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February 2022

Cuyahoga

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# Celebrate Read Across America Day & National March Into Literacy Month

By Kimberly Blaker

What better day to celebrate Read Across America Day than on March 2nd, the birthday of the beloved Dr. Seuss? It's the perfect kickoff to March's National March Into Literacy Month, both of which are dedicated to the promotion of reading and literacy.

Read Across America Day was first introduced by the National Education Association (NEA) in 1998. The NEA's goal for the celebration is to motivate kids to become lifelong readers, thereby improving student performance. Every year, schools, public libraries, and other organizations celebrate this day by holding reading events for kids.

## Ways parents can promote reading

There are many ways parents can promote a love of reading and encourage their kids to read not only during this celebration but year-round.

**Read to kids.** Begin reading to your child very early. The NEA suggests infancy is a good time to start. As your child grows, encourage your child's participation in reading the story with or to you. Although your child may not be ready to read, kids often have some of their favorite books or pages memorized. By making your child an active participant, it will help develop their love for reading.

**Visit the library.** Think of the library as a big, free, educational toy store. Help your child choose some books but also encourage your child

to look through shelves and select some on their own. Your child can also take home audiobooks, video games, videos, and music CDs.

**Help your child build a collection.** One thing common among reading lovers is how much they enjoy having their own book collection. Help your child build a personal library of your child's favorite series, author, or genre. Then give your child a special shelf to store and display the collection.

“Think of the library as a big, free, educational toy store.”

**Play word games.** Look for board, computer, or phone games that help kids develop their reading and spelling skills and vocabulary.

**Sign up for Goodreads.** Through this Android and iOS app, kids can track both the books they've read and those they want to read. They can also check out what their friends are reading.

**Subscribe your child to a magazine.** There's a host of kids' magazines on the market and something for every age group. It will give your child something to look forward to each month and build enthusiasm for reading.

**Read in front of your kids.** Show kids that reading isn't just a school requirement, but rather a lifelong activity. Let them see you reading



both to learn and for pleasure.

**Form a kids book club.** If your child is interested in it, this is a great way to build excitement for reading. You'll want to find kids who are all about the same reading level. You'll need to decide where to hold the weekly or monthly meetings, which could be at your house, or perhaps your school or public library will

provide you space. You might be able to advertise it through your child's school or public library as well.

**Set up a reading room or corner.** Find a quiet distraction-free area in your home to designate as the reading area. It should have comfy seating, perhaps even a bean bag chair or two, pillows, blankets, and good lighting.



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## Creative ways to spread Valentine's Day cheer

By Sarah Lyons

**K**ids enjoy exchanging cards and candy on Valentine's Day but the holiday can be an opportunity to spread love and cheer to our neighbors, friends, and those in need. Here are some creative ways you and your kids can show others the holiday spirit.

### Random act of kindness

Get the kids involved and show someone a random act of kindness. Pay for the person behind you in line at the coffee shop, take cookies to your neighbors, volunteer at a homeless shelter, visit with seniors at a nursing home, or collect coats and hats for those in need. Pick a cause that is near and dear to your family's hearts and do something that would benefit that charity.

### Show some heart

Consider contacting a local children's hospital and making goody bags for kids and families who are admitted. Most hospitals will have a list of things they need but they could include books, art supplies, blankets, or stuffed animals for kids, and Chapstick, magazines, playing cards, and travel size toiletries for parents. Get the kids involved in gathering the items and delivering them to the hospital.

### Furry friends

If your child loves animals, consider volunteering at a local pet shelter. If you are unable to work there, ask what items can be donated and do a neighborhood drive to collect items to take to the pet shelter. Check Pinterest for homemade dog or cat toys you can make as a family and deliver.

### A surprise delivery

Do some baking with your kids and do a surprise delivery to your spouse, a grandparent, or a neighbor. You could also consider taking treats to teachers, or the fire or police station. Ask your kids to make a homemade card to go along with the treats.

### Host a party

Invite your kids' friends over for a Valentine's Day party. Offer a holiday themed snack, craft, and card making station. Ask them to make thank you cards that you can send to nurses, first responders, or people overseas in the armed forces.

Valentine's Day doesn't have to just be about cards and candy, it can be about showing those around you that they are loved and appreciated. Get the kids involved and ask them who they would like to serve and show kindness to this year. Have them help you brainstorm creative ways that they can show love to others.

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SCREENS AT  
NIGHT, GLASSES  
ARE AVAILABLE  
TO FILTER OUT  
THE BLUE LIGHT  
TO PREVENT  
EYE STRAIN.



# Not getting enough Zzzzs?

## Try these 15 tricks!

By Kimberly Blaker

**F**or many, getting a solid night's sleep is as elusive as winning the lottery. Getting too little sleep is so common that it's become almost a badge of honor to get through each day with sleep deprivation. Even if you feel like you can function on little sleep, it's actually debilitating, if not dangerous, to a person's health and mental faculties. Not getting enough sleep increases the risk of obesity, memory impairment, illness, and even hallucinations or death. Falling asleep is a common problem. But sleep quality is also crucial for optimum brain function and recovery. Fortunately, there are many ways to train your body and mind to fall asleep more quickly and improve your sleep quality.

**Create a relaxing nighttime ritual.** Starting a routine to wind down every night creates an association between nighttime habits and sleep, preparing your body to relax and fall asleep more quickly. Try drinking a soothing tea like chamomile. Or use aromatherapy with scents such as lavender that promote relaxation.

**Go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day.** This gets your body into a regular sleep-wake pattern, which regulates your circadian rhythm and makes falling and staying asleep easier. It may be tempting to sleep in on the weekends to make up for lost sleep. But this may actually hurt you in the long term.

**Avoid alcohol at night.** Though it may help you

fall asleep, drinking alcohol before bed significantly reduces your sleep quality.

**Be careful with naps.** A long afternoon nap can make it more difficult to fall asleep at night. So keep naps short and as early in the day as possible.

**Track your sleep.** Different technologies are available to track your sleeping patterns, including restlessness, awake and sleep times, and even how long you're in each part of the sleep cycle. This can help you find how many hours you individually need for optimal function.

**Practice meditation and mindfulness.** Regularly practicing these can help calm your mind and body. Progressive relaxation is one technique. Through it, you slowly focus on each part of your body, moving from head to feet, while releasing tension and consciously relaxing your muscles.

**Avoid screens an hour before bed.** Looking at the bright light is stimulating. Likewise, so is much of the content on the screens. If you use screens at night, glasses are available to filter out the blue light to prevent eye strain.

**Use breathing techniques.** One popular method to fall asleep is known as 4-7-8. First, breathe in through your nose for a count of four. Then hold your breath for 7, and exhale out your mouth for 8.

**Listen to soothing white noise, music, or podcasts.** Many of these audio productions are designed to help put you to sleep.

**Stop drinking caffeine after midday.** Caffeine is a stimulant, which can affect your mind and body hours after consumption.

**Make sure your room is dark for sleep and that you get natural light during the day.** This regulates your circadian rhythm and provides external cues for your body.

**Exercise in the morning.** Being physically active, especially early in the day, is associated with better sleep.

**Journal or keep paper by your bed.** Do you have a hard time falling asleep because your mind is racing? Writing down your thoughts can help to keep them from swirling incessantly through your brain so you can relax.

**Use your bed and bedroom for sleep only.** This creates a specific association, so your body and mind know it's time to rest. Also, keep electronics out of the bedroom.

**Try a natural supplement.** Melatonin, magnesium, and CBD are some of the options touted as supporting relaxation and sleep. Be sure to check with your doctor before taking any supplements to ensure you do so safely.

If behavioral changes aren't working, discuss your sleep concerns with your doctor. You may have an undiagnosed sleeping disorder that requires medical intervention. Depending on your doctor's findings, medications and breathing treatments may help improve your sleep.



# AI

## Artificial Intelligence

Prepare your children for careers  
in an AI-driven future-world

Article by Kimberly Blaker

**M**any parents today never experienced a world where computers weren't a standard household fixture, let alone a world without the Internet. When the World Wide Web first became available to the public in 1991, it was archaic compared to today. Yet at the time, it was quite the phenomenon. But the rapid speed of technological progress over the past couple of decades will resemble the crawl of a tortoise in another decade or two as technology continues to advance at an exponential rate.

In fact, according to Ray Kurzweil, a world-renowned inventor, thinker, and futurist, "We won't experience 100 years of progress in the 21st century – it will be more like 20,000 years of progress (at today's rate)." If you have any doubt, Kurzweil has a remarkable 30-year track record of making accurate predictions.

This means the rapid change in recent years is nothing compared to what's to come. The world in which tomorrow's young adults will enter will be startlingly different from the one in which we live today. That's because our world is increasingly dependent on robotics, technology, and now artificial intelligence (AI).

But what is AI? It's machines or programs with the capabilities of human intelligence. AI capabilities include learning, presenting knowledge, reasoning, problem-solving, planning, perception, manipulation, and motion. Right now, AI is in its infancy, and much of what's purported to be AI is actually pseudo-AI. Whether imitation or the real thing, there are several current AI technologies: chatbots, Tesla,

Siri and Alexa, Facebook feed, and Pandora, to name a few – and AI is on the brink of changing the world as we know it.

But with all good things come drawbacks. Within the next 20 years, AI will result in a loss of anywhere between 9 and 47 percent of jobs, according to various studies by Oxford University and other institutions. So kids must be fully prepared for our vastly changing world and careers of the future.

## Tips to help you prepare your kids for the future job market

**Bolster interest and enthusiasm in STEM.** Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills are one of the gateways to job opportunities in a world dependent on AI. But to many kids, 'science' and 'math' spell boring with a capital "B." This is in large part because kids can't always see how these disciplines apply to life. So unless your child already expresses genuine interest in one or more of these disciplines, discussing STEM may be met with resistance.

The trick is to provide kids with everyday experiences that put the fun in learning or provide kids experiences that are a natural part of life. Once you've gained their interest, then explain its relationship to STEM. That way, your child has a positive perspective on the discipline and recognizes its purpose and value.

**Stimulate spatial awareness.** This refers to your ability to be aware of objects in space and your body's position in relation to them. It is an integral part of STEM learning and provides kids the ability to visualize their end product, says David Lubinski, a psychology professor at Vanderbilt University. He is the lead author of a study published in Psychological Science journal, July 15, 2013. Researchers found spatial ability is a predictor of the development of knowledge and innovation in STEM fields.

**Encourage free play and out-of-the-box thinking.** Play fosters imagination, creativity, and resilience to deal with challenges. These traits will be necessary to succeed in an ever-advancing world of AI. When kids play freely, they experiment, explore, and dismantle (things, scenarios, and concepts) to understand how the world works. So play is one

of the best ways for kids to learn and develop skills.

**Develop kids' ability to deal with the real world.** Dave and Helen Edwards, cofounders of Intelligenstia.ai, an AI research firm, point out there will still be careers in the future that are dependent on human capabilities. In "The skills your kids should cultivate to be competitive in the age of automation," the Edwards explain humans will still be needed for jobs that require: interpersonal skills, applying math to business problems, management of our physical world (environmental science and engineering), as well as health care jobs. People will remain ahead of robots in these areas for some time.

**Foster social skills and teamwork.** These will be valuable assets in the future workforce. Collaboration requires a combination of skills and traits: emotional intelligence, humility, communication, listening, conflict resolution, goal setting, prioritizing, decision making, and framing problems.

Emotional intelligence is particularly crucial to the development of excellent social skills and teamwork. Both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are the framework for emotional intelligence. Interpersonal skills include social awareness and relationship management, while intrapersonal skills include self-awareness and self-regulation.



Within the next 20 years, AI will result in a loss of anywhere between 9 and 47 percent of jobs.



**Cultivate entrepreneurial characteristics and skills.** Even though automation and technology will reduce the need for laborers, people will always be needed to develop and manage companies. Add to this, the growing trend toward companies outsourcing and hiring independent professionals for a broad range of needs is likely to continue and become more common. Some essential entrepreneurial skills kids should



develop are financial literacy, goal setting, problem-solving, creativity, and good work habits.

**Promote tech skills.** Greg Satell says the tech skills of tomorrow will be vastly different from today, in his article, "These Are the Skills That Your Kids Will Need for the Future (Hint: It's Not Coding)." By the time kids grow up, computer programming will no longer be based on current coding languages. It'll be based "more on quantum laws and the human brain," he explains. But because the future of computer programming is unknown, there's

no way to teach it to kids. So Satell recommends kids learn more about quantum dynamics, the logic of code, and genetics, on which future systems will be based.

Still, learning to code has its benefits. It's true learning a coding language of today will unlikely be of any use in the future. But learning how to learn a code can make learning future codes easier. Coding also helps kids develop problem-solving skills. Finally, it's an excellent way for kids to discover a career path and boost their self-confidence in a STEM discipline.

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## Ice skating at University Circle through Feb. 27

The Rink at Wade Oval is welcoming skaters through February 27. Visitors can bring their own skates or rent them on site. A concession stand will feature treats, including hot cocoa, coffee and a variety of snacks.

Seasonal programming at The Rink will include the popular “Pink the Rink” throughout Valentine’s Day weekend, and special open skate hours Presidents Day.

Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for students, and skate rentals are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students, making The Rink an affordable winter experience.

For hours of and more information visit [universitycircle.org/rink](http://universitycircle.org/rink).

By Stacy Turner

As soon as she was able to communicate, our eldest daughter let us know that she wanted to do it-- whatever it was -- by herself. From selecting what to wear, what to eat, or clipping the intricate buckles on her car seat, we learned to allow extra time, knowing she’d push aside our offers of help with an authoritative, “Not you -- my do!”

When looking through old photos recently, she asked why in the world we let her dress that way, wearing a combination of patterns, textures, regular and funky dress-up clothes. I explained that her younger self insisted on the “my do” mantra, adding or subtracting based on the day’s real or imagined adventures. “But you let me look like an idiot!,” she now complains. Reflecting on the major temper tantrums that often erupted during her terrible twos and threes, it was important to give her the chance to be sovereign over some small things. Her triumphant smile

## Mommy Chronicles

# Soiling the nest

in those silly photos is something we still treasure.

She was a ball of energy, moving continually from dawn until dusk. Convinced she’d miss all the fun by being forced to take an afternoon nap, she railed against the tyranny of it. One day, I found her on the bedroom floor sound asleep with a legging on one leg, half a pair of pants on the other, and a shirt half-covering her head and one arm. The nap she fought to elude with fashion aplomb had nonetheless triumphed over her tiny iron will in the end. After that, instead of sending her to her room, I’d suggested quiet activities, giving sleep the chance to approach in stealth. Once she succumbed, head down on the table strewn with tiny plastic cups mid-tea party, another time in a heap in her comfy TV chair as Dora droned on in the background. Other times we’d run errands, enticing sleep by the monotone voices on public radio broadcasts, the white noise of tires on the highway, or the soothing sounds of a rainforest CD. And this is the dance we played until she officially outgrew naps, since lack of (her) sleep tended to make life harder on all of us.

Over time, she matured and learned to better manage her own needs. When she was a bit older her main concern, at least that summer, was figuring out a proper mermaid name. As I was unfamiliar with the intricacies of mermaid nomenclature, she quickly informed me that a mermaid name must be different from your regular name and from the regular name of any friend you’re swimming with. To be clear, your mermaid name must also be different than your friend’s mermaid name. Can you just imagine the utter chaos at the pool when someone calls Ariel, and a multitude of sea princesses answer? It was helpful to have the inside scoop on tricky social situations like these. I miss having conversations where the answers are so clear cut.

Now that she’s a high school senior heading to college in a few short months, she likes to remind us that she’s got everything figured

out and can’t wait to be out on her own. I remember feeling that way, blissfully unaware of all I didn’t know, and I worry that her usual mantra may cause trouble. On a recent night, she headed straight to her room after nearly falling asleep at dinner, with plans to go to bed early. When I checked in several hours later, she looked up from her phone with bleary, half-closed eyes, still (barely) awake. When I asked why she hadn’t gone to bed, she informed me that she’s old enough to decide when to go to bed. Her obstinate expression mirrored that of her 3-year-old self, trying to negotiate an end to naptime, and I had to bite my lip to keep from laughing. I understand that in a few months, she’ll be making her own decisions, but while she’s still with us, we’re holding fast to what works to try and help her make good decisions. Plus, she’s still a beast to deal with when she’s overtired.

Through many similar interactions over the past few months, my husband and I are comfortable being the bad guys because, no matter what she believes, she still needs us. It’s difficult as she tests boundaries and pushes limits more frequently. She’s become adept at letting us know we aren’t her favorite people some days. A friend referred to this process as “soiling the nest,” explaining that sometimes kids (young fledglings) try to make the nest so uncomfortable that their mamma (bird) wants to push them right out. I guess that fits in with the empty nest analogy everyone in our similar situation has been talking about lately.

Not much of a birder, I’m reminded of the final few weeks of pregnancy when lack of sleep and discomfort replace the fear of labor and delivery. Perhaps this current pain, too, has a purpose -- making graduation and college drop off a little easier to bear. At any rate, it’s nice to remember some of the challenges we’ve successfully faced together. Who knows, maybe when she returns, she’ll have stories to share after she’s had the chance to spread her wings a bit -- maybe after a nap.



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## Free spring special needs webinar series available to families

Julie Billiard Schools help support families throughout the special education journey in a webinar series this February.

Navigating the special education process can be full of acronyms, hurdles, paperwork, and meetings. But with the proper tools and support, parents and caregivers can confidently advocate for their children. Understanding the process is the first step to accessing special education resources that can change the trajectory of your child's life.

"Our goal at Julie Billiard Schools is not only to meet the needs of our current students but all students and families who have special learning and social needs," said Kayla Santana, Julie Billiard Schools' marketing officer. "We put this series together so that any family or individual can find resources and support."

In this free, virtual webinar series, special education experts at Julie Billiard Schools and industry advocates will help families and caregivers:

- Initiate the special education process



- Recognize services available to their child
- Advocate for their child's unique needs
- Understand affordability, scholarships, and resources
- Visualize an IEP in action
- And more!

Families are invited to register for any or all episodes in the series. If you aren't able to attend, all episodes are recorded and available on demand. To learn more about the episodes available, visit [juliebilliard.school.org/special-education-webinar-series](http://juliebilliard.school.org/special-education-webinar-series).

Julie Billiard Schools take students with high functioning autism, ADD/ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning difficulties beyond education, and beyond expectations.



## Just For Laughs

An employee goes to see his supervisor in the front office. "Boss," he says, "we're doing some heavy house-cleaning at home tomorrow, and my wife needs me to help with the attic and the garage, moving and hauling stuff."

"We're short-handed," the boss replies. "I can't give you the day off." "Thanks, boss," says the employee "I knew I could count on you!"

Paddy and Murphy are havin' a pint in the pub, when some scuba divers come on the TV. Paddy says, "Murphy, why is it them deep sea divers always sit on the side of the boat with them air tanks on their backs, and fall backwards out of the boat?" Murphy thinks for a minute then says, "That's easy. It's 'cos if they fell forwards, they'd still be in the boat!"

Son: "Dad, when will I be old enough so I don't have to ask mom for her permission to go out?"

Dad: "Son, even I haven't grown old enough to go out without her permission!"

In a Catholic school cafeteria, a nun places a note in front of a pile of apples, "Only take one. God is watching." Further down the line is a pile of cookies. A little boy makes his own note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

Q: What starts with E, ends with E, and has only one letter in it?

A: Envelope.

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# A CHANCE TO PLAY

Local organization provides adaptive sports opportunities for children with physical disabilities

**A** chance to play. Most families won't think twice about the phrase. Youth sports is a multi-billion dollar industry, thus most children are provided with ample opportunities to play. Of course, there are still barriers to entry, but what if your child had no access to sports at all? Without adaptive sports, that would be the reality for children who have physical disabilities that prevent them from participating in able-bodied sports.

Adaptive Sports Ohio provides those adaptive sport opportunities for children and adults with physical disabilities through community-based and interscholastic sports programs.

Headquartered in Wooster, Ohio, Adaptive Sports Ohio now offers programming for athletes in Wayne, Mahoning, Stark, Lucas, and Cuyahoga counties. The Cleveland-area office offers an extensive list of programs for veterans, adults, and youth with disabilities that includes wheelchair basketball, power wheelchair soccer, sled hockey, track & field, hand cycling, wheelchair tennis, wheelchair softball, and more. Athletes have the option to play recreationally or compete on one of the many competitive travel teams offered.

Inclusion in school athletics is important for students with disabilities, thus Adaptive Sports Ohio has launched school-based wheelchair basketball programs in six Ohio school districts with plans to scale the program, adding new programs each year. ASO also assists schools with integrating wheelchair track athletes into their high school and middle school track programs by providing

adaptive track training for athletes and coaches across the state and by providing racing chairs for students. The goal is to soon bring these interscholastic programs to schools in Cuyahoga County.

Maintaining an active lifestyle is important for the health and well-being of anyone, but it's especially critical for individuals with disabilities. Individuals living with disabilities are more likely to be inactive, socially isolated, and have a greater risk of poor health than their able-bodied peers.

Sports play an important role in the academic success of children. According to the National Federation of High Schools, studies have proven that students who participate in high school athletic programs have higher grade-point averages than those who do not participate. Yet, our most academically vulnerable population, students with disabilities, have a 68% Ohio graduation rate and don't have access to the academic benefit that school sports provide. Adaptive Sports Ohio is working to change that by getting kids with physical disabilities off the sideline and into the game, providing them a path for a more active and healthy life.

If you have a child with a physical disability, or know someone that would benefit from adaptive sports, you can learn more about getting involved by contacting Lizzie Goldsmith, program manager for Cuyahoga County, at [lizzie.goldsmith@adaptivesportsohio.org](mailto:lizzie.goldsmith@adaptivesportsohio.org) or call (216) 410-6627. You can also find them on Facebook @AdaptiveSports Ohio, or visit [adaptivesportsohio.org](http://adaptivesportsohio.org) for more information.



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## Finding the right private school for your family

By Jan Pierce

**Y**ou want a top-notch education for your children and choosing the perfect school is probably one of the biggest decisions you'll ever make. Depending on your location, you may find your public schools offer everything you want. If not, you'll need to embark on a search for the right private school.

In general, private schools exist to provide smaller class sizes with greater individual attention to each student and a safe, focused environment free of discipline problems. They tend to set a higher bar than public schools in academics, and build a culture of shared values. They offer a strong sense of community and may tailor lessons to the needs of the student.

In reality, each private school is a world unto itself. It may or may not hold accreditation with a national education association, or hire credentialed teachers. It may have many extracurricular offerings or just a few. It may charge a very large tuition plus additional fees, or may be more affordable, offering scholarships and sliding scales. It may have a long history in your community or be a brand new charter school.

To find the right private school for you, you'll need to consider the following:

### 1. What are your educational priorities?

Some private schools are faith-based and some are not. You'll want to decide as a family your basic priorities. Is it most important to find high academic standards, or more important to support your family's faith? Do you expect accelerated programs such as advanced placement classes or extensive access to STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs? How important are extracurricular activities? Are you comfortable with homework policies and school rules?

### 2. What is the culture of the school?

In a faith-based setting the culture of the school will place religion at the forefront. There will be religious studies as part of the curriculum. The school may be all boys or all girls. Does this suit your goals? What is the relationship of staff to students? Is it casual and friendly, formal and strict? How are parents involved? What is the balance of

academics to sports, the arts, clubs and other activities? Does the culture "feel right" for your children?

### 3. What role do parents play in the school?

Some private schools make great use of parent volunteer time and emphasize whole family participation in their programs. Others minimize parent involvement to occasional visits or conferences to report progress. Which best suits your family's needs?

### 4. What are the costs? Are there scholarships available?

It's a sacrifice to pay for your child's education when public schools are free. And there are huge variations in the expenses involved. When researching possible schools, be sure to check not only the tuitions, but also book fees, sports or other extracurricular expenses and possible transportation fees. Check on scholarships available and the possibility of a sliding scale based on family income.

### 5. Is the staff credentialed and the school accredited?

Some faith-based schools and newer charter schools don't require their teachers to be credentialed. How important is this to your family? In addition there are many different education associations nationwide offering accreditation. If a prospective school has received accreditation, they've shown the initiative to meet high standards.

### 6. Is the curriculum up to date?

In this technological age, you'll want to be sure your private school has kept up with the times. Do they offer appropriate college preparation standards in science, math, languages, writing and more? Do they offer a well-rounded education in art, drama and music? Are textbooks current and in good condition? Are computer labs or individual screens available to students?

### 7. Does the school provide transportation?

Do buses transport students to school? Are they available for after-school activities? Does the school coordinate carpools? Are there extra expenses charged for transportation?

### 8. How well do students transition into or out of the school?

If a particular school offers classes such as K-6 or K-8, do they work closely with a sister high school? What provisions are made to make a smooth transition from one school to another? If students transfer into the school either at the beginning of a year or mid-year, what provisions are made to welcome them? How do children fare when they need to move from this school to another?

### 9. What is the school's reputation?

Most private schools have a reputation to uphold. Are they the best in college prep? Are they known for a friendly, family community spirit? Who do you know with firsthand information and experience with the school? What recommendations can you find amongst friends and acquaintances?

### 10. Is the school open to visits and drop-in observations?

All schools need to make sure their campus is secure and will have procedures to follow when visiting. But as a parent, you want to feel comfortable visiting the building to observe or take care of business. You'll want to find a school that makes parents welcome and is proud to show them around.

When you've narrowed your search to several schools, be sure to take the time for a personal visit. Talk with an administrator, take the tour and gather any written information they've prepared for prospective students. Discuss pertinent questions and voice any concerns you may have about your child's specific needs. Above all, gauge your "feel" of the school. Is it the right place for you and your family?

Selecting the perfect private school is well worth the time it takes to research, visit and finally make your selection. This is the place your children will make important friendships, learn and grow, and pave the way to their bright futures.



# PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

## Cleveland Montessori

12510 Mayfield Road, Cleveland  
(216) 421-0700  
www.clevelandmontessori.org

Cleveland Montessori is celebrating over 26 years of serving the children of Greater Cleveland. The school is located in the historic Alta House. Students in preschool through middle school thrive within this unique urban campus inclusive of Little Italy and University Circle. A Cleveland Montessori education looks at each child's individual potential academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. Their students become independent thinkers with compassionate hearts.

The authentic Montessori curriculum incorporates a variety of opportunities to extend learning beyond the classroom to the culturally rich neighborhood of Little Italy. Their proximity to University Circle provides many extensions for cultural and scientific exploration, setting the stage for an experience rich in diversity, growth and joy. Cleveland Montessori

operates on a school year calendar, September to June.

Call to arrange a personal tour or visit their website for more information.

## Corpus Christi Academy

5655 Mayfield Road, Lyndhurst  
(440) 449-4244  
www.corpuschristiacad.org

Corpus Christi Academy is a family-friendly pre-K through 8th grade school serving Lyndhurst and the surrounding communities. At CCA, your child will develop the foundational knowledge to deepen their curiosity in learning, while enhancing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The school boasts a 1:1 technology program that supports student creativity and innovativeness in the classroom. Intimate class sizes encourage individualized learning plans for each student to deepen their spiritual, social-emotional, and academic accomplishments guided by a caring and dedicated faculty.

Full- and part-time pre-K options are available. For more info call (440) 449-4244.

## Gesu Catholic School

2450 Miramar Boulevard  
University Heights  
(216) 932-0620  
www.gesu.com

Gesu Catholic School is an educational community created in partnership with students, their families, and the Church of the Gesu. Founded in 1926 under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame and the Society of Jesus, the school community is committed to the Jesuit traditions of Catholic faith formation, academic rigor and excellence, personal growth, service to others, and global citizenship, "all for the greater glory of God."

They are proud to be part of the Diocese of Cleveland's "Better Together: Exceptional Catholic education for every student" initiative and to be a "Designated STEM School" by the state of Ohio.

The school community includes

630 students in kindergarten through grade 8 with another 95 students in the Gesu Preschool and 75 members of their faculty and staff.

For preschool, kindergarten, or admissions information for grades 1-8, please contact Judi Herbert at (216) 932-0620, ext. 117 or email [jherbert@gmail.com](mailto:jherbert@gmail.com).

## Gilmour Academy

34001 Cedar Road, Gates Mills  
(440) 473-8050  
[admissions@gilmour.org](mailto:admissions@gilmour.org)  
www.gilmour.org

As an independent, Catholic school, Gilmour Academy stands alone in its ability to prepare students who thrive. Its mission is rooted in educating the mind and empowering the heart, ensuring that every student develops to their fullest potential. From 18 months to 18 years, everything at Gilmour – from the experiential curriculum to the immersive, real-world opportunities to the full spectrum of cocurriculars –

*Continued on page 14*

## Foundations for Lifelong Learning

A child's preschool experience should build a foundation for their education and lifelong skills of **perseverance independence confidence curiosity** and finding joy in their own interests.

Located in the heart of Little Italy, our students grow and thrive in a learning environment that promotes a lifetime passion for learning.

Unlock your child's potential with a solid preschool foundation.

Applications are now being accepted for preschool through 8th grades for the 2022-2023 school year.

Call today for information on discounted tuition for those working in designated University Circle area institutions .

Contact the Director of Admissions at 216-421-0700 or email at [info@clevelandmontessori.org](mailto:info@clevelandmontessori.org) to arrange a personal tour.



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Or contact our admission team at [admissions@hb.edu](mailto:admissions@hb.edu) or 216.320.8767

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To learn more  
or schedule a personal tour,  
visit [gilmour.org/admission](http://gilmour.org/admission)



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Gilmour Academy is an independent, Catholic, coed school in the Holy Cross tradition. Grades K-12 and Montessori (18 months - Preschool) 34001 Cedar Road | Gates Mills, Ohio | 44040 | [gilmour.org](http://gilmour.org)

## PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

### Gilmour Academy cont'd

is focused on cultivating ethical leaders who communicate authentically, think critically and solve real-world problems. These foundational principles are introduced in the Montessori preschool programs, and then expanded upon and developed throughout the Lower, Middle and Upper Schools. Gilmour graduates emerge primed for the next step with an understanding that they have both the tools and the responsibility to make the world a better place.

### Hathaway Brown School

19600 North Park Boulevard  
Shaker Heights  
(216) 932-4214  
HB.edu

Hathaway Brown is an all girls K-12 day school in Shaker Heights. Since 1876, HB has educated and empowered girls with the "Learn for Life Signature Approach." The school's distinguished academics are nationally recognized and are valued by families, top colleges and universities, and employers.

The Signature Approach allows students to take ownership of their education with outstanding experiential learning opportunities such as the Storyline model in the primary school, the Academies in middle school, and the Fellowships for the Applied Studies in the upper school.

HB's model, facilitated by an incredibly impressive and engaged faculty, empowers girls to rise boldly to the challenges of the times, achieve their goals and reach their utmost potential.

For more information, visit HB.edu or contact the admission office at (216) 320-8767.

### Hawken School

[www.hawken.edu](http://www.hawken.edu)

**Lyndhurst Campus**  
(Preschool-Grade 8)  
5000 Clubside Road  
(440) 423-2950

**Gates Mills Campus**  
(Grades 9-12)

Mayfield and County Line roads  
in Gates Mills  
(440) 423-2955

### The Birchwood School of Hawken

(Preschool-Grade 8)  
4400 West 140th Street  
Cleveland  
(216) 251-2321

### The Mastery School of Hawken

(Grades 9-12)  
11025 Magnolia Drive  
Cleveland  
(440) 423-8801

Hawken School is an independent, coed day school of 1,500 students, toddler through grade 12, located on two campuses in the eastern suburbs of Cleveland, a campus on Cleveland's west side, and a campus in University Circle that is home to the recently opened Mastery School of Hawken, which takes the school's problem-based programming to scale.

Hawken was founded in 1915 as an educationally progressive school, and they remain academically progressive — because that's what it takes to prepare students to thrive in a changing world. From recognizing the value of a co-educational environment to designing programs, learning spaces, and innovative schedules that support learning by doing, Hawken boldly adapts to prepare students for a promising future.

Hawken's nationally-recognized programming and non-traditional schedules support partnerships with world-renowned institutions that provide real-world learning opportunities, including honors-level engineering and entrepreneurship programs and STEMM internships. These experiences instill in students the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly complex and dynamic world.

*Listings continue on page 16*



# MONTESSORI

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For more information, call 440.423.2950 (Lower & Middle School), 216.251.2321 (Birchwood School), 440.423.2955 (Upper School), 440.423.8801 (Mastery School), or visit [hawken.edu/admissions](http://hawken.edu/admissions)

**HAWKEN**  
SCHOOL



COEDUCATIONAL,  
TODDLER – GRADE 12

[hawken.edu](http://hawken.edu)

Lyndhurst



Cleveland–West



Gates Mills



University Circle

## PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

### Hershey Montessori School

[www.Hershey-Montessori.org](http://www.Hershey-Montessori.org)  
(440) 357-0918  
Concord Campus  
10229 Prouty Road  
Huntsburg Campus  
11530 Madison Road

Hershey Montessori School prepares students to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Their Montessori approach to education is scientifically geared toward the psychological stages of the student at every phase of their natural development. This allows the student to discover their strengths and master challenging concepts based upon individual growth and interests.

Hershey provides a world-renowned education that integrates academics with financial literacy, leadership, entrepreneurship, and other important real-life skills. Special emphasis is placed on embracing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB), ensuring students are emotionally, academically, and skillfully empowered for life. DEIB are Montessori-aligned skills that give students necessary

tools to navigate the social complexities of our current society and to make a positive impact in the communities among them.

Hershey's Concord Campus educates children from birth through 6th grade. Their Huntsburg Campus educates adolescents from 7th through 12th grade.

Tuition assistance, boarding, transportation, and scholarship opportunities are available.

### Montessori School of University Heights

23599 Cedar Road, Lyndhurst  
(216) 381-8388  
[www.ms-uh.org](http://www.ms-uh.org)

The Montessori School of University Heights, established in 1968, is a preprimary school dedicated to helping the child become the unique person his/her Creator intended in a Christian atmosphere of peace, love, and respect. Their approach involves:

- Providing comprehensive, individualized opportunities for growth. Each child is introduced to the materials as the child becomes ready for

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## PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

### Montessori School of UH cont'd

the concepts that the material embodies. Children develop order, concentration, coordination, independence, and self-discipline.

- Engaging children in a caring, supportive community. Their multi-age environment, serving children ages 3 through 6 years old, provides a family-like atmosphere. Children develop compassion and confidence.
- Respecting each child's developmental abilities and personality. Montessori children enjoy choosing their own work each day guided by adults who are sensitive to each child's unique personality. Children experience joy in learning.

They warmly encourage interested parents to schedule an in-person or virtual tour.



### Our Lady of the Lake School

175 East 200th Street, Euclid  
(216) 481-6824  
[www.olleuclidschool.org](http://www.olleuclidschool.org)

Our Lady of the Lake School, grounded in Catholic faith and values, provides a program of academic excellence in an environment that engages students, families, faculty and community. Small classrooms, individual attention and strong curriculum together provide exceptional learning opportunities, and advanced programs and educational partnerships challenge their students to excel.

Learning goes beyond the classroom. Students enlarge their world with service learning and field trips. Outreach programs bring a wealth of resources into the school, and students also engage in hands-on learning through technology, with interactive boards in every classroom, a cutting-edge makerspace, and iPads and Chromebooks for each student for curriculum use. Even their youngest students take part,

We teach our students to apply scientific theory. **And to practice faith.**



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## PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

# Our Lady of the Lake School

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Jenny Millett, Principal  
JMillett@OLLEuclid.org

East 200th Street • Euclid, OH 44119 • 216-481-6824  
www.OLLEuclidSchool.org

**Our Lady of the Lake cont'd**  
with preschoolers making full use of the gymnasium, art rooms, makerspace and library.

Students are also encouraged to develop their talents through art and a variety of clubs and extra-curriculars. A fully-equipped gym hosts an array of sports and athletics. An active parent-teacher organization keeps the school community engaged and welcoming.

Call today for a tour or to get more information.

### Ruffing Montessori School

3380 Fairmount Boulevard  
Cleveland Heights  
(216) 321-7175  
www.ruffingmontessori.net

Ruffing Montessori School in Cleveland Heights is more than just a school for children ages 18 months through the 8th grade. It is a beloved community where bright and curious children are guided by experienced Montessori-trained faculty and immersed in a rigorous curriculum that prepares students to become independent thinkers and creative

problem-solvers. Walking through Ruffing's classrooms, you will see students working with purpose and joy, and excelling academically with confidence and compassion. Being a student at Ruffing offers children a global perspective and a strong understanding of their impact on the world, and prepares them for high school, college, and life beyond.

Learn why Ruffing is the compelling school of choice for so many families by scheduling a personal or virtual tour at [ruffingmontessori.net](http://ruffingmontessori.net).

### St. Joan of Arc School

498 East Washington Street  
Chagrin Falls  
(440) 247-6530  
www.stjoanofarc.org

For over 50 years, faculty and staff of St. Joan of Arc Catholic School have instilled within each student a lifelong desire to learn, lead, and live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Committed to learning and teaching in the 21st century, the experienced faculty and staff of



## School Open House

March 27, 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm

Register Online: [gesu.com/openhouse](http://gesu.com/openhouse)



[gesu.com/admissions](http://gesu.com/admissions)

2450 Miramar Boulevard • University Heights, Ohio 44118  
admissions@gesu.com • (216) 932-0620 x117 • [gesu.com](http://gesu.com)

*Gesu admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.*



# PRIVATE SCHOOL GUIDE

## St. Joan of Arc School cont'd

St. Joan work tirelessly to develop each student to his or her fullest potential. Technology is incorporated as a part of daily instruction, which may find students utilizing the 3-D printer in the makerspace or working collaboratively with the aid of an ActivPanel.

The small class sizes allow for individualized instruction and contribute to the warm, Christ-centered atmosphere that is a hallmark of St. Joan of Arc. As a National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence, St. Joan of Arc has been recognized for the education that they provide to students in the Chagrin Valley.

## St. Paschal Baylon Catholic School

5360 Wilson Mills Road  
Highland Heights  
(440) 442-6766  
www.saintpaschal.net

Recipient of the Governor's Thomas Edison Award for Excellence in STEM Education and Student Research for nine consecutive years, Saint Paschal Baylon

Catholic School educates students in pre-K through grade 8. Its mission is to focus on Christ-centered values and to develop the unique potential of each student through a rigorous and engaging curriculum.

Offering a program that prepares students for their secondary education and beyond, the faculty and staff recognize each student as an individual with unique gifts. They truly care about their students and are dedicated to helping each child succeed and attain his or her academic and spiritual potential.

The academic program is aligned with diocesan, state and national standards. In addition, Saint Paschal Baylon offers daily religion instruction, Spanish (pre-k through 8), fine arts, service learning opportunities, co-curricular activities, gifted education classes, as well as psychological, speech/language, intervention, and learning disability services.

Please call the school at (440) 442-6766 for more information or to schedule a tour.



# SAINT PASCHAL BAYLON CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*A National Blue Ribbon School of Excellence*



**Governor's Award for Excellence in STEM Education**  
**nine years in a row!**



## Open Houses

**Catholic Schools Week Open House**  
Sun., January 30 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

**Sneak Peek for parents of prospective K-8 students**  
Thursday, February 3 • 8:30 a.m.

Or call to schedule a private tour

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- Stress-reducing integration with nature
- Life readiness & college readiness

## CONTACT US TO REGISTER OR REQUEST MORE INFORMATION

Birth - 6th Grade: (440) 357-0918

7th -12th Grade: (440) 636-6290

admissions@hershey-montessori.org

Ask about our transportation & boarding options!

## 2022 SPRING OPEN HOUSE DATES

\*Registration is required\*

February 5th | March 5th  
April 9th | May 7th

10 am-12 pm at Huntsburg  
1-3 pm at Concord

### Huntsburg Campus

(7th-12th Grade)  
11530 Madison Rd.  
Huntsburg, OH 44046

### Concord Campus

(B-6th Grade)  
10229 Prouty Rd.  
Concord Township, OH 44077

Virtual tours are available on our website.



Visit our website at [www.Hershey-Montessori.org](http://www.Hershey-Montessori.org)

# Valentine's Day History

## 'Sweethearts' candies started out as lozenges

The iconic chalky heart-shaped candies that have been passed out lovingly every Valentine's Day started out as lozenges. According to the Food Business News, pharmacist and inventor Oliver Chase created a machine that would quickly create the lozenges before switching to using the machine to create candy—later known as Necco Wafers.



Chase's brother came up with the idea to print messages on the candy in 1866, and the candies got their heart shape in 1901, appealing specifically to Valentine's Day sweethearts.

## How 'X' came to mean 'kiss'

The idea of using a kiss to sign off on valentines also has a long history, according to the Washington Post. The use of "X" came to represent Christianity, or the cross, in the Middle Ages. During the same time, the symbol was used to sign off on documents. After marking with an X, the writer would often kiss the mark as a sign of their oath. As the gesture grew among kings and commoners to certify books, letters and paperwork, these records were described as having been "sealed with a kiss."

## Box of chocolates

The Valentine's Day tradition of giving a box of candy was started in the 19th century by Richard Cadbury, a scion of a British chocolate manufacturing family. With a new technique recently established at the company to create more varieties of chocolate, Cadbury pounced on the opportunity to sell the chocolates as part of the beloved holiday.

## 'Wearing your heart on your sleeve'

The term "wearing your heart on your sleeve" may have origins in picking a valentine. Smithsonian reports that during the Middle Ages, men would draw the names of women who they would be coupled with for the upcoming year while attending a Roman festival honoring Juno. After choosing, the men wore the names on their sleeves to show their bond during the festivities.

## Cupid began as a Greek god

The chubby baby with wings and a bow and arrow that we call Cupid has been associated with Valentine's Day for centuries. However, before he was renamed Cupid, he was known to the ancient Greeks as Eros, the god of love. Eros, the son of Greek goddess Aphrodite, would use two sets of arrows—one for love and another for hate—to play with the emotions of his targets. It wasn't until stories of his mischief were told by Romans that he adopted the childlike appearance that we recognize today.

## First valentine was written from a prison

History's first valentine was written in perhaps one of the most unromantic places conceivable: a prison. Charles, Duke of Orleans wrote the love letter to his second wife at the age of 21 while captured at the Battle of Agincourt. As a prisoner for more than 20 years, he would never see his valentine's reaction to the poem he penned to her in the early 15th century.

Source: [www.history.com](http://www.history.com)



## Spring break camps at Great Lakes Science Center

This spring break, get down to the Science Center for Camp Curiosity: Spring Break Camp! Campers can experience hands-on robotics workshops, learn about engineering through Minecraft, get creative with spy science, and more! Spring Break Camps run from March 28-April 1 and April 18-22. Camps sell out quickly, so register soon.

Explore new, standalone themes each day, or join in all week to experience them all! Camps are \$59 per day (\$50 for members) and siblings receive a \$5 discount.

### Theme: Allies

Grades: K-3

March 28— April 1, 2022

This week is all about empathy, compassion and kindness. How do our differences make us special? What can we learn from each other by working together? Get ready for plenty of hands-on robotics workshops, dynamic design challenges, exciting maker activities, and real-world problem-solving as we explore strategies for navigating tough emotions, communicating diverse ideas, and supporting each other. Campers will also take home a copy of the "Little Allies" book and some exciting "My Ally Promise" swag!

### Theme: Minecraft

Grades: 4-8

March 28 — April 1, 2022

Collaborate to build a unique Minecraft village based on real-world research, experiments and activities! Each day offers a host of new hands-on challenges, followed by time working in Minecraft: Education Edition to bring your shared vision

to life. Learn about biomes, material science, civil engineering, circuitry and more. Join us all week for the full experience, or just pop in for a day or two!

### Theme: Sphero

Grades: K-3

April 18-22, 2022

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Camp Curiosity is presented by Timken.

For more information and to register call (216) 621-2400 or visit [GreatScience.com](http://GreatScience.com).

# 7 reasons to send your child to summer camp

By Mary Ann Blair

**W**ith summer calendars quickly filling up, it can be hard to try and squeeze in one more thing. But if you have never sent your kids to a summer camp, here are seven reasons why you should consider it!

## **With so many options, it's easy to find a great fit for your child.**

From sports camps and art camps to STEM-based camps and more traditional overnight options, summer camps are designed to serve a variety of ages and interests. The length of camp can range from a few mornings for younger kiddos to week-long sleep-away camps for older kids. Local churches, school districts, and other organizations like the YMCA, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and 4-H offer a wide range of camps. With a little bit of research, you can easily find a camp well-suited for your child. [Editor's note: This issue of Today's Family includes a preview of camp opportunities on pages 10 and 21-23. The March issue will feature our annual camp guide with dozens of listings.]

## **Camps provide kids with experiences they might not have access to in "everyday" life.**

Horseback riding. Paddling a canoe across the lake. Wilderness survival. Conquering a ropes

course. Sleeping under the stars. Adventures are endless at camp, and your child will have an opportunity to try something brand new. For the youngest campers, trying a new craft activity or learning a new camp song can be so much fun!

## **Camps are a safe place to practice social skills.**

It might be awkward or uncomfortable for your child during those first few hours of camp when they don't know a single soul. After all, stepping into a new social environment can be challenging. But the ability to comfortably communicate with new people is a life skill that all kids need, and a camp is a great place to practice! Camps also provide kids an opportunity to form friendships with a whole new group of peers they might never have met otherwise.

## **Camps give kids a much-needed technology break.**

No matter how old your child is, they could probably benefit from a screen hiatus, especially during the summer months. Spending time outdoors, learning a new skill, having fun, and forming new friendships is good for the body and soul!

## **Sending kids to camp is beneficial for you, too.**

Driving away from your child(ren) on the first

day might be a little gut-wrenching. But entrusting your kids to someone else for a while can be truly beneficial. Maybe it will free up time for some overdue self-care, or give you and your partner time to reconnect. Maybe it will provide an opportunity to hit the reset button with your tween or teen. After all, absence makes the heart grow fonder! Parenting is tough work, so don't feel guilty if you enjoy this time to yourself. Chances are, your kids are having a blast without you!

## **Your child's experience as a camper could help land a summer job in the future.**

Camps are staffed by amazing counselors who provide kids with all kinds of good, clean fun. Most of these counselors were campers once, too. Now they get to help a new set of youngsters make unforgettable summer memories, all while sharpening their own teamwork and leadership skills. Your child might have that same opportunity one day. What great way to spend a summer!

## **Camp is just plain fun.**

So many adults have fond memories from their days spent at camp, and kids who have been to camp often say it's a favorite part of their summer. Odds are, your kids are going to love it! And for that reason alone, it's worth sending them to camp.



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# How to choose a summer camp your kids will love and that you approve – even amid a pandemic

By Kimberly Blaker

Whether you're looking for enrichment for your child, a way to keep your kids occupied and supervised while you work, or need a short reprieve from parenting, there's sure to be a summer camp that's the right fit for your child and family. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, many summer camps will be up and running either offering alternative programs or by following safety protocols to reduce the risk to campers and staff.

## The benefits of summer camp

Summer camp offers kids plenty of benefits, and many kids are thrilled with the idea of going away to summer camp. Still, for some kids, particularly those who are shy, introverted, or homebodies, the thought of going away for a night, let alone a week or more, can cause considerable anxiety. When kids are adamantly opposed, forcing summer

camp on them may not be in their best interest.

But for kids who are eager – or at least willing to give it a shot without much fuss – summer camp offers opportunities kids may not have elsewhere. Summer camp provides kids the following benefits:

- Fosters independence.
- A place to develop new and lasting friendships.
- Development of new skills.
- Discovery of new interests and hobbies.
- The opportunity for creative expression.
- A break from being plugged-in.
- Daily exercise.
- Improves their self-esteem.
- Teaches kids to work with others
- Makes them feel part of a community.
- Prevents or reduces summer learning loss.

## Getting started in your search

Before you begin looking into summer camps, create a list of the

criteria you're looking for. Here are some things you'll want to consider.

- What is your budget for summer camp?
- What is the purpose of sending your child to summer camp?
- Do you want a resident (overnight) or a day camp?
- Are you looking for a short-term (week or two) or summer-long program?
- Do you want a camp that's very structured or one that provides

your child with lots of freedom and choices?

- What are your child's passions, such as a particular sport, hobby, or other interest?

Once you've narrowed down some of the criteria, you can begin your search. An excellent place to start is Today's Family. We have a few camps advertising in this issue, then watch for our extensive Summer Camp Guide in the March issue!

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(ACA) accredits summer camps. So this is another excellent place to look. The ACA educates camp owners and directors in health and safety for both staff and campers as well as program quality. It then accredits camps that meet the ACA's standards.

### Next steps to finding the perfect summer camp

Once you've selected a few summer camps that meet your primary criteria, and that fit your child's interests, share the choices with your child to see what excites him or her. Be sure to let your child know upfront that you still need to thoroughly investigate the camp(s) before making a final decision. But do keep your child's choices in mind to ensure your child gets the most out of summer camp.

Once you and your child have narrowed the list down to a manageable selection, you'll want to investigate the camps further. There are several things you'll want to consider.

### Is this camp a safe option for my child and family during the pandemic?

Many summer camps are now

offering virtual programs so kids can benefit from summer camp without the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19. Virtual summer camps range from a couple of hours a day to all-day camps offering a broad range of virtual activities led by counselors. Virtual summer camp programs range from free to several hundred dollars.

Perhaps you're considering sending your child to an in-person summer camp. If so, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) offers suggestions on how summer camp programs can reduce campers' risk during the pandemic. Recommendations include promoting behaviors to minimize spread, maintaining a healthy environment, maintaining healthy operations, being prepared for when someone gets sick, and special considerations for overnight camps. When considering an in-person summer camp, review the CDC's more detailed recommendations found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>. Then compile questions to ask the summer camp you're considering to make sure it adheres to these safety protocols.

### What are the staff's qualifications?

Many summer camps use teens to staff the camps. Teens make excellent mentors and can bring liveliness to summer camp programs. However, the programs themselves should be developed by professionals and have professional oversight to ensure kids are getting the most from their camp experience.

### How does the camp ensure your child's safety?

Find out what kind of safety training the camp provides its staffers. Also, is there staff on hand at all times that knows CPR? What are the camp's procedures in the event your child becomes ill, has an accident, or an emergency?

### What is the daily schedule for campers?

Ask for a daily itinerary, so you know your child will be getting everything you and your child anticipate from the program.

### What are the rules?

Each camp has its own set of rules. So, find out whether your child is allowed to call you. If it's a

summer-long residential camp, can parents come and visit? Can kids bring along a cell phone or electronics? Also, how much money can they bring, and how is it managed?

### Don't sweat it

Keep in mind, although there are many great camps, no camp is likely to offer everything precisely the way you want it. Just choose the one that best fits your child and satisfies your most important criteria. Remember, your child will have many summers to come and plenty more opportunities to work in more exciting camp experiences.



A vibrant advertisement for Ninja Warrior Summer Camp. The background is a bright yellow-green with a torn-paper effect. On the right, a young boy in a blue t-shirt and black shorts is swinging on a ropes course. On the left, there's a black silhouette of a ninja with the text "NINJA WARRIOR SUMMER CAMP" and "BEGINS JUNE 6TH!". Below this, a list of activities is shown in yellow text on a black background: "YOUR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE", "NINJA WARRIOR COURSES", "ROCK CLIMBING", "AERIAL ROPES COURSE", and "ARCADE". At the bottom, the phone number "(216) 282-3100" and website "WWW.ADRENALINEMONKEYFUN.COM" are listed. Three circular icons are scattered throughout: a rock climber, a monkey logo for "ADRENALINE MONKEY", and a person on a ropes course.

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