

A photograph of three young women in a school hallway. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt over a dark polka-dot top. The woman in the center has dark curly hair and is wearing a green jacket over a white t-shirt. The woman on the right has curly brown hair and is wearing a denim jacket. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, other students are visible, and a large window shows greenery outside.

# CHOICES in EDUCATION

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ROUNDED RESUME**

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**ARTS SMARTS**

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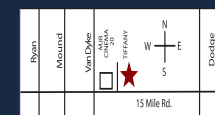
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## OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

# How your child's playtime can be a pathway to future success

What if your family's playtime was not just fun, but a pathway to future success? In a recent survey of parents conducted by OnePoll on behalf of The Genius of Play, a leading online hub of expert-based play ideas and resources for families, 87% of respondents said the skills they learned while playing as a child helped them achieve success in their adult careers.

Those skills, according to survey respondents, include creativity, teamwork, problem-solving, empathy and communication, all of which are highly valued across many different industries and careers.

For example, when it comes to careers in science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM), the ability to solve complex

problems and think outside the box are key to driving innovation. According to child development experts, play lays the foundation for these and many other skills, while helping kids discover real-world applications of STEAM early on.

"Play driven by curiosity and wonder presents endless possibilities for STEAM learning," says Anna Yudina, senior director of marketing initiatives at The Toy Association, which spearheads The Genius of Play. "While many STEAM concepts may seem intimidating and lack real-world relevance when taught in a formal classroom environment, play gives kids an opportunity to engage in free, hands-on, child-led exploration, igniting their natural curiosity and fueling the innovative thinking



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Children of all ages enjoy building, and it's the perfect way to strengthen fine motor skills while using one's imagination.

they'll need in future careers."

To combine fun with STEAM learning and practical skill-building, consider these playtime ideas from The Genius of Play that get the whole family in on the fun:

- **Build a car.** Find materials at home to create a car. For example, an empty juice carton can be turned into the car's body, and a spool of thread can serve as wheels and an axle. Now, work together to make the car move. Slide it down an

incline, push it by hand or attach a balloon and use air as a propellant. Design additional cars to see which goes fastest or farthest!

- **Make colorful bubbles.** Blowing bubbles is a great opportunity to apply STEAM concepts to play. In a container, combine 1½ cups of hot water, ¼ cup of light corn syrup, ¼ cup of dish soap and washable paint and fill a glass jar half full. Make a wand out of a pipe cleaner. Explore how different shape wands change the shape of the bubbles.

- **Create structures.** Children of all ages enjoy building, and it's the perfect way to strengthen fine motor skills while using one's imagination. Whether building a volcano or a house, design the plan on paper and tap into your collective cre-

ativity. Then, construct your design. You may need to make changes and that's okay. That's part of the engineering process.

- **Experiment with cabbage colors.** Cabbage have tubes called xylem that allow water to be pulled up into their leaves, and you can watch this phenomenon in action. Slice each cabbage at the stalk and place in a jar of dyed water (made with food coloring). Watch the cabbage change color from the bottom up. Take notes. What do you observe after one hour, one day and one week?

For more play ideas that encourage children to enhance their learning and build lifelong skills, visit [thegeniusofplay.org](http://thegeniusofplay.org).

*Story courtesy of StatePoint Media*

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## ACADEMICS

# Establishing a well-rounded school resume

A quality education is priceless. Lessons learned in the classroom are vital to students' long-term success, serving as a foundation as young adults transition from the role of student to professional.

An academic resume is a great vehicle for young people to illustrate how well-rounded their educational experiences have been. Such resumes also give college admissions departments a snapshot of students' accomplishments, hobbies and extracurricular activities. In fact, the National Society of High School Scholars says there are certain criteria that colleges and trade schools look for in students — and things graduate schools may look for in university students who hope to do postgraduate work. Recognizing these attributes can help students better prioritize their time as they look to build strong resumes.

- **Grade point average.** The NSHSS says some colleges will recalculate students' GPAs based only on core subjects, such as math, language arts, social studies, science, and foreign languages. It is essential to do well in these core subjects.

- **Advanced placement classes.** Many schools weigh honors or AP classes more heavily toward GPA or acceptance requirements due to their rigor. AP courses often translate directly into college credits, which can make them even more valuable to high school students.

- **Extracurricular activities.** Schools and even future employers look at more than just test scores and GPAs. In a competitive admissions climate, colleges will weigh the entire picture of a student. Someone who was heavily involved in sports, clubs and peer-run groups like scouting organizations may find that such participation is what sets them apart from other applicants. Pick extracurricular activities that align with passions rather than just ones that will look good on a resume. According to Christine Chu, a premier college counselor at IvyWise, a New York-based education consulting company, students who demonstrate grit, authenticity and integrity stand out.

- **Well-crafted essay writing.** Essays give students an opportunity to tell their unique stories in ways a resume cannot. An essay should be highly personal and thoughtful, and also present students as a real person. Students should write essays even when they are optional, as the essay can be a window into what makes applicants tick. It is important for students to continually hone their essay-writing skills, which they can ultimately utilize to make a strong impression with university admissions departments.

- **Depth, not breadth, of experience.** Students should focus their passions on a few select activities over widespread participation in many different ones. Activities that carry over into academic focus and a future major may be especially valuable. It's never too early for students to start building their school resumes. Achievements in and out of the classroom can lay the groundwork for both short- and long-term success.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

An academic resume is a great vehicle for young people to illustrate how well-rounded their educational experiences have been.



Schools and even future employers look at more than just test scores and GPAs.



## At Macomb Community College: We've got a course for that!

Macomb's online course catalog offers an encyclopedia of possibilities, with offerings in everything from Accounting to Welding. Some are program-specific, others are interest-driven, most are transferable and each one has life-changing potential.

A few courses will come as a welcomed surprise to first-time college students. CSSK-1200: College Success Skills, for example, will help them excel in test taking, note taking, time management and more. It also introduces them to the free resources available at Macomb, including those offered at its Learning Centers and Reading and Writing Studios.

"Before my (CSSK-1200) class, I was not all that great as a student," said Louis Winters, an Information Technology (IT) major. "(CSSK-1200) taught me to have the desire to achieve success."

Speaking of IT, ITNT-1500: Principles of Networking, part of Macomb's

Cybersecurity program, brings students up to speed on firewalls, malware, encryption and more so they can better defend their computer systems or those of a future employer.

"Macomb has a great cybersecurity program," said Marjoria Cox, Cybersecurity major, noting its "Center of Academic Excellence" designation from the National Security Agency/Department of Homeland Security. "The professor makes (each class) a fantastic experience."

Students will find many other fantastic experiences that could prove useful in the future, regardless of what field they are considering. Take ANTH-1100: Intro to Cultural Anthropology, in which students gain a greater understanding of cultural evolution and globalization, helpful knowledge if they plan a career on the international stage. And they can't do much better than BCOM-2500: Business

Communications to prepare for work in a corporate culture.

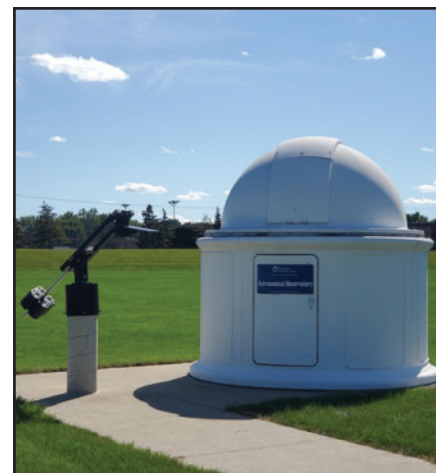
During the pandemic, there is no question that we more online courses than ever before, even hands-on ones like ATPP-1110 Plumbing – Drain, Waste and Vent.

"I find that remote/online classes have really benefitted me," said David Tisch, a student in Macomb's Plumbing and Pipefitting program. "I'd prefer that option permanently moving forward."

Some courses serve as both an elective and a gateway for exploration. Consider Macomb's two general astronomy courses (ASTR-1030 and 1040), which provide insight into the past, present and future. Andrew Lapeer took both before transferring to the University of Michigan to pursue bachelor's and master's degrees in Astronomy and Astrophysics.

"The MTA (Michigan Transfer Agreement) allowed me to transfer every single course I've taken at Macomb, but to

see my time end there (was) sad," said Lapeer. "Macomb allowed me to grow tremendously as a person and pursue paths I never dreamed of."



Macomb's astronomy courses are complimented by an on-campus mini observatory for viewing the night sky.

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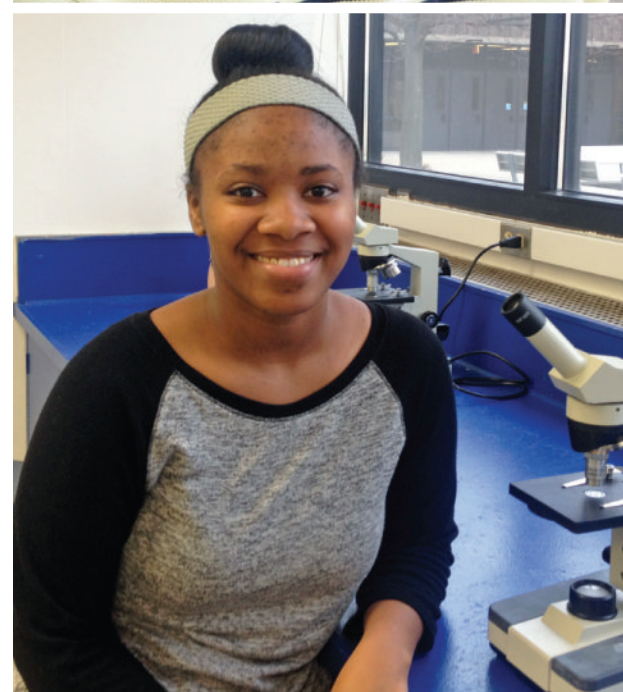
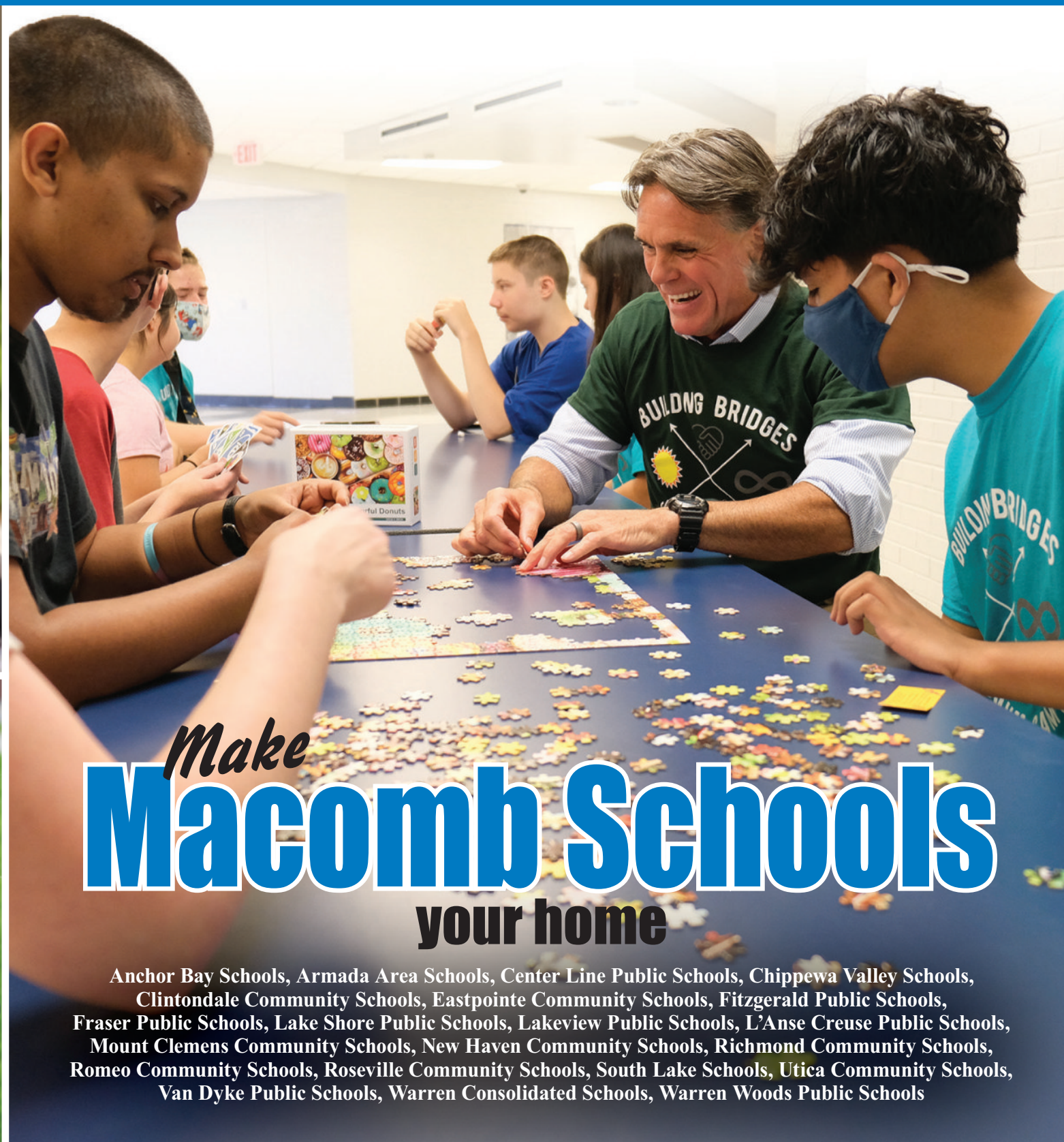
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**–Carissa, Macomb alumna  
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## CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE

# How to help students improve their focus on their studies



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Various studies have found that periodic breaks improve mood, boost performance and increase a person's ability to concentrate and pay attention.

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Teachers strive to create supportive and challenging classroom environments for their students. Such settings can bring out the best in students and help them overcome obstacles, including an inability to focus.

The struggles students can have with focusing on their studies was apparent during the pandemic. A 2020 survey of more than 400 college students found that 64% were concerned about their ability to maintain their focus and discipline in remote instructional environments. Though educators, students and parents are hopeful that remote learning will soon be a thing of the past, no one is certain about what lies ahead for the rest of the 2021-22 school year. Ideally, students will remain in school full-time five days per week by the start of the new academic year. But even still, many students may need help focusing on their studies af-

ter a very unusual school year.

- **Emphasize one activity at a time.** Various studies have shown that multitasking adversely affects performance and makes it hard to concentrate. A recent study from researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology found that performing two or three activities simultaneously puts significantly more demand on the brain than simply doing those tasks one after another. All students, and especially those who are struggling with focus, should be encouraged to take on one task at a time.

- **Take breaks.** The Cleveland Clinic notes that various studies have found that periodic breaks improve mood, boost performance and increase a person's ability to concentrate and pay attention. Many students are well acquainted with lengthy cramming sessions on the eve of a big exam, which can feel like

a rite of passage for high schoolers and college students. Parents and educators can emphasize the importance of taking breaks during such sessions and how periodic rest can help improve performance.

- **Take a piecemeal approach to big tasks.** The Child Mind Institute notes that breaking big tasks down into smaller, more manageable pieces can help kids effectively tackle more challenging tasks. The piecemeal approach can make big tasks seem less daunting, and the success kids have at each smaller task can provide some needed momentum as they draw closer to solving the problem. Many students struggle to focus on their studies. Some simple strategies can help students overcome such challenges and fulfill their academic potential.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



Various studies have shown that multitasking adversely affects performance and makes it hard to concentrate.



## OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Volunteering is a social activity that can help children develop their social and networking skills.

# The link between volunteering and academic performance

There are many reasons for parents to encourage children who express an interest in volunteering.

Volunteering is a social activity that can help children develop their social and networking skills, and many parents credit volunteering with instilling a sense of perspective in their children that they might not have gained had they not been exposed to people from different backgrounds.

Volunteering also has been linked to stronger academic performance. The Corporation for National and Community Service reports that students who

indicate they're doing better in school are more likely to be volunteers than students who report doing less well. The broadened exposure to people and places that students may otherwise not encounter without volunteering also can benefit them in the classroom, helping them more readily identify with cultures and societies they're studying. College applicants with volunteering experience also may set themselves apart in the increasingly competitive application process. Though a 2019 Pew Research study reported that most schools admit more than two-thirds of their ap-

plicants, that figure is significantly lower at many of the more highly rated institutions in the United States. For example, Stanford University (4.3%) and Harvard University (4.9%) recently reported acceptance rates below 5%.

Though volunteering alone won't help applicants gain acceptance to such competitive institutions, it can serve as a strong résumé builder and be even more effective if it also produces the previously noted improvements in academic performance.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*

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## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

# 5 great reasons to participate in scholastic sports

Many kids are introduced to sports at an early age. Though young children may enjoy the recreational aspect of playing sports, a serious passion for a particular sport may develop as children reach high school. Such passions can be encouraged, as participating in sports can be highly beneficial for young people.

**1 . Learn resilience.** Compared to generations past, when children may have had jobs during the school year, today's children do not have many demands placed on them beyond schoolwork and maybe some light chores around the house. The average student may use sports as a way to learn about and overcome challenges. Participating in sports can teach kids how to recover from setbacks (being the losing team) or dealing with adverse situations (sports-related injuries).

**2 . Improve fitness.** School sports require ongoing physical activity, which is advantageous to children in an age when lifestyles are increasingly sedentary. A report from the National Federation of State High School Associations found that when female students are given more opportunity to engage in athletics in high school, their weight and body mass improve. School sports can help students overcome the negatives of sedentary lifestyles.

**3 . Relieve stress.** Exercise in any shape or form can help relieve stress. The camaraderie that develops within a team setting also can boost self-esteem and help



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Participating in sports can be highly beneficial for young people.

some students overcome any feelings of isolation they may confront during adolescence.

**4 . Boost brainpower.** School sports may work the body but they also benefit the brain. A report from the Institute of Medicine indicates children who are physically active show greater attention, have faster cognitive processing speed and perform better on academic tests than those who are

sedentary.

**5 . Develop confidence and leadership skills.** A study from Cornell University says teens who played sports developed stronger leadership skills and developed better confidence. That can work in a team or solitary setting, and translate into skills that serve a person well throughout life.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



The camaraderie that develops within a team setting also can boost self-esteem and help some students overcome any feelings of isolation they may confront during adolescence.



## CREATIVE STUDIES

# The many benefits of arts education

Why does art matter? This is a question that has given philosophers and artists food for thought for centuries. It's also been a leading question in many school districts when budget cuts have forced school administrators to put various curricula on the chopping block.

Very often arts programs are the first to be cut. From their earliest years, many children communicate and learn through artistic expression. Songs help them learn words and repetition to develop speech and reading skills. Drawing, painting and crafting helps to solidify motor skills.

Though 88% of Americans consider the arts part of a well-rounded education, an American for the Arts public opinion survey found that the percentage of students receiving arts education has shrunk dramatically over the last few decades.

Houston's Arts Access Initiative, in conjunction with Houston Education Research Consortiums, found a substantial increase in arts educational experiences had remarkable effects on students' academic, social and emotional outcomes. Students who participated in arts education experienced a 3.6% reduction in disciplinary infractions, an improvement of 13% of a standard deviation in standardized writing scores, and an increase of 8% of a standard deviation in students' compassion for others. Compassion translated into wanting to help people who were treated badly and being more conscious of how other people feel.

The Nation's Report Card, the largest ongoing assessment of what students in the United States know and can do, shows that American students continue to score lower than many of their peers in Europe and Asia. Seeking to improve performance in reading

and math may be as simple as including arts education. Researchers from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education say that instruction becomes more effective when educators integrate creative activities.

Encouraging creativity and imagination across all disciplines can help shine light on new concepts and help students discover connections and innovative ideas. To bolster support of arts in the classroom, parents and educators can point out the following benefits of arts education:

- Increases creativity. The arts let students express themselves in different ways and offer outlets for all types of skills.

- Improves academic performance. A report by Americans for the Arts indicates young people who regularly participate in the arts are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement than non-participants.

- Develops motor skills. Arts helps foster motor skills, which are essential for writing letters and words, playing musical instruments, using paintbrushes, and much more.

- Helps one appreciate numeracy. Art involves patterns and problem solving. Learning these skills translates into many different disciplines, including mathematics.

- May accelerate brain development. Bright Horizons, a U.S.-based child care provider, reports learning to play an instrument has been found to improve mathematical learning, boost memory and lead to improved academic scores.

The benefits of arts in the classroom cannot be ignored. The arts encourage students to utilize many skills that translate to various subjects.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*



PHOTOS COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Encouraging creativity and imagination across all disciplines can help shine light on new concepts and help students discover connections and innovative ideas.



The arts are an important component of students' overall education.

**Researchers from the Johns Hopkins University School of Education say that instruction becomes more effective when educators integrate creative activities.**



## IN THE CLASSROOM

# 5 common learning disabilities

Students are often told that hard work is the path to success. Individuals who have learning disabilities may have to work even harder than their peers to be successful.

The Learning Disabilities Association of America says learning disabilities occur due to neurobiological and/or genetic factors that alter the way the brain functions. This can affect one or more cognitive processes related to learning and interfere with various skills, potentially preventing a person from acquiring the same amount of knowledge as others of the same age.

There are many learning disabilities, and the following are five of the most common, according to LD Resources Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps find solutions to those who are affected by learning disabilities.

**1 . Dyslexia.** This learning disability can impede a person's ability to read and comprehend text. Students may have trouble with phonemic awareness, or the way to break down words. Similar problems with phonological processing, or distinguishing between similar word sounds, can occur as well.

**2 . ADHD.** Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder is marked by behaviors that make it difficult to pay attention and stay on task. The Masters in Special Education, a resource for finding work and study in special education concentrations, says there is debate over whether ADHD is a learning disability. But there is no denying that ADHD can impede success in school settings.

**3 . Auditory processing disorder/language processing disorder.** APD affects how sounds are processed and interpreted by the brain, advises WebMD. A person may not be



PHOTO COURTESY OF METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

There are many learning disabilities, and the following are five of the most common.

able to recognize slight differences between the sounds in words and may not be able to distinguish the direction sounds are coming from. That's challenging in a classroom setting. LPD is a form of APD that affects how one attaches meaning to sound groups that form words, sentences and so on. An audiologist can diagnose APD.

**4 . Dyscalculia.** LDRF says dyscalculia makes it challenging to understand even basic mathematical concepts, such as time, measuring and estimating. A person with dyscalculia may have difficulty following order of operations. And since math skills build on one another, a student quickly with dyscalculia can fall behind.

**5 . Dysgraphia.** A person with dysgraphia may not be able to write legibly. He or she may take a long time to write, hold writing implements improperly and/or struggle with putting thoughts onto a page. Additional symptoms of learning disorders include failing to tell left from right, difficulty recognizing patterns, lack of coordina-

tion, difficulty doing tasks with the hands, and challenges associated with concepts of time. Educators and health care providers often collaborate to help those with learning disabilities get the services they need to be successful in the classroom.

*Story courtesy of Metro Creative Connection*





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