

The Education Enquirer for Parents

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Important Dates

- ◆ Ongoing: storytime at Manatee County Library locations, 748-5555
- ◆ Farmer's Market, Downtown Bradenton, Saturdays, 9:00 am
- ◆ First Fridays, Lakewood Ranch Main Street, Free Concerts, 6p-9p every first Friday of the month
- ◆ Free Movies, Rossi Park, 3rd Friday of every month, starts at sunset or 7:00pm when it gets dark early
- ◆ Mon., 9/7, Labor Day
- ◆ Fri., 9/18, Rosh Hashanah
- ◆ Mon., 9/28, Yom Kippur
- ◆ Fri., 10/16, Boss's Day
- ◆ Sat., 10/31, Halloween
- ◆ Sun., 11/1, Daylight Savings Time (fall back)
- ◆ Wed., 11/11, Veteran's Day
- ◆ Thurs., 11/26, Thanksgiving

Back to School and Bullying

Bullying can happen to anyone at any age, but the most concentrated cases are usually in the school years. Children may dread going to school when bullies are a problem.

"Bullying isn't just on the playgrounds anymore. It includes taunts in text messages and Facebook and MySpace pages, not just physically or verbally," said Dr. Wally Goddard, professor and family life specialist with the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service. "When we start thinking of bullying as harassment rather than a childhood right-of-passage, we'll be better able to address and put an end to it."

Here are some ways to detect when a child is being bullied and what action to take.

First, if your child is afraid to go, avoids the bus, or asks you to change the normal route to school, or says he or she is sick on school mornings, he or she is most likely experiencing the first stages of bullying. If he or she begins to lose things like lunch money, lunch boxes or clothes or returns home with clothes torn or school supplies destroyed, the bullying has progressed.

"When your child has become withdrawn or has good grades that begin to drop, it's crucial you address the situation," Goddard said. "If kids start to have nightmares about school or talk about suicide, the bullying has gotten to such a point that it is not manageable for them at all. Help must be sought to turn the situation around."

Parents and adults in a child's life can help the child deal with and even stop bullying, but it must be addressed as soon as possible. The first step is to take seriously any of the warning signs your child may exhibit. Approach your child

about what you've noticed and listen to what they have to say about their experiences at school.

Next, work with your child to develop a plan on how to address the bully and bullying.

"This is an opportunity to teach your child how to face a problem and solve it," Goddard said. "Talk with your child about the situation. Your child may be able to avoid or ignore the bully. Or your child might use the buddy system to make him a less likely target. Work with your child to identify adults who could help."

If your child has faced the bully and the situation has not stopped or gets worse, meet with the teacher and principal at the school. "There are good reasons to meet with school personnel," Goddard said. "They truly may not know anything is going on between the bully and your child, or other children may be bullied by the same student, and your input will reinforce the school's approach in dealing with it."

Don't forget to follow up with the teacher or principal to ensure the situation is being addressed and monitored. Working together, the bullying will stop and your child will feel safer as a result.

<http://www.uaex.edu/news/august2009/0814bullying.htm>

Listening Games & Activities

Ages 3-5

Create fun rhythms for kids to clap along with and you'll improve their patterning skills. Patterning skills are necessary for comprehension of beginning math and reading concepts.

What this activity will develop:

Listening and thinking skills

What you'll need:

- Music

What to do:

Clap your hands in a pattern and encourage your child to repeat the pattern. Try the pattern of two short claps, one clap, two short claps, one clap. After your child repeats it several times, make a more difficult pattern or include finger snaps if your child can do them.

Turn on some of your children's favorite music and have them repeat the clap pattern again. Give them a chance to create a pattern for you to learn and repeat.

Ages 6-8

This exercise helps to enforce the concept of rhyming for children. By thinking of words that rhyme and articulating them into a sentence, kids practice listening and language skills together.

What this activity will develop:

Listening, language and thinking skills

What you'll need:

- Imagination

What to do:

Ask your child to choose two rhyming words and make a nonsense sentence from them. For example, your child might choose "bear" and "hair" and say, "If I had a bear, I'd lose my hair." Let your child make several nonsense rhymes

(http://parenting.ivillage.com/tp/tplearning/0,,sklbldr_9xxf,00.html#ixzz0Py2RinRp)

Why Is Reading Important?

http://childrens-books.lovetoknow.com/Why_Is_Reading_Important

Why is reading important? Although many of us take the ability to read for granted, developing literacy skills is a process that is central to a child's development. Essentially, learning to read is a process that sets the tone for a child's entire educational experience. Research indicates students who don't read at grade level by the end of first grade only have a 10% chance of ever achieving grade level proficiency. By the time students enter the fourth grade, they are expected to be able to read unfamiliar content to acquire new information. For this reason, teachers often talk about "the fourth grade wall" as a major obstacle for children who failed to get a proper start in their literacy education. They not only have trouble in English class, but also struggle in science, history, geography, and math. If the problem isn't addressed, the difficulty grows every year.

Promoting Literacy in Your Home

To promote literacy, one of the best things you can do is simply to read aloud to your children. The U.S. Department of Education recommends that parents begin reading to their children when they reach six months of age and continue the tradition of family story time throughout the elementary school years. Unfortunately, recent research indicates only about 50% of children ages three to five have a family member read to them on a daily basis. The numbers are lowest for low-income children with parents who have minimal education. However, even in homes with above average incomes and college-educated parents, only about 70% of children are read to on a daily basis. Reading aloud to your children doesn't need to be difficult. Experts say kids get numerous benefits from being read to for just 15 minutes per day. Bedtime stories are a popular choice for many homes, but reading can also be part of your morning routine or something that you enjoy immediately after your evening meal if that is more convenient for you. If you have more than one child, you can read to all of your children together. Kids will still benefit even if they are occasionally hearing stories that are a bit above or below their age level.

Other ways to promote literacy within your home include:

Set aside a special area as the family library, place children's books on an easily accessible shelf, and provide a comfortable spot for reading;

Start a tradition of giving books as gifts for birthdays, Christmas, and other special occasions;

Share the stories you enjoyed as a child with your kids, such as Aesops Fables;

Pick out books for yourself when you take your children to the library and let your kids see you reading for pleasure instead of watching TV or playing video games.

Recommended Reading

Arthur's Back to School Day *by Marc Brown*
 Arthur's Teacher Trouble *by Marc Brown*
 Leo the Late Bloomer *by Robert Kraus*
 The Teacher from the Black Lagoon *by Mike Thaler*
 Autumn: An Alphabet Acrostic *by Steven Schnur*
 Johnny Appleseed *by Reeve Lindbergh*
 Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf *by Lois Ehlert*
 Too Many Pumpkins *by Linda White*
 Five Little Pumpkins *by Iris Van Rynbach*
 Today is the Birthday of the World *by Linda Heller*
 Pepper's Purple Heart: A Veterans Day Story *by Heather French Henry*
 A Plump and Perky Turkey *by Teresa Bateman*



Halloween**Monster or Witch's Hands**

Surprise party guests or classmates with a spooky snack!

You'll need:

Clear disposable plastic gloves
Popped popcorn

Red or green small gumdrops

Spider rings

Rubber bands or ribbons

Directions:

Place a gumdrop into each finger of the glove (these are the fingernails).
Fill glove with popcorn.
Tie off the end with rubber band or ribbons.
Add a spider ring for fun.

http://www.amazingmoms.com/htm/Halloween_recipes.htm

Important Rules Original Author Unknown

Sung To: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Here are rule for you and me,
See how important they can be.
Always be honest, be kind and fair,
Always be good and willing to share.
These are rules that we should know,
And follow these rules wherever we go.

**A Little Elf by John Newmark**

A little elf sat in a tree
Painting leaves to throw at me.

Leaves of yellow and leaves of red
came tumbling down about my head.
Cornflake leaves upon the trees -
Are they a breakfast for the breeze?

Thanksgiving**Pumpkin Custard****Ingredients:**

1 spray can (8 oz.) whipped cream
1 spray can (8 oz.) creamed cheese*
1 cup pumpkin
½ cup sugar
Pumpkin pie spice to taste

Directions:

Put all of the above in a bowl. Stir until lumps are gone. Chill and serve.

A dessert so easy that your kids can make it themselves, and so tasty that they'll fight over the last bit!

* Any cream cheese can be used, but it's hard for little people to mix out all the lumps when the cream cheese is hard. The spray cream cheese is so soft that it blends effortlessly. Similarly, you can use whipped cream from a tub, but the kids have a lot more fun spraying it into the bowl from a can.

www.cdktichen.com



*Hunsader's Annual Pumpkin Festival
October 16, 17, 18, 24, 25*

ELC PROGRAM INFORMATION**Child Care Resource and Referral**

Anyone looking for child care in Manatee County can contact the CCRR Program for customized listings of child care programs. This is a free service for families and child care providers.

VPK

Did your child turn 4 on or before September 1st? If so, they are eligible for free Voluntary Prekindergarten (as long as they've not already participated in VPK). Contact the ELC for enrollment information.

School Readiness

Eligible families can receive financial assistance for child care. Currently, there is a waitlist. You can apply by contacting our office and requesting a waitlist application. These applications are also on our website under "documents".

We have a lot of information for you on our website. Check it out!

We're on the Web!
www.elc-manatee.org



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Please visit our partner's website too for more program information:
<http://www.familypartnership.org>

Delicious Math

A.J. Schmidt

"Finish eating your math and you can go out to play," I tell my kids. So they chew up the last of their manipulatives before racing outside to enjoy the rest of the sunny day.

Actually my children have been gobbling up their math lessons for years. Instead of spending money on Cuisenaire Rods, flexible blocks, or tangrams, we buy certain snack foods that can double as math manipulatives before they get eaten.

When the kids were young I browsed the cereal and cracker aisles at the market looking for interesting shapes. There are actually a lot of square, rectangular and circular crackers. But I also managed to find ovals, triangles, hexagons, stars, and even spheres, cubes and cones. The kids had fun learning to identify various shapes. And they realized that each shape can come in a wide variety of sizes, colors, textures - and tastes.

At the same time, my children learned to count. After all, those crackers need to be doled out equally and counting is the best way to do that. When they were young, it seems, I spent most of my time in the kitchen counting out loud. Before every meal we had to count how many people were home, then we had to count out the correct number of plates, cups and napkins that would be needed. When serving, we'd all count how many lima beans or spoonfuls of applesauce went on each plate.

Counting to four, or even twenty, a dozen times wasn't the highlight of my day, but the kids enjoyed both the counting and the eating. When they were a few years older, pretzel sticks helped them count by twos, fives, and tens. Pretzel sticks work well because they can be secured together in groups of five or ten or, later, even one hundred, to reinforce the idea of place value.

Pretzels, cereals, and other snack foods are great for introducing kids to addition. Before they're very old children KNOW that two apple slices are preferable to one. They just need an adult to point out the mathematical equation of $1+1=2$. And once they know that, it's easy to figure out that $1+2=3$ is even better.

When they want a new game, kids can take a pile of seven crackers, for example, and see how many combinations they can discover. At the age of five or six it fascinates some children to see that $1+6$ and $2+5$ and $3+4$ all equal seven.

Addition may be interesting, but at our house subtraction is definitely the winner when food is involved. Once all those apple slices or pretzel sticks are counted out and added up, making them disappear, one by one, is the best part of the game. It's also a clear way to show the relationship between addition and subtraction. The children can easily see for themselves that $1+1=2$ and, after an apple slice is eaten, that $2-1=1$ again.

Older kids can use food to understand math, too. My third grader automatically got out a bowl of dry cereal when learning her multiplication tables. She could arrange small circles of cereal into three groups of four to find out how $3 \times 4 = 12$. Division, just like multiplication, becomes easier with food. If we have twelve crackers to distribute evenly to four people, it's soon apparent that each person will get three crackers.

Snack foods help with the early concepts of shapes and counting, adding and subtracting, multiplying and dividing. Other foods can work better with other mathematical ideas. Large foods are good for fractions. So, start counting and enjoy eating!

Pumpkin Science

www.brighthub.com

Kitchen Pumpkin Exploration

No matter where you live in Manatee County, there is a pumpkin patch nearby in October and November. Visit a local pumpkin patch or farmer's market and bring the kids along. Look at the different varieties of pumpkins and take pictures.

In addition to the pumpkins you buy for various reasons, bring one home for exploration purposes. You can make a jack-o-lantern from this pumpkin when you're finished, or use it to make a pie if you like, so no worries, the pumpkin won't be wasted.

Cut open the pumpkin and have your child reach in and pull out the seeds. Notice the stringy texture of the pumpkin pulp. Point out where the fruit of the pumpkin is, and take a closer look at the seeds. If you have a microscope, take a closer look at a tiny string of pumpkin pulp. Notice the cellular structure of the pumpkin.

When you're finished with your pumpkin exploration, why not roast some pumpkin seeds together and make a pie from scratch? This is a great way to show your child two wonderful uses for pumpkins.

Finally, plant your own pumpkin seeds in a small pot and place in a sunny window. Help your child take care of the seedling, and watch it grow. You may not be able to grow a pumpkin in the window sill, but you'll get to see how the plant grows and what the vine looks like as a young plant. Dry out some of your pumpkin seeds to plant in the spring. Your child will love planting and caring for his own pumpkin patch.

Toy Recall Information

<http://www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/prerel/category/toy.html>

