

TODAY'S family

September 2026

Lake Geauga

Clean Water Festival
September 19

Kent State University's

Aeronautics & Engineering Expo

Airplane rides, drone demos and hands-on activities for all ages

Learning Differences

Homework and test grades shouldn't leave kids in tears

Library Card Sign-up Month

A little card opens up big doors

Plus

Fun Events
Book Club
Living Well

Mommy Chronicles
Parent Wins/Parent Fails



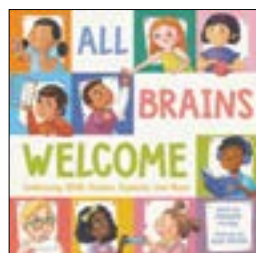
A Kid's Guide to the Night Sky

By John A. Read

Illustrated by Ford Rasmussen
(Grades 3–8)

This easy-to-use stargazing guide for kids explores the popular night sky constellations, visits the brightest stars, and tours our solar system. As they learn step-by-step how to find the most fascinating sights in the night sky, readers will learn how the sky changes with each season, when to look for meteor showers, how to see the milky way, and much more!

A Kid's Guide to the Night Sky includes fact-packed sections like: Your Stargazing Toolkit, The Life of a Star, Learn the Constellations, Astronomical Events, Tour the Solar System, and Explore the Moon.



All Brains Welcome

By Johanna Peyton

Illustrated by Olga Popova
(Preschool–grade 3)

All Brains Welcome brings neurodiversity into the spotlight, following a class of kids who throw a “brain party” to celebrate their awesome brains and their favorite ways to connect with each

other. Each character speaks directly to the reader, sharing how conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and Down syndrome impact their daily lives. As the brain party unfolds, readers gain insights into communication challenges, different learning approaches, and the importance of respecting each other.

A joyful celebration of difference, *All Brains Welcome* helps build acceptance and spark important conversations in schools and at home. Discover how every brain brings something special to the party!



Party Pony

By Claire Wrenn Bobrow

Illustrated by Ross Burach
(Preschool–grade 3)

Pony is everyone's favorite party guest—until his friends start making him the main attraction. First, Mouse wants him to give pony rides. Next, Raccoon makes him the star of the petting zoo. Then, Pig turns him into the target of the “Pin-the-Tail” game. After being poked in the face,

Pony has had enough. No. More. Parties. Will Pony ever join in the fun again? What will bring his party spirit back?

Bursting with humor, empathy, and a heartwarming lesson about friendship, this delightful picture book reminds us that the best friends are the ones who notice how we feel and do something about it.

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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September 2026



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TODAY'S family
Lake, Geauga & Cuyahoga Counties



Publisher/Advertising

Kim Miller

kim@todaysfamilymagazine.com

Publisher/Editor/Online

Dan Miller

dan@todaysfamilymagazine.com

Writers

Justin Daniels
Sophia Filipiak
Dan Miller
Stacy Turner

P.O. Box 7316

Eastlake, Ohio 44097

TodaysFamilyMagazine.com

440-223-0936

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Aeronautics
& Engineering
EXPO

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with

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09.26.2026

Adventures with Planes, Drones, and Robots @ Kent State Airport

Pancake Breakfast | Drone Activities | Robot Dog & Robotics | VR Demos |
Foundry in a Box | Aircraft on Display | Airplane Rides | Simulator Rides | Food Trucks



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Asian Lantern Festival at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo



Tickets are on sale now for the summer's popular Asian Lantern Festival at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo through Sunday, September 12. Experience the wonder of the Zoo illuminated after dark, featuring live performances and a

variety of culturally inspired cuisine.

New this year, guests can expect more hands-on interactive experiences and the debut of the K-Pop Family Dance Party. Throughout the evening, dynamic festival hosts will keep the celebration going, featuring family-friendly K-Pop and global pop hits, host-led dance tutorials, and interactive games that invite guests of all skill levels to join the fun.

Additional interactive opportunities include several pedal, crank, and step-operated lanterns, walk-through tunnels and uniquely themed areas, including the RainForest Path.

For the first time, the festival will culminate with a spectacular new drone show finale on the final night transforming the night sky into a canvas of choreographed light.

The advance discounted cost for Zoo members is \$24 or a four-pack for \$70. Advance nonmember tickets are \$27 or a four-pack for \$80. Limited same-day tickets can be purchased online or at the box office for an increased cost. The box office will close at 9:30 p.m. Children under 2 are admitted free. Advance tickets are on sale now at FutureForWildlife.org.

Cleveland Orchestra 2026–27 Family Concert Series and Music Explorers Series

Family Concerts offer performances in beautiful Mandel Concert Hall at Severance Music Center that blend education and entertainment for children ages 7–12. Each concert is designed to spark curiosity and imagination, pairing engaging performances with interactive preconcert activities that begin one hour prior.

The series opens on Sunday, October 25 with the Halloween Spooktacular, featuring the Baldwin Wallace Symphony Orchestra. With both a sensory-friendly performance at 1 p.m. and a traditional family concert at 4 p.m., the program blends spooky favorites with festive fun, encouraging audiences to arrive in costume and take part in a lively seasonal celebration.

The Cleveland Orchestra, led by Assistant Conductor Taichi Fukumura, presents *The Snowman in Concert* on Sunday, January 10, at 3 p.m. The Orchestra accompanies the Oscar-nominated film adaptation of Raymond Briggs's beloved classic, following James and his snowman on a magical journey through wintry skies.

The Orchestra and Fukumura conclude the series with *The Magical World of Music* on Friday evening, April 9, at 7:30 p.m. and the sensory-friendly option on Saturday



morning, April 10, at 11:30 a.m. This captivating program introduces young audiences to a range of musical storytelling, from the enchanting music from the Harry Potter film series to Grieg's always popular *In the Hall of the Mountain King*.

Throughout the series, sensory-friendly concerts provide a welcoming and inclusive experience for people of any age who may benefit from a more flexible concert environment, including those with autism spectrum disorder or other sensory sensitivities. Audience guidelines are modified to welcome talking, clapping, and moving around.

Tickets for adults start at just \$15 and young people (age 17 and under) are free (with purchase of adult ticket)! Not available for box seating.

Visit www.clevelandorchestra.com to purchase tickets and for more information.

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Pumpkin Spice and the Case for Slowing Down

By Stacy Turner

September used to signify a return to school, but with so many kids now starting in August, it has lost its title as the reigning champ of back-to-school.

When my little “pumpkins” were young, September meant pictures on the front porch in new school clothes. If the season was measured by produce, we were still enjoying corn on the cob and apples from the local orchard. Sadly, school seems to shift earlier each year, claiming a little more of summer. Maybe that’s why, when a certain retail coffee chain announced its signature fall beverage would launch at the end of August, I felt a public service announcement was overdue.

For many, September’s cooler evenings still bring to mind bonfires, football games and sweater weather. For others, September means pumpkin spice season has officially begun. But before we jump ahead and miss this transitional time, let’s pause and consider why we’re in such a hurry to fast-forward through one of the loveliest times of year in Northeast Ohio.

To be fair, I enjoy my share of pumpkin spice baked goods and caffeinated beverages. It’s a pleasant seasonal candle scent, too, reminding us of crisp weather and warm gatherings, which are lovely scent-iments. But each new pumpkin spice season begins long before actual pumpkins



Yep, nothing says autumn like pumpkin spice SPAM.

Clearly, we have lost control.

are done growing, which can disconnect us from what’s happening right now.

In September, warm days and more daylight mean there’s still time to be outside. It’s warm enough to cook out and sometimes even swim. When it still feels like flip-flop and lemonade season, it seems wrong to be looking for autumn, even in an iced drink. And nowadays people are buying pumpkin spice-flavored cereals, coffee creamers and baked goods. But who decided to add the signature fall flavor to cheese?

Every year, pumpkin spice is incorporated into more products where it just shouldn’t be. Like pumpkin spice SPAM. There’s no denying SPAM has its own niche of consumers. But in the Venn diagram where SPAM lovers and pumpkin spice lovers intersect, I’m fairly certain it’s a negligible share of the already tiny canned meat market. The same goes for pumpkin spice-flavored pork rinds. Just. No.

Pumpkin spice has also infiltrated products that make even less sense: trash bags, deodorant and beard oil, now available in September’s gourd-geous new scent. And don’t worry—even pets can enjoy the season, thanks to pumpkin spice-scented cat litter.

Shopping for groceries has turned into a strange scavenger hunt, where I try to identify the places this seasonal scent-sation has infiltrated. Nothing is safe from the cloying mix of cinnamon, nutmeg and ginger. But we can’t blame September for its identity crisis, since we pumpkin spice lovers have brought it on ourselves.

When I was a kid, pumpkins didn’t make it out of the patch until just before Halloween, when we carved them and lit them with candles for the front porch. Now sugary pumpkin drinks are available through every drive-thru on the way to school or work, or as an after-school pick-me-up. And in about a month, retailers will rush headlong into the next big seasonal flavor: gingerbread. I guess we should count our blessings that turkey and gravy don’t mix well with coffee and sweet treats.

I’m not advising you to avoid this transplanted taste in whatever ways you enjoy. But I would like you to make time to be present for the season you’re in right now. Because if you don’t, you might miss it. It’s the same with our kids, too. Someday soon, you may turn around and wonder where your own little pumpkins have gone.

Taste of the Browns returns September 14 to support the Greater Cleveland Food Bank

One of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s biggest fundraisers of the year returns this fall, inviting guests to kick off football season while helping tackle hunger across the community.

Taste of the Browns will be held Monday, September 14, 2026, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Huntington Bank Field inside the club lounge and will feature some of the best food and beverages from Cleveland’s dining scene, exciting auction packages, and the opportunity to mingle with Cleveland Browns players and alumni.

This year’s event will be co-chaired by Joel Bitonio, recently retired Browns Pro Bowl guard; Carson Schwesinger, Browns line-backer and 2025 Defensive Rookie of the Year; and Chef Rocco Whalen, owner of Fahrenheit Cleveland.

Proceeds from Taste of the Browns support the Greater Cleveland Food Bank’s mission to ensure that

everyone in the community has the nutritious food and essential resources they need to thrive. Each ticket purchase helps provide meals for neighbors facing hunger.

General admission tickets are \$225 and include access to the event from 6 to 8:30 p.m., all food and beverage, a souvenir wine glass, complimentary valet parking, and

the opportunity to meet and mingle with Browns players past and present. Each general admission ticket provides the equivalent of up to 450 meals for those in need.

VIP tickets are \$325 and include all general admission benefits, along with exclusive access to specialty cocktails and private VIP space. Each VIP ticket provides the equivalent of up to 650 meals.

Visit www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/taste for more info and to purchase your tickets.



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Buckle Up With Brutus

Teaching Ohio's youngest Buckeyes the importance of seat belt safety

and The Ohio State University. The program uses fun, age-appropriate activities to teach children why wearing a seat belt and using a booster seat is essential to staying safe in case of a crash.

Why Seat Belt Education Matters

Motor vehicle crashes remain one of the leading causes of death for children. Research from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that nearly half of child safety seats are misused – often because children are placed in the wrong type of seat or the seat is improperly installed. In Ohio, data from 2023 shows that 44% of children killed in crashes were unrestrained, and 84 children were seriously injured because they weren't properly buckled.

"These deaths and injuries are 100 percent preventable," said OTSO's Director Emily Davidson. "Buckling up is the simplest, most effective step anyone can take to prevent serious

injury or death in a crash – whether you're a child or an adult."

Learning from Brutus

Families might be surprised by how engaging the program is. Instead of a traditional lecture, a school resource officer leads students through interactive lessons, worksheets, and the fan-favorite "Brutus' Seat Belt Boogie" – a lively music video featuring Ohio State's beloved mascot. These tools help children understand when they need a booster seat, how seat belts keep them safe, and why everyone under age 13 should ride in the back seat.

The program also reinforces safety messages at home. By equipping students with materials they can share with parents and caregivers, Buckle Up with Brutus makes seat belt education a whole-family effort.

Growing Statewide Impact

During the 2025-2026 school year alone, more than 11,500 students in 118 schools participated in the Buckle

Up with Brutus presentation. School Resource Officers, law enforcement partners, and school personnel delivered lessons in 47 Ohio counties – bringing life-saving education to communities large and small.

To support schools, OTSO provides curriculum materials at no cost and reimburses presenters \$300 per class, helping agencies and districts strengthen their overall traffic safety efforts.

How Families Can Get Involved

Parents and caregivers can explore additional child passenger safety resources – including information on booster seats, proper installation, and statewide safety campaigns – at BuckleUp.Ohio.gov.

And if Buckle Up with Brutus hasn't visited your child's school yet, there's a good chance it will soon. As the program continues to expand, OTSO is working to reach even more students across Ohio, building a culture of safety that starts early and lasts a lifetime.



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Family Fun Awaits in Lakeside, OH

Who says summer fun has to end when the school year begins? Along the shores of Lake Erie, Lakeside Chautauqua keeps the good times going well into fall and winter, with festive weekends, family traditions and plenty of reasons to plan a getaway.

Just an hour from Cleveland on the Marblehead Peninsula, Lakeside offers a setting that makes slowing down easy. Stroll past hundreds of colorful Victorian cottages, grab a bite at a local restaurant, browse seasonal shops, catch a movie or concert, or simply spend the day playing along the lake. Then, as the seasons change, Lakeside transforms with special events that bring families back year after year.

Make a Weekend of It:

Praise by the Lake | Sept. 12–13

Lakeside is turning up the volume this fall with Praise by the Lake, a brand-new, free two-day Christian music festival featuring nationally acclaimed artists Katy Nichole, David Leonard, Chris Byrd and Jabari Johnson.

Beyond the concerts and worship, the weekend is packed with ways to play. Take a dip in the pool, challenge the family to a game of mini

golf, pickleball or tennis, cool off at the splash park, relax on the beach or let the kids burn off some energy at the playgrounds. There's even a family movie to round out the weekend.

Thanks to generous donors and sponsors, the festival is free to attend. A free ticket is required for admission to concerts in Hoover Auditorium, with general admission seating available on a first-come, first-served basis. Reserve tickets and view details at lakesideohio.com/praise2026.

Fall Favorite: Lakeside-Marblehead Lighthouse Festival | Oct. 10

Held the second Saturday in October, this beloved fall tradition offers a full day of family fun, from browsing more than 100 arts and crafts vendors to taking a hayride or exploring the farmers' market.

Kids can enjoy crafts and inflatables, while history buffs can tour the iconic Marblehead Lighthouse and Wolcott Keeper's House. With fall colors, seasonal treats and activities around every corner, it's an easy way to turn a crisp October day into a memorable family outing.

Plan your visit, find lodging, and explore upcoming events at lakesideohio.com.



Patterson Family Fun Fest returns September 16–November 1

When it comes to nature at its best, the beautiful days of autumn speak to our senses. Crisp fresh air and colorful scenes with leaves ablaze wherever you turn welcome you to celebrate the climax of the growing season at Patterson Fruit Farm. Harvest is in full gear with an abundance of apples leading the way. In fact you can pick your own apples daily at the Mulberry Road location into the middle of October. Stop by the farm market to shop and to enjoy the scenes overlooking Lake Erie on Caves Road or bring the family to the Family Fun Fest on the Mulberry Road farm to play for a while – both

in Chesterland.

While the market is open year round, Pattersons add their Family Fun Fest to the action September 16 through November 1, 2026. There is an admission and you will find the fest is geared toward preschool through 6th graders with their families. Enjoy hiking, sliding, playing in the straw, climbing and "driving" tractors, viewing the world from the top of their tree house, disappearing in the silo and, in general, enjoying the out-of-doors filled with fun. No reservations needed.

For more info, call 440-729-1964 or visit pattersonfarm.com.

Help your girl reach her potential with Girl Scouts of North East Ohio

You want a brighter, happier tomorrow for your girl—and that's exactly what we want, too!

Studies show Girl Scouts improves girls' confidence and makes them better prepared for life's challenges. That's because we are dedicated to helping your girl follow her heart while she discovers new interests, strengths, and abilities. We're here with your family, hand in hand, to support: her dreams, her growth, and her success. The best part? It's a journey that you take with your girl and there's a place for the entire family.

Girl Scouting is a way of life that brings out the best in your girl, and helps her bring out the best in everyone around her. While she's learning about STEM, the outdoors, entrepreneurship, and important life skills, she's also discovering new ways to make your family and community stronger, kinder, and better for everyone.

At Girl Scouts, groups of girls from the same community, called troops, typically meet weekly or biweekly for an hour or two. Hand in hand



with adult volunteers—often parents or caregivers—girls select exciting hands-on activities and projects, try new things, and cheer each other on. Together, they earn badges to reflect their successes and show the world what they're made of.

Our goal is to make sure girls see and have the opportunity to reach their potential. It isn't just about helping them earn better grades, make better decisions, and have happier lives (although it helps with those things, too!). It's about creating a more fair, equal, and compassionate world where every girl has a seat at the table and can make her dreams come true. Check out our values in the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

To learn more about Girl Scouts of North East Ohio visit gsneo.org/join.

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Kent State University to Host 2026 Aeronautics & Engineering Expo

Annual family-friendly event returns to Kent State Airport with airplane rides, drone demonstrations, and hands-on activities for all ages

Kent State University's College of Aeronautics and Engineering (CAE) will host the 2026 Aeronautics & Engineering Expo on Saturday, September 26, from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. at the Kent State Airport. The family-friendly event has been a fixture for more than two decades, offering visitors a rare, up-close look at the university's airport and FedEx Aeronautics Academic Center.

This year's Expo will feature a wide range of activities, including:

- Airplane rides and flight simulator experiences
- Live drone demonstrations, including flights from the Alta X, Event 38 E455, and Sentaro V
- An interactive Drone Tent where attendees can pilot their own drone
- A demonstration from Yimo, the university's robot dog from the Cognitive Robotics and AI Lab
- Virtual reality flight simulations from the Extended Reality (XR) Research Lab
- A live look at the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV), a student-built golf cart powered by fuel cell, solar, and battery technology
- 3D printing demos, with take-home keychains

from the university's Makerspace Lab

- Hands-on stations from Kent State student organizations, including the High-Powered Rocket Team, Design, Build, Fly Club, Combat Robotics Team, Society of Women Engineers, and more

- Displays and activities from external exhibitors, including the MAPS Air Museum, FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics, and Props-4-Paws

Attendees will also have the opportunity to tour the Kent State Airport and FedEx Aeronautics Academic Center, giving families a firsthand look at the facilities that train the university's future pilots and aerospace professionals.

A pancake breakfast will be hosted by Scout Troop 177. Tickets are \$8 for 12 and up, \$5 for kids 5–11 and free for kids under 5. Food trucks will be on-site from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Cash only.

Presale tickets for the 2026 Aeronautics & Engineering Expo are available at <https://commerce.cashnet.com/KENTCAEEXPO>.

For the most up-to-date information, visit <https://www.kent.edu/cae/aeronautics-engineering-expo>.



About Kent State University's College of Aeronautics and Engineering

Kent State University's College of Aeronautics and Engineering prepares students for careers in aviation, engineering, and aerospace through hands-on learning, industry partnerships, and access to state-of-the-art facilities, including its own airport and the FedEx Aeronautics Academic Center.

Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library



CELEBRATE LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP MONTH AND SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!

During the month of September, show your Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library card at select local businesses and receive discounts or other offers. Four new WEPL cardholders will be entered into a drawing for a variety of prizes. New WEPL cardholders will also get a Library Lollipop from Jeff's Candy Shop (while supplies last)!

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Harbor Hogs & Hot Rods Returns September 12

The 9th annual Harbor Hogs & Hot Rods event will return to Veterans Memorial Park in Fairport Harbor on Saturday, September 12, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Held each year on the Saturday after Labor Day, the popular community event features cars, bikes, trucks, vendors, live music, raffles, a dog show and more. Proceeds benefit the Christ Child Society of the Western Reserve.

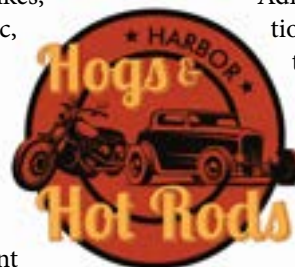
Cars, bikes, trucks and vendors will begin arriving at 9 a.m. The event officially opens at 11 a.m. with an opening ceremony, flag raising and the national anthem.

The dog show begins at 11:30 a.m. Awards will be presented for the top three dogs in each category, including Best Trick, Cutest Costume, Cutest Wiggle and Best Kisser. Doggie ice cream will also be available.

Live music by Cheeseburgers in Paradise, featuring Julie Slattery and Tom Todd, begins at noon. Car show and raffle winners will be announced

at 3 p.m. Winners do not need to be present.

Car show plaques will be awarded in 21 classes, with cash prizes including \$250 for Best Car or Truck, \$150 for runner-up and \$250 for Best Bike.



Admission is free. Registration is payable the day of the event and is \$10 for cars, bikes, trucks and dog show participants. Event t-shirts will be available for \$20.

Raffle tickets include a \$10 grand prize raffle ticket for a chance to win a Harley-Davidson or \$3,500 cash, plus a \$5 Christ Child raffle ticket for chances to win \$1,000, \$500 and \$300 cash. A 50/50 raffle, basket raffle and more will also be featured.

Veterans Memorial Park is located at 301 3rd Street in Fairport Harbor.

Interested vendors and sponsors can visit lakeeventsgroup.com or text Danielle at 440-289-3781 for more information.

Fall is coming – oh deer!

The temperatures have gotten cooler, and the trees are vibrant with color! It is a beautiful time of year.

Fall also means animal-related car accidents are likely to rise. Between October and December, the annual deer breeding season (known as the rut) occurs. Deer can be very active and unpredictable during this time, and many find their way to our roadways.

Five recommended safety tips:

1. Be alert!

- More deer are on the road around dusk and dawn
- Deer crossing signs are posted where deer are likely to cross.
- Large deer populations are near wooded areas.
- Deer are herd animals – if you see one, it is likely there are more!
- Deer don't only live in rural areas.

2. Use high beam headlights when safe to do so, to increase your visibility.

Be aware that a deer crossing your path may freeze in your headlights. Quickly turn them off and honk your horn to scare the deer away from the road if it's safe.

3. Reduce speed in areas where deer are suspected.

4. Wear your seatbelt or motorcycle helmet.

- The size of an adult male deer can be 200-plus pounds, and a collision with one can pack a

powerful punch.

- Contact with the animal alone was not the cause of the majority of fatalities from animal collisions. Safety belts and motorcycle helmets could have prevented many deaths, according to the Institute for Highway Safety.

5. Don't swerve!

- Swerving can cause you to lose control and hit an object, another vehicle, or even be involved in a rollover accident.
- Swerving to miss one deer can steer you into the path of another.

If you hit a deer:

- Pull over and call local law enforcement.
- Ask for medical assistance if you or your passengers are injured.
- Stay away from the animal! It could still be alive and panic.
- Report the accident to your insurance as soon as possible. Do not wash your car before you give your insurance company a chance to inspect your damage. The amount you pay (called your deductible) could be lower if the impact is confirmed to have resulted from an animal collision, rather than hitting another car (depending on your coverage selections).

Curious about your comprehensive coverage?

Comprehensive coverage, rather than collision



coverage, covers deer-related collisions because these incidents are considered beyond the driver's control. Check your automobile policy to ensure you have sufficient comprehensive coverage in place.

Courtesy of Central Insurance Companies.

Contact the Corsaro Insurance Group for more information regarding your personal insurance and how they can help protect you and your family.

Matthew Corsaro is the president and owner of the Corsaro Insurance Group in Mentor. His company and staff have been providing insurance solutions to families and business owners for over 40 years. Mr. Corsaro has obtained the Accredited Advisor in Insurance and Certified Insurance Counselor designations. Corsaro Insurance Group represents over 20 insurance companies. As well they have expertise in all areas of auto, home and business insurance. They can be reached at 440-946-4950.



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Homework Shouldn't End in Tears

When learning differences may be hiding in plain sight

By Dan Miller, Today's Family Editor

The homework assignment should have taken 20 minutes. An hour later, you're both still sitting at the kitchen table.

Your child has read the same paragraph three times but can't explain what it says. A math problem that seemed simple turns into frustration. You repeat the directions. They insist they don't understand. Before long, voices get louder, tears begin to flow, and someone finally says, "Forget it."

Homework ends in tears. As a parent, it's heart-breaking.

You know your child is bright. You've watched them build incredible Lego creations, memorize every dinosaur that ever walked the Earth, or explain the rules of a complicated video game without missing a detail. Yet when it comes to schoolwork, they suddenly seem overwhelmed.

You begin asking yourself difficult questions. Are they just not trying? Are they distracted? Do they simply hate homework? Or could something else be making learning more difficult than it should be?

The good news is that struggling in one area of learning doesn't mean a child isn't intelligent. In fact, many children with learning differences are creative, curious, and highly capable. They simply learn differently than their classmates.

Learning differently doesn't mean learning less

One of the biggest misconceptions about learning differences is that they reflect intelligence.

They don't.

Children learn in many different ways. Some absorb information best by hearing it. Others need to see it, write it, or experience it firsthand. When the way a child naturally learns doesn't match the way information is being presented, school can become frustrating — for the child, the parent, and the teacher.

That's why communication between home and school can be so important. When parents and teachers compare what they're seeing, a clearer picture can begin to emerge.

"One of the hardest things for parents is watching a child who is clearly intelligent begin believing they're 'not smart,'" says Dr. Jordan Hoerr, a pediatrician at Senders Pediatrics in South Euclid. "Recognizing learning differences early can help protect a child's confidence as much as their academic success."

It's often the pattern that matters

Every child has difficult homework nights. Everyone forgets an assignment now and then.

What parents should pay attention to are patterns that repeat over time.

Perhaps your child understands a story perfectly when you read it aloud but struggles to read it



independently.

Maybe they can explain an answer verbally but freeze when it's time to write it on paper.

Some children seem to understand yesterday's lesson but can't remember it the next day. Others consistently lose assignments, struggle to stay organized, or become emotionally overwhelmed by even simple homework.

Individually, these moments may not seem unusual. Together, they may tell a story worth exploring.

What parents might notice

Learning differences can look different from one child to another, but some common signs include:

- Homework taking much longer than expected
- Reading that seems unusually slow or frustrating
- Difficulty putting thoughts into writing
- Frequently losing homework or forgetting assignments
- Trouble following multi-step directions
- Becoming unusually frustrated or emotional doing schoolwork
- Avoiding reading or writing whenever possible
- Saying things like, "I'm stupid," or "I'll never get this."

Dr. Hoerr says these moments deserve curiosity rather than criticism.

"When children struggle repeatedly, they often begin blaming themselves," he says. "Parents can make an enormous difference simply by helping their child understand that struggling with something doesn't define who they are."

It's not about labels

Children can get stuck on labels. A child who does well in school may think they are "smart," while a child who struggles may begin to believe they are "dumb." Neither label helps a child flourish.

What matters is helping children understand that effort, practice, support, and the right learning approach can make a difference. Praising persistence, hard work, and progress can help children see challenges as something to work through, not proof that they can't succeed.

Some parents worry that asking questions means their child will receive a diagnosis or label.

In reality, understanding how a child learns simply opens the door to providing the support they may need.

Sometimes the solution is extra practice. Sometimes it's a different teaching strategy. And sometimes, additional evaluation helps identify a learning difference or an attentional problem that has gone unnoticed.

Whatever the outcome, the goal isn't to label a child.

The goal is to help them succeed.

Start the conversation

Parents don't have to figure this out alone.

Dr. Hoerr emphasizes the importance of collaboration. "Teachers may notice patterns during the school day that parents don't see at home, while parents may see the emotional toll that shows up after school." Together, those observations can help guide the next conversation — with the school, the pediatric provider, or both.

If homework has become a nightly struggle, teachers are noticing similar concerns in the classroom, or your child's confidence is beginning to suffer, it's worth starting a conversation.

Your child's teacher can share what they are seeing at school. Your pediatrician can help rule out other concerns, discuss attention, sleep, anxiety, or developmental factors, and guide your family toward additional support if needed.

Trust what you're seeing

Parents are often the first to recognize that something doesn't quite add up.

You know when your child is working twice as hard as everyone else. You know when they're becoming discouraged. You know when school begins affecting their confidence instead of building it.

Trust yourself and your instincts. Asking questions doesn't mean something is wrong. It means you're paying attention.

"Children don't need parents who have all the answers," says Dr. Hoerr. "They need parents who are willing to ask the right questions. The earlier we understand how a child learns, the sooner we can help them build confidence and reach their full potential."

Learning differences can be frustrating, but they do not define a child's future. With understanding, communication, and the right support, children can begin to see themselves differently — not as students who can't learn, but as students who may need a different path to get there.

And sometimes, that begins with a parent looking across the kitchen table and realizing homework shouldn't have to end in tears.

Senders Pediatrics is located at 2054 South Green Road in South Euclid. To schedule an appointment, call 216-291-9210 or visit senderspediatrics.com for more information.

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Join Lake Metroparks September 19 & 20, 2026, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. to witness many traditional harvest activities and discover how apple butter and cider are made. Take a tour of the “Johnny Appleseed Trail” and explore the Plant Science Center, where Farmpark’s apiary offers a closer look at bees, honey production, and the many ways pollinators support everyday life. Together, apples and honey take center stage in a weekend that blends education with hands-on family fun. The whole family can explore Paul Revere’s Ride three-acre corn maze. Enjoy harvest activities including apple-themed crafts both days.

Regular Farmpark admission or membership applies.

Please leave your pets at home!
Visit lakemetroparks.com for more info or to purchase tickets.



Annual Clean Water Festival returns September 19

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District will host its annual Clean Water Festival on Saturday, September 19, 2026, from 9 a.m.–4 p.m. at the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, located at 4747 East 49th Street in Cuyahoga Heights. The last tour of the day will begin at 3 p.m.

Clean Water Fest offers a full day of free games, giveaways, tours, trucks, education, treats and family-friendly activities focused on the work it takes to protect clean water, public health and the environment.

Guests of all ages can tour the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant, the largest wastewater treatment plant in Ohio and one of the largest facilities of its kind in the country. The nearly 300-acre site gives visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the innovation, equipment and infrastructure needed to treat wastewater and protect the region’s waterways.

Walking tours of the plant last approximately 45 minutes and depart every 15 minutes from 9:30 a.m.–

3 p.m. Hard-sole, closed-toe shoes are required. Tour registration is required on-site at the Plant Tour booth, and space is limited to 40 guests per tour.

Guided tours of the Sewer District’s award-winning, state-certified laboratory will also be offered every 30 minutes, with limited space available.

Clean Water Fest will also feature dozens of exhibit booths with games and prizes, face painting, Touch-a-Truck displays, a Kids Zone with hands-on activities, arts and crafts, stickers, free popcorn, food trucks, photo opportunities and gift bags for all guests. Free shuttle service will be available to and from the parking area throughout the day.

Two 5-mile bike tours through and around the Southerly facility will take place at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Advance registration is required while space is available.

For more information, visit www.cleanwaterfest.com.

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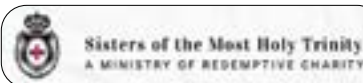
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IngenuityFest returns Sept 25–27

IngenuityFest 2026 will transform Ingenuity Labs (5401 Hamilton Ave.) into a four-story immersive dream-scape exploring the question, "What does America dream about?" from September 25–27. Since its inception in 2004, IngenuityFest has pushed the boundaries of art and science, discovering new ways to combine them.

The festival sprawls throughout a warehouse, outdoor spaces, and one closed street, giving it the feel of a street festival alongside its indoor exhibits. Expect food trucks and vendors selling art, thrift finds, jewelry, and baked goods, alongside hundreds of artists and thousands of visitors.

Visitors will enter an immersive landscape where featured spectacles explore one burning question: What does America dream about? Festival highlights include the immersive Garden of Heroes exhibition, live professional wrestling, aerial and acrobatic storytelling, interactive maker installations, and performances by local and regional musicians. You never know what you'll find at IngenuityFest.



Ticket prices start at \$20 for a day pass, \$30 for a weekend pass, and kids 12 & under are free.

Experience art, technology, performance, and imagination unlike anywhere else in Northeast Ohio. Purchase tickets online today at www.ingenuitycleveland.org.

About Ingenuity Cleveland

Ingenuity Cleveland is a nonprofit dedicated to fostering creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship through year-round programming combining art, technology, and community engagement. Since 2004, Ingenuity has connected artists, makers, entrepreneurs, and audiences through immersive experiences and collaborative projects.

Should you repair or replace your HVAC system?

One tough part of owning a home is the costs of repairing or replacing any HVAC equipment. Especially in an emergency situation, when your air conditioner isn't cooling the house or in the winter when your furnace isn't heating. It is never an easy decision on whether to make the investment of a new unit or repair your existing one. Before making that decision, there are some considerations you can make to determine what is best for you and your family.

How old is your system? On average, a furnace will last around 15–20 years. Air conditioners or heat pumps will last around 10–12 years. As units age, they will typically require more maintenance and may need costly repairs.

What would my unit cost to repair? If the cost of repair exceeds the cost of replacing, refer to the "50 percent rule," or a general rule of thumb that encourages pursuing a new investment when the repair of an old unit exceeds half the cost of a new one.

How efficient is your system?

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TODAY'S FAMILY MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2026

13



TODAY'S FAMILY ADVICE COLUMN

LIVING WELL

with Rebecca Fellenbaum

Parenting, stress, relationships,
family life—we all have questions.

Ask yours
anonymously or
with your name.
Selected questions
will be featured in an
upcoming issue of
Today's Family.



Talking So My Family Will Listen

Dear Rebecca: It's not even just with the kids, but lately everything I say to my family sounds like a correction, reminder, or complaint. No one is listening, and when I hear myself talking, even I want to tune myself out! I want to have more fun with my family, but it's hard when I feel like I'm the only one who sees what needs to get done. How can I talk so my family will listen?

~Joanna, Bainbridge

Hi Joanna: I love this question. You want to change your delivery, enjoy family life, and get some concrete help. That's all reasonable, fair, and exactly what you deserve!

Intent is one of the winning strategies I talk about in my work as a relational coach. A request is more

likely to be heard when you approach it with good intent and assume good intent from the other person. This sets you up for success.

When you see what needs to get done, center yourself first. You could say to yourself, "I want us to have more fun and feel like a team." Then make a clear, specific request.

State what needs to get done clearly, focusing on positive intent and the task at hand. Instead of "No one ever listens to me," try, "I'm frustrated because I've asked twice for the dog to be let out. Will you please take her out now?" You've named how you feel and kept the request specific.

I've been here! When I was facing resentment in my self-appointed role as family complainer, I learned to turn inward first and get to know the voices and parts within myself

that were pressuring me to constantly scan for problems. I realized that some of the pressure was coming from within me. I wasn't only speaking impatiently to my family; I was speaking impatiently to myself.

It may also help to have a conversation with your family. Explain that you don't want your primary role in the family to be noticing, asking for help and reminding. Let them know you want to enjoy your time as a family. Together, decide how everyone can contribute to a more positive home.

If you center having fun with your family, you may find that you naturally drop the expectation that everything has to be perfectly clean and organized or done your way. As you release some expectations and give others genuine ownership, you may create more room for your family to step up.

Slowing Down Time

Dear Rebecca: Summer is practically over, my kids are headed back to school, and it all seems to be happening so fast. I keep thinking that we only get 18 summers with our kids. I want to hold on to this time. How do I slow down and really experience my life while I'm living it?

~Sarah, Lyndhurst

Hi Sarah: You can't freeze time, but there are some easy and wonderful ways to slow down and be fully present in it. The idea that we only have 18 summers with our children is a reminder that time together is precious. Raising our kids is a precious stage in our lives, and like all stages, it doesn't last forever.

I'm curious where your mind goes when you think about these 18 summers. It's natural to let our minds take over and start doing more to capture it all. We take more pictures, try to create special memories, and tell ourselves to appreciate every second. But sometimes, all that effort to capture a moment takes us out of the moment itself.

Slowing down is a practice of

noticing the present moment. Every single time you do this, you're really experiencing your life. Pause and listen when your child tells you a story from school. Notice everyone laughing in the kitchen. Look at your child's face when they don't know you're watching. Whenever you pause long enough to notice, remind yourself: I am here. This is my life.

I recommend a gratitude practice to almost all of my coaching clients because it is a daily reminder to drop from our busy minds into our hearts and look at our lives through the lens of love. Writing down, or naming, three things you're grateful for each day trains you to notice what's happening.

You can also help make memories together as a family. At dinner, ask, "What's one moment from today you want to remember?" This helps you recognize your life while you're living it.

And don't forget to welcome what comes next. Ask your children what they want to remember from this summer and what they're looking forward to about the new school year. Slowing down doesn't mean resisting change. It means giving yourself time to notice the transition instead of rushing past it.

We don't slow life down by clinging to it. We slow it down by paying attention.

Rebecca Fellenbaum is a certified life coach, writer, and Cleveland-area mom who helps parents enjoy this season of life. Learn more at rebeccafellenbaum.com.

**Have a question
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The Little Card That Opens Big Doors

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month

A library card may be small enough to fit in a wallet, but it can open the door to a much larger world for children, parents, teachers and lifelong learners.

Today's libraries are much more than quiet places filled with books. They are community centers, technology hubs, homework helpers, entertainment sources and places where families can explore new interests without adding another subscription to the monthly budget.

Of course, books are still at the heart of every library. A child who discovers the right book at the right time can become a reader for life. Picture books, chapter books, graphic novels, nonfiction, audiobooks and eBooks give children choices, and choice is one of the best ways to build excitement around reading. For parents, regular library visits can create a simple family routine: browse, read, return and discover something new.

But the modern library reaches far beyond the bookshelf.

Many libraries offer digital collections that can be accessed from home, including eBooks, audiobooks, music, movies, television, magazines and research databases. A library card can also help families use public computers, reserve meeting rooms, attend programs, borrow technology and connect with resources they may not even realize are available.

That is why signing up for a library card is such a smart first step.

At Mentor Public Library, patrons can apply for a card at the circulation desk with identification showing their current address. Library cards in good standing can be used to check out materials, use public computers and reserve meeting rooms. Mentor Public Library also offers several card options designed for specific needs.

Adults age 60 and older receive a one-week extension period on materials owned by Mentor Public Library. Veterans may also receive a one-week grace period on materials owned by the library with proper military or veteran identification. Educators and institutions can apply



for special cards that allow them to borrow up to 250 items, with extended checkout periods on many print materials. Mentor residents who are temporarily or permanently homebound may qualify for Words on Wheels, a free delivery service that brings materials to individual residences or group homes.

Mentor Public Library also offers an Opportunity Card for children and adults who may not have been able to obtain a standard card because they lacked photo identification, proof of residency or a parent/guardian signature. For Ohio residents age 18 and older who want online access only, Mentor offers an eCard for digital resources.

Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library also makes it easy and free for Ohio residents to get a library card. A full-service card, available through in-person application, allows patrons to borrow physical materials such as books, music, movies, Chromebooks, hotspots, video games and Launchpads, while also accessing the library's digital collection.

Willoughby-Eastlake also offers an eCard that can be obtained online for digital access only. With either a full-service card or eCard, patrons can use digital resources such as Libby, hoopla, Kanopy and online databases.

For families, a library card is more than a way to borrow books. It is a pass to stories, learning, technology, entertainment, creativity and connection. Best of all, it is free.

If your child does not have a library card yet, this is a perfect time to sign up. One small card may become the beginning of countless discoveries.



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The Joy of Movement

How dance can benefit your child's growth

Getting children moving through dance isn't just about fun and rhythm — it's a powerful way to support their physical, emotional, and social development. Whether it's ballet, hip-hop, jazz, or tap, dance offers kids a unique blend of exercise, creativity, and confidence-building that benefits them in countless ways.

Physical health and coordination

Dance is a fantastic form of exercise that helps kids build strength, flexibility, and endurance. Unlike many sports, dance encourages the whole body to move in harmony, improving balance and coordination. These skills not only support physical health but also aid in everyday activities like running, jumping, and even handwriting.

Regular dance classes can also promote cardiovascular health and healthy weight management, setting a foundation for a lifetime of fitness. Plus, it's a low-impact activity, making it suitable for children of all abilities and ages.

Boosting confidence and self-expression

One of dance's greatest gifts is the chance it gives kids to express themselves. Through movement, children learn to communicate emotions and stories without words, developing a unique sense of

creativity. Performing in front of an audience, even a small one, helps build self-esteem and reduces stage fright — skills that translate to other areas of life like school presentations or social interactions.

Dance encourages children to take risks and try new things in a supportive environment, teaching resilience and a growth mindset. They learn that mistakes are part of the process and that practice leads to improvement.

Social skills and teamwork

Dance classes often require collaboration, whether in group choreography or partner dances. Kids learn to listen, cooperate, and support one another, building essential social skills. Being part of a dance community fosters friendships and a sense of belonging, which are critical for emotional well-being during childhood and adolescence.

Additionally, many dance programs emphasize respect — for teachers, peers, and oneself — creating a positive, inclusive atmosphere. These lessons help kids develop empathy and emotional intelligence.

Cognitive benefits

Learning dance routines challenges memory and concentration. Children must remember



sequences, timing, and spatial awareness, all of which enhance cognitive development. Dance has been linked to improved brain function, including better problem-solving skills and creativity.

Moreover, the discipline of regular practice encourages goal-setting and time management — valuable habits that benefit academic success and personal growth.

Fun that lasts a lifetime

At its core, dance is joyful. It's a way for kids to connect with music, move their bodies, and have fun. Introducing children to dance can spark a lifelong love of movement and the arts, offering a healthy outlet for stress and a positive way to channel energy.

Whether your child dreams of the spotlight or simply enjoys twirling in the living room, dance offers a world of benefits that go far beyond the studio.

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Fall is a great time to delve into the arts at Rabbit Run Community Arts Association (RRCAA) in Madison. Registration for fall classes and lessons is now open.

Dance classes are available in creative movement, ballet, tap and jazz from preschoolers, who just love to move, to adults looking to get back into shape. Also available are classes in modern dance, contemporary and lyrical and ballroom dancing.

RRCAA also offers visual art experiences, including our very popular Art with Miss Katie for grade school

children.

RRCAA provides a full range of private music instruction from beginner to advanced students in voice, brass, beginning band instruments, acoustic and electric guitar, woodwinds, piano/keyboard, viola/violin/Suzuki violin, cello and fiddle.

For specific class information or to register visit www.rabbitrun.org or call 440-428-5913. RRCAA is a non-profit organization that receives partial funding from the Ohio Arts Council and is located at 49 Park St. in Madison.

My Grandfather Clock Is Ticking

Becoming a grandfather has a way of making time feel both precious and beautifully new

By Dan Miller, Today's Family Editor

My wife and I had been hoping to become grandparents for many years.

Our parents became grandparents in their mid-to late 40s, and we always loved that they were young enough to run, play, babysit, spoil, chase, laugh, and generally do all the things grandparents are supposed to do. Fortunately, both of our fathers lived to be 80, which meant they not only knew our children as babies and kids, but also got to see them become adults.

That is a gift we never take for granted.

When we found out our eldest son and his wife were expecting, we were thrilled. Actually, "thrilled" may be too mild. We were beaming. The only downside was that we found out very early in the pregnancy, which meant the wait from Christmas to September moved at the speed of a school bus stuck behind a tractor.

But the wait was worth it. In September of 2025, the world got to meet Arlo Ellis Miller.

His middle name, Ellis, came from my great-grandfather. My daughter-in-law's family also had a tradition of using middle names that began with the letter E, so Ellis turned out to be a perfect fit. I never knew my great-grandfather. My dad didn't either. But I liked the idea of keeping his name alive into the future.

They say you die twice: once when your life ends, and once when your name is spoken for the last time. Ellis had a few quiet decades, but thanks to one little boy, he is back in action.

And Arlo? He was perfect.

I know every grandparent says that, and we are all supposed to nod politely and pretend their wrinkly little potato baby is the most beautiful child ever born. But in this case, I am obviously correct. His features looked like they had been carved out of porcelain, and his eyes were open on the day he arrived, as if he wanted to get a good look at the people who were about to become completely useless around him.

To say we are in love is an understatement.

My obsession with him is, admittedly, off the charts. The joy he has brought into my life is beyond anything I could have predicted. I have told people that he nourishes my soul, and I even put that line into a song I wrote for him. It may sound dramatic, but it is true. Some days, seeing his smile feels like someone opened a window in a room I didn't realize had gotten so dark.

Watching him grow has been incredible. The first laughs. The crawling. The standing. The first cautious steps. The little looks that seem to say, "I know exactly how cute I am, and I plan to use this power irresponsibly."

I was there every day for my own three children

as they grew up. In my career, I only spent one night away from my family, and I am grateful for that. I watched the milestones then, too, and I know I loved them deeply.

But being a grandparent is different.

It is not just because I don't have to rock him back to sleep at 3 a.m. after a long cry, although let's not pretend that isn't a nice feature of the grandparent package. It is not just because, when he gets fussy, I can hand him back to his parents and say something helpful like, "I think he wants you," while slowly backing out of the room.

The difference is that I can experience him without carrying the same pressures I had as a young father.

When I became a dad at 24, I was still trying to figure out life, career, money, marriage, work stress and how to be a grown-up while technically still feeling like someone who should be asking an adult for help. I loved my children completely, but I also carried a lot of worry. My first job was stressful, our future was uncertain, and I am sure that affected my patience and my ability to fully take in every moment.

Now, life still has stress. Plenty of it. But it is different.

At 24, I was not thinking much about mortality. At this age, the clock is harder to ignore. Becoming a grandfather brings joy, but it also brings a quiet awareness that time is not unlimited. I hope to know Arlo for many, many years. I hope to watch him grow into the person he is going to become. But I also understand there will be parts of his life I may not get to see.

That reality makes every moment with him feel more precious.

Maybe that is why I have spent years quietly preparing for a future grandchild. My large collection of Lego bricks and sets, HO and O27 trains, and other toys are all waiting for him. I have visions of building cities, running trains, creating worlds and sharing the toys that have brought me joy for most of my life.

Of course, he may play with them for 10 minutes and then become fascinated by whatever technology children are obsessed with in five or 10 years. By then, kids may be wearing hologram helmets and asking their robot pets to do their homework. If that happens, I will still be there, sitting among my Lego buildings, trying not to take it personally.

But I hope he likes them. I hope we build things together. I hope he remembers me as someone who got down on the floor, made ridiculous noises, wore toys on his head, and gave up whatever dignity he had left just to make him laugh.

Grandparents Day has never quite caught on the way Mother's Day and Father's Day have. There are



Arlo, 11 months

no massive card displays, no brunch reservations made six weeks in advance, no national panic over whether Grandpa wants socks or a meat thermometer.

But maybe the day deserves a little more attention. Because being a grandparent is one of life's great second chances. Not to redo parenting, exactly, but to experience childhood again from a different seat. To love without quite as much fear. To play without quite as much pressure. To see your family move forward while also feeling the past standing beside you.

So, to every grandparent out there, Happy Grandparents Day.

I hope you are soaking it in. I hope you are making memories. I hope you are saying yes to one more story, one more hug, one more game, one more silly face.

And if there is a little person in your life who makes your heart feel younger and your knees feel older, you already know exactly what I mean.



Geauga County Junior Fair to Crown 2026 King and Queen on Opening Day

The Geauga County Junior Fair crowns its 2026 Junior Fair King and Queen on Thursday, September 3, 2026.

The coronation ceremony begins at 7 p.m. in the Youth & Livestock Center, located across from the Large Arena. The evening will open with a special performance by the Great Geauga County Fair Band, followed by the crowning of the 2026 Junior Fair King and Queen and their court.

The Junior Fair King and Queen serve as ambassadors for the Junior Fair, representing more than 600 youth exhibitors throughout the year. They promote agriculture, leadership, and the traditions of The Great Geauga County Fair while attending community events, visiting other county fairs, and serving throughout fair week.

This year's candidates have demonstrated leadership and dedication through their involvement in Junior Fair organizations, including 4-H, FFA, GHPA and other youth programs.

The 2026 Junior Fair King can-

didates are Anthony Intelisano, William Boehnlein, James Toth and Zach Vandevander. The 2026 Junior Fair Queen candidates are Aubrey Haefke, Campbell Hoar, Haylee Taylor and Allie Wiseman.

The Geauga County Junior Fair royalty program has earned recognition across Ohio. Earlier this year, 2025 Geauga County Junior Fair Queen Campbell Reese represented Geauga County at the Ohio Fair Managers Association Queen Contest, where she was selected as one of the top five finalists among county fair queens from across the state.

The Geauga County Agricultural Society invites fairgoers to attend the ceremony and celebrate these exceptional young leaders. The coronation recognizes not only the newly crowned King and Queen, but also the dedication, hard work, commitment to agriculture and community service shown by all of the candidates.

For a complete fair schedule and additional info, visit GauguaFair.com.



Too Quiet Upstairs

The kids were bathed, stories read, lights out by 8:30. I actually sat down on the couch in silence. That's when my son calmly walked downstairs and informed me the dog had eaten an entire pack of crayons.

— Dad of two, Cleveland

Defeated by Fourth Grade Math

My son asked for help with "new math." Twenty minutes later, we were both frustrated, the answer was still wrong, and somehow he ended up explaining it to me.

— Mom of three, Solon

Campground Reality Check

We took the kids camping for the first time. Within hours there were mosquito bites, soggy sleeping bags, and someone crying because "nature is too loud." We lasted one night.

— Parents of two, Madison

Spirit Week Miracle

I forgot it was "favorite book character day" at school until 20 minutes before the bus came. Somehow, with cardboard, duct tape, and pure panic, we pulled together a pretty convincing Harry Potter costume. My daughter told me it was "the best morning ever."

— Mom of two, Burton

Some days you feel like parent of the year. Other days... not so much. Tell us about it. The funny, the frustrating, the "did that really just happen?" moments.

We're collecting real stories from local parents—and yours might be featured.

Scan here. It takes less than a minute.

Short and messy is fine—we'll help shape it!



September is LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP MONTH

www.mentorpl.org

Visit us at 4 locations:

Main Library
8215 Mentor Ave. (440) 255-8811

Mentor-on-the-Lake
5642 Andrews Rd (440) 257-2512

Headlands Branch
4669 Corduroy Rd (440) 257-2000

The HUB at Mentor High
6477 Center Street

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH
6:00 PM - 8:30 PM
HUNTINGTON BANK FIELD

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Be a mentor to a youth!

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS
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We serve the youth in Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties

440.352.2526
torchlighttyma.org

CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2026

Geauga County Fair

September 3–7 • 9 am–midnight
Geauga County Fairgrounds
14373 N Cheshire St., Burton
geaugafair.com
General admission: \$12
Children 6 and under are free.

Waterloo Arts Fest

Sat., September 12 • noon–7 pm
Waterloo Arts/
Entertainment District
15605 Waterloo Road, Cleveland
216-692-9500
www.waterlooartsfest.org
Multiple stages of a great mix of local music (40 bands!), 100 art vendors, food trucks, stilt walkers and unique art activities for visitors of all ages. Attendees can also visit artist studios, galleries, shops, eateries and bars throughout the walkable Waterloo Arts & Entertainment District. Free admission.



Fresh Fest Cleveland

Saturday, September 12 • 1–9 pm
Rid-All Farm + Otter Park
8129 Otter Avenue, Cleveland
www.freshfestcleveland.com
An amazing line-up of music, and a full day of unforgettable performances, art installations, health and wellness activities, farmer's market, chef tastings, local vendors, hands-on activities, workshops, and a kids zone!

Patterson's Family Fun Fest

September 16–November 1
8765 Mulberry Road, Chesterland
(See page 7 for details.)

NASA Discovery Days at Great Lakes Science Center

September 18–19 • 10 am–5 pm
greatscience.com
Become part of the Artemis Generation at NASA Discovery Days, an interactive, free event featuring the incredible teams from NASA's Glenn Research Center in Cleveland!
Experiential exhibits that bring the Artemis story to life — from

details on the Orion spacecraft to the powerful SLS (Space Launch System) rocket:

- Hands-on simulations that let visitors soar through space using virtual and augmented reality
- Opportunities to meet real NASA engineers, scientists, and communicators who help make deep space missions possible
- Examples of how aeronautics and space innovations are improving everyday life on Earth

Apple & Honey Harvest Weekend

September 19 & 20 • 9 am–5 pm
Lake Metroparks Farmpark
lakemetroparks.com
Witness traditional harvest activities and discover how apple butter and cider are made. Take a tour of the "Johnny Appleseed Trail," explore the Plant Science Center and explore a three-acre corn maze.

Clean Water Fest

Sat., September 19 • 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
4747 East 49th S., Cuyahoga Hts.
(See page 12 for details)

IngenuityFest 2026

Fri., September 25 • 6 pm–1 am
Sat., September 26 • 1 pm–1 am
Sun., September 27: 1 pm–6 pm
IngenuityLabs @
The Hamilton Collaborative
5401 Hamilton Avenue, Cleveland
www.ingenuitycleveland.com
IngenuityFest includes immersive artwork; exhibits in technology & innovation; artisan vendors; educational offerings and half a dozen stages featuring hundreds of musicians, dancers, poets, and performances of all types.

Cleveland Pickle Fest

Sat., October 3 • 11 am–6 pm
Mall C, Downtown Cleveland
clevelandpicklefest.com
This one-of-a-kind event features dozens of vendors, food trucks, pickle-eating contests for youth and adults, live bands, and our new Cleveland Pickle Fest 5K. Thousands of pickle lovers will gather for a full day of flavor, entertainment, and community spirit, all while raising funds to support Greater Cleveland Volunteers.

Bring the family for
fall fun at Farmpark!



Apple & Honey
Harvest
Weekend

September 19 & 20
9 am to 5 pm

**HORSE
POWER
WEEKEND**

September 26 & 27
9 am to 5 pm



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Contact the LCDJFS to learn more about becoming a foster parent.

Call the Foster Care line:

(440) 350-4218

(440) 918-4218

lakecountyfostercare.com

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

