about participation. So whether you're a hardcore environmentalist or someone who just remembered to turn off the lights when leaving a room, you're part of the movement. Celebrate however you like—just maybe don't litter while doing it.

And if all else fails, at least plant a basil plant. It'll probably die, but it's the thought that counts.

~Article by Jeannine Todd

~Photo: Adobe Stock/By Melinda Nagy

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Drop the cement suitcase: Tools to get unstuck this spring

As the daffodils emerge and the trees blossom, spring brings a fresh start and a clean slate. Why, then, do many parents tell me they feel stuck? They feel trapped in routines, overwhelmed by daily demands, and weighed down by unhelpful thoughts, impossible expectations, and unresolved emotions. To get out of this rut, it helps to understand why we feel stuck and how to unpack the cement suitcase filled with limiting beliefs, resentments, and emotional baggage many of us carry.

Why do we feel stuck?

We get stuck when we don't process our emotions, we ruminate about the past or future, and our nervous system gets caught in overdrive. Imagine piling your negative thoughts, worry, external pressures, and uncomfortable emotions into a suitcase and then trying to carry it around with you. You wouldn't get very far. For parents, the pressures of work, family, relationships, and finances can all contribute to feeling weighed down and out of options.

When I became a mom of two, the demands were so intense that I lost myself. Thoughts like "this is so hard" and "I'm not cut out for this," overwhelmed me. I didn't have the tools to manage those feelings and thoughts effectively and I spiraled into a stuck state. I felt trapped and overwhelmed.

Here are four tools to help us unpack that cement suitcase:

1. Get out of story and assumptions, and into fact and truth

Do you find yourself going over stories or assumptions when you're trying to make a decision? If you're considering a career move, for example, do you talk yourself out of the jobs you come across assuming you are over or underqualified or not sure if it will work with your family's schedule? Instead, try asking yourself, "What's true?" Often, the truth is you don't know all of the facts about the role. In that case, sending in your application is a great first step. Challenging your default thoughts can help you see your situation more clearly and nudge those limiting stories out of the way.



2. Feel your emotions

Imagine your emotions as a river. When we allow them to flow up and through us, our internal channels remain open and clear. When we don't allow ourselves to feel our feelings, it's like building a dam that blocks the flow. When an emotion arises, take time to sit with it, journal about it, or simply allow yourself to feel it without judgment. This process can help you get to know yourself and release it. Feelings are energy and they are meant to be processed.

3. Get into the present moment

In the present moment, we can tap into our intuition and make conscious decisions. When you notice yourself ruminating about the past or future, take a moment to breathe deeply, scan your surroundings, and notice the sensations in your body. This is a beautiful practice to do with your children, as they naturally live in the present moment.

4. It's all in your head

Our thoughts stem from our beliefs and they determine our actions. If you think, "I'm never going to succeed," challenge that thought with something a bit kinder like, "Right now, I'm facing challenges, but I'm working on finding solutions." Reframe negative thoughts to shift your mindset and challenge limiting beliefs.

Drop the cement suitcase

To get unstuck, we must let go of emotional baggage. Reflect on what beliefs, thoughts, or actions no longer serve you. Journal, meditate, or talk with a trusted friend to help unpack and lighten your emotional load.

When I was struggling in young motherhood,

my chest felt heavy, my breathing was shallow, and negative thoughts were pinging me constantly. I chose a few small things that gave me pleasure and a glimpse into my whole self. Whether it was a cup of hot coffee, or feeling the sun on my face, I embraced those moments and allowed the stuck energy to gently start to fall away.

Tools to get unstuck

Accept yourself: Embrace your current reality, including the challenges. Acceptance doesn't mean approval but it can create movement and clarity.

Envision your future: Get clear on where you want to be. Visualize your desired future and the emotions associated with it. Start to feel what it will feel like to reach your goals. For example, if you want to feel connected with your partner again, imagine what you will feel like when you do. This can help bring it into reality.

Practice gratitude: Even amidst challenges, finding things to be grateful for can shift your perspective and mood. Look for 3–5 things you are grateful for each day. Gratitude multiplies!

Journal: Take pen to paper to explore and process your thoughts and emotions. When you journal, you allow your unconscious mind to flow up and through, revealing your inner knowings.

Choose empowering thoughts: Focus on thoughts that lift you and guide you toward your goals. When thoughts that don't help you arise, imagine them floating away on a cloud.

Reflect and reconnect

As we embrace the new beginnings of spring, reflect on where you feel stuck and how you can use these tools to create positive change. By tuning into your emotions, staying present, and choosing empowering thoughts, you can lighten your load and start moving forward with renewed energy and clarity. Like the seasons this too shall change.

Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified life coach, writer, and Cleveland area mom who helps parents enjoy this time in their lives. You can find her at rebecca.fellenbaum.com.

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Christ Child of the Western Reserve helps children in need

Christ Child of the Western Reserve is a nondenominational and nonprofit organization comprised of a volunteer group of over 200 women who have helped Lake County children in need for over 40 years.

In 2024 the organization helped 1,599 children in need spending \$147,000.

Services they provide include but not limited to:

- Christmas gifts (including books)
- Hygiene kits
- Layettes for newborns
- Eye exams for preschoolers
- Clothing
- Scholarships for both private and public school high school seniors
- Camperships
- Hunger relief on weekends

In order to provide these services the group sponsors a number of fundraisers. This year the Red Wagon Luncheon will be on April 30 at Regovich's Catering in Eastlake (formerly the Patrician.) Tickets are \$50 each and available at www.christchildwesternreserve.org.

Other events include their 29th

annual Daisy Golf Classic and Luncheon at the Pine Ridge Country Club on July 14, and on September 6 they will have a table at Harbor Hogs and Hot Rods at Fairport Harbor with raffles and baskets. More info on these is coming in May.

In addition to events, the organization also raises money through their retail site, Clothing Cottage, where they sell gently-used or even new clothing for women, men, and children. They also have scarves, jewelry, purses, ties, and belts.

The shop is at 9324 Mentor Avenue across from Walmart in the Pastina Rustic plaza in Mentor. Hours are 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. They also take gently-used or new donations during the hours of operation. Tickets for the Red Wagon Luncheon are available here.

They are always looking for new members to help them fulfill their mission statement: "Nothing is ever too much to do for a child."

Info on joining Christ Child of the Western Reserve is available at www.christchildwesternreserve.org.

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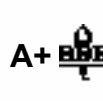
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The 20 questions playlist – Parenting teens

When you are a parent of young children, you probably repeat the same questions over and over. “Did you brush your teeth?” or “Do you need to go to the bathroom?” When the kids become teenagers, you still repeat yourself, but the questions are a little different. The answers, at this age, often come with some heavy sighs and a few eye rolls.

“Will you be home for dinner?” I usually follow that up with, “Will you be alone or are 20 of your closest friends joining you?”

“Is there gas in the car?” I don’t care that the dashboard says you have 50 miles until empty and it didn’t ding yet.

“Where are you going now?” They always seem to have keys in their hand. I am seriously considering getting a revolving door.

“Are you sleeping?” This is typically a morning question when I don’t see a light under their door. However, if I find them napping in the middle of the day, I might use a different tone of voice.

“Did you get my text?” I know you did because the read receipt is on. What I really want to know is why didn’t you answer my text.

“Where is MY phone charger?” Just because I leave my charger in the same place all the time does not mean it is free for you to use or move to a more convenient spot.

“Who used the last (fill in the blank) and didn’t



put it on the shopping list?” It is so frustrating to reach for a box of cereal in the pantry only to find it is empty. The same goes for the milk. Just put it on the list!

“Where are all the cups/bowls/spoons?” I had to eat breakfast out of Tupperware this morning and use a fork to stir my coffee.

“Does anyone know how to change the toilet paper roll?” I taught them this, I swear.

“Am I made of money?” Every day someone needs money for something. Don’t you people have jobs? Use your own money once in a while.

“Are you really wearing that?” My kids all have their own idea of appropriate attire for occasions. It rarely matches mine.

“Where is your coat?” Apparently, I am the only one aware of temperature change.

“What is that smell?” This is usually answered with “I don’t smell anything.” Maybe it’s coming from the three-day-old cup of melted shake in the back seat.

“Why is it so dark in here?” My kids are part vampire. The blinds are always drawn in their bedrooms and they cannot watch TV unless all the lights are off.

“Do I know him/her?” When the kids were in elementary school, I knew everyone they knew as well as their parents. In high school, my kids seem to have a new friend every day.

“Do you have homework?” The answer varies conveniently around what is going on at the moment. “Yes,” is the answer if I need dishes done but it’s a definite “no” if friends invite them out on a school night.

“Who is driving?” When they didn’t have their license, I knew I would get the crappy shift of the carpool. Now that they are driving, I need to know if I should shine up my St. Christopher.

“Whose towels are on the bathroom floor?” I am going to start assigning colors. It’s the only way I will know who the real culprit is.

Pam Molnar is a writer and the mother of three. She is fluent in sarcasm, can decipher mumbled words and can halt procrastination with a single eyebrow raise.

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The great booger excavation

Why kids love picking their noses

Ah, children. They are tiny, sticky, chaos machines who defy the laws of hygiene with Olympic-level enthusiasm. If you've ever spent time with a small child, you've undoubtedly witnessed one of the greatest unsolved mysteries of human behavior: the irresistible urge to mine for nose gold.

It starts early—too early. Before they can walk, talk, or even understand that the cat does not, in fact, enjoy being licked, children discover that their index finger is a perfect spelunking tool for nasal exploration. And once they figure it out, there's no turning back.

The scientific appeal

Why do kids love nose-picking? Some say it's curiosity. Others suggest it's an innate desire to recycle natural resources. The truth is, kids pick their noses for the same reason people binge-watch reality TV—it's disgusting, oddly satisfying, and they can't stop.

To a child, a booger isn't a gross bodily excretion. It's a mystery, a treasure, an experiment. "What is this strange, sticky substance?" they wonder. "Why does it change color? Can I flick it farther than my last one? What happens if I stick it to the couch?" These are the questions that

haunt the minds of our youth.

The social minefield

Every parent has experienced the sheer horror of their child digging for nostril gold in public. Maybe it was in church, at a family dinner, or worse—at a school play while they were standing front and center.

And let's not forget the pièce de résistance: when the child, caught in the act, decides that the most logical next step is to eat it.

At that moment, time slows down. Parents lock eyes across the room, silently wondering if it is too late to put this one back.

Despite the sheer volume of times we say, "Get your finger out of your nose!" children simply do not care. Why? Because their tiny, developing brains have already assessed the situation and have decided "this is a battle I am willing to fight to the death."

The forbidden snack

If there's one thing kids love more than nose-picking, it's snacking on the results. Science has yet to explain why children, who gag at the mere sight of a green bean, will happily ingest something they just dug out of their own nasal



passages. Maybe it's the thrill of the forbidden. Maybe it's a survival instinct from caveman days. Or maybe it's just because they know it horrifies adults.

Regardless, parents everywhere have mastered the art of a soft mid-air slap, the desperate tissue grab, and the frantic, "SPIT IT OUT!" command—usually followed by the soul-crushing realization that it's already too late.

Hope for the future?

Thankfully, most kids outgrow their nose-picking phase by the time they realize their peers find it gross. Until then, parents must endure the battle, armed only with tissues, hand sanitizer, and the fervent hope that their child won't be "that kid" in kindergarten.

Until then, we must accept that nose-picking is a childhood rite of passage—one that is, unfortunately, still happening in the backseat of your car right now.

~Article by Jeannine Todd

~ Photo: Adobe Stock/Lightfield Studios

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HOLIDAY HUMOR



Easter: The only holiday where you hunt for your own food

Ah, Easter! The magical time of year when we celebrate renewal, rebirth, and the fact that an oversized rabbit apparently sneaks into our homes and leaves us candy. It's the only day when eating chocolate for breakfast is not only acceptable but encouraged.

Let's start with the real highlight of Easter: the egg hunt. Nothing says "fun" like unleashing sugar-fueled children into the yard, where they'll fight to the death over a plastic egg containing a single jellybean. Meanwhile, parents stand on the sidelines, coffee in hand, wondering why they didn't just hide \$5 bills and call it a day.

Speaking of eggs, Easter is the only time we willingly participate in an elaborate egg-dyeing ritual that leaves us with rainbow-stained fingers and countertops that will be "festively decorated" until July. Somehow, despite using every color imaginable, the eggs all end up the same murky shade of disappointment.

Then there's the Easter feast—a meal that somehow manages to involve both ham and deviled eggs, which seems oddly threatening when you think about it. And let's not forget Grandma's "famous" carrot cake, which is basically a sneaky way to add vegetables to dessert.

Of course, no Easter is complete without the mysterious Peeps—those neon marshmallow chicks that have the texture of insulation foam and a shelf life of eternity. No one actually enjoys them, yet they somehow multiply in your pantry like real rabbits.

In the end, Easter is about family, faith, and the universal agreement that hollow chocolate bunnies are a scam. So whether you're celebrating with church, candy, or just an excuse to eat ham for three days straight, enjoy the holiday!

Just watch out for rogue Easter eggs hiding under your couch until Halloween.

~Article by Justin Daniels

~Photo: Adobe Stock /By romanets_v



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Actions speak louder than words

As someone who tries to see the best in people, I've had trouble over the years recognizing the red flags in some of my "friendships." I tend to take people at face value. I assume people will do what they say, and I tend to trust people until they give me a reason not to. This generally serves me well. Sometimes, though, the way someone presents themselves is in direct opposition to their actions. I'm a slow processor, so often, it isn't until reflecting later that I come to terms with this contradiction.

Don't misunderstand me—giving people grace when they aren't their best selves is something good friends do for each other. If it's reciprocal, it's positive and necessary. But it really is true that actions speak louder than words. I've learned that when someone keeps showing me who they really are, I need to pay attention. It's a hard lesson to learn at any age, and especially difficult to watch as your kids struggle through it.

After school one day, my younger daughter seemed more subdued than usual. She shared that little by little,

girls she considered friends were no longer acting that way. As is often the case in middle school, friendships were shifting. Little by little, my daughter was on the outside of this circle of friends. Understandably, her feelings were hurt, but when she said as much, they told her nothing had changed. But each day and new drama made her feel more ill at ease around them. Eventually, she learned to trust her gut and walk away. Soon after, she settled into a new, kinder group of girls, and school became fun again. And she wondered why it took her so long to cut ties with the mean girls.

I recently read about a study that, in hindsight, could have helped. The study done at the University of Virginia asked students to estimate the steepness of a hill. Those students who were paired with someone they identified as a good friend saw the incline as less steep than those estimating the challenge alone. In fact, even those students who were thinking of a good friend while estimating saw the incline as less strenuous. The op-



posite was true in both cases in the company of a not-so-good friend. The study found that the support of good friends make challenges seem less daunting, while false friends made things seem more difficult.

So if you're questioning whether a friendship is adding to or subtracting

from your life, no matter what age you are, maybe this simple question can help. Is this someone you'd like to climb a hill with? If the answer is no, it may be time to move on.

~Article by Stacy Turner

~Photo credit:

Adobe Stock/ by highwaystargz



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PRESCHOOL GUIDE



Tips for finding the right preschool for your child

Choosing the right preschool for your child is a significant milestone in their early development. The preschool years are crucial for laying the foundation for social, emotional, and cognitive growth. With so many options available, selecting the best fit can feel overwhelming. Here's a comprehensive guide to help you navigate the process and make an informed decision.

1. Understand your child's needs

Every child is unique, and their individual temperament, interests, and learning style should guide your decision. Some children thrive in structured environments, while others may prefer a more flexible, play-based setting. Consider your child's personality, strengths, and any special needs they may have when evaluating different preschools.

2. Research different types of preschools

There are various preschool philosophies and teaching approaches to consider:

- **Montessori** – Encourages self-directed learning and hands-on exploration.
- **Waldorf** – Focuses on creativity, imagination, and routine-based learning.



- **Reggio Emilia** – Child-led learning that fosters curiosity through projects and collaboration.
- **Play-based** – Emphasizes learning through play and social interaction.
- **Academic-focused** – Offers structured learning with an emphasis on early literacy and math skills.

Understanding these approaches will help you determine which aligns best with your child's learning style and your family's values.

3. Consider location and convenience

A preschool's location plays a vital role in daily logistics. A school that is too far may add stress to your routine. Consider whether you prefer a preschool near your home, workplace, or a trusted caregiver. Also, check their operating hours to ensure they align with your schedule.

4. Evaluate the curriculum and learning environment

When visiting potential preschools, observe the classrooms and curriculum structure. Look for a balance of structured activities and free play. Ask about daily routines, subjects covered, and how teachers encourage curiosity and critical thinking. Ask if they provide meals and snacks, are naps taken and how they handle discipline.

The classroom should be a safe, engaging space with age-appropriate materials that stimulate creativity and learning.

Continued on page 17



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Finding a preschool from page 16

5. Check teacher qualifications and student-to-teacher ratios

Qualified, caring teachers are essential to a positive preschool experience. Ask about teachers' credentials, experience, professional development opportunities and ongoing training. Additionally, a low student-to-teacher ratio ensures that children receive individual attention, helping them feel secure and supported in their learning journey.

- Emergency preparedness
- Illness prevention and hygiene practices
- Food and allergy policies
- Background checks for staff
- Supervision during playtime and outdoor activities
- Required immunizations
- Sick child rules

8. Consider cost and affordability

Preschool tuition varies widely depending on the school type, location, and facilities. Create a budget and explore tuition assistance or scholarships if needed. Some public programs, such as Head Start, offer free or low-cost preschool options for qualifying families.

9. Ask for parent reviews and recommendations

Talking to other parents can provide valuable insights into a preschool's reputation. Read online reviews, join local parenting groups, and ask for recommendations from friends or family. First-hand

7. Inquire about safety and health policies

Children's health and safety should be a top priority. Ask about the school's policies regarding:



experiences can help you gauge the strengths and weaknesses of different schools.

10. Trust your instincts

While research and recommendations are helpful, trust your instincts when making a final decision. If a preschool feels right and aligns with your child's needs and your values, it's likely a great fit. If something feels off, continue exploring other options.

Finding the right preschool takes

time and careful consideration, but the effort is worth it. A positive preschool experience lays the foundation for a lifelong love of learning, social development, and emotional growth. By considering your child's needs, researching options, and visiting schools, you can confidently choose the best preschool for your little one.

~Article by Justin Daniels

~Photo: (boy) Adobe Stock/By GulArt

~Photo (girl): Adobe Stock/By Oksana Kuzmina



LITTLE KNIGHTS PRESCHOOL

Learn about our fully accredited
Preschool programs

Pre-Kindergarten - (5 full days)

Pre 4 - (3 full days-M,W,F)

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

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



MORAL VALUES
DISCOVERY
ACHIEVEMENT



HOME OF THE KNIGHTS!

Mater Dei Academy is committed to providing a quality Catholic education centered on gospel values.

29840 Euclid Ave.
Wickliffe OH 44092
440-585-0800

www.materdeiacademy.us

Personal tours can be scheduled any time by contacting the school office

PRESCHOOL GUIDE

All Saints School of St. John Vianney Little Saints Preschool

28702 Euclid Avenue, Wickliffe
(440) 943-1395
www.allsaintssjv.org

Located on the peaceful campus of the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe, All Saints School offers a distinctive educational experience where faith, academics, and community come together. They are fortunate to have a special partnership with the seminarians who live on campus, enriching their students' lives. These seminarians bring knowledge, passion, and a unique perspective to the classroom, offering insights into faith, service, and Catholic traditions. This partnership fosters unity and shared purpose, benefiting both the students and seminarians.

At All Saints, they recognize that each child is unique. Their commitment to personalized learning ensures every student thrives and reaches their full potential. Their rigorous curriculum meets state and diocesan standards, preparing

students for academic success while nurturing their spiritual and moral development. They believe education shapes character, instilling a love of learning, compassion, and a deep connection to Catholic faith.

Schedule a tour today at (440) 943-1395.

Little Light Learning Center

34201 Eddy Road, Willoughby Hills
(440) 585-2625
www.littlelightlearningcenter.com

Little Light Learning Center is an affordable, part-time Christian-based preschool program that has been known for over 20 years as "Willoughby Hills best kept secret." They offer small class sizes of 12-16 children with a lead teacher and teaching assistant in each classroom that are below state required ratios. Their structured programs help children to learn, play and grow while preparing them for kindergarten. The dedicated and degreed teachers use a flexible curriculum that allows them to incorporate the children's interests

and meet them developmentally where they are at. Their safe and welcoming environment supports children in building friendships that last beyond preschool. For more information on their program, please call (440) 585-2625.

Mater Dei Academy Little Knights Preschool

29840 Euclid Avenue, Wickliffe
(440) 585-0800
www.MaterDeiAcademy.us

Mater Dei Academy's preschool program for ages 3, 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.



ALL SAINTS SCHOOL

NOW ENROLLING

Faith. Family. and Future Leaders

- The Little Saints Preschool Program concentrates on developing a love for learning, for family, and God for students 3-5 years of age.
- Take a tour of our beautiful school located on campus of the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe, OH.
- Meet our teachers and learn about our curriculum and the many family-friendly activities we offer to our families.



28702 Euclid Ave, Wickliffe, OH 44092

www.AllSaintsSJV.org

(440) 943-1395

PRESCHOOL GUIDE

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 or visit St-GabrielSchool.org. Please note full-time program has a waiting list for 2025-26 school.

St. Mary Chardon Little Scholars Academy

401 North St., Chardon
(440) 286-3590 x170
www.stmaryschoolchardon.org

For more than 25 years, the Little Scholars Academy at St. Mary School in Chardon has served as a catalyst in the early educational lives of hundreds of children. Their preschool and pre-kindergarten programs promote the spiritual, social, emotional, and intellectual growth of its young scholars through age-appropriate development experiences and play-based activities, while helping students transition from home to school.

Their 3-year-old preschool program offers a three-day, half-day option. While the prekindergarten program offers both three-day and five-day options in half-day and full-day.

If you are interested in learning more about their Little Scholars Academy or have questions about enrollment, please complete an admissions inquiry form online at stmaryschoolchardon.org or contact Mrs. Kimberly O'Keeffe via email at kokeeffe@stmaryschoolchardon.org or call (440) 286-3590 x170. Their teachers are ready and excited to welcome your child into their Little Scholars community!



Today's Family BOOK — CLUB —

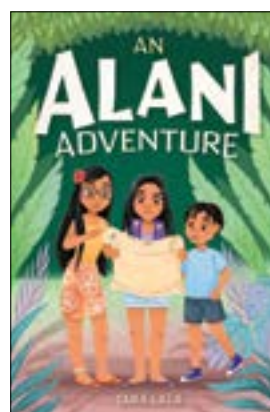
It's time to spring clean your reading list with these new page-turners that are full of adventures, friendships, and even fun festivals. All titles are available on Amazon.com.



Alycat and the Copycat

by Alysson Foti Bourque

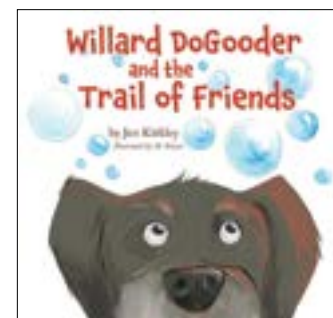
Alycat is excited that it's Science Fair Day, but why is her classmate copying almost everything about her, from the shirt she's wearing to the project she's doing? Soon Alycat learns, through patience and kindness, that two similar things can be better when they work together. This latest addition to the kitten picture-book series includes STEM themes plus instructions for making your own glitter volcano!



An Alani Adventure

by Tara Lala

Leia, Ohana, and Kai are three siblings who have never ventured off of the island of Maui. When a dormant volcano suddenly awakens and threatens their home, they are gifted a magic map that allows them to explore different countries all around the world. What treasures does the map want them to find? Will they be able to follow its clues in time? Or will the volcano erupt and destroy their island before they return?



Willard DoGooder and the Trail of Friends

by Jen Kirkley

Willard DoGooder has trouble making friends in his new class. Things are just...different. One day, Willard spots a magical trail that leads him on an adventure filled with curiosity, fun, and new friends, as he learns how to think through and celebrate differences. Each friend that Willard DoGooder meets on the trail, teaches him how we can approach differences, learn from one another, and appreciate each other. Over the course of the book, Willard learns a three-step process for approaching differences: name the difference, find the good, and move on with kindness.



Hannah Bear and LuLu's Festival to Remember

by Julie Hooks

Two adorable bears set out to find the source of an irresistible aroma and wind up smack dab in the middle of the most exciting place on earth—a festival! Join Hannah Bear and LuLu on a thrilling journey as they explore the blinking lights, the spinning rides, and delicious food! The adventurous cubs sample every delectable delight from spicy cracklins, pecans, and pralines to other Louisiana treats.

Follow Hannah Bear and LuLu to the perfect spot with the most delicious smell of all.

Shining in Willoughby Hills since 2005



- Christian-based preschool programs for 3, 4, and 5 year olds
- Small class sizes and low student teacher ratios
- Degreed teachers & caring staff
- 4/5 yr old PreK program focused on kindergarten readiness

Enrolling for the 2025-2026 school year

440-585-2625 www.littlelightlearningcenter.com



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Exploration



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Learn how to be a good friend

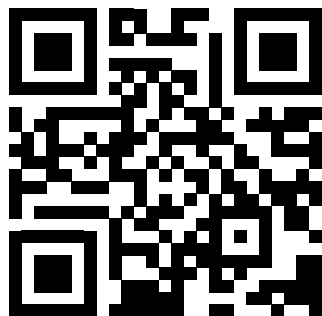


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Earn badges by learning new skills

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Sign up for our Extended Year Membership* today! Girls can join for \$63, and adults for \$42. Start in April and enjoy up to five extra months of fun, through September 2026! Visit girlscouts.org/benefits to learn more.

Scan the QR code to join Girl Scouts today!

Questions? Contact GSNEO at 800-852-4474 or customercare@gsneo.org

*The Girl Scout Extended Year membership spans April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026, followed by the annual membership year from October 1 to September 30, which requires yearly renewal.

girl scouts
of north east ohio

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