

# TODAY'S family

April 2026

Lake Geauga

Free!

## Where creativity comes to life

The Fine Arts Association

## More Than Books

How the Willoughby-Eastlake  
Public Library connects  
the community

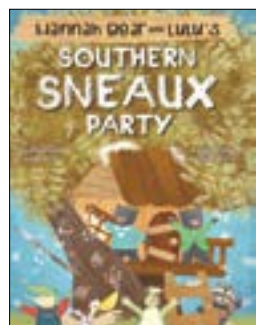
**Market  
at the  
Food Bank**  
Fundraiser for  
Greater Cleveland  
Food Bank

**Child Abuse  
Prevention  
Month**

Raising awareness  
and taking action

TIPS FOR FINDING THE RIGHT  
**PRESCHOOL**



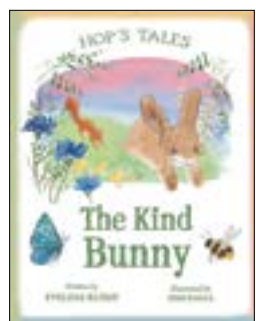


## Hannah Bear and Lulu's Southern Sneak Party

By Julie Hooks

The air is crisp in the Honey Hollow Woods, and the sister cubs, Hannah Bear and LuLu, are busy getting ready for their big winter party. Excitement is everywhere—but not for everyone. Magnolia, the newest resident of the woods, is feeling homesick and missing her favorite part of the season: sneaux! Determined to make their

new friend feel welcome, Hannah Bear and LuLu spring into action with a heartwarming plan—and one magical ingredient that could make all the difference. Will they solve the conundrum and bring a little southern sneaux magic to the celebration? This cozy picture book is a joyful tale of friendship, creativity, and the magic of the season—with a sweet surprise ending that's sure to warm hearts of all ages.



## Hop's Tales: The Kind Bunny

By Evelina Ruimy

Meet a bright and curious bunny who loves to learn, read, and play with friends. But when one pup gets in the way, this little bunny discovers something important about kindness, courage, and staying true to who you are.

This charming, rhyme-filled story takes young readers on a heartwarming journey about friendship, confidence, and what it really means to be

“cool.” Through playful rhythm and an uplifting message, children will learn that kindness and being yourself are the greatest strengths of all. Perfect for storytime at home or in the classroom, this delightful tale encourages children to build empathy, celebrate differences, and believe in themselves.



## The Lost Locket on the Golden Gate Bridge

By Scott Sollers

What is your most prized possession? For Katherine, her most prized possession is the locket given to her on her seventh birthday. On a trip to San Francisco, California, the locket goes missing on the Golden Gate Bridge. Heartbroken, Katherine must come face-to-face with the reality

that the locket is lost forever. When a seagull spots the missing locket, he quickly retrieves it and takes it back to his nest, hoping to return it to its rightful owner. Will the locket ever be reunited with its owner? Read along to find out and discover the greatest gift of all.

## Do you know someone who deserves the SPOTLIGHT?

We're always looking to share inspiring, heartwarming stories. If you know someone whose story would inspire or uplift Today's Family readers, please send us an email and tell us about them!

SCAN TO EMAIL US!



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# More Than Books

How the Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library connects the community

For generations, libraries have been places to borrow books and study in quiet corners—but today's public libraries offer so much more. The Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library system continues to evolve to meet the needs of modern families, offering innovative programs, digital learning tools, and welcoming spaces for residents of all ages.

Serving seven Lake County communities, the library system includes four full-service locations in Willoughby, Eastlake, Willowick, and Willoughby Hills. Each branch provides access not only to books and movies, but also to educational programs, technology resources, and opportunities for social connection throughout the year.

One of the system's greatest strengths is its wide variety of programs designed to support early literacy and lifelong learning. Weekly story times for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers help introduce young children to books, rhythm, and language in a fun, engaging setting. These programs are carefully designed to encourage literacy development while also helping children build social skills and prepare for future classroom experiences.

For school-age children and teens, the library offers a growing selection of hands-on activities and digital learning opportunities. A standout example is Adventure Academy, a free online educational game available to families with a library

card. Designed for elementary and middle school students, the interactive program blends reading, math, science, and social studies into a virtual world where kids can learn through quests, games, and collaborative exploration.

In addition to digital learning tools, the library system provides unique physical resources that many families may not realize are available. The WE Play Toy Library allows children to borrow educational toys just like books, giving families access to high-quality play materials without the cost of purchasing them. This initiative supports both learning through play and equitable access to enrichment opportunities for all families.

The Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library also plays an important role as a community gathering space. From book clubs and craft workshops to technology classes and family events, the branches serve as welcoming hubs where residents can meet, learn, and connect. Each location strives to be accessible and sensory-inclusive, ensuring that visitors of all abilities feel comfortable and supported during their time at the library.

April is an especially meaningful time to visit. From April 19–25, 2026, libraries across the country will celebrate National Library Week, a yearly observance that highlights the important role libraries and library professionals play in strength-



Mr. Jeff performs for a children's music program in summer 2025 in Downtown Willoughby.

ening communities and expanding access to knowledge. The week offers a perfect opportunity for families who haven't visited recently to rediscover everything their local branches have to offer.

Whether you're looking for early literacy programs, homework support, digital learning tools, or simply a welcoming place to spend a quiet afternoon, the Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library continues to be a valuable community resource. By combining traditional services with modern technology and inclusive programming, the library system ensures it remains not just relevant, but essential, in the lives of local families.

To explore upcoming programs, digital resources, and services at each branch, visit the library online at [www.we247.org](http://www.we247.org) or stop by your nearest location to see what's new.

*Article by Dan Miller | Today's Family Editor*

## A Job with Purpose Fosters Lives with Purpose

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# Where is the rest of my cereal?

## Shrinkflation and the mystery of the disappearing ounces

By Dan Miller  
Today's Family Editor

Years ago I noticed the groceries in our house started disappearing faster.

At first, I blamed the kids. Teenagers are known to inhale cereal at an alarming rate. But eventually I realized something else was happening. The cereal wasn't vanishing faster—the box was getting smaller.

Welcome to the world of shrinkflation, the increasingly common practice of keeping the price the same while quietly shrinking the product.

It's the economic equivalent of ordering a large pizza and opening the box to discover it now feeds three people instead of five.

### Honey, they shrunk the cereal box

If you've bought cereal recently, you may have noticed the boxes look about the same—but contain less.

Many cereals that once held around 19 ounces now hold closer to 18, and some standard boxes have dropped from about 10 ounces to under 8 over the years.

The boxes remain tall and colorful, of course. Manufacturers have mastered the art of what might politely be called "visual optimism."

From the front, it still looks like plenty of breakfast. From the top, it's more like two bowls and a handful of crumbs.

Parents now understand why the phrase "part of a balanced breakfast" was always followed by pictures of eggs, toast, fruit, and milk. The cereal alone clearly wasn't going to cut it.

### The Goldfish situation

Take Goldfish crackers, a staple in lunch boxes everywhere.

The smiling little fish look the same as they always have, but the bags don't last nearly as long as they once did.

Some parents suspect the fish themselves may now be more "minnow sized."

Of course, the kids don't complain. Goldfish crackers remain wildly popular. They just require more bags to feed the same number of hungry swimmers.

### The curious case of the disappearing candy bar

Candy bars may be the most obvious victims of shrinkflation.

Anyone who grew up in the 1980s or 1990s remembers candy bars that felt like a legitimate dessert. Today, many of those same bars seem... daintier.

Take Reese's Peanut Butter Cups. The familiar orange package still contains two cups, but longtime fans swear the cups themselves are a little smaller than they used to be.

Maybe our hands just got bigger over the years?

Or maybe the peanut butter cups went on a diet.

The same goes for classics like Hershey's Milk Chocolate Bar, which once tipped the scales at more than 2.5 ounces but now often weighs closer to 1.5 ounces in its standard form.

Apparently chocolate obeys the same laws as airline legroom: there's just a little less of it every year.



Quaker's Life cereal shrunk from 24.8 ounce to 22.3, and it was renamed from "giant" to "family" size – and the box actually got bigger! This is common for nearly all cereal brands. *Source: Business Insider*

### When a pint isn't really a pint

Ice cream has also quietly joined the shrinkflation club.

For years, a pint of ice cream meant exactly what the name implied: 16 ounces.

But in 2009, premium brand Haagen-Dazs reduced its containers to 14 ounces while keeping the same familiar packaging.

The containers still look like pints. They just contain two fewer ounces of happiness.

Other brands followed with similar changes, proving that even dessert is not immune to the mysterious shrinking effect.

### Paper towels

Shrinkflation isn't limited to food. It has quietly reached the cleaning aisle as well.

Paper towel rolls used to contain well over 100 sheets. Today many brands offer rolls with far fewer sheets—but they come with impressive-sounding labels like "Mega Roll," "Super Mega Roll," or "Family Roll."

Translation: the roll is smaller, but the name is bigger.

The math can get confusing quickly.

A "Mega Roll" might equal two regular rolls, except the regular rolls used to be bigger. So now a Mega

Roll might actually equal one and a half rolls from 15 years ago.

Somewhere, a marketing team deserves a trophy for that one.

### The juice box question

Even kids' drinks haven't escaped shrinkflation.

Many familiar juice boxes that once contained about 6.75 ounces have quietly dropped closer to 6 ounces over time.

That may not sound dramatic, but across a week of school lunches those missing ounces add up.

Parents now face the difficult task of explaining why the juice box seems empty halfway through the sandwich.

### The family strategy

The good news is that the grocery store still provides one helpful clue: the price per ounce printed on the shelf label.

That small number reveals whether the cereal box really is a good deal—or whether the crackers, candy bars, and juice boxes have quietly lost a few ounces along the way.

And if the groceries in your house seem to disappear faster than they used to, don't worry.

It's probably not the kids.

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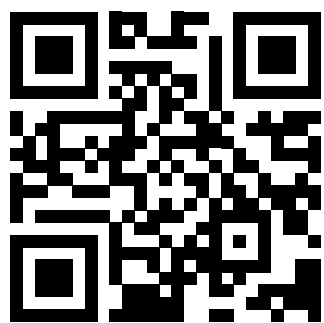


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Questions? Contact GSNEO at 800-852-4474 or [customercare@gsneo.org](mailto:customercare@gsneo.org)

\*The Girl Scout Extended Year membership spans April 1, 2026 to September 30, 2027, followed by the annual membership year from October 1 to September 30, which requires yearly renewal.

**girlscouts**  
of north east ohio

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# The mystery of the moving holidays

Why Easter and Passover change dates every spring

Unlike holidays such as Christmas or the Fourth of July, Easter and Passover don't stay put on the calendar. One year they arrive in late March, and another year they don't appear until well into April.

For many families, it can feel a little random. Why don't these holidays just settle on a simple date like the first Sunday in April?

The answer turns out to involve the moon, ancient calendars, and a decision made nearly 1,700 years ago.

## It starts with the Jewish calendar

The story begins with Passover, one of the most important holidays in the Jewish faith.

Passover follows the Hebrew calendar, which is based largely on lunar cycles. A lunar month lasts about 29½ days, which means a lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar calendar most of the world uses today.

To keep holidays aligned with the seasons, the Hebrew calendar occasionally adds an extra month. Even

with that adjustment, the holiday still shifts each year when translated to the modern Gregorian calendar.

Passover begins on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, which falls shortly after the first full moon of spring.

## How Easter is determined

Early Christians wanted Easter to remain connected to the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, which took place during Passover.

In the year 325 AD, church leaders meeting at the First Council of Nicaea established the formula still used today:

Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox.

That means three things determine the date:

- The spring equinox (around March 20 or 21)
- The first full moon after the equinox
- The first Sunday after that full moon



Because the moon's cycle doesn't line up perfectly with the calendar, Easter can fall anywhere between March 22 and April 25.

## Could Easter ever be fixed to one date?

Over the years, there have been occasional proposals to give Easter a permanent place on the calendar. One commonly suggested option is celebrating it on the second Sunday in April.

A fixed date could make planning easier for schools, families, and even retailers preparing for the holiday season.

However, changing Easter would require agreement among many Christian denominations worldwide, including the Catholic Church, Protestant churches, and Orthodox churches. With so many traditions involved, a change has never gained widespread approval.

## Why the dates can be so far apart

Because Easter depends on both the equinox and the full moon, the holiday can shift by several weeks from year to year.

That's why some years Easter and Passover occur close together, while other years they appear nearly a month apart.

Even in a world of digital calendars and carefully planned schedules, these holidays are still guided by traditions that began thousands of years ago. Long before smartphones sent reminders about egg hunts or family dinners, people looked to the sky to mark the seasons.

So the next time Easter or Passover seems to jump to a new date on the calendar, remember—it isn't random at all. The timing is simply following the same rhythm of the moon and springtime that people have watched for generations.

## Return of the Butterflies at the Cleveland Botanical Garden

Beginning April 1, 2026, the popular Return of the

Butterflies exhibit returns to the Cleveland Botanical Garden, inviting visitors to step inside the lush Costa Rica biome and experience hundreds of newly emerged tropical butterflies up close as they flutter among vibrant flowers. Guests can also attend live butterfly releases Tuesday through Saturday at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m.

Families with young children won't want to miss Caterpillar Craze on April 24–25 and May 1–2, when kids can learn about the butterfly life cycle and create their own caterpillar crafts in the Hershey Children's Garden (or indoors in Perennial Playspace if weather requires).

Visit [holdenfg.org](http://holdenfg.org) for ticket pricing and more info.





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## A NEW TODAY'S FAMILY ADVICE COLUMN!

# LIVING WELL

with Rebecca Fellenbaum

Heartfelt advice to help you enjoy this time in your life.

Scan the QR code to learn more or write to Rebecca!



This month, I'm answering two questions about school, a topic that brings up a lot of emotions for both kids and parents. If you're frustrated over homework or wondering whether your child is getting the support they need, you're not alone.

### Homework battles

**Dear Rebecca:** I'm really angry at my sixth-grade son for not turning in his homework. How much hand-holding should I be doing?

— Jason, *Shaker Heights*

**Dear Jason:** The age-old homework battle—relatable and challenging.

Before we jump to solutions, I'd like you to ask yourself: How do you feel? When our kids don't follow through on their responsibilities, it can trigger a range of emotions. You might feel frustration, embarrassment, fear about their future, or even worry that you're failing as a parent. What's coming up for you here?

Then, take a moment to consider what you might be making this mean about you or your child. While anger is a valid emotion—and can even be helpful—it's often tied to a story running in our minds. It might sound like: My child is lazy, irresponsible, or headed for trouble. When we notice that story, we can begin to separate it from the facts by asking, "What's actually true?"

Once you've separated the problem from your feelings and assumptions about it, you can get curious about what might be happening for your son. Homework struggles are rarely just about homework.

Consider a few possibilities:

- Is there a skills gap, like trouble organizing or knowing what he needs to get done?
- Does he need more help with the subject matter? Kids often avoid work when they feel behind or unsure of how to do it.
- Is he exhausted after a long day?
- Is he pushing for autonomy or attention (even negative attention

is still attention)?

- Has he lost motivation?

Instead of focusing on how much to hand-hold, try shifting into "investigation mode." A calm conversation might sound like: "I notice homework isn't getting turned in. What's going on?"

The truth is, you can't create intrinsic motivation for another person—even your child. What you can do is provide structure and support while allowing natural consequences to play a role.

The goal is support without rescuing. When you've worked through your initial frustration, you'll be in a better place to help your son understand what's getting in the way—and to work together on a solution.

And don't worry—I think you'll do just fine with the homework I've given you here.

### When to step in

**Dear Rebecca:** How do I know when to advocate for my child at school? Sometimes I feel like she needs more help than she's getting.

— Jessica, *Willoughby Hills*

**Dear Jessica:** This is where your intuition as a parent matters. You're obviously concerned enough to ask me about it. I'd be curious to know who at school you've brought this up with.

In the Adult Chair® framework I teach, we often talk about the difference between reacting from fear and responding from our grounded self. If you're feeling anxious about your child's progress, pause and ask yourself two questions:

- What am I noticing that feels concerning?
- And what might my fear be telling me about this situation?

Separating facts from fears can bring clarity.

From there, start with open communication. Talk with your child about how school feels for them. Are they confused by the material? Embarrassed to ask questions? Feeling

overwhelmed?

Next, gather information from the school. Teachers often appreciate when parents approach with curiosity rather than criticism. You might say, "I've noticed my daughter seems discouraged about math. What are you seeing in the classroom?"

Sometimes struggles resolve naturally as kids mature or build new skills. But if something consistently feels off, advocating for additional support, tutoring, or evaluation is not overreacting.

You know your child best. When you combine that intuition with thoughtful communication and collaboration, you become a powerful partner in your child's education.

And perhaps one of the most valuable lessons your child learns along

the way is that when something isn't working, it's okay to ask for support.

**About Living Well:** We welcome your questions about parenting, mindfulness, wellness, and everyday life. Rebecca will share tools, tips, and heartfelt advice to help you feel understood, supported, and inspired to truly enjoy this stage of life with your kids and family. If you're wondering about it, chances are another parent is too — so don't be shy! Let's talk about it... and start Living Well. Scan the QR code above and submit your question for consideration for future columns.

*Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified somatic life coach, writer, and Cleveland-area mom who helps parents reconnect with themselves so they can enjoy their lives, kids, and families. Learn more at [rebeccafellenbaum.com](http://rebeccafellenbaum.com).*



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# When the power goes out, family time turns on

A spring storm left our house in the dark—but lit up a cozy night of pioneer-style family time

It's often said that April showers bring May flowers. And while springtime brings colorful blooms from what seemed like lifeless dirt just a few short weeks ago, it can also bring powerful storms. And those storms have the potential to knock out electric lines.

We're blessed to live in a time and place where the flip of a switch means illumination and the twist of the tap delivers water like magic. We don't have to think too much about it, it's just always there—until it isn't.

Where I live, we aren't connected to village or city water lines. Instead, we have a well, so when the electricity goes out, so does our water. Simply put, that means no water in faucets or for flushes. And while we can hook our fridge and freezer up to a portable generator to keep our food cold, we must resort to bottled water, hand sanitizer, wet wipes, and delayed flushes until the power returns.

During one spring storm season, my husband and I were at parent-teacher conferences at our kids' school. The girls were old enough to stay home by themselves, each busy in separate rooms of the house. While we were gone, a storm blew in. At school, there was no loss of power during

our meetings, but as we drove closer to home, we didn't see lights on in any of the homes we passed. When we got to our driveway, we saw that a small tree had been blown down, blocking our path to the garage. Our house was dark, just like the rest of the neighborhood. We found the girls huddled together in one room, wrapped in cozy blankets and eating granola bars.

While my husband cut the tree to clear the driveway, I found something simple to reheat on the grill. During our meal, eaten by candlelight, the girls recounted their harrowing tale of survival. "We felt like pioneers," they noted, relieved when we came to the rescue, just like Ma and Pa Ingalls would out on the prairie. The cozy lighting made for a quiet, screen-free evening as we read books by flickering candles, then circled the wagons to bed down for the night.

The electricity returned late that evening, and my husband and I ran around turning off lights, resetting clocks and flushing toilets. When the girls woke up the next morning, they were happy to return to the 21st century. But after going without modern conveniences even a short while, we each had a new appreciation for the things we



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often take for granted.

In a work environment, it's common for technical support staff to recommend shutting down a computer, then restarting it to resolve an issue. At home, a power outage can work in a similar way for us human machines. In fact, studies have shown that taking a break from screens can help improve mental and physical health, strengthen relationships, and encourage us to engage in offline activities. It can even increase the quality of our sleep, allowing our brains to 'reset'.

Whatever the weather, April can provide you with more opportunities to enjoy offline activities with your family—whether you're out on the prairie or at home in the suburbs. Hopefully, you won't need to lose power to give it a go.

## Mommy CHRONICLES

By Stacy Turner



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# 2026 SUMMER

# CAMPS & CLASSES

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## Womankind to host free Spring Fling Community Resource Fair

Families and community members are invited to attend Womankind's Spring Fling Community Resource Fair, a free event designed to connect local residents with valuable programs, services, and support resources.

The event will take place on April 18, 2026, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Garfield Heights Civic Center. The fair is open to everyone and welcomes individuals, parents, caregivers, and children.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet and speak with up to 50 vendors representing a wide range of fields, including health and wellness, education, parenting support, housing assistance, counseling, prenatal care, food resources, and more. The event is designed to make it easier for families to discover local services, ask questions, and gather information in one convenient location.

In addition to learning about com-

munity programs, visitors can take part in raffles offered by participating vendors, many of whom will be providing gift baskets or other donated items throughout the day.

The event is hosted by Womankind, a long-standing nonprofit organization that provides counseling, education, and support services to women, children, and families throughout Northeast Ohio.

Spring Fling is intended to be both informative and welcoming, giving families a chance to explore resources they may not have known existed while also enjoying a relaxed, family-friendly atmosphere.

For more info on this event email [info@womankind-cleveland.org](mailto:info@womankind-cleveland.org). For more information about Womankind visit [www.TodaysFamilyMagazine.com](http://www.TodaysFamilyMagazine.com) or scan the QR code to read our feature article on Womankind from the March issue.



## 31<sup>st</sup> 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 26, 6–8 p.m. at the 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 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](http://www.GreaterClevelandFoodBank.org/Market) today to purchase tickets.



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# Where play meets STEM

## Exploring Snapology Cleveland

For many parents, finding activities that are both fun and educational can feel like a balancing act. At Snapology Cleveland, that balance is built into every program. Snapology combines hands-on play with science, technology, engineering, arts, and math—often without kids even realizing they're learning.

Snapology's Discovery Center in Beachwood offers camps for children who thrive in structured, instructor-led classes, and for children who prefer open-ended or themed creative play. At Snapology of Cleveland, both options are built into the full camp day! Experienced instructors guide campers through LEGO® building activities that introduce real engineering and technology in the mornings. Afternoons are reserved for LEGO® themed programming designed to promote creativity and problem-solving.

Snapology offers enrichment opportunities in schools, but when school is out, their vacation camps give kids the chance to dive deeper

into subjects that spark their interest, from Pokemon to amusement park engineering to robotics. Snapology camps provide a structured but fun environment where children can build, collaborate, and develop problem-solving skills alongside peers who share similar interests.

For families planning celebrations, Snapology's birthday party packages offer a different kind of party experience. Kids participate in guided building challenges and creative activities led by trained facilitators. Your Snapology facilitator handles setup and cleanup, making the process easier for parents while keeping children engaged throughout the event.

In addition to its on-site programs, Snapology partners with schools, community organizations, and youth groups throughout the region. Ultimately, Snapology's approach is rooted in a simple idea: children learn best when they are actively engaged in creating, experimenting, and solving problems. By turning



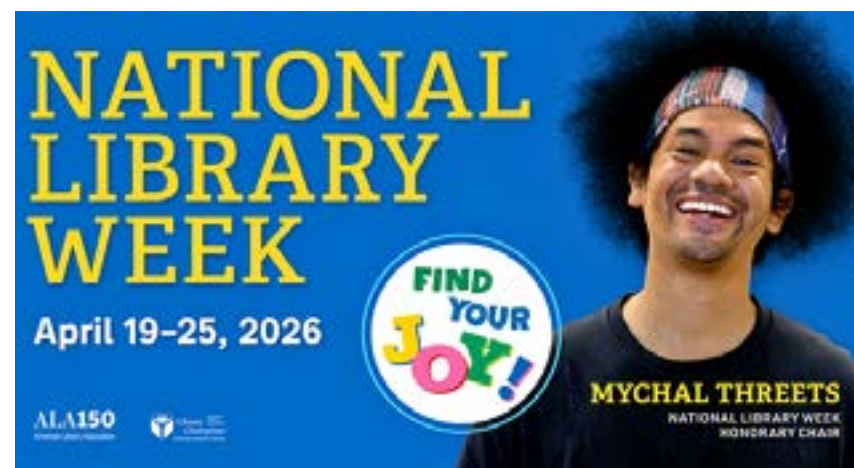
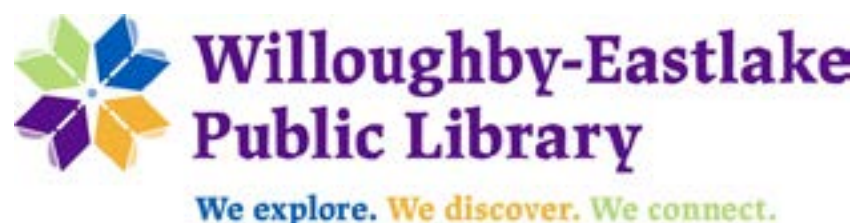
complex subjects into interactive play, the program helps build confidence, teamwork, and critical-thinking skills—qualities that extend far beyond the playroom.

For parents looking to introduce their children to STEAM concepts natural and exciting, Snapology offers a maker space where curiosity is encouraged, creativity is celebrat-

ed, and learning happens one brick at a time.

Snapology is located at 23645 Mercantile Rd., Suite H in Beachwood. For more information, call or text (216) 990-8988 or visit [www.snapology.com/ohio-cleveland](http://www.snapology.com/ohio-cleveland) for a listing of classes, camps, and more.

*By Dan Miller  
Today's Family Editor*



**Celebrate National Library Week with Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library and discover everything we have to offer!**

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## FREE Earth Day celebration event

Stop by Penitentiary Glen Reservation to celebrate Earth Day with activities for all ages. Earth Day is a global celebration and one day of the year that humans join in bringing awareness to the issues facing our planet. Actions, whether big or small, can help our planet as we work together to protect it 365 days of the year. Earth Day activities include:

- FREE event!
- Eco-fair with local conservation organizations
- Earth Day Marketplace with locally made 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 26, 2026 • Noon–4 pm  
Penitentiary Glen Reservation  
8668 Kirtland-Chardon Rd., Kirtland  
[www.lakemetroparks.com](http://www.lakemetroparks.com)

## Family Kindness Festival

30 inspiring nonprofits, 35 innovative students, and 30 area schools are joining together to celebrate the healing power of kindness at this FREE festival

Family Kindness Festival returns for another inspiring afternoon celebrating compassion, community, and connection. This year's festival will take place on Sunday, April 26 from 1–4 p.m. at Landerhaven at 6111 Landerhaven Dr. in Mayfield Heights.

Families from across Northeast Ohio are invited to gather for a joyful event designed to help children,

parents and grandparents explore the healing power of kindness. The free festival will feature interactive activities, inspiring youth activists and entrepreneurs, hands-on projects, and opportunities for families to connect with nonprofit organizations that promote service, and community well-being.

For more info and to register, visit [senderspediatrics.com/kindness](http://senderspediatrics.com/kindness).



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5. Does your skin and hair feel dry or itchy after a shower?
6. Do you have low water pressure?
7. Do your appliances break quicker than they should?
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## Celebrate Earth Day with the Coast Hippy Rescue Kit from Ohio-based Wild Republic!

For nearly 50 years, Wild Republic has been committed to wildlife conservation, habitat preservation, and environmental education. Built on the belief that connecting children with animals fosters a lifelong respect for nature, the brand brings this mission to life through products like the Coast Hippy Rescue Kit, which teaches kids about protecting marine life and cleaning up shorelines, and the Ekokins collection, featuring plush made from 100% recycled materials with eco-conscious packaging.

Additionally, this Earth Day, Wild Republic is also highlighting ocean

conservation with its Sustainable Turtle Collection, featuring plush made from recycled fabrics and fill, designed to raise awareness around protecting marine life.

Wild Republic also supports global conservation efforts through partnerships with the Aquarium Conservation Partnership, Plant-for-the-Planet, and Rainforest Trust, reinforcing its mission to inspire respect for nature through play.

Visit [wildrepublic.com](http://wildrepublic.com) to see all the great products they have, and check out their fun Easter baskets, too!

### Financing Available

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# Child Abuse Prevention Month

Raising awareness and taking action

Every April, communities across the United States observe Child Abuse Prevention Month, a crucial time dedicated to raising awareness, promoting prevention strategies, and supporting survivors of child abuse and neglect. Established in 1983, this month-long campaign serves as a reminder that protecting children is a shared responsibility that requires the collective efforts of individuals, families, and organizations.

## Understanding child abuse and its impact

Child abuse encompasses various forms of maltreatment, including physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect. Each type of abuse can have long-lasting consequences on a child's development, emotional well-being, and future relationships. Studies show that children who experience abuse are more likely to face challenges

such as mental health disorders, substance abuse, academic struggles, and difficulty forming healthy relationships in adulthood.

## The importance of prevention

Prevention is the key to reducing the prevalence of child abuse. By fostering safe, stable, and nurturing environments, communities can help children thrive. Key prevention strategies include:

- **Education and awareness** – Providing parents, caregivers, and community members with information on positive parenting techniques, child development, and the warning signs of abuse.
- **Strengthening families** – Offering support services such as parenting classes, family counseling, and economic assistance to reduce stressors that contribute to child maltreatment.
- **Community engagement** – Encouraging neighbors, schools,



and local organizations to play an active role in promoting child welfare and reporting suspected abuse.

- **Legislative advocacy** – Supporting policies that protect children's rights, fund child welfare programs, and ensure strict penalties for abusers.

## Moving forward

While Child Abuse Prevention Month brings national attention to the issue, protecting children is a year-round responsibility. By continuing efforts to educate, support, and advocate, we can work toward a future where all children grow up in safe and loving environments.

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.

## How to get involved

Everyone has a role to play in preventing child abuse. Here are a few ways individuals and communities can make a difference:

- **Wear blue:** The color blue symbolizes child abuse prevention. Many organizations encourage people to wear blue on specific days in April to show solidarity.
- **Spread awareness:** Use social media to share resources, statistics, and educational materials about child abuse prevention.
- **Volunteer:** Many child advocacy organizations and shelters welcome volunteers to help support at-risk children and families.
- **Report suspected abuse:** If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected, report it to local child protective services or law enforcement. Early intervention can save lives.

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

**Lake County Department**  
**of Job and Family Services**  
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**PETE MORAN:** Head coach at John Carroll University.

**PAT MORAN:** Assistant coach at John Carroll University.

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**RYAN SCHNEIDER:** Former head coach of boys at St. Martin de Porres.

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**"I'm still going with our textbook. I don't care what Wikipedia says!"**

## Greater Cleveland Aquarium Spring Discovery Days runs through April 12

Have you noticed the bold split coloring of a Boesemani rainbowfish or watched a red cleaner shrimp wave its white antennae to invite passing fish in for a cleaning? Did you know cuckoo catfish rely on a remarkable egg-swapping strategy to raise their young, or that Northern clingfish use a suction-cup-like disc to hold fast in rushing water?

Greater Cleveland Aquarium highlights these and other diminutive animals during Spring Discovery Days, March 13 – April 12, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily. Animal encounters, small species shoutouts, a "Spot a Spotted" challenge, interactive Discovery Carts, a fill-in booklet and short videos are all part of this celebration of nature's hidden influencers and are included with regular Aquarium admission.

While standing beneath sandtiger sharks gliding through 230,000 gallons of saltwater is a defining Aquarium moment, Curator Ray Popik hopes Spring Discovery Days encourages guests to linger on some of the Aquarium's more understated standouts. Details like a clownfish's specialized mucus coating, the bristlenose pleco's suction-cup mouth, the bark-like texture of Vietnamese mossy frogs or the spade-shaped snout of



an Eastern spiny softshell turtle reveal how small features help animals navigate a big world.

"Our unique design makes those details easier to see," says Popik. Set on the ground floor of a historic brick powerhouse, the Aquarium's retrofit habitats feature floor-to-ceiling, overhead and 180- to 360-degree views that bring guests closer to the action.

Visit [greaterclevelandaquarium.com](http://greaterclevelandaquarium.com) or call (216) 862-8803 for more information.



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[www.lakecountyyymca.org](http://www.lakecountyyymca.org)

## Camp 2026 Registration Now Open!

# Where creativity comes to life

## The Fine Arts Association in Willoughby

For many families in Lake County, the Fine Arts Association has long been a place where creativity is discovered, nurtured, and shared. Located on Mentor Avenue in Willoughby, the nonprofit organization has been serving the community for decades by bringing together arts education, live performances, and creative therapies under one roof.

The Fine Arts Association offers a wide range of classes and private lessons in visual art, theatre, dance, and music for students of all ages and skill levels. Young children can explore their interests through introductory classes that focus on creativity and self-expression, while teens and adults have opportunities to refine their skills through more advanced instruction. Summer camps, workshops, and seasonal programs provide even more ways for students to stay engaged with the arts throughout the year.

In addition to education, the organization is well known for its live theatre and concert productions. Each year, the Fine Arts Association presents a full season of performances featuring both local talent and visiting artists. Productions range from family-friendly musicals to dramatic plays and concerts, giving audiences of all ages the chance to experience live performing arts close to home.

Upcoming productions continue that tradition.

This spring, audiences can enjoy a staging of Jesus Christ Superstar, followed by the high-energy musical Fame later in the season. These performances not only provide entertainment but also give local performers—many of whom began their journey as students in Fine Arts classes—the opportunity to showcase their skills on stage.

Beyond traditional classes and performances, the Fine Arts Association also offers creative arts therapies and adapted programming designed to make the arts accessible to individuals of all abilities. Through partnerships with schools, senior centers, and healthcare organizations, teaching artists bring music, movement, and visual arts experiences directly to community members who may not otherwise have access to them.

The organization's campus serves as a hub for cultural activity in the Willoughby area. In addition to performances in its theatre spaces, the building features galleries that showcase the work of students and regional artists, as well as rehearsal and studio areas where classes and workshops take place daily. This steady flow of activity helps create a vibrant, welcoming environment where creativity is visible at every turn.

For families, the Fine Arts Association offers a unique opportunity to grow alongside their children's artistic interests. It is not uncommon for



multiple generations to take part—parents enrolling children in dance or music classes while also attending performances or participating in their own lessons. This multi-generational involvement has helped the organization remain a cornerstone of the local arts community for more than half a century.

Whether someone dreams of performing on stage, learning a musical instrument, experimenting with paint and clay, or simply enjoying a night at the theatre, the Fine Arts Association provides a welcoming place to explore those interests. By combining high-quality instruction with engaging performances and community outreach, the organization continues to enrich lives and strengthen the cultural landscape of Lake County.

To learn more about upcoming classes, camps, and performances, or to view the current theatre season, visit the Fine Arts Association online at [www.fineartsassociation.org](http://www.fineartsassociation.org) or stop by its campus at 38660 Mentor Avenue in Willoughby.

*Article by Dan Miller | Today's Family Editor*

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# 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 16*



## Preschool Readiness Checklist

Signs your child may be ready

Preschool is often a child's first experience in a structured group setting. While every child develops at their own pace, these signs can help parents decide if the timing feels right.

### Social Readiness

- Shows curiosity about other children
- Can participate in short group activities, such as storytime

### Separation Comfort

- Can stay with another trusted adult without becoming overly distressed
- Recovers from goodbyes within a reasonable time

### Communication

- Can express basic needs, such as hunger, tiredness, or needing the restroom
- Understands simple directions like "clean up" or "sit down"

### Independence

- Attempts simple self-help tasks such as washing hands or putting away toys
- Shows interest in doing things "by myself"

### Attention and Energy

- Can focus on an activity for several minutes
- Is able to follow a basic daily routine at home

Remember, preschool is designed to help children build these skills. Readiness isn't about perfection—it's about showing signs of curiosity, growing independence, and an interest in the world beyond home.

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**St-GabrielSchool.org**  
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## Finding a preschool from page 15

### 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.

### 6. Observe the school's atmosphere and culture

Visit the school and observe interactions between teachers and students. A nurturing environment with happy, engaged children is a good indicator of a well-run preschool. Pay attention to cleanliness, organization, and overall safety measures in place.

### 7. Inquire about safety and health policies

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

- 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 ex-



periences 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



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www.allsaintssjv.org

Located on the beautiful campus of the Center for Pastoral Leadership in Wickliffe, All Saints School offers a warm and welcoming preschool experience where faith, learning, and community come together.

In their preschool program, children begin each day with prayer and learn the importance of kindness, respect, and caring for others. These values are woven naturally into daily routines, helping students grow not only academically, but also socially and emotionally.

Their program focuses on the whole child. Through hands-on, play-based learning, students build strong foundations in early academics while developing confidence, curiosity, and independence. They recognize that each child is unique, and their teachers take the time to provide individualized support so every student can thrive.

At All Saints, your child will be known, loved, and supported in a nurturing environment where they can grow and succeed.

They would love to welcome you to All Saints School. Schedule a tour today at (440) 943-1395.

### The Goddard School

7645 Fredle Drive, Concord Twp.  
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www.GoddardSchool.com

For over 35 years, The Goddard School has been a trusted name among parents and families. Their classrooms are safe, nurturing environments for children 6 weeks to 6 years, offering age-appropriate opportunities to explore and discover.

At The Goddard School located in Concord Township their play-based, Wonder of Learning curriculum is grounded in research on how children learn best—children experience the deepest, most genuine learning when they are having fun and are able to explore in order to seek understanding. Their curriculum is designed to provide a well-rounded experience and ensure each child becomes confident, joyful, and fully prepared in school and in life. For more information, call or visit their website.



### 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. Their 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. Their program 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 skill and explore science through experiments.

For more info, call the school office at (440) 585-0800 or visit [www.materdeiacademy.us](http://www.materdeiacademy.us).



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**Personal tours can be scheduled any  
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[www.st-gabrielschool.org](http://www.st-gabrielschool.org)

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cated teachers view their work as a ministry, bringing compassion, expertise, and joy into the classroom each day. At the Learning Loft, children grow academically, socially, and spiritually developing a sense of wonder, awe, and love for Jesus and His creation. It truly becomes a second home where each child is known and cherished. They are proud to have been voted #1 Preschool in Lake County for four consecutive years.

Limited part-time openings are available in afternoons for 3- and 4-year-olds for the 2026-2027 school year. The full-time program currently has a waiting list. To schedule a tour, call (440) 354-7574 or visit [St-GabrielSchool.org](http://St-GabrielSchool.org).



## Spring into programs for young explorers

Geauga Park District offers a season filled with hands-on nature fun for kids

While some of Geauga Park District's popular programs have already filled, there are still plenty of openings available to inspire young people and their families to get outside, explore and learn together.

For the youngest explorers, Timbertots: Animal Babies for ages 3 to 5 with an adult will celebrate how spring brings new life to wildlife on Sunday, April 19, at The Rookery's Great Blue Heron Lodge. Later in the season, Timbertots: Wonderful Wings on Saturday, May 30, at The West Woods Nature Center will add a creative twist with a scavenger hunt through the On the Wing...Nature That Takes Flight Community Art Show.

Toddlers ages 1 and 2 can experience Nature with all their senses during Toddler Time: Sensing the Spring on Wednesday, May 27, at Beartown Lakes Reservation, while curious preschoolers ages 3 to 5 with an adult can look to the skies during Astrotots: Good Night Satellite on Friday, May 15, or Saturday, May 16, at Observatory Park's Robert McCullough Science Center.

Families with older children can dive into outdoor adventure together by learning navigation skills during Orienteering Adventure for

Families on Thursday, May 28, at Chickagami Park, or by searching for reptiles during Searching for Snakes on Saturday, June 6, at The Rookery. Creative kids can also drop in with an adult for Nature Craft: Solar Prints on Sunday, June 7, while water-based programs like Basic Learn to Canoe on Sunday, June 14, at Bass Lake Preserve and Polliwog Paddle Family Canoe on Sunday, June 28, at Eldon Russell Park offer hands-on experiences on the water.

Registration for all the above, as well as scouting programs and summer day camps for kids entering grades 5 through 10, is now open to Geauga County residents and non-residents at [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org) under Programs & Events.

In addition, families of young children especially won't want to miss Touch-a-Truck on Saturday, April 25, at The West Woods, where all in attendance will explore the tractors, trucks and equipment that keep Geauga Park District's 28 parks and 90+ miles of trails in top shape.

For more on Geauga Park District offerings, please call (440) 286-9516 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. or visit Geauga Park District online via [www.geaugaparkdistrict.org](http://www.geaugaparkdistrict.org), Facebook, X, Instagram or YouTube.



# Indoor Sports and Fun at LNSP East!

## Lil Kickers & Skills Institute



Try a class for FREE or register today online!

### SPRING SESSION (12 WEEKS) March 11–May 31

- Youth soccer development program
- 50-minute classes, one day a week (Tuesdays, Thursdays, or Saturdays)
- Ages 18 months–12 years old
- Payment plan available! • Register anytime

Cost: Kickers \$18/class • Skills \$20/class

Dave Swinarski | [DSWINARSKI@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:DSWINARSKI@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)



## Lil Sluggers



### SPRING SESSION (12 WEEKS)

Registration now open

- Nationally franchised youth baseball development program
- 50-minute classes, one day a week (Tues or Thurs)
- Ages 2–6 years old • Payment plan available! • Register anytime

Cost: \$18/class

## Mike Moran Basketball Camps



June 15–19 & June 22–26 • 9:00 a.m.–3:15 p.m.

Camp Fee \$205

Early Bird Fee \$185 for campers registering by May 1, 2026

Each camper receives a camp t-shirt

For more info and/or to register please visit

[www.morancamps.com](http://www.morancamps.com) or call (216) 397-4505

## Cleveland Soccer Academy Camps

Camp #1: June 15 – 18 (Mon. – Thurs.)

Camp #2: June 20 – 23 (Mon. – Thurs.)

Full-day camp (9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.) – Fee: \$195

Half-day camp (9 – 11:30 a.m.) – Fee: \$135



Contact Ali Kazemai | [KAZ@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:KAZ@LNSPORTSPARK.COM)

## Birthday Parties

### Custom design your own birthday party package!

Includes your choice of sports activities, plus exclusive use of our party room. Sports include soccer, baseball, batting cages, basketball, virtual reality golf and volleyball. Contact Marilyn for pricing options and more info.



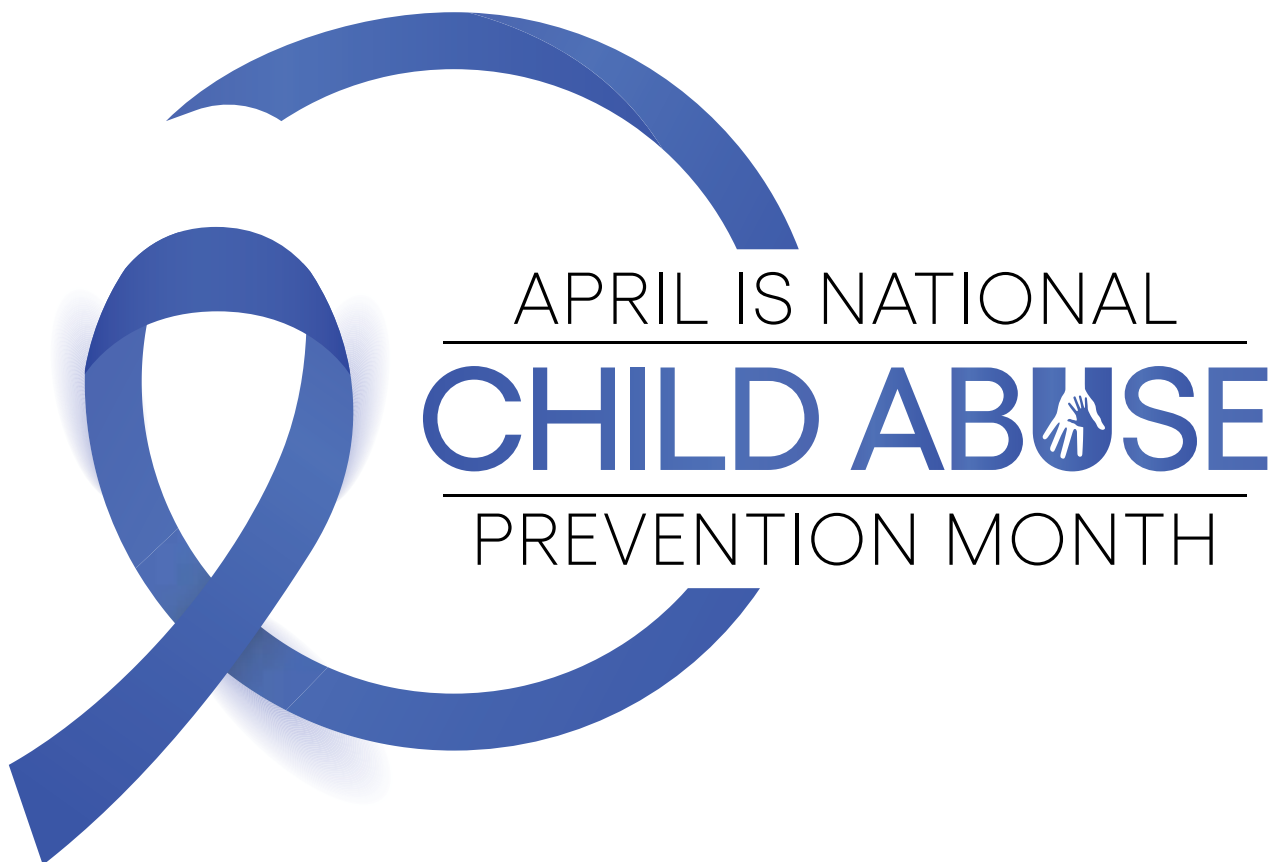
[MARILYN@LNSPORTSPARK.COM](mailto:MARILYN@LNSPORTSPARK.COM) or 440-602-4000 ext. 223



38630 Jet Center Dr., Willoughby  
North of Rt. 2 off Lost Nation Road

440-602-4000

[www.LostNationSports.com](http://www.LostNationSports.com)



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 8, 2026  
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 8 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**

