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Finding Balance Between Books and Devices

As parents, we're in a constant battle for our children's attention. It's a fight that's never been more apparent- when we're competing with a world full of dazzling screens. I, like many other parents, could go on about how much time my children were on devices while growing up. Looking back, I wish I could make some changes to my parenting strategy, but it's too late —my kids are adults now. If you are currently raising little ones, it's not too late for you- or your children.

The impact of technology on parenting and a child's well-being is a vast topic, so let's focus on one specific dilemma: books versus devices. I'll get this out of the way now: neither has to be entirely "good" or "bad." It's about finding a balance that works for your family and each individual child.

By understanding how these two different mediums engage the brain, we can make more intentional, informed, and impactful decisions for our children's development.

While the digital world offers many incredible educational opportunities and teaches essential technical skills, we always hear how "excessive screen time is bad for kids." But what does "bad" really mean? Well, when we watch screens, our brains work less. The constant stream of visuals and sounds do most of the thinking for us, making it a largely passive experience. Over time, this leads to shorter attention spans and difficulty with sustained focus—skills that are vital for learning and life.

A 2019 study published in JAMA Pediatrics highlighted the link between screen time (media) and cognitive performance in children. Tests found that increased screen time was associated with poorer performance, especially in language and memory skills. Even more surprising was that for every additional hour of screen time—including time spent on "educational" apps and games (yes, that part surprised me too)—pre-



schoolers were behind in development. This research suggests that early and excessive exposure can have long-term negative effects.

Books vs. Devices

In our fast-paced, tech-saturated world, the excitement of a good book can easily be forgotten. It's unfortunate, because the benefits of books go beyond just learning to read or improving vocabulary. Studies consistently show a strong connection between having books in the home and higher academic achievement. It's not just about the act of reading; it's about fostering a home environment that values learning and curiosity. The skills cultivated —such as enhanced attention, critical thinking, and problem-solving—and aren't just for school, they are life skills that profoundly affect career prospects and overall well-being.

Reading also builds emotional intelligence (EI). When kids read stories, they step into different worlds and see things from other perspectives. This helps them understand and process their own feelings, allowing them to grow their emotional muscles. EI is a valuable skill that many people struggle with, and reading can significantly help kids develop it. Fiction, in particular, builds empathy. It helps children recognize that other people have thoughts and feelings that are different from their own—a key component of emotional intelligence. In fact, studies show more

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COUNTY KIDS "welcome" BACK TO SCHOOL

The Arts Build More Than Talent — They Build Community

At The Fine Arts Association, we believe the arts are for everyone. From toddlers taking their first art class to adults stepping onto stage, the arts help people grow—not just as artists, but as people. Whether learning a dance step, painting a canvas, or rehearsing for a theatre production, our students are building confidence, friendships, and lifelong skills.

In a world increasingly lived behind screens, the arts offer something different: real connection. Our classrooms, studios, and stages are places where friendships form and communities grow. Many of our theatre students grow up performing on our stage—learning collaboration, discipline, and the thrill of expressing themselves in front of a live audience.

We also understand that everyone's path is different. Through Creative Arts Therapies, our licensed professionals use music, art, and movement to help students of all abilities communicate, build motor skills, and express their emotions in creative, supportive ways. At FAA, the arts heal, inspire, and empower.

At The Fine Arts Association, we serve all



ages and all abilities, offering classes in theatre, dance, visual arts, private music instruction, and creative arts therapies. Whether you're exploring a hobby, pursuing serious training, or simply looking for connection, you'll find a welcoming space here.

We are more than an arts school. We are a community empowered by the arts.

Fall registration is open now—and spots fill quickly. Join us.

Visit www.fineartsassociation.org to register today.



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An independent and Catholic school, Gilmour Academy develops both the mind and heart



Gilmour Academy is home to students from 18 months to 18 years and its mission is to educate the mind and empower the heart of every student. Founded by the Brothers of Holy Cross, Gilmour encourages students of all faiths to ask tough questions, think critically and grow spiritually. Following the independent school model, Gilmour's small class sizes and variety of real-world learning opportunities provide a personalized education for every student. Through a rigorous academic program, religious studies, social service and an emphasis on leadership, Gilmour educates the whole person.

Gilmour's Montessori Toddler and preschool programs promote self-directed learning and an interdisciplinary approach, teaching children *how* to learn instead of just *what* to learn. Students in Gilmour's Lower School (traditional Kindergarten - Grade 6) learn to formulate their own ideas and questions about the world around them. Class activities range from working in the greenhouse to researching ways to reduce energy consumption, building houses to scale from blueprints they've created, and learning to play a variety of musical instruments.

At Gilmour's Middle School, seventh and eighth

graders are afforded every opportunity to explore new passions and develop their talents in an individualized learning environment. They may take advanced courses at the Upper School and join their Upper School peers in a variety of club offerings, making for a smooth transition into high school.

Upper School students benefit from a wide range of electives—from molecular genetics and forensic science to digital marketing and entrepreneurship—as well as unique real-world experiences. One standout opportunity is the semester-long science research internship, which places students alongside industry professionals in a professional lab setting.

Gilmour also offers the VECTOR program, a signature academic track that combines coursework, mentoring and professional networking in areas such as engineering, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement. VECTOR students graduate with a robust portfolio and real-world experience aligned with their passions.

As both an independent and Catholic school, Gilmour inspires students to realize that they have both the talent and the responsibility to make the world a better place. Ranked the #1 Catholic high school in Northeast Ohio by niche.com, at Gilmour, we know If you educate the mind and empower the heart, students do more than succeed - they thrive.

Learn more at gilmour.org/admission



Beck Center for the Arts

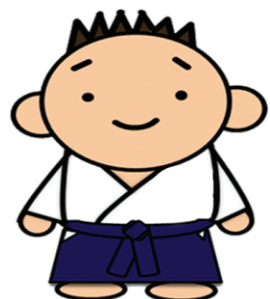


Beck Center for the Arts, located in Lakewood, is the place to fall in love with the arts! From classes for all ages, all skill levels, all abilities, we welcome you into our theater, dance, visual arts, and music programs. Creative Arts Therapies assists those with disabilities and special needs in adapted arts classes and lessons. From free visual arts exhibitions, great for all ages, to the new outdoor pocket park, you are invited to the Beck Center campus to express yourself. Find out more about professional theater productions, youth theater productions, dance performances, and arts education programs at BeckCenter.org.



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www.ncaikikai.com

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GILMOUR
ACADEMY

EDUCATING THE MIND
EMPOWERING THE HEART



#1 Best Catholic
High School
in Cleveland



As Northeast Ohio's only independent, Catholic, coed school, Gilmour creates endless possibilities for students to not only learn about the real world, but how to positively impact it.

Gilmour Academy is an independent, Catholic, coed school in the Holy Cross tradition. Grades K-12 and Montessori (18 months - PreK)

Papillion Enrichment Center: Where Children Bloom, Learn, and Thrive



In today's fast-paced world, parents are looking for more than just childcare — they're looking for a place where their children feel safe, nurtured, and inspired to learn. At Papillion Enrichment Center, that's exactly what we provide: a warm, welcoming environment where early education is rooted in love, curiosity, and community.

Founded on the belief that every child deserves a strong start, Papillion Enrichment Center offers high-quality care and early learning programs for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and school age. Our center blends structured curriculum with hands-on exploration, guided by experienced educators who treat each child as a unique individual full of potential. Our menu is made with organic and fresh fruits and vegetables by our private in house chef.

At Papillion, children are encouraged to play, explore, question, and create—laying the foundation for critical thinking, emotional resilience, and lifelong learning. Whether it's sensory play in the infant room, nature walks for toddlers, or pre-reading activities in our preschool program, every experience is designed to support the

whole child — socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.

But what truly sets Papillion apart is our deep commitment to family and community. We believe that early education thrives when families are included in the journey. That's why we build strong partnerships with parents, offering transparent communication, open-door policies, and regular updates on each child's progress and milestones.

As a licensed childcare provider, Papillion Enrichment Center meets or exceeds all state standards for safety, staffing, and child development. From our clean, thoughtfully designed classrooms to our secure entry systems and daily health practices, we work tirelessly to give families peace of mind.

Enrollment is now open for all age groups, and we invite families to come visit, meet our team, and see why Papillion is more than a daycare — it's a place where little hearts are nurtured and big dreams begin to take flight.

Papillion Enrichment Center
Willoughby Hills • Chesterland
papillionschool.com

Follow us on social media for updates, photos, and events!



As the crisp autumn air begins to nip at your cheeks and the golden leaves crunch beneath your feet, there's no doubt that fall has arrived.

This season brings with it a bounty of exciting events, perfect for gathering with friends and family to make unforgettable memories.

Don't let this fall pass by without experiencing the joy of a bounce house. Whether it's a community festival, a school carnival, or a cozy backyard party, a bounce house will bring smiles to faces young and old. So, get ready to leap into fun and book your bounce house today!

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Nurturing Lifelong Learners at Willoughby Montessori Dayschool

By: Vanessa Lemponen

For decades, Willoughby Montessori Dayschool has been a trusted source of early childhood education in Lake County. Known for its nurturing environment and commitment to excellence, the school has long embraced the Montessori philosophy—a child-centered approach to education that empowers children to explore, discover, and grow into confident, independent learners.

At the heart of Willoughby Montessori Dayschool's mission is a deep respect for each child's natural curiosity. From the youngest children to students in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, the school thoughtfully incorporates Montessori practices in every classroom. These practices emphasize self-directed learning, hands-on materials, mixed-age classrooms, and the fostering of independence—all within an environment tailored to support each child's developmental stage.

Willoughby Montessori Dayschool also proudly accepts the EdChoice Scholarship, helping to ease the cost of kindergarten for Ohio families. This reflects the school's belief that quality education should be accessible to all children, regardless of financial circumstances.

While the school recently transitioned to new ownership, its heart remains the same. Many of the dedicated staff members—some of whom have served the school for over 20 years—con-



tinue to provide the consistency, care, and expertise that families have come to rely on. Their experience and passion ensure that the values and vision of Willoughby Montessori Dayschool continue to thrive.

Above all, the school remains steadfast in its commitment to preparing children not just for the next grade, but for life. By cultivating independence, creativity, and a love for learning in the earliest years, Willoughby Montessori Dayschool gives its students the tools to grow into thoughtful, capable, and confident individuals.

In a world that is constantly changing, the Montessori philosophy remains a beacon of timeless wisdom—and at Willoughby Montessori Dayschool, it is alive and well.

GriffonRawl MMA Academy



Our approach here at the GriffonRawl MMA Academy is simple, "If it doesn't work, we don't teach it". All of our programs are not only designed to benefit those who intend to compete, but are also designed to teach Self-Defense while getting you in shape. Mixed Martial Arts is currently one of the fastest growing sports in the world today! However, do not be fooled, the styles we teach have proven their effectiveness inside and outside of the ring time and time again. Competing is not a mandatory requirement for attending any of our classes. Competitions we currently compete in are Muay Thai, Boxing, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, & MMA. We are one of the premier MMA Academy's in the state of Ohio. We stay very active as a team and compete a minimum of at least once every month. Our gym is not just for fighters however and we welcome beginners who are just looking for a chance to train in the arts we teach to get in shape, learn to fight to be able to defend themselves, and or just want to have a lot of fun.

TRY A CLASS FOR FREE! Stop in anytime and check out as many different programs as you'd like. No reservation needed. The first session in each program is free. It's that simple! No obligations!

We are located at 6090 Pinecone Drive in Mentor.
You can reach us at 440-358-9371 or check us out on Facebook or on our website at www.ohio-mma.com.



Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library

We explore. We discover. We connect.

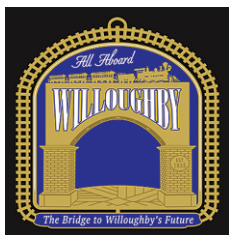
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North Coast Aikikai is dedicated to the practice of Aikido

Aikido – teaches basic awareness of self-defense and self protection. It is a great tool to defend against attack or bullying. North Coast Aikikai has been in the Lake County area for over 60 years teaching students traditional martial arts self defense through Aikido.

Come check us out at:

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Willoughby, Ohio 44094

440-622-6485



Last Stop Willoughby Ornament offered by the Willoughby Lions Club

The City of Willoughby was forever memorialized by the genius of Rod Serling in his Twilight Zone episode, “A Stop at Willoughby”. It is believed Rod may have passed through our Village on his trips from New York to see his wife’s grandmother in Columbus. Through the kindness and caring of the Serling family, The Willoughby Lions Club has obtained permission from Anne Serling, Rod’s daughter, to use their name.

The Willoughby Lions Club is offering a piece of that memory in its second medallion, “Last Stop Willoughby”, an ornament of the bridge and train edifice that stands at the corner of Erie Street and Mentor Ave. The limited edition medallion will be sold at the Farmer’s Market in Downtown Willoughby on August 9th for \$20.00 Don’t miss out on owning a piece of history.

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CHOOSE PLAY EVERY DAY

How to transform everyday activities into playful learning opportunities

(Family Features) Play is a universal language spoken by people of all ages. Through play, children learn to forge connections with others, build a wide range of leadership skills, develop resilience, conquer fears and navigate relationships and social challenges.

For babies and toddlers, play is about far more than just having fun; it's about learning and building important skills, from cognitive and physical to emotional and social abilities. As children get older, play helps reduce stress levels, process difficult emotions, promote problem-solving and build confidence - skills they need to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Despite its importance, play is often undervalued and overlooked due to busy schedules, lack of resources or misconceptions about its benefits. Approximately 4 in 10 children ages 2-4 do not get enough responsive interaction or stimulation at home, based on estimates from UNICEF, and roughly 1 in 8 children under age 5 don't have toys or playthings at home.

To overcome these barriers, it's essential for parents and caregivers to recognize the value of both structured

and unstructured play. Simple, everyday items - like kitchen utensils, cardboard boxes, leaves and stones - can be tools for imaginative play. Setting aside dedicated time for play, even in short intervals, can make a difference.

In honor of International Day of Play, consider these ideas to turn everyday activities into playful learning opportunities from UNICEF, which recognizes play as an important means to help children by providing access to evidence-based parenting programs and working with governments to prioritize play-based teaching and learning practices in schools and other learning environments.

- Turn a grocery shopping trip into a scavenger hunt to teach kids about different foods, counting and categorization.
- Role play or act out different scenarios you read in books or see in movies to help develop social skills and emotional understanding.
- Make important language connections when getting dressed, such as identifying different articles of clothing and teaching colors.
- Use bathtime to explore buoyancy and



water with floating toys.

- Play "I spy" while driving in the car or going for a walk around your neighborhood to help kids identify different animals, shapes, colors and elements of nature like trees, clouds and more.
- Explore the kitchen through tasks such as choosing ingredients, measuring them and keeping time while cooking.
- Use puzzles and building blocks to help develop problem-solving skills and hand-eye coordination.

• Stimulate senses and promote fine motor skills through play with materials like sand, water or crafting dough.

- Make sorting laundry educational by asking children to match socks by color or size, reinforcing their understanding of sorting and categorization.
- Take turns doing the feeding at snack or mealtimes to build hand-eye coordination.

Find more ways to engage your children in engaging play at unicefusa.org/play.



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Adventure Zone is the BEST VALUE in the Region in family entertainment

Located on The Strip of Geneva-on-the Lake, Lake Erie, Ohio, Adventure Zone Family Fun Center is a one-stop shop for guests of all ages. Adventure Zone features 10+ attractions, including a zipline, go karts, bumper boats, miniature golf, climbing and repelling walls, batting cages, bungee tramp, merry-go-round, the Hammer, two escape rooms and snack bar. Guests can rent golf carts and bicycles to explore The Strip. Adventure Zone is a perfect location for birthday parties, summer camps and group outings!

www.adventurezonefun.com



Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library

Readers of all ages are invited to join Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library's 2024 Summer Reading Challenge! This year's theme is Adventure Begins at Your Library.

The Summer Reading Challenge is open to children, teens and adults. Participants will have the chance to win prizes including gift cards to Starbucks, Amazon, Target, admission to the Great Lakes Science Center and much more!

Program runs May 28-July 20. Pre-register through Beanstack or at any Willoughby-Eastlake Public Library beginning May 20.

Willoughby-Eastlake Library's Summer Reading Challenge is sponsored by the W-E Library Boosters.

For more information, visit we247.org or stop by any of our four convenient locations:

Eastlake Public Library, 36706 Lakeshore Blvd., Eastlake, 440-942-7880

Willoughby Public Library, 30 Public Square, Willoughby, 440-942-3200

Willoughby Hills Public Library, 35400 Chardon Rd., Willoughby Hills, 440-942-3362

Willowick Public Library, 263 E. 305 St., Willowick, 440-943-4151

TRY A CLASS FOR FREE!

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MENTOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

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(440) 255-8811

Mentor-on-the-Lake

5642 Andrews Rd.
Mentor-on-the-Lake 44060
(440) 257-2512

Headlands

4669 Corduroy Rd. Mentor, OH 44060
(440) 257-2000

www.mentor.lib.oh.us

Emoji Scavenger Hunt All August
Lake Branch Find the different emojis throughout the library. Each day, a new emoji will be hiding.

Finger Paint Fridays Fridays from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Headlands Branch Kids can explore their creativity with finger-painting every Friday at the Headlands Branch. The library will provide paper, paint and aprons. This activity will largely be self-directed with limited assistance from staff. Registration is not required; but space is limited, so children may need to wait their turns.

LEGO at the Library Saturday, Aug. 2, at 11 a.m. Children's Story Room, Main Branch Kids (ages five to 12) can rock the blocks on the first Saturday of every month. No registration required.

Book-to-Movie Book Club Monday, Aug. 4, at 4 p.m. Children's Story Room, Main Branch Kids (ages eight to 12) read part of a classic children's book, watch a snippet of the movie it inspired, and enjoy related activities. This

month: "Hoot" by Carl Hiaasen. Registration required.

The Fine Arts Club Tuesday, Aug. 5, at 4 p.m. Children's Story Room, Main Branch

Using history and hands-on experience, children (ages seven to 12) will learn about dance, theatre, poetry, painting and other forms of art. This month, the club will explore the artwork of sculptor and photographer Andy Goldsworthy. Registration required.

Travel Club — USA Wednesday, Aug. 6, at 4 p.m. Children's Story Room, Main Branch Kids (ages six to 12) will enjoy crafts, activities and snack celebrating a different state each month. Kids can also collect a pin from that state. In August, they're visiting West Virginia. Registration required.

Let's Cook with Kids Wednesday, Aug. 6, at 6:30 p.m. Headlands Branch Local chef LaDonna Oltmanns will lead a cooking class for children (ages eight and older.) Registration required

Yoga Kids Thursday, Aug. 7, at 1 p.m. Frances Cleveland Room, Main Branch Kids (ages three to six) along with their grownup are invited to stretch their minds and bodies during this special yoga story time. Yoga Instructor Darlene Kelbach will lead everyone through breathing and movement exercises, all put together with a story and music. Please bring a yoga mat or a towel for both child and adult. Regis-

tration is required.

Video Game Party Thursday, Aug. 7, at 6:30 p.m. Lake Branch Tweens can play video games with friends but only one can win the coveted Best Gamer Trophy. Registration required.

Dog Days of Summer Adoption Event with Lake Humane Society Saturday, Aug. 9, from 9 a.m. to noon Headlands Branch Furry friends from Lake Humane Society will be looking for their fur-ever home. Even if someone isn't ready to adopt, they can still meet a furry friend, ask questions and learn about the important work Lake Humane Society does in the community. No registration required.

ROBLOX Saturday Saturday, Aug. 9, at 2 p.m. Headlands Branch Join the library online or in-person for a different game from ROBLOX each month. Register to get in the game.

Toddler Playdate Monday, Aug. 11, at 10 a.m. Lake Branch Connect with other families that have toddlers (ages 18 to 36 months) and test drive toys from the library's collection. No registration required.

Early Intervention Family Story Time Monday, Aug. 11, at 5:30 p.m. Children's Story Room, Main Branch Story time and short activity for families in the early intervention program. Registration required.

Welcome Back to School Pencil Pouches Tuesday, Aug. 12, at 4 p.m. The HUB

Children entering third through fifth grade can personalize their pencil pouches. Registration required. (This program will also occur on Aug. 19 with pencil cases for students entering kindergarten through second grade.)

Perseid Party Tuesday, Aug. 12, at 6:30 p.m. Village Room, Main Branch Kids (ages four to 12) can learn about the most plentiful meteor shower of the year. Registration required.

Ozobot Hangout Thursday, Aug. 14, at 4 p.m. Village Room, Main Branch Kids can learn about Ozobots while hanging out with peers. Ozobots are small robots that can teach the basics of programming through play. Registration required.

Thrills and Chills Teen Book Club Monday, Aug. 18, at 6:30 p.m. Headlands Branch The library's book club for teens — with books selected by its club members! In August, they will read and discuss "Their Vicious Games"

by Joelle Wellington. The club is open to 14- through 18-year-olds in ninth through 12th grade. Registration required.

Welcome Back to School Pencil Boxes

Tuesday, Aug. 19, at 4 p.m. The HUB Children entering kindergarten through second grade can personalize their pencil boxes. Registration required. (This program will occur on Aug. 12 with zippered pencil cases for students entering third through fifth grade.)

Bingo Club Thursday, Aug. 21, at 4 p.m.

Children's Story Time Room, Main Branch Kids (ages seven to 12) can win prizes by playing bingo. Each month, the game will have a different theme. Registration required.

Family Luau Saturday, Aug. 23, at 4 p.m.

Main Lawn, Main Branch Kids (ages three to 12) can enjoy Hawaiian-style fun with stories, songs, games and crafts. Registration required.

Dog Tales Storytime Tuesday, Aug. 26, at 11 a.m. Headlands Branch Preschool-aged kids can enjoy this story time that's all about dogs. Registration required.

Adorable S'mores Tuesday, Aug. 26, from 4 to 6 p.m. The HUB Use The HUB's Cricut and laser engraver to make an excellent (but inedible) s'more. While supplies last. No registration required.

WILLOUGHBY-EASTLAKE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Eastlake Public Library

36706 Lake Shore Blvd. Eastlake 44095
(440) 942-7880 x. 105

Willoughby Public Library

30 Public Sq. Willoughby, OH 44094
(440) 942-3200 x. 104

Willowick Public Library

263 E. 305 St. Willowick, OH 44095
(440) 943-4151 x. 116
(440) 516-0843 TTY

Willoughby Hills Public Library

35400 Chardon Rd.
Willoughby Hills, OH 44094
(440) 942-3362

www.welibrary.info

Fiber Arts from the Farm Learn about sheep and fiber animals, how to spin wool, and more. We'll also meet one of the special sheep friends from Lake Metroparks Farmpark! Tuesday, August 5, 2 pm

Willoughby Public Library
Meet Kit: An American Girl Program
 American Girl fans in grades K-6 are invited to join us for a celebration of Kit! We'll learn more about Kit's time period with a craft and activities. Children are welcome to bring a favorite doll or stuffed animal.
 Tuesday, August 5, 3 pm
 Willoughby Hills Public Library
Adaptive Storytime Children of all ages and abilities can join this inclusive storytime designed to support varying developmental needs.
 Zoom: Tuesday, August 5, 6 pm
 In Person: Tuesday, August 12, 6 pm
 Eastlake Public Library
Young & Restless Join our popu-

lar music and movement class for 2-4-year-olds with shakers, bubbles, the parachute and more!
 Tuesdays, August 5, 12, 19, 26, 6:30 pm
 Wednesdays, August 6, 13, 20, 27, 10 am
 Willowick Public Library
Tween & Teen Anime Awesomeness
 Join us for a new anime each session. Draw, chat, snack, and have anime-zing time. Ages 10-18
 Wednesdays, August 6, 20, 3:30 pm
 Willowick Public Library
Healthy Kids Kids ages 5-13 can join June Whittaker from The Ohio State University Extension to learn about creating healthy habits. We'll learn about healthy food choices and play

fun games to get our bodies moving. We might even try some food samples!
 Thursday, August 7, 12:30-1 pm
 Willowick Public Library
Last Stop Willoughby The arts and crafts Kids Zone will be located in West Point Park. Sponsored by the Heart of Willoughby.
 Saturday, August 9, 10 am
 West Point Park in Downtown Willoughby
Willoughby 2nd Weekends Join Willoughby Library in West Point Park in Downtown Willoughby on the 2nd Saturday of each month for crafts and activities. 2nd Weekends offer family-friendly activities in the park and around the city and are hosted by the City of Willoughby.
 Saturday, August 9, 11 am
 West Point Park in Downtown Willoughby
Learn and Play Chess Club An excellent opportunity to learn strategies, develop skills and play with people of various experience levels. All ages and skill levels are welcome.
 Saturday, August 9, 1 pm
 Saturday, August 23, 12 pm
 Willoughby Public Library
LEGO Club Bring the family to LEGO and Duplo playtime! All ages.
 Saturday, August 9, 1:30 pm
 Willoughby Hills Public Library
 Saturday, August 16, 1:30 pm
 Willowick Public Library
 Saturday, August 16 10 am
 Eastlake Public Library
Homeschool Career Exploration
 Interested in exploring welding as a career? Join us at Lincoln Electric Welding Technology and Training Center to learn about the field, get a tour of the school, and try out virtual reality welding.
 Grades 9-12
 Monday, August 11, 1 pm
 Willowick Public Library
Book Tasting and Arts & Crafts
 Sample the best teen summer reading books along with arts and crafts activities. Select a title from our recommended reading lists {or explore on your own} and read/review the first chapter. We will share our findings as a group. Following our discussion, take time to relax and focus on a selected creative activity. Refreshments provided.
 Tuesday, August 12, 1 pm
 Willoughby Public Library

Homeschool Teen BYOBook Discussion Club
 A book club without an assigned book. Join us for a snack and casual discussion with fellow readers about the latest book, graphic novel, manga or anything else you've been reading. Grades 9-12.
 Thursday, August 14, 2 pm {Sci Fi or Fantasy}
 Willowick Public Library
Family Playgroup Play, interact, and connect with other families at the library.
 Monday, August 18, 6:30 pm
 Willoughby Hills Public Library
Movie Night at the Hills Watch recently released movies on the big screen. Outside food and drink is permitted.
 Wednesday, August 20, 4-6 pm
 Willoughby Hills Public Library
Rescue Readers In 20-minute sessions, emerging readers will gain confidence, improve skills, and provide soothing company to cats and small critters as they await adoption at Lake Humane Society in Mentor.
 Thursday, August 21, 3-5 pm
 Lake Humane Society, Mentor
Movement and Music Join us for a fun Music and Movement program followed by an optional opportunity to socialize and play.
 Ages 2-5.
 Friday, August 22, 3 pm
 Willowick Public Library
Sit, Stay, READ! Practice your reading skills by reading to a therapy dog! Grades K - 5.
 Saturday, August 23, 10 am
 Eastlake Public Library
Sensory Messy Play Make a mess, have fun, and don't stress about the clean up! Wear clothes you don't care about.
 Saturday, August 23, 11 am
 Willowick Public Library
Monster Truck Party Do you love Monster Trucks? Come to the library to celebrate everything Monster Truck! We will have crafts, games, and a real-life Monster Truck! Sponsored by Classic Lexus of Willoughby Hills.
 Saturday, August 30, 12 pm
 Willoughby Hills Public Library



FREE! Back to SCHOOL BASH

SATURDAY AUGUST 2, 2025

Open to all **Lake County children** in need for the 2025-2026 school year. Come anytime between **9am-2 pm**.
Free Breakfast and Lunch Available

HARVEY HIGH SCHOOL
 200 W Walnut Ave, Painesville, OH

FREE! Sports Screenings
Grades 7- 12:
Pre-registration open until spots are filled

SCAN THIS CODE TO PRE-REGISTER

SCAN THIS CODE TO PRE-REGISTER

50 Spaces Avail English/Spanish

FREE! Services

- Haircuts
- Dental Services
- Vision Screenings
- Immunizations 4-18 Years
- Community Resources
- Family Photos
- Clothing
- Books

FREE! Immunizations
Ages 4 - 18 years
 Parents or caregivers must register for vaccinations.

SCAN THIS CODE TO PRE-REGISTER

ADVANCE REGISTRATION W/SIGNATURE HEALTH REQUIRED

FREE! School Supplies
The Lake County Salvation Army
 School supply distribution at Harvey High School while supplies last!

Laying the Foundation for Writing

(Family Features) Learning to write is one of the defining milestones of early childhood, but it doesn't happen all at once. Children build writing skills over time, from indecipherable scribbles to writing letters and words. While children progress at their own pace, families can help foster early writing development.

Dr. Lauren Loquasto, senior vice president and chief academic officer at The Goddard School, and Dr. Sonia Cabell, professor of reading education at Florida State University and member of The Goddard School's Educational Advisory Board, provide this insight and guidance for families.

Early Writing Milestones

Writing begins in early toddlerhood, around 18-24 months. The earliest developmental milestone is when children scribble on paper with a crayon.

By 2-3 years old, children often draw shapes and narrate their writing. Parents should show genuine interest to help build confidence and interest. Ask your children to read what they write, as this helps make the connection that marks on paper represent thoughts and ideas. It's not expected for children younger than 3 to write identifiable letters. Instead, encourage them to make marks on paper without constraint, allowing them to freely express themselves.

Around ages 3-5, children begin to move from writing (making marks) to handwriting, which is the formalized motion of making numerals and letters in recognizable forms. It's vital for parents

to value their children's writing no matter what appears on the paper and provide opportunities for them to regularly engage in writing. Children at this age tend to write letters in different ways. It's common, for example, for letters to appear backwards or from right to left. These are not causes for concern; this is a natural part of the development process.

Writing Supports Reading (and Vice Versa)

Reading and writing skills develop in tandem, reinforcing each other. Through writing, children experiment with how written language works, learning English moves from left to right and top to bottom. By estimating spelling - using their knowledge of letter shapes and sounds to attempt to write words - they are beginning to break the code of reading. Moreover, when children are composing stories, they are supporting comprehension and oral language growth, which are critical for reading development.

Encourage Writing at Home

Make writing part of everyday life. While ensuring paper and writing utensils are accessible is a start, materials alone won't spontaneously create writing experiences. Children naturally want to engage with things they see, so parents and older siblings should serve as writing models. For example, when writing a grocery list, ask your children to write their own lists. When you're writing a thank-you note, have them write their own.

The development of fine motor skills is also essential. One way to do this is



provide tools like chopsticks or tongs that require them to use their forefinger and thumb in a pinching motion; this strengthens the hand muscles that are used to write. Also encourage play with small toys like blocks or beads that engage the hands in different ways. As fine motor skills improve, it becomes easier to grip writing utensils and write for extended periods.

Writing Tools

From apps to workbooks, countless tools and resources tout their ability to help children learn to write. Be wary. Typing on a tablet or computer is no substitute for learning to write by hand. Multiple studies have shown that writing - not typing - better promotes cognitive and literacy development.

Avoid activities like workbooks that require repetitive writing of letters over and over, as this inhibits creativity and experimentation. These activities can cause children to fear making mistakes, which can lead to anxiety, frustration and a loss of interest. The best tools are often the simplest: a small writing utensil (not big or bulky; children have small hands and need appropriately sized utensils) and a blank piece of paper.

Remember, children develop at their own pace. Provide encouragement and focus on effort, not perfection.

To watch a writing webinar featuring Loquasto and Cabell and access additional parenting resources, visit the Parent Resource Center at Goddard-School.com.

FINDING BALANCE FROM PAGE 2

screen time and less reading of fiction tend to make them less apt to see emotions in others. Reading fiction is an active process; it requires you to create a world in your mind. You are the one generating the mental images, sounds, and even smells within the story. This active cognitive process helps the brain develop; improving memory, attention, and critical thinking skills. Not to mention, reading to your kids strengthens your bond, makes them feel special, and opens up opportunities for meaningful conversations.

I know what, you're thinking. Limiting screen time can feel like an uphill battle- so where do you begin to tip the scale? Here are some ways:

Limit Early Screen Use:

- Resist handing a cranky or uncomfortable baby a device. Offer them a book or toy instead (treat these items as "special" - something they don't always get to play with).

- Keep books in the car to offer as an alternative to screens on long trips.
- Pick certain days of the week (not every day) for screen time and limit it to one program/game (and only one hour).
- Balance screen time with outdoor play, creative activities, and family conversations.
- Hold off on giving kids smartphones and tablets until they reach their upper teenage years, if possible.
- Dedicate specific screen-free times of the day, especially at night.
- Avoid putting televisions (or computers) in children's bedrooms.
- For a child who needs sensory input at bedtime consider screen alternatives like white noise machines, nature sounds, music, or audiobooks. (The Calm app has numerous 'sleep stories' - no screen activity but the stories use well-known voices and a picture of beloved children's characters).

Make Reading a Cherished Family Habit:

- Read to your children before they can talk and keep going into elementary school (middle, if they'll let you).
 - Start a nightly bedtime story ritual (our favorite).
 - Read to them at breakfast (another favorite for us).
 - Give children age-appropriate books from a very young age.
 - Create a cozy reading nook that's always stocked with books (rotate with fresh options every so often- they don't have to be new books, just new to them).
 - Take regular trips to your local library (it's a fantastic, free resource that offers endless adventures).
 - Let your children see you reading. When they see you valuing books, they're more likely to follow suit.
- The more you can help your child avoid relying on screens for entertainment or comfort, the better off their brains will be. Even small shifts in habits can make a significant difference. You got this!

Have a Great School Year!

