

Ready, Set, GROW!

Virginia Beach GrowSmart's Quarterly Newsletter



BACK TO SCHOOL

BY BARB LITO

I love fall! The newness of starting a new school year, cooler weather and the beautiful colors of the season are some of the reasons why. Let's be honest though, this year's transition may create extra challenges caused by the pandemic.

What can we do as parents, educators and community support agencies to ensure children (and adults!) have a successful transition back to in-person learning and care.

Our fall newsletter will provide tips and information to support our young learners and the adults who support them.

One thing we all can do is start with relationships - connect, connect, connect.

Responsive relationships help children, families and staff feel safe, secure and valued. Steps we can take are:

- Provide positive descriptive praise and feedback across the day.
- Check-in with children and co-workers throughout the day to see how they are doing.
- Update schedules to include new safety procedures and provide visual schedules. Re-teach the routine to children and refer to it often throughout the day.
- Make routines engaging and fun - sing songs, role play.
- Expect behavioral change. COVID-19 has been hard for all of us. Remember behavior always communicates a message. What need is a child trying to get met.

See more tips on page 6 - for reconnecting after a break. We hope everyone has a happy and healthy school year!

NEWS & EVENTS FOR FUN FALL LEARNING!

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THE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

During the first five years of life, the brain is developing rapidly as the child begins to understand concepts and acquire skills required for all later learning. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) believes that all children in our state deserve to build on their capabilities and start school ready to learn. Providing high-quality early education lays the foundation for a successful transition into kindergarten and beyond. To properly prepare students for school success, early childhood educators need access to clear guidance in relation to how children develop skills as they engage in their environment. For this reason, VDOE has released the Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS), which focus on the progression of children from birth to age five, across various areas of development. In order to emphasize specific skills and behaviors that adults should look for when educating young children, the ELDS focus on five areas of development. Within each area, the ELDS describe concepts and skills that educators should recognize and support as students reach different ages and stages.

The ELDS focus on the following five areas of development:

- Approaches to Play and Learning
- Social and Emotional Development
- Communication, Language and Literacy Development
- Health and Physical Development
- Cognitive Development

All birth to five programs are expected to implement the new standards by Fall 2021. For more information, please refer to the following link:

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



FREE Parenting Series
September 2021

Parents & caregivers of children aged 0-3:

LENA Start sessions support the parent's role in making a difference in your baby's life through early talk & interaction.

LENA Start families will receive:

- FREE on-site childcare
- 11 FREE children's books
- Program Materials & Incentives



Talk builds babies' brains!

Interested?

CONTACT: VBGROWSMART@VBGOV.COM
CALL (757) 385-0144

Meet us for Orientation Sessions:

- Monday, September 27 | 6:00 p.m. | Williams Farm Recreation Ctr
- Wednesday, September 29 | 10:00 a.m. | Virtual class via Zoom
- Wednesday, September 29 | 6:30 p.m. | Virtual Class via Zoom

10-week series from October 4 - December 6, 2021
Visit www.vbgrowsmart.com for more information



Parents: It's time to schedule back to school physicals and immunizations

Parents and guardians, as the school year begins, it is time to ensure our children return to school with the required and recommended vaccinations.

To ensure every effort is made to keep our children safe, contact your child's pediatrician to set up an appointment as soon as possible. Children ages 12-17 will be able to get the Covid-19 vaccination along with the other vaccinations.

The Virginia Beach Department of Public Health will be holding "Back to School" clinics by appointment only on Fridays in August, and on September 10th. Students can receive their school physical and all required or recommended vaccinations. You must bring your child's vaccination records. Only one child per appointment. Please limit the number of people that you bring to the appointment to allow for social distancing and safety precautions.

To make an appointment, Call 757-518-2700 and select Option 1.

Appointments are available on August 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th & Sept 10th from 8:30 a.m. until 3:15 p.m.



For information on the Virginia Department of Education's immunization requirements, [click here](#).



For the Covid-19 vaccinations, appointments should be scheduled as soon as the first week in August to ensure both doses of the Pfizer vaccine have been received before the start of the school year. Currently, the Pfizer vaccine is the only vaccine approved for children 12 and older. This vaccine requires a 21-day wait time in between doses and you are not considered fully vaccinated until 14 days after your second dose. Appointments for the free Covid-19 vaccine can also be made at local pharmacies, grocery stores, and clinics. Visit <https://vaccinate.virginia.gov/> to find a location, or call (877) VAX-IN-VA (877) 829-4682.

For more information on Back to School Recommendations: [Virginia Department of Health Back to School Safety Guide](#)

For more information on the new Virginia immunization requirements: <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/immunization/requirements/>

For more information on the Pfizer vaccine <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/different-vaccines/Pfizer-BioNTech.html>

Let's Talk About Mealtimes!

Talking Tip #13: Encourage them, be positive.

Sit down with your child to eat when possible to encourage calm, courtesy, and conversation!



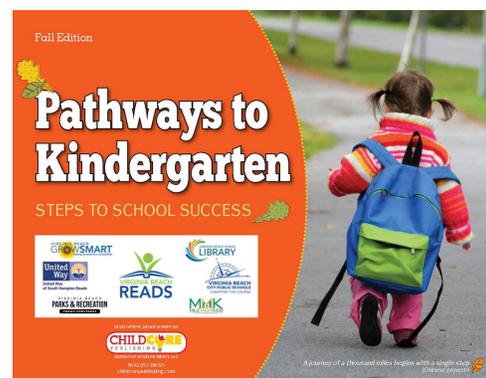

Parents and caregivers, mealtime is a great opportunity to practice conversation skills with your kids as well as check-in with them on how their day was!

- Comment on what they're doing.
- Describe the food. Is it crunchy? Soft? What color is it?
- Repeat and add on to what your child says or does, but most importantly,
- HAVE FUN!

And the fun doesn't have to stop when they're eating lunch at school! Try some fun and healthy school lunch ideas from Modern Honey [here!](#)

Or, for a fun snack at home, try these [Caterpillar Kabobs](#) which are a great snack to make after you finish story time with Eric Carle's "A Very Hungry Caterpillar"! These caterpillars are made of grapes, strawberries, and some edible eye candies - all your kid's favorites! Since the skewers can be sharp, be sure to stay with your child as they create their little critters!

For more Fall Family Fun, check out these upcoming events at the Virginia Beach Farmers Market!

Think of your home as your child's classroom. Every room has wonderful opportunities for learning. All you need to do is combine familiar materials with play, and learning will occur! Click the graphic above to view our Fall Pathways to Kindergarten calendar which includes ways to support learning this fall, for all ages!

First Grade READS Needs Volunteers!

First Grade READS is a literacy based tutoring program in Virginia Beach and we need your help. We need caring community volunteers to take on this incredible role of reading tutor/mentor for the VBCPS 2021-2022 school year.

Reading on grade level is a critical milestone in a child's educational and future life success. The need is great as the data shows significantly more students are starting the school year at a higher risk for not reading on grade level compared to previous years.

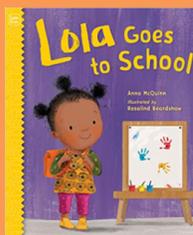
That's why the First Grade READS program is so important. The program pairs volunteers like you, with first graders to help them improve their reading skills. The relationships that are built in this role are just as important and rewarding as the work being done to help children to become confident and successful readers.

Does this sound like a good fit for you or someone you know? Please share our flyer and join us by completing a volunteer application today!

Please visit our webpage for more details about First Grade READS.
<https://www.vbgrowsmart.com/tutoring-program>

The Smartest Card
GET IT. USE IT.
@your library®
Celebrate Library Card Sign-up Month in September

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. Check out these fun back to school reads and many more when you sign up for a **FREE** library card at your local library!



Lola and her family prepare for the first day of school the night before, then get up early, take pictures, and head to class. Lola puts her things in her cubby, chooses her

activities, reads, plays, and has a snack. Before she knows it, it's time to sing the good-bye song and rush into Mommy's arms for a warm reunion.



It's the first day of school. What will it be like? At school, students will meet the teacher, make new friends, sing songs, play, learn, and so much more! Young readers will love seeing kids their age go to school in this adorable

introduction to the classroom.



Kids will understand the excitement and nervousness as they get ready for the first day of school after summer vacation. They've all

changed a little. As the kids get into their back-to-school rituals, they know one thing for sure: this year is sure to be great!



Rebuilding the Pyramid: Reconnecting After a Break

After a long break, it's likely children and adults may forget some of the routines that make the school day go smoothly. To help with the transition of your classroom community back to school after an extended break, it may be important to re-teach or remind children of schedules, expectations, and routines. Adults should expect that children will **NOT** remember all of these things and should intentionally plan extra supports following a break. The longer the break, the more likely it is that children will need to be reminded of the routines and expectations. Children will also need time to reconnect with teachers and peers after time away from school. Make sure you are engaging in positive interactions with all children throughout the day to support their return to school and increase the likelihood that they will be successful.

Schedules

- ▶ Re-teach the schedule at the beginning of each day
- ▶ Note any changes in the schedule as a result of the break
- ▶ Refer to the schedule before and after activities throughout the day



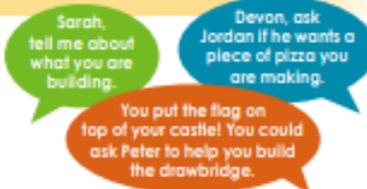
Routines

- ▶ Re-teach steps of common routines
- ▶ Model and practice the steps
- ▶ Provide individual supports as needed
- ▶ Provide positive descriptive feedback to children when they follow the routines



Supportive Conversations

- ▶ Acknowledge children's communication to you
- ▶ Greet/call children by name
- ▶ Use a calm and positive tone
- ▶ Join in play and talk about their play (e.g. questions and comments)
- ▶ Support interactions between children in play



Expectations and Rules

- ▶ Re-teach the rules
- ▶ Provide children with opportunities to practice the rules
- ▶ Refer to rules throughout the day
- ▶ Give children positive feedback when they follow the rules
- ▶ Talk about how the rules link to the program-wide expectations (e.g., Be Safe and Be a Friend)



Positive Descriptive Feedback

Provide positive descriptive feedback to children when they

- ▶ ... follow a direction
- ▶ ...engage in activities
- ▶ ...transition appropriately
- ▶ ...follow the rules
- ▶ ...engage in friendship skills
- ▶ ...demonstrate desirable behaviors/actions/skills



Emotional Support

- ▶ Label and describe adult and child emotions throughout the day especially as they relate to returning to school
- ▶ Support children in talking about their own emotions
- ▶ Model and practice calm down strategies



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Pub: 05/12/20

Teaching Expectations



Once you have developed classroom expectations, it is not enough to just post the words on the walls... You Must Teach Them! Once expectations and rules are posted with visuals that are meaningful for all children in the classroom, they must be concretely taught and systematically reinforced. Teach expectations and rules the way you would teach any other concept:

1. Define them with words children will understand.
2. Provide examples and non-examples.
3. Check for understanding.
4. Model, practice, and rehearse (create songs, rhymes, use visual supports, have puppets recite).
5. Use gestures, pictures, or graphics to frequently remind children of classroom rules and expectations.
6. Provide clear expectations for children's behavior during each classroom activity.
7. Acknowledge efforts frequently.
8. Share information regarding expectations and rules with families. Provide ideas about how to apply the concepts at home and in the community.



Click on the graphic to Read 'Going to School' to children in your class or at home to introduce expectations.

More family resources at ChallengingBehavior.org/Implementation/Family.html



National Center for
Pyramid Model
INNOVATIONS



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Pub. 01/13/20

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



15th Annual Raising the Bar
a Virtual Early Childhood Conference
October 8 – 9, 2021



Quality Workshops | Trending Topics | ECE Resources
Over 5 hours of Training | Certificates Issued

Training Topics to include:

Conscious Discipline™ Social Emotional Learning
Early Brain Development Infant & Toddler Care
Equity & Diversity Self-Care & More!

More details, including workshop titles and presenter information, available soon.



Need Assistance with Zoom? We are here to help you!
Join us for a brief tutorial on steps for successful virtual learning:
September 30th @ 12PM -OR- October 4th @ 7PM
Contact us for your link to join! See below for contact info.



Are you a director, administrator, owner, or someone aspiring towards these roles?

Join us in the **Leadership Lab** on **Friday, October 8th from 9AM – 1PM**

Come discover recruitment must-haves, implementation strategies and creative ideas to manage the 'HR Challenge', along with many other resources designed just for you. Check box on reverse to claim your spot!



You Don't Want to Miss This Party!
Saturday, October 9th at 5:30PM
AFTER the RTB Conference

Join your colleagues for an **IN-PERSON** event after you wrap up conference day!
Light Refreshments, Music, Networking, Conference SWAG, Vendors & Raffles!

Space is limited to the **FIRST 75 People**.
If interested, check the box for "After Party" on your registration form.

Location details shared post-registration.

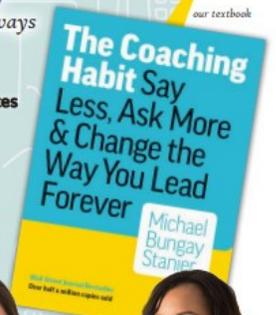
Community Training Department | Training@childrensharbor.cc | (757) 399-1337

Southside Directors LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Make your program more successful by empowering your staff in little, everyday ways

FREE Webinar Series

- Stay in the know with industry & DOE updates
- Network with local early childhood leaders
- Reduce turnover & retain talent
- Use creativity in marketing with language that offers a call to action
- Become the ultimate coach—quick!
- Save yourself—and staff—hours of time
- Accomplish more through your teachers
- Get right to the point in any conversation



TRAINING CERTIFICATE
will be emailed after submitting your evaluation for each individual session

ONE SESSION PER MONTH FOR 8 MONTHS

For-Profit Programs:
Tuesdays • 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Sep. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 16, Dec. 14,
Jan. 11, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 12

Family Childcare:
Tuesdays • 7 to 8 p.m.
Sep. 14, Oct. 12, Nov. 16, Dec. 14,
Jan. 11, Feb. 15, Mar. 15, Apr. 12

Nonprofit & Faith Based:
Thursdays • 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Sep. 16, Oct. 14, Nov. 18, Dec. 16,
Jan. 13, Feb. 17, Mar. 17, Apr. 14

Must attend two sessions by Dec. 16 in order to receive free book



Register now at [earlyeducationbusiness.com/leadershipacademy](https://www.earlyeducationbusiness.com/leadershipacademy)



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