

YOUTH SERVICES NOTES



Week of May 12, 2014

No. 166

Smart Beginnings

Virginia Early Childhood Foundation & Library of Virginia Launch

“Smart Beginnings Start with Families” Campaign from Mother’s Day to Father’s Day, May 11-June 15

The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation and the Library of Virginia have partnered to designate **May 11-June 15**, the time period between Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, as an opportunity to focus on the unique needs of young children and to recognize that **Smart Beginnings Start with Families**.

Both of these partner organizations develop and implement statewide strategies to help parents and families provide young children with a strong foundation for school readiness and language development in the formative years from birth through age five.

- **The Virginia Early Childhood Foundation** (VECF) works in collaboration with Smart Beginnings initiatives in communities across the Commonwealth to promote school readiness and quality early experiences through a wide variety of initiatives designed to support families with young children.
- **The Library of Virginia** provides educational programs and resources on Virginia history and culture for students and teachers throughout the state, and consults with Virginia’s public libraries to create enriching programs that encourage a love of reading in children of all ages.

Smart Beginnings Start with Families offers several resources that are attached to this newsletter. They can also be downloaded from

<http://www.smartbeginnings.org>:

- A **Tip Sheet** of suggested activities and parenting tips to help young children be better prepared to start kindergarten healthy and ready to learn
- A series of **5 short writeups** about how schools, libraries, child care providers and healthcare professionals can support families with young children within the community

A **Facebook** cover banner can be downloaded and posted and shared throughout the campaign.

“We are delighted to partner with VECF on this innovative initiative to honor families and recognize the pivotal role of parental guidance in the lives of young children,” said **Dr. Sandra “Sandy” Treadway, Librarian of Virginia**. “One way to celebrate Smart Beginnings Start with Families is for parents to enroll their children in the summer reading program sponsored by their local library. Even the youngest child enjoys being read to and looking at picture books with an adult. Reading helps children discover and understand how the world works.”

“Since Smart Beginnings Start with Families is bookended by Mother’s Day and Father’s Day, it’s an ideal time to renew our collective commitment to support families with young children at all levels of community involvement, including business leaders, elected officials, libraries, healthcare and social service agencies, among other stakeholders,” said **Kathy Glazer, President of the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation**. “During this special time, we salute moms, dads, grandparents and other family members across the Commonwealth in their efforts to provide children with a strong foundation for school, life and workforce success.”

For more information about **Smart Beginnings Start with Families**, visit <http://www.smartbeginnings.org>.

Source: Press Release, May 1, 2014



Smart Beginnings
Start with Families

May 11 - June 15, 2014



Youth Services Notes

is issued weekly by

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The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums.



Through grant making, policy development, and research, IMLS helps communities and individuals thrive through broad public access to knowledge, cultural heritage, and lifelong learning. This newsletter project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.



ALA Library Facts

Number Employed in Libraries

Academic Libraries

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Librarians..... | 26,606 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 59,145 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 85,751 |

Public Libraries

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Librarians..... | 46,630 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 90,473 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 137,103 |

Public School Librarians

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Librarians..... | 78,570 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 47,440 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 126,010 |

Private School Librarians

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| Librarians..... | 14,090 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 3,770 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 17,860 |

Bureau of Indian Education School Libraries

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Librarians..... | 90 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 80 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 170 |

TOTAL

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Librarians..... | 165,986 |
| Other Paid Staff..... | 200,908 |
| Total Paid Staff..... | 366,894 |

Source: <http://www.ala.org/tools/libfactsheets/alalibraryfactsheet02>

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Dates to Remember

Conferences

| | | |
|----------------------------|---|--------------|
| May 18-20, 2014..... | Virginia Library Association Paraprofessional Conference..... | Richmond |
| June 26–July 1, 2014..... | American Library Association Annual Conference..... | Las Vegas |
| September 18-20, 2014..... | Association for Library Service to Children National Institute..... | Oakland |
| October 22-24, 2014..... | Virginia Library Association..... | Williamsburg |

Training

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Monday, May 12, 2014..... | Evanced Summer Reader Training..... | Danville |
| Thursday, May 15, 2014..... | Evanced Summer Reader Training..... | Covington |
| <i>Evanced Summer Reader Training..... On request—Call or email Enid.....</i> | | <i>At Your Library</i> |



Programs and Displays from Virginia Libraries

Newport News Public Library System

Teens and youth turned cardboard boxes, paper, stickers and other recyclable materials into “cakes” to compete in the **Fourth Annual Boss of Cakes** contest on April 17 at **Pearl Bailey Library** to celebrate



Amiya Hargrove, 13, left, and 17-year-old Deja Mitchell work on their cake inspired by the book, “Seven Blind Mice,” at Pearl Bailey Library’s Fourth Annual Boss of Cakes contest on April 17. They won “Most Original Cake.” Photo by Brionna Matthews/Newport News Public Library System



Volunteer judges Rod Bowser and Edith Shingles take one last look at the cakes before making their final contest on April 17. Created by Samantha Ritchie and Destiny Williams, “The Giver” cake won “Most Likely to Be Eaten Cake.” Photo by Brionna Matthews/Newport News Public Library System



Deandre Newson, 17, and Lazarreia Ghoston, 15, present their cake to audience members and judges at Pearl Bailey Library’s Fourth Annual Boss of Cakes competition on April 17. Their cake, based on the book, “No, David,” won Honorable Mention. Photo by Brionna Matthews/Newport News Public Library System

More photos page 4

DayByDayVA

WWW.DAYBYDAYVA.ORG FAMILY LITERACY CALENDAR

Thanks

for the photos!

- ◇ **Karen L. Gill** and **Brionna Matthews**, Newport News Public Library System
- ◇ **Cassie Boyd**, Boydton Public Library, Southside Regional Library
- ◇ **Sarah Pahl**, Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library
- ◇ **Rachel Enrich**, Portsmouth Public Library
- ◇ **Carol Aubut**, Little Creek Branch Library, Norfolk Public Library

Programs and Displays from Virginia Libraries
Continued from page 3

Boydton Public Library / Southside Regional Library

We just wanted you to know Rocket has arrived safe and sound and already has made great friends with Daisy! – Cassidy Boyd



Montgomery-Floyd Regional Library

On Saturday, May 3, the Blacksburg branch celebrated Star Wars with our Jedi Academy program. Children were able to make light sabers, Yoda ears and Leia buns. We also had several members of the 501st Legion present to pose for pictures. – Sarah Pahl



Portsmouth Public Library

Our summer reading bulletin board. - Rachel Enrich



Little Creek Branch Library / Norfolk Public Library

In celebration of the NATO countries, Little Creek Branch Library in Norfolk, presented a program on Bulgaria. This is the window display. - Carol Aubut





Smart Beginnings Start with Families

**LIBRARY
OF VIRGINIA**

**SMART
BEGINNINGS**
Virginia Early Childhood Foundation



May 11 - June 15, 2014

You are an active participant in your child's early learning.

Play with your child.

Play is an essential way for children to learn about their world while developing emotionally, socially, and intellectually.

Create and keep routines.

Children do best when they know what to expect. Teach about rules by setting up daily routines, particularly for eating and sleeping.

Read at bedtime.

Curling up with your child to read helps your child settle down after a busy day and sets the stage for a lifelong love of reading.

Have meals together as much as possible.

Mealtimes with your children are great ways to spend time together and share family values and traditions, while also teaching good eating habits and table manners.

Take time to talk and listen.

Talking to your baby stimulates brain development and builds a strong foundation for learning. Children feel important and gain confidence when adults take the time to talk with them often. Ask about friendships and activities that your child enjoys. Talk about your own best and worst experiences.

Children learn by your example. Show respect to gain respect.

Put the cell phone down, move away from the computer/TV and focus completely on activities, conversations, or homework with your child. When you cannot stop what you are doing, tell your child you'll check in with him/her as soon as you have completed your task at hand. Be honest – remember to check back with your child.

Unconditional love.

We all make mistakes. Acknowledge your own mistakes and talk through your child's challenging behaviors with guidance and love and without threats.



For More Information Contact:

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Ready for School. Ready for Life.

Building a Child's Brain: A Parent's Privilege

Parents are the most important and enduring influence in the lives of children. Excellent parenting does not demand perfection—but does require loving involvement and sensitive interaction, responsive to the unique nature of each child. Researchers in neuroscience now realize “brains are not born, but built.” Unlike most other organs, the brain is not complete at birth! Although the brain cells are all in place, the “wiring” of the brain is not fully formed, but emerges over time through stimulation in the context of nurturing relationships, with the most rapid explosion in synaptic connections between cells occurring in the first few years of life. This period builds either a sturdy or a weak foundation for all learning that follows.

Scientists stress several things: (1) Both *nature* and *nurture* are involved in brain development. (2) The care a child receives in the early years has a lasting impact on development and the ability to learn and manage emotions. (3) Though the brain is adaptable, there are sensitive times for optimal development. (4) Negative experiences or the lack of stimulation may have lasting consequences.

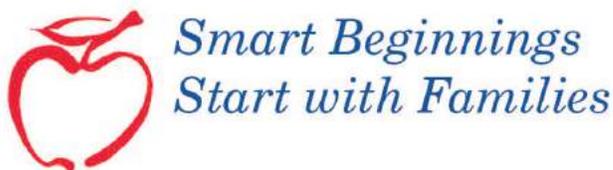
Why is this important for parents and caregivers to know? Parents are the very first teachers a child has—and, in fact, are co-architects of the brain. The loving interaction between a young child and the parent builds on and expands nature's basic foundation. Scientists describe this interaction as a “serve and return” action: the child naturally reaches out to the parent in some way, and adults respond with words or gestures. This back and forth exchange strengthens the architecture of the brain, affirms the child's sense of worth, and enhances social development. With repetition and stimulation, these connections are not only dramatically increased, but become permanent. Without appropriate stimulation the child will fail to achieve full potential.

The foundation for success in school and life begins at or before birth, with parents enjoying the privilege of being the very first teachers for their child, followed by additional partners in the educational process.



We have always known parents are important—science simply confirms and gives practical definition to their impact. So what is a loving parent to do? Fortunately, this is not rocket science—here are some tips:

- **Give consistent, loving care**, with gentle, affectionate touch, promoting both physical and brain development.
- **Engage in language with your child** from the moment of birth, using words, songs, books and rhymes. Watch for and respond to cues from your child, practicing “serve and return” interaction. Repeat whatever your child says, adding additional words. *Note:* passively watching TV does *not* have the same impact!
- **Look for teachable moments all through the day**, using ordinary actions as “windows for learning.” Name items, identify colors, count, describe things outdoors and concepts such as bigger/smaller, hot/cold.
- **Introduce children to music**, which develops the areas of the brain required for math and spatial reasoning.
- **Mirror the behavior you want to see in your child:** a soft voice, patience in solving problems, ways to handle a variety of emotions. A child's healthy attachment to the parent provides the necessary foundation for trust, independence, and effective relationships with others later in life.



Building Partnerships for a Healthy Start In Life

As children develop, parents find it helpful to build partnerships with others, particularly in terms of ensuring their child's health. Children develop best when they enjoy several essential ingredients: regular health care; good nutrition; sufficient rest; exercise; and protection from stress, neglect or violence. Consider five ways to ensure a healthy start for your child:

- **Find a medical home for your child:** Children need regular wellness checkups with a health practitioner who knows them and observes their development over time. An Emergency Room is not the place to obtain on-going care. Your child's doctor has the expertise to offer preventive care and quick response to any illness or developmental concerns. Equally important, parents bring to this partnership their special knowledge of their child, often being the first to identify a concern. Selecting your child's doctor is an important task, as you look for a good match for your child and your own values.
- **Provide a nutritious diet:** You don't need to be a certified nutritionist to provide healthy food for your child. Just remember that you, as the parent, are in charge of which foods to buy and prepare! Here are a few suggestions:
 - **Establish regular times for meals and snacks and eat together as a family often.** Meal times offer rich opportunities for positive family interaction.
 - **Give children some choices.** As the parent, decide what foods to offer, but give children some choices as you develop menus. Encourage them to taste new foods. Avoid the "clean plate" syndrome, forcing children to eat even when they feel full.
 - **Model healthy eating patterns.** What parents do speaks far louder than words!
 - **Keep sweets to a minimum.** Children need to get most of their calories from healthy foods—not sweets and sodas.
- **Ensure sufficient sleep:** Regular times for napping and going to bed are important for young children, with infants requiring 14-18 hours of sleep a day and young children 11-12 hours, gradually dropping by adulthood to about 8 hours.
- **Encourage patterns of exercise:** Encourage an active lifestyle in your child, with time outdoors to run and play every day, weather permitting.
- **Keep your child safe:** Young children and their brains are extremely vulnerable to abuse, neglect, and violence, with these negative experiences impacting physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Scientists have found that a child's exposure to persistent, high levels of stress, particularly without a comforting adult, has a "toxic" impact on the developing brain, the child's established patterns of emotional response to any future stress, and lifelong patterns of chronic illness.



Parents and doctors are partners in determining a healthy start in life!



Early Language and Literacy Development: Partnering With Your Library

The development of language skills and a love of reading are absolutely foundational to success in school and life—and this process begins at birth! Good news: babies are born prepared to learn and are wired for language—and everyday interactions offer rich opportunities for encouraging language and a love for reading. In one research study with premature babies, when parents talked to and shared books with their tiny infants, these babies gained weight more rapidly, left the hospital sooner, and when checked later, were more likely to be showing normal developmental progress than babies who had not enjoyed such interactions, indicating that it is never too early to start reading with your child!

Oral language is the foundation for literacy development

Language skills develop primarily in the context of relationships, through “serve and return” interactions with parents and other adults. **Every** parent, regardless of education, can talk to their child, sharing their own interests and observations, pointing to and naming objects, singing simple songs, or enjoying pictures in a children’s book with their young child.

Unfortunately, when parents do not engage their children in conversation, there is a heavy cost. By age three, children in homes with little conversation have heard roughly 30 million fewer words than children in a language-rich environment. This gap has a profound impact that progressively widens. Young children who have heard fewer words show up at kindergarten with over 2,000 less words in their vocabulary. By 2nd grade, that gap may have increased to a difference of 4,000 words. By the third grade, they are far behind in reading. Until the 3rd grade, children **learn to read**; but after that point, schools expect children to **read to learn**—they have missed the optimal time in which reading is taught.

Libraries are wonderful partners for parents

Your community library is a terrific partner in introducing children to the joy of reading. Your librarian will suggest books that are appropriate at every developmental stage and which respond to particular interests of the child. Most libraries offer story time activities for young children, using both books and music and drama to expand the stories.

With encouragement, your child will become an enthusiastic and capable lifelong reader. Find your way to the library, beginning by getting your own card to check out books for yourself and your child, and then, obtaining a card for your child at the earliest age allowed by the library!



There are simple tips for supporting early vocabulary development:

- Use lots of words with infants and toddlers.
- Give simple explanations for new words.
- Respond to the sounds, babbling, words, and/or questions of young children.
- Point out signs as you walk, drive or shop.
- Encourage your child’s natural curiosity and desire to explore.
- Read and play with youngsters, beginning in infancy—and be willing to repeat favorite books often! Interact with your child as you read, asking and answering questions. If your child is in child care, make sure there are plenty of books in the classroom and that the teacher reads to children every day.



Parents & Child Care Provider Partnerships

In most communities, about 2/3 of young children live with working parents; therefore, selecting high quality child care is a necessity for many. One of the most crucial partnerships a parent will form is with other adults who will care for and teach their child. Any environment where children spend the majority of their time is a part of their lifelong educational experience—thus the quality of the child care or early learning setting is critically important for a child's development, readiness for kindergarten, and success in school and life.

Parents can look for or ask about the following when trying to select a program:

- Do the teachers talk to, sing with, and read to the children?
- Do teachers ask children questions and respond patiently to questions the children ask?
- Is the atmosphere welcoming and is parent involvement encouraged?
- Are schedules or activities posted?
- Is the teacher respectful of and responsive to cultural differences, special needs, and individual interests?
- Does the teacher participate in on-going training opportunities?

Parents can build an effective partnership with their child's teacher by:

- Communicating regularly, both informally at drop-off or pick-up and through written notes or telephone calls.
- Visiting often, perhaps reading aloud to children and celebrating special occasions.
- Scheduling regular conferences and asking questions about your child's progress.
- Volunteering as you are able, helping with field trips or events.

Remember, every teacher your child has is your partner in ensuring positive development and educational success for your child!



What are the essential ingredients of quality early learning settings?

- **The warmth of interaction between teachers and children:** Look for positive, encouraging teachers who genuinely enjoy children, respecting the individuality of each child and the values and priorities of the family.
- **Teacher competencies:** Training and education in child development is important, indicating the level of understanding the teacher has in strategies to encourage children's learning and skills.
- **Turnover:** Children need consistent care, with the same teacher. When teachers come and go, it is hard on young children.
- **A stimulating, child-friendly environment:** Whether in a formal classroom or a family child care home, early learning settings should be clean and safe, allowing exploration, and providing interesting things to explore, with organized areas for learning, eating, and diapering.
- **Group size:** Smaller groups allow for more individualized interactions between teachers and children.
- **The ratio of adults to children:** Look for ratios of 1:4 for infants, increasing gradually to 1:10 for 4-year-olds.
- **Accreditation or ratings:** There are accreditation systems for early learning settings. Virginia has also created the Virginia Star Quality Initiative to help parents find high quality child care. Both star ratings and accreditation are helpful clues that an early learning setting is committed to providing high quality care and education.



Ensuring a Successful Transition to School

Life is full of important transitions from one stage of development to the next. One of the most important transitions for a child is moving from early environments into school. Whether the child has spent most of the time at home or has been in child care or preschool classrooms, moving into “big” school can be a major adjustment, for both children and their parents.

Parents play an important role in ensuring that this transition goes smoothly—and in establishing the foundation for an on-going partnership with the school in encouraging a child’s academic success. Here are a few tips for navigating this transition:

- **Before enrolling your child, visit the school your child will attend,** giving your child a chance to explore and develop some familiarity with the school and its routines.
- **Once your child is enrolled and receives an assignment, visit with the teacher.** Introduce your child to the teacher before school starts. Take the teacher information identifying your child’s interests, experiences, learning style, and family background.
- **Volunteer as your circumstances and time allow.** If your work schedule does not allow you to participate during the day, attend evening events and conferences; offer to make or find helpful items needed in the classroom.
- **Communicate regularly with the teacher.** Exchange telephone and email information. Stay in touch, focusing on positive interaction with the teacher and letting the teacher know of any special circumstances in your child’s life.
- **Create a learning environment at home and support your child’s learning, but avoid over-involvement; respect and encourage your child’s independence in completing assignments.** Establish a time and place for your child to do school work. Be available to help, but ask questions that encourage the child to think through and solve challenges.

Work to ensure that you and the teacher are partners in your child’s education!



Recognize the five areas of readiness that are important for school success.

Being ready for school includes *all* of the following:

- **Approaches to learning:** It is important that a child arrives at school with their natural curiosity intact. During the early years, children should be encouraged to explore their environment, to ask questions, to engage in creative play. Eagerness to learn is essential for school success.
- **Cognitive development:** Critical thinking skills develop when appropriate stimulation is provided in the context of nurturing relationships. A few guidelines: Can your child sit and listen to a story and begin to recognize letters, numbers, colors, shapes, and names in print?
- **Language development:** A child who has engaged in conversation with parents and has enjoyed looking at/listening to books arrives at school with a strong foundation. Talk with your child every day about events and activities and read to them every day. Encourage your child to initiate and engage in conversations, describe experiences and ask questions.
- **Social-emotional development:** In the first few years, a child develops a sense of personal worth, the ability to trust, and growing skills in relating to others. If your child has experience in following simple directions and rules, as well as playing with and taking turns with other children, adjusting to school will be easier.
- **Physical development:** Help children develop both large muscle development through active play and small muscle coordination through coloring, drawing, working puzzles, and building things.