

Important things for the month of May

Several important events are coming up for students and parents alike in May.

May 11 will be the day of the BIG all-school breakfast. It will take place at 8:45 AM and all parents are invited.

May 18 is a day not to be missed. It will feature the bridge meetings for parents of students moving up to 1st grade, 4rd grade, 7th grade, and High School. These meetings will prepare parents for helping their children navigate upward into different and more challenging atmospheres. All meetings will be held at 11:45.

June 2 is the last day of school, and by long-standing tradition, is celebrated with the International Lunch for all Elementary and Upper Elementary grades. It is highly enjoyable, as parents provide dishes from many cultures to be shared by students.

June 4-5, of course, is the time for the annual Dance Recital.

This year's recital is "*The Princess and the Pea.*" The recital is held at Hamman Hall on the Rice University campus. Performances are at 7 PM on Saturday and 3 PM on Sunday.



SUMMERTIME

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Edited by Eloise Rochelle

April 4 was Square Root Day 4.4.16

Good to know! $\sqrt{\quad}$

Square Root Day occurs only nine times in a century. Now that April 4, 2016 has passed, we will have to wait nine years for the next one – 5.5.25.

Playing with numbers. Pi Day (3.14) and Square Root Day (4.4.16) have recently occurred, but there are other sequences to entertain us. Sequential time is when numbers form a normal sequence, as 1:02:03 4/5/06. An even longer one would be 12:34:56-7/8/90 or 01:23:45-6/7/89. Another is the Fibonacci number sequence. A nifty one occurred on Pi Day: 3/14/15 at 9:26:53.58979... following the sequence of pi to all digits.

PLUS: if you write 3.14 on paper and look at it in a mirror, it spells PIE.

The Child Has Time Sensitive Opportunities For Growth

“No.” If we could have one word to associate with a two-year-old, it would be the word “no”.

When a two-year-old realizes that he or she has the power to decide by saying a simple yes or no, we can observe a time-sensitive period in a child’s development. Establishing independence around age two, and exerting a self-directed will, is an inherent growth pattern in all of us.

We can expect two-year-olds to express their will both verbally and physically. This expression is part of the natural human process of realizing that you are an individual, with particular needs.

Around age six, children begin to develop a sense of belonging to a group and become aware that the group has specific needs and desires, outside each individual. Until that juncture in development, it is unrealistic for us to expect a child to understand others’ needs.

There are natural times in a person’s life that learning about how to become an individual, how to walk, how to talk, and how to become part of a group are part of the innate process of human development. When a person fails to acquire certain skills at these important times, the effects can have long-term significance.

We know that if a child doesn’t speak by age six, the chances are the child will never speak. This is due to a sensitive period of language development in children from birth to the age of six.

Before the age of six, children are in periods of growth where learning appears effortless. The child absorbs information and learns from interactions with the world. We don’t have to teach a child how to walk or talk because of these instinctive periods of development for language and movement.

Through their sixth year, children experience five developmental periods.

What are these periods of growth and how can we support this development? We can support this time of learning by being aware that this developmental growth is driving children’s behavior. As we watch them, we can see that they are attracted to activities in these five areas:

1. Language
2. Movement
3. Sensory perception
4. Understanding of the order of people, places and things
5. Developing social skills and relationships

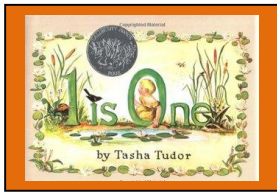
Children are drawn to activities that help them create language, both spoken and written. They are acquiring motor skills, both large and small, and have a need to be involved in actions that use their whole body and/or hands. Hand and eye coordination is developing, along with the senses of taste, smell touch. Understanding what noises to pay attention to is also part of children’s normal process. For example, the child is learning to discern which is more important, the voices on the television or the adults in the room?

Understanding the order to everyday life, the significance of people in the child’s life, and the physical orderliness the world around him, guides the child’s behavior, and a disruption in that perceived order could create disturbances in the child’s behavior.

The child is interested in how to interact with others and easily learns a multitude of social skills, such as please and thank you. The child is also creating a foundation for interpersonal relationships, while learning how to treat family and close friends.

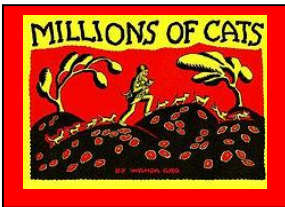
These five time-sensitive areas for learning in the child create a driving force for the child’s actions, demeanor and conduct. When you can recognize these forces of development within the child, you can be of genuine assistance as the child creates his or her unique personality and an individual who contributes to the whole.

Teacher Bridget Tomlinson recommends....



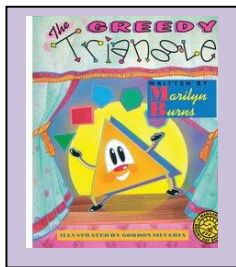
1 is One, by Tasha Tudor. A classic book first published in 1956, winning the Caldecott Medal. Republished in 2000. The book is a charming introduction to numbers – one duckling, two sisters, etc.

Hardcover, 48 pages.
Ages 2-5.



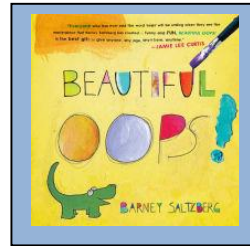
Millions of Cats, by Wanda Gág. When an old man and woman saw they were very lonely, they decided to get a cat. They found millions, but which one? They took them all home to make a choice. Oct.

2006; originally published in 1928. 32 pages, ages 3-6.



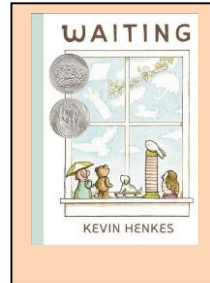
The Greedy Triangle, by Marilyn Burns. Bored and dissatisfied with his life, a triangle visits a local shapeshifter to add another angle to his shape. Poof! He becomes a quadri-lateral. But then he gets greedy and keeps adding angles until he's transformed completely. A colorful introduction to shapes and

basic math concepts. 1995, 40 pages. Ages 5-9



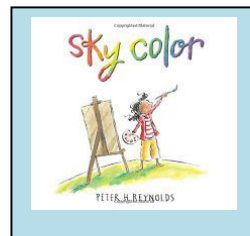
Beautiful Oops!, by Barney Saltzberg. A one-of-a-kind interactive book, *Beautiful Oops!* shows young readers how every mistake is an opportunity to make something beautiful. *Beautiful Oops!* is filled with pop-ups, lift-the-flaps, tears, holes, overlays,

bends, smudges. 28 pages, Sept., 2010. Ages 3-8.



Waiting, by Kevin Henkes (Caldecott Medalist). An owl, puppy, bear, rabbit, and pig—all toys arranged on a child's windowsill—wait for marvelous things to happen in this irresistible picture book, in which a child sets the stage and pulls the strings. It is about imaginative play, the seasons, friendship, and

surprises. 32 pages, Sept. 2015. Ages 4-8.



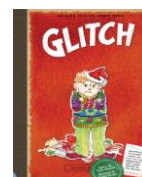
Sky Color, by Peter Reynolds. The sky's no limit in this tale about seeing the world a new way. Marisol loves to paint. When her teacher asks her to help make a mural for the school library, she's excited but has no blue paint to make a sky. The story reminds us to look beyond the expected for

creative inspiration. 32 pages, Aug. 2012. Ages 5 and up.

Calling All 7-13 year-olds:

A series of comic novels for this age group began appearing in 2009, starring the main character, Aldo Zelwick (A-Z). Ten-year-old Aldo lives with his family in Colorado. He's not athletic like his older brother, Timothy (a jock); he's artistic, and is put forth as the writer and illustrator of these 'journals' (really, Karla Oceanik and Kendra Spanjer). He is a wimpy, geekish, and normal boy with three friends: Bee, Tommy, and Danny, plus one best friend, Jack. The series calls for 26 books, each named for a letter of the alphabet. Eleven have been published to date, the first being *Artsy-Fartsy*. Each book introduces new words that begin with that book's letter. The eighth book, *Hotdogger*, for the letter "H," includes hyperbole, halcyon, hindrance, and hoodwinked. There is a glossary in each book defining the new words, which are highlighted in the text. *Glitch*, No. 7, also includes galore, gobbledygook, gnomes, generous, gumption, gullible and gadzooks. All books run to 150-160 pages.

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|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| <i>ArtsyFartsy</i> | <i>Dumbstruck</i> | <i>Ignoramus</i> |
| <i>Bogus</i> | <i>Egghead</i> | <i>Jackpot</i> |
| <i>Cahoots</i> | <i>Finicky</i> | <i>Kerfuffle</i> |
| | <i>Hotdogger</i> | |



Grade Level Transitions: Students Report on Moving Up

by Mary Clemer, Jane Collins, Margi Dhruv, Heidi Harbaugh,
Ginger Schwarz, Kay Shields and Elizabeth Stepankiw

Development occurs in stages, almost like steps. Maria Montessori noted that within each stage of development there is a creative period of intense acquisition of skills or knowledge and then a calmer period of *consolidation, i.e. absorbing and making that knowledge one's own* (http://www.countrymontessori.org/montessori/planes_of_development.html).

Montessori schools make use of the similar characteristics of children in three-year age spans. Mixed age groups promote healthy interactions; students have the opportunity to reinforce previously learned concepts by helping younger children, and younger children learn by observing older children in the classroom. It is natural in this environment to have different levels of accomplishment in one classroom; therefore, each child is given the ability to learn at his or her own pace. Teachers are able to learn more about each child's strengths and challenges, and children are able to develop a strong sense of community and belonging.

When students transition from one level to another, they begin to build a new foundation for the next stage of development. The second year in a new level is a year of practice as knowledge is reinforced, and the third year becomes the year of synthesis and taking on responsibility as classroom leaders. Moving to the next age group often contains a mixture of apprehension as well as anticipation and excitement for what is coming next.

School of the Woods students who are moving up will visit their new classrooms during the month of May. They will have the opportunity to become familiar with teachers, students, and the classroom. The following reports from

previous years' new students in first, fourth, and seventh grades may be helpful to the students who will be moving up this year.

First grade students recalled their feelings when they were about to move to the next level. They remembered looking forward to making new friends and seeing old friends, seeing the new classroom and getting to know the new teachers, having more time at school, moving to a higher level with "harder" work, and having fun. Most were happy and excited about the move, and one student was particularly looking forward to new math work.

When asked, many children didn't recall having big concerns. Those that did, expressed being concerned about the difficulty of new work and being able to finish their work. Some children said that they had concerns about meeting new people and making new friends.

Most of the children found the new classrooms to be bigger, the work to be more challenging, and the teachers to be nice, helpful, and "giving good lessons." Students said they had made new friends, and some reported that they were still able to see old friends. Most did not report having difficulty adjusting, but one student said that the tire swing had made her vomit at P.E.

Finally, the students gave advice for those who will be moving to first grade in the fall. They should expect new and harder work. Many children said that the work is fun, "I like this work," and one student specified that cursive is fun to learn. New first graders should know that you only get one P.E., but you get three hours each of art and music and, you will stay in school for a longer day. Also, the children want the new first graders to know that there is nothing to be scared or shy of because older students will help them.

Students new to fourth grade this year were overwhelmingly looking forward to making new friends and seeing old friends. They also mentioned the fourth grade field trip, research work, new teachers, a bigger classroom, and moving up a grade. They had concerns about adjusting to having more structured homework, and a few were concerned about adjusting to a new classroom environment. Most students reported that homework turned out to be "not so bad."

Fourth grade students noted that the classroom is much bigger, and the teachers are nice, helpful, and fun. Most students feel the work is more challenging and advanced, yet they did not have problems adjusting to Upper Elementary. Attending summer school made adjusting easier. All the students have made new friends, and, with a few exceptions, most of them are able to see old friends as well.

New fourth graders should expect the work to be "plentiful, but it pays off." You should "always know what your teachers are saying, or they will call on you when you are not paying attention." Also, the field trip is long; you will do more research, and there is no reason to be afraid because, "we are all friendly." Most of all, this year's fourth graders want next year's fourth graders to know that, "You will love Upper Elementary." In fact, one student described fourth grade as being super fun 36 times (except for the homework)!

When anticipating the move to seventh grade, Middle School students reported that they were looking forward to more challenging work and lessons, seeing old friends, learning new things in a new atmosphere, having lockers, service learning, the bonding trips with new and old friends, being able to use the microwave and kitchen appliances, trying new learning styles and lessons, and the freedom of making more choices.

Many new students said their concerns were about how the new class would affect their

work: tests, not being able to finish on time, too much challenge, homework, and the independent study. Once school began, they found that they enjoyed the emphasis on interaction between students, more independence, longer lunch, the relaxing times during the day, the three color group rooms, small groups, and computer. They wrote that the work was challenging, with more assigned work, more projects and presentations, more detailed and complicated information, and required organizational skills.

Seventh grade students made new friends and got to know some old friends better. Some still had contact with friends no longer in their class. They found their new teachers to be both nice and funny. The teachers encourage independence, are helpful to students with their work and emotionally, present lessons well, are engaging, and have "cool interests." Some students had difficulty adjusting at first, but felt that things had improved as they became more familiar with the expectations.

To prepare for Middle School, students advise you to be organized, concentrate on grammar because you will need it, learn what study guides and homework notes are, be prepared to take tests, and know that you will get better at it. In addition, do not put off doing your homework, find your own best work strategy, ask questions, be prepared for fun, and be positive. Remember to be nice to your friends because you may end up having to work with them every day for five weeks. Relax and be sure to ask another student or teacher for help if you need it. You will only need a good binder, not a new backpack. There will be more work, but you can look forward to learning new concepts - most of them are fun!



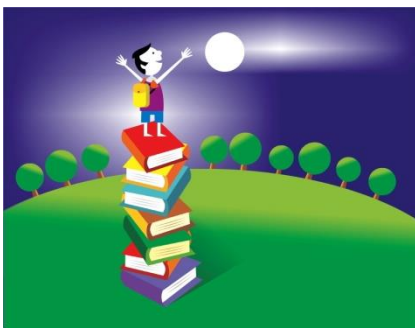
The Family That Reads . . . How it helps everyone

There is nothing like reading together to build the bond between parent and child. Such reading can greatly improve the child's achievements in school and in life. In fact, it will shape the child's language and emotional development, self-esteem, social skills and creative expression. Also, reading to your child is fulfilling and fun.

Parents who have books at home and who read to their children have children who are better readers and high achievers academically.

A Commission of The National Institute of Education reported, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children."

The US Department of Education stated, "What parents do to help their children learn is more important to academic success than how well-off their family is."



Creating a love for reading is the cornerstone of your child's

education that will last a lifetime. Most importantly, teach your child that reading is the window to every opportunity in life.

The exploration of shared spoken language, the reading of the world through dialogue, is a vehicle for bringing change into the world.

These points are considered "truths" among experts in the field:

- Children who are read to learn to read more easily than those who are not.



- Reading to children helps build their curiosity, imagination, attention span, vocabulary and language skills. It also helps improve their spelling and writing abilities, promotes listening comprehension and helps them to think and communicate better.

- Children's ability to comprehend what they read very much depends on the knowledge they already have, so the more they are read to the more knowledge they will have in store for use in future reading.

- Reading is a good conversational tool, providing parents and children with the opportunity to share thoughts and feelings. The child grows

emotionally and important family bonds are built.

- Reading to your children lets them know that you value reading as an important activity in your life.

Some ways to achieve these goals:

- Establish a routine for reading aloud – a daily activity which will become a habit.

- Be proactive: move your finger under the words as you read; let your child turn pages with you; take turns reading paragraphs or pages; interject comments, such as "what do you think will happen next?"; look at and talk about the illustrations.

- Let your children see you reading your own books – i.e., be a role model. Talk to them about the things you read.

- Develop a family library – keep lots of books, magazines and newspapers and take them when you travel; give children books as gifts.



- There is no limit to the kinds of material to read – children's books, biographies, science, adventure, even mail order catalogues. And make regular library trips so that your child becomes familiar with it and what it has to offer.

Adapted from "Tips for family reading",
Houston Parent, October 1995

Hit the Road!

With summer and vacations at hand, this is a good time to investigate camping and hiking locations in Texas. It's a big place with lots to see and do.

For leisure-time pursuits, the state is divided into 10 areas under the broad name of Texas Heritage Trail Regions. One area will keep you busy for a long time: the Forest Trail Region. It is the most heavily forested part of the state, bordering Louisiana and the Sabine River on the east all the way down to Port Arthur and the Gulf, the Red River on the north, and on the west, a variable boundary, mostly following the Trinity River. The region is sometimes called "Wet Texas."



The Forest Trail Region spans 35 counties. Within it there are five national forests, five state forests, 12 state parks and three historic sites. The national forests together contain a half-

million acres. Historically, the region was the "Gateway to Texas" for Caddo Indians, Spanish and French explorers, Anglo pioneers, European immigrants, and African-Americans, both free and captive.

National forest names are Angelina, Davy Crockett, Sabine, Sam Houston, and Big Thicket National Preserve. State Parks are Atlanta, Caddo Lake, Daingerfield, Lake Bob Sandlin, Lake Livingston, Martin Dies, Jr., Mission Tejas, Sea Rim, Tyler and Village Creek. State Forests are Siecke, Fairchild, Kirby, Masterson, and W.G. Jones. Historic sites are Caddo Mounds, Sabine Pass Battleground and Starr Family Home.

Caddo Lake (Caddo Lake State Park) near Karnack (as in Egypt) is an interesting site. It covers 26,000 acres, a swampy maze winding through overgrown cypress with 42 miles of channel, marked to keep boaters from getting lost. In legend the lake resulted from the 1811 earthquake



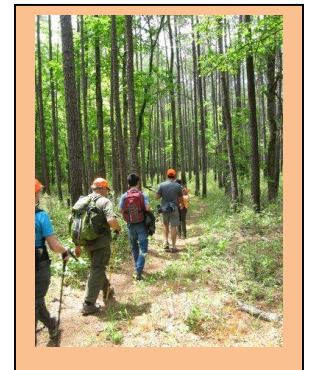
in Missouri, also cited in the Caddo Indian legend that the lake was formed at night by angry shaking earth spirits.



A short description of Angelina National Forest would be that it has 153,000 acres and elevation is 200 ft. Its Boykin Springs Campground was built in 1937 by the CCC. The area

offers swimming, boating, birding, picnicking, hiking trails and rough camping. Other recreation sites offer multiple amenities and activities.

Generally located in the Huntsville area, Sam Houston National Forest is the go-to place to find wilderness areas. It is a Wildlife Management Area and is home to some very long hiking trails – up to 129 miles. This park also spans parts of three counties. Hunting is allowed at certain periods and locations, and with a permit, you can take along your own horse. Do bring your own drinking water.



In this forest area, evidence of human occupation dating back 12,000 years has been found, and newer finds in some river basins show that Atakapan-speaking groups known as the Bidai, Patiri, Deadose, and Akokisa lived there. Many prehistoric and historic archaeological sites are found here, protected by Federal and State regulations. Visitors may not disturb any sites, cemeteries, structures or artifacts.

Before going on this type of trip, it would be well to access websites for all these recreational areas. Much information is available along with photographs. The concept of the ten Trail Regions was the work of the Texas Historical Commission. National forests, of course, are overseen by the U.S. Forest Service/National Park Service; regional state parks are the purview of Texas Parks and Wildlife; state forests are overseen by the Texas Forest Service at Texas A & M University.

As Roy Rogers used to say, "Happy Trails!"

