

SPRING 2022 | VOLUME 4

Ready, Set, GROW!

Virginia Beach GrowSmart's Quarterly Newsletter



The Importance of Reading to Children

BY BARB LITO

Virginia Beach GrowSmart has led a community wide celebration of reading since 2014 and joins the National Education Association (NEA) and Dr. Seuss Enterprises for our [Read Across America Day](#). Our local celebration event is on March 4.

This event kicks off National Reading Month (March) and is a day to celebrate and foster a love of reading with children, across the entire community.

Over the years, we have had over 1000 volunteers read with young children and provided over 28,000 books through local child care partners, head start classrooms, and our pre-k students. This year we hope to provide over 6,000 books to young children across our community, thanks to the generous support of the [Virginia Beach GrowSmart Foundation](#).

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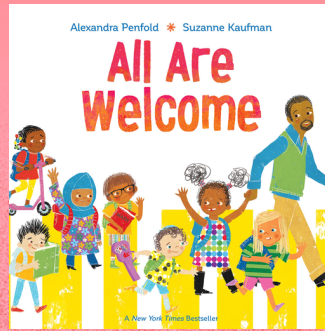
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The pandemic has negatively impacted our early learners and we want to highlight the importance of reading with children. Experts agree that reading aloud to young children from birth through third grade is the single most important thing we can do to prepare a child for a love of reading and learning. We want to prepare our future leaders, innovators and educators for success in the 21st century. Read on for more ways to inspire learning and share the love of reading.

Did You know?

- Reading on grade level is a critical milestone in a child's educational and future life success. Studies show that the number of words a child knows when entering kindergarten is predictive of future learning success.
- Children who fall behind are likely to stay that way, and a child not reading at grade level by the end of first grade has an 88% chance of not reading at grade level by the end of fourth grade.
- Children not reading proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of school.



Read Across America Day: March 4, 2022

We have selected a special book this year to connect with our theme: **Creating a Sense of Community!**

Our book is "**All Are Welcome**" – a warm welcoming picture book that celebrates inclusiveness and diversity, sending the message to children and families that everyone is welcome in their school, in their class, and in their community. Follow a group of children through a day in their school, where everyone is welcomed with open arms.

Please join us for the virtual read at VBGrowSmart.com/Read-Across-America & Facebook.com/VBGrowSmart.

Here are some additional activities to go along with the book:

- **Draw a picture** of a group of people you meet with. That might be a classroom, sports group, faith group, or other interest area. Show the differences of looks, colors, activities, and actions of the people in your group. Show how your community is stronger because of all the differences and kindnesses that make people feel welcome.
- **Create a Poster** that reads, "All Are Welcome Here." Be creative with images that show warmth and interest in people's uniqueness.
- **Make a list** of all the places that you go where you feel welcome. What are some ways you can make someone else feel welcome there. Write a list of five kind things you can do and make a plan to do them.
- **Say something** when you see someone feeling sad or unwelcomed. Speak up to let the child know you care. Tell them they are important and that they are welcome to play with you. Be kind.
- **Draw your family** doing something you do that you think other families don't do. Maybe you have a routine, holiday tradition, or good-bye habit that you always do.



Celebrating Children



A VIRGINIA BEACH CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

SATURDAY

APRIL 30, 2022

9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

[HTTPS://WWW.VBGROWSMART.COM/
CELEBRATING-CHILDREN](https://www.vbgrowsmart.com/celebrating-children)

MOUNT TRASHMORE PARK 310 EDWIN DRIVE VB 23462



Our Interactions with Children Matter: Ways to Support a Child Throughout Their Day

BY BEVERLY BECKER

Social interaction invites children to explore and learn all about the world around them. However, many children during the pandemic were not able to experience these interactions. Parents and educators alike are seeing the impacts at home and in the classroom. Here are ways to support our youngest learners to help promote a safe and calm interactive environment.

Bring the Calm - Take a deep breath. When a child is having an emotional reaction, it is our job to model emotional regulation, not add to the chaos. Children who experience a caregiver who meets their emotions with calm ones learn how to emotionally regulate themselves in a positive way when they are struggling. Not to mention, they learn early that you are someone they can trust when they're having a hard time and this attachment is crucial.

Consistency matters - Who wants to go into a meeting with no idea when it will be over, what breaks you will get, and what you will be discussing. No one. Children are the same way. When they don't have a schedule or know what is happening each day, research shows children exhibit more negative behaviors. Set a schedule, discuss when it will be different, and use pictures to help children who need visual support. When children know what is expected of them, they feel more confident and grounded which reduces anxiety and other negative emotions.

Edit and Organize - Less can be more. Sometimes children have too many options to play with. Try providing a set number of toys and books for your child in a simple organized way. Observe and see how their engagement changes when they have a smaller set of toys to focus on. Rotating books and toys is a great way to keep children interested and exploring all year long. You can even swap with friends. When it's time to clean up, piles of toys can be daunting for children. Come beside them and help them clean up after they play. Sometimes they need you to get in the mess and coach them through it. Doing this helps emotionally regulate them, teaches them organizational skills, and builds a trusting relationship.

Ask Open-Ended Questions - Starting from infancy, children need us to interact with them. This one activity helps build ALL their readiness skills for school. Interacting with your child builds their brain by building their vocabulary and conceptual understanding of their world, helps regulate their emotions, builds trust and confidence, and encourages them to take risks as they learn new and difficult things. Listen to your conversations with your child. Are your conversations leading to open-ended questions or are they requiring a simple response from your child? The more we get them to talk to us, the faster their brains are growing.



To learn more about meaningful social interactions click the link: <https://info.teachstone.com/blog/5-ways-that-meaningful-interactions-support-social-emotional-learning>



VBCPS 2022-2023 PRE-K REGISTRATION FEBRUARY 15 - JUNE 3, 2022

Virginia Beach City Public Schools proudly offers a Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program to children with the greatest need at many elementary schools. Pre-Kindergarten is a full-day program that follows the VBCPS school calendar and school hours. The Pre-K program provides children with purposeful learning experiences to prepare them for a successful transition to kindergarten while they become independent, enthusiastic and self-confident learners.

Through the implementation of a developmentally-appropriate, hands-on curriculum, students will be engaged in learning literacy with a focus on phonemic awareness, language enrichment, letters/sounds, decoding and beginning reading and writing; developing numeracy with a focus on numbers and number sense; and growing socially and emotionally. The program develops students' communication, collaboration and problem-solving skills and integrates technology when appropriate to support learning. Participation in the program encourages children to develop good habits and daily routines while teachers are encouraged to adopt child-centered instructional practices.

The Pre-K program is funded through both the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI) and Title I grants awarded to the school division. VBCPS offers Pre-K in select schools across the division.



Click the GrowSmart
backpack to learn more
about school readiness!



Visit https://www.vbschools.com/academic_programs/pre_kindergarten/steps
for more information and to complete the online application.

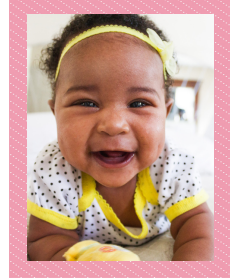
The logo for EVMS (Early Virginia Minus 9 to 5 System) features the letters "EVMS" in a large, bold, blue serif font.

MINUS 9 TO 5

Preparing families from
conception to kindergarten

The logo for Ready Region Southeastern features the words "READY" and "REGION" in a blue sans-serif font, with a green horizontal line separating them.

Southeastern



EVMS Minus 9 to 5 is excited to share that they have been selected by Virginia Early Childhood Foundation as the Ready Region Southeastern lead. They will be expanding their systems building work, focused on creating a stronger early childhood system that serves young children and families from the time they find out they are pregnant (Minus 9) until the child enters Kindergarten (to 5).

Through these important changes, Ready Region Southeastern is part of a statewide network of 9 regions that will bring communities together for early childhood success. Ready Region Southeastern includes the counties of Accomack, Northampton, Isle of Wight, Southampton and the cities of Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach.

Focused on accountability, parent engagement, responsiveness to regional needs, reliability and boldness, Ready Regions builds on the strengths of existing Smart Beginnings programs. More information about **Ready Regions can be found here.**

Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) has five areas of development.

Social and Emotional Development is included in those areas. In the ELDS, Social and Emotional Development is broken down into three sub areas:

- **Positive Self-Concept**
- **Emotional Competence**
- **Interacting with Others**

Each of the sub areas are essential in guiding little ones to learn about themselves, as well as people around them. By creating a positive learning environment, we are helping children learn to express their emotions in a healthy way and develop healthy relationships with adults and other children.

The skills/indicators in the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) are presented in an order that allows for children to build from foundational skills (infancy) to more complex skills (preschool).

Click the link below to check out more on social and emotional development and the ages skills may start to develop on pgs. 24-36 of Virginia's Early Learning and Development Standards.

<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/early-childhood/curriculum/va-elds-birth-5.pdf>



A **virtual conference** for professionals providing parent education and working with families and youth in homes, schools, hospitals and community organizations. Sessions throughout the virtual event, will cover a variety of topics integral to best practice in parent education.

Thursday, April 21, 2022

8:45 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

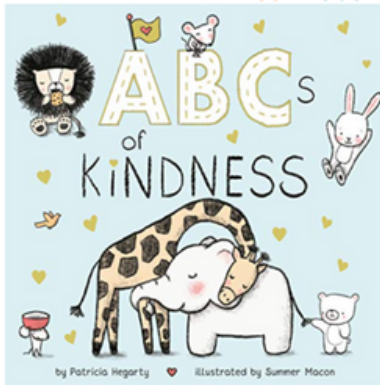
Fee: \$10

Registration and Information

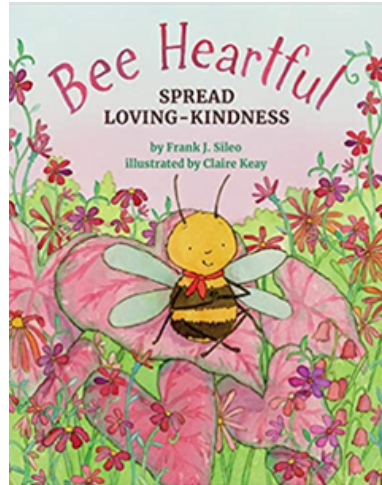
www.CHKD.org/classes



Spring into reading with these great titles about kindness!



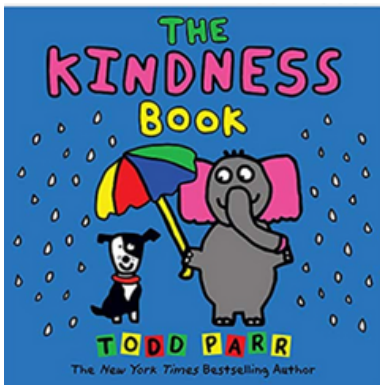
Learning the importance of kindness is as easy as A-B-C with this sweet board book that fosters social emotional development and learning to be kind to everyone you meet.



When compassionate Bentley sends loving-kindness thoughts to himself and others, he can feel his heart growing.



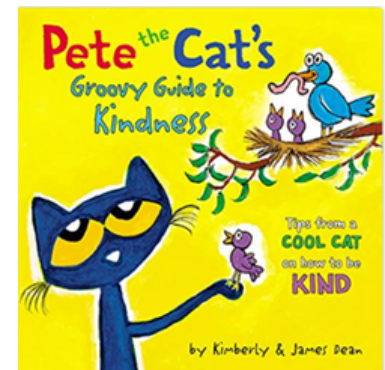
It was like a game of tag, with one small act of kindness spreading throughout a small community of kids and teachers alike.



No matter what other people choose to do, you can always choose to be kind -- and what a wonderful thing to be!



Click the calendar to view the spring edition!



Pete the Cat shares some groovy words on kindness in this fun collection of his favorite famous quotes about sharing, lending a helping hand, and having compassion for others.

Let's Talk About Shared Reading!

Talking Tip #2:
Comment on what they're doing or looking at.

Read a book together and ask **open-ended questions** such as: "What do you think will happen next?"

LENA

CONGRATULATIONS



April is National Volunteer Month and we want to kick off by congratulating **First Grade READS** volunteer **Sylvia Johnson**. She recently reached 1,000 volunteer service hours.

Sylvia has volunteered as a tutor with **First Grade READS** since the program began. Thank you for your continued dedication to helping children become confident and successful readers.

★CONGRATULATIONS★



Childcare Network 62 has been rated and is a **Level 4** in **Virginia Quality**!

★CONGRATULATIONS★



Parish Day School went through **accreditation** with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (**NAEYC**). This is the 3rd time they have completed this process!

★CONGRATULATIONS★

