

SPRING 2024 | VOLUME 12

# Ready, Set, GROW!

Virginia Beach GrowSmart's Quarterly Newsletter



## The Importance of Reading to 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.

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**. This was our 10th year and our biggest event to date.

Our local celebration was held on Friday, March 1. This event kicked off National

## News & Events To Help You Spring Into Learning!

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Reading Month (March) and was a day to celebrate and foster a love of reading with children, across the entire community.

Over the years, we have had over 1,150 volunteers read with young children and provided over 43,000 books through local child care partners, head start classrooms, and our pre-k students.

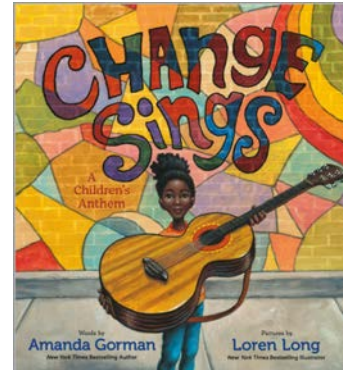
This year we provided over 8,000 books to young children across our community, thanks to the generous support of the **Virginia Beach GrowSmart Foundation, Square One and Anthem HealthKeepers Plus.**

# Read Across America Day: Friday, March 1, 2024



This year the featured book for Read Across America Day was "Change Sings: A Children's Anthem" by acclaimed Harvard University cum laude graduate and award-winning writer, Amanda Gorman.

This story follows a young girl who embarks on a musical odyssey, discovering along the way that each individual possesses the power to effect change, no matter how big or small, in our world.



Click the book cover to enjoy our virtual read video or visit [vbgrowsmart.com/read-across-america](http://vbgrowsmart.com/read-across-america)



## THANK YOU



Thank you to our wonderful  
volunteers who visited classrooms  
across the City and shared the  
love of reading!



# VBCPS 2024-2025 PRE-K REGISTRATION



**Apply for Pre-K (2024-2025) from  
February 13, 2024 until June 3, 2024.**

Virginia Beach City Public Schools proudly offers a Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) program to 4 year old 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 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.

## VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRE-K REGISTRATION PROCESS 2024-2025

*Registration Opens February 13, 2024 and  
will remain open through June 3, 2024*



### PHASE I

On the division's website, families should fill out the Pre-K Application to determine if they are tentatively eligible for the VBCPS Pre-Kindergarten program. A notification email will be sent to families by the Pre-K team with instructions on next steps.

If internet access isn't available, please call and leave a message at the Pre-K Registration Help Line at (757)-263-1492 or (757) 263-1420. A member from the Pre-K office will reach out to complete the application and Phase II of the process.



### PHASE II

All eligible families will be contacted to schedule a virtual appointment (or other method of communication) to verify information and confirm eligibility. At this time, families are informed of Phase III procedures.



### PHASE III

By late July, families will receive letters from VBCPS to inform them of placement in a class or on the wait list. Instructions and a list of documents will also be provided for families to take to their assigned school to complete registration with the school registrar.



Scan here to apply  
for Pre-K



Visit <https://www.vbschools.com/academics/pre-kindergarten>  
for more information and to complete the online application.



Click to view the video!



Check out all of the no cost quality preschool available in Virginia Beach  
[Explore All No-Cost Preschool Options in Virginia Beach](#)

# Spring Events & Activities



## • Celebrating Children •

Saturday, April 27  
8:30am-12:00pm  
Mount Trashmore  
310 Edwin Drive

**FREE FAMILY FUN EVENT**

- Family-Friendly Entertainment
- 1 Mile Fun Run
- Inflatables & Games
- Children's Crafts & Activities
- Resources, Exhibitors, & More!

**FOLLOW US**

**VIRGINIA BEACH GROWSMART**  
Planting the seeds for a successful life.

This event is **100% FREE** and open to the public.

Sign up for the Fun Run here:



[Visit us at vbgrowsmart.com](http://vbgrowsmart.com)  
for more details.

## Explore StoryWalk

Spring is on the way, a great time for families to read a book as they walk by visiting the permanent StoryWalk at Williams Farm Recreation Area or at many area schools.

What is a StoryWalk? Storywalks feature pages of a children's book deconstructed into panels and placed along a path at a library or other location. Families can enjoy reading the story as they walk along a path.

To discover where StoryWalks are located, visit the library online or click the link below.



<https://libraries.virginia-beach.gov/programs-events/kids/storywalks>





## Parenting is Hard, but it doesn't have to be complicated!

The world is full of so much information, and for parents of young children, it can be exhausting to try to parse through it all to find strategies that support their families. All you have to do is search “parenting” on platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram, and you will find tens of thousands of accounts that are geared towards those raising young children. How do you know who is giving the right advice, and when you DO find a good resource, when in the world are you going to have time to implement those great strategies? Whether working part time, full time, or staying at home, parents in all situations report that finding time to support their child’s development is challenging.

The Basics Hampton Roads is here to help! The Basics movement teaches parents and caregivers 5 simple strategies that support children’s brain development.

	Maximize Love, Manage Stress
	Talk, Sing, and Point
	Count, Group, and Compare
	Explore Through Movement and Play
	Read and Discuss Stories



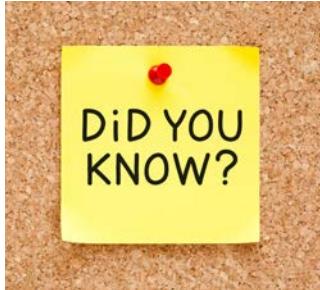
The best part is that these strategies can be used ANYTIME and ANYWHERE when with young children. You can support your little one’s brain at the grocery store, at home, the park, even when you are pumping gas at 7-11!



**Follow us at [@thebasicsHR on Instagram](#) to see how you can boost your little one’s brain on any average day, no premium subscription or fancy toys needed!**

# Visit the Library!

Bring your family to any branch where they have comfortable YOUTH areas to find books, play learning games on iPads, attend programs, or meet up with friends!  
Click [HERE](#) to find a library location near you.



- Did you know that Virginia Beach Public Library card accounts are now available for **free** for people living in any part of the state of Virginia and Currituck County N.C.
- Also, there are no more late fees for children's or adult materials. Click [HERE](#) to apply then visit a branch to pick up your library card!

## Spring Books



Spring is a time of budding trees, chirping birds, and croaking frogs. Discover these and more wonders of spring in this delightful board book.



The animals are playing outside, the flowers are blooming, and everyone is joyous—even The Grouchy Ladybug!



Spring is here and today a flower has sprung to life. But when Squirrel becomes too protective of it, Bird shows Squirrel the right way to let flowers blossom and grow.



Bonjour! After a long winter spent indoors, Escargot can't wait to look outside for the first signs of Spring. Will he find a new friend in the fluffy white bunny he meets along the way?



Ruth the bunny is excited to share the smelly springtime smells of spring with Bruce! But what will Bruce think of all that stink?



In Animals in Spring, beginning readers will learn how animal behavior changes during the spring season.



## It's All in the Perspective!

Have you noticed how children like to “get into things.” And how it happens at the least convenient time! It may be frustrating to parents, but for the child, they are playing, discovering, growing. In the first 3 years of life, children develop 80% of their brain. That’s astounding!

When babies drop food from the table and see you pick it up – over and over – they are learning about cause and effect, and getting your attention. When a toddler scoots a box across the floor to reach a forbidden object on a shelf, they’re problem solving. When your 2-year-old repeats words you may not want them to learn, they are developing their vocabulary.



Connect



Support



Empower



Your perspective on interacting with your child helps shape who they will become. So how do we nurture this learning and growing while keeping your little one safe – and keeping your own cool?! How about creating an “obstacle course” with couch cushions, pillows, and blankets to encourage exploration. Or a game of freeze dance to build self-regulation and vocabulary. (These are adapted from our Great Kids curriculum which encourage play and laughter.)

For more fun activities that focus on positive parenting, home visiting provides a personalized program to meet your values, needs and goals.

Two Free Home Visiting Programs at your local VB Health Department providing support such as:

- Personalized program
- Answers about pregnancy and childbirth
- Lactation support
- Parent education
- Connection to community resources
- Developmental screenings & milestones

Currently Accepting New Families!

Call or text:  
757.641.8806  
(Spanish) 757.943.5570



# More Spring Activities & Events



Click the calendar to view the spring edition!

**Let's Talk About Outdoor Play!**

**Talking Tip #13:** Encourage them, be positive.

Encourage **action!** Climbing, crawling, hanging, sliding. Talk about new accomplishments.

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## Bodies in Bloom

### Community Baby Shower

Virginia Beach WIC  
Invites You To Our  
Community Baby Shower

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Friday March 15, 2024  
1:30pm-3:30pm  
4452 Corporation Lane  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462

For expectant and new moms with babies 6 months and younger

Gifts available for the first 15 families  
FREE event! Register at your local Virginia Beach WIC office.  
Or call 757-518-2789

Join us to learn about:  
Mammography  
Breast Health  
Breastfeeding  
Baby Behavior  
WIC counseling  
Public Health Services  
And more

VirginiaWIC.com  
This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Virginia Beach DEPARTMENT OF Public Health

WIC Virginia Women, Infants & Children