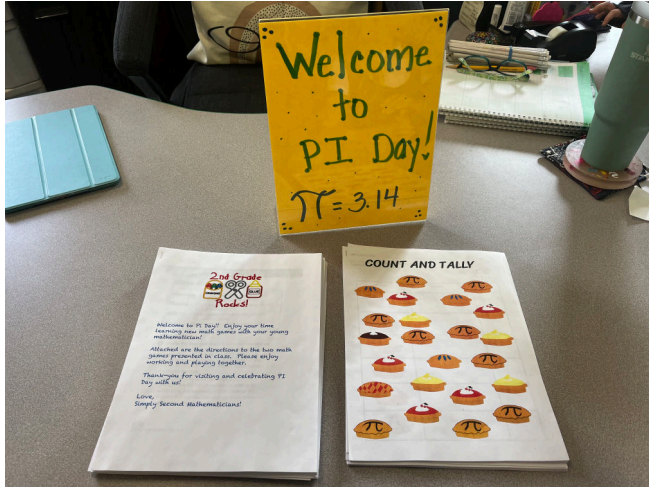
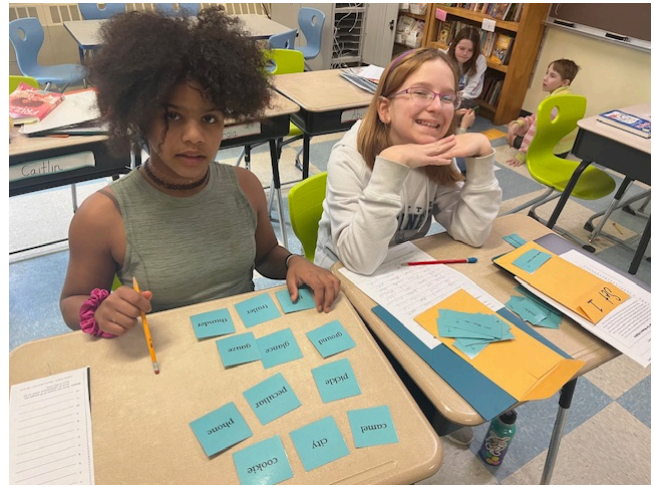


APPLETON VILLAGE SCHOOL

Wildcat News



Simply Second
Page 4



Fifth Grade
Page 5

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- 4/2 Wildcat Ambassador Meeting, 5:30
- 4/3 Spring Photo Day
- 4/5 Grade 8 HAL Dance, 6:30-8:30
- 4/8 11:30 release, Solar Eclipse!!!
- 4/10 Art Show 5:30
- 4/10 Spring Concert 6:00, see page 6
- 4/11 Grades 6-8 to the Strand
- 4/11 Storyteller here for grades PK-5
- 4/12 Early release, 11:30
- 4/13 Family Dance, see page 14
- 4/15 – 4/19 VACATION

PLEASE NOTE:

No students are to be dropped off before 8:10, unless prior arrangements have been made.

Solar Eclipse

After much discussion and consideration, AVS has determined that the best course of action is to dismiss all students at 11:30 am on Monday, April 8th. The primary reason for this decision is student safety, there are risks related to looking directly at the sun during an eclipse. The height of the eclipse is taking place during dismissal, a time when we are not in a position to provide the same level of supervision as we do during the school day. We are also hoping this dismissal will give you and your family an opportunity to enjoy this rare occurrence together. The students will be sent home with eclipse glasses, and we have shared information regarding observing the eclipse safely in the last *Wildcat News*.



Attendance Matters: A Challenge for Students and Staff

Duration: April 22 to June 1, 2024

Total School Days: 29

Criteria for Recognition:

- Achieve at least 90% attendance from April 22 to June 1, 2024. This means you can miss up to 3 school days for any reason.
- Alternatively, maintain 90% attendance for the entire school year by June 1, 2024, missing fewer than 17 days for any reason.

ROAR Award: Regular On-Time Attendance Recognition

Why It Matters: Attendance is currently the biggest challenge facing schools, as highlighted by Edweek. Regular attendance not only fosters academic success but also builds consistent routines that benefit our school community.

<https://www.edweek.org/leadership/opinion-chronic-absenteeism-could-be-the-biggest-problem-facing-schools-right-now/2024/02#:~:text=This%20is%20not%20a%20new,a%20much%20rosier%20COVID%20picture.>

Recognition Ceremony: Join us on Monday, June 3, 2024, to celebrate all qualifying students and staff. Honorees will receive a special ROAR award as a token of our appreciation for their commitment to regular attendance.

Let's come together to make every day count!

Health

If your family (or someone you know) is struggling with lice, there is a lice removal treatment center in Waterville, All About Lice. Please visit <https://www.allaboutlice.com/>, for more information.

Health Spotlight: Ticks

Spring is finally here and so are ticks. When I am able, my practice is to send home any tick that has been attached to a student and email the parent/guardian. This allows parents the opportunity to pursue tick testing, if desired. There are instances where students will remove ticks on their own and dispose of the tick. In this case, I am unable to send the tick home and will send the parent an email for notification.

Tick identification and testing:

- Tick identification and testing is available through the Tick Lab at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. More information can be found at www.ticks.umaine.edu.
- Tick identification is available for free.
- Tick testing is available for \$20 with a three-day turnaround time. This service is only available to Maine residents.
 - ○ Deer ticks are tested for Lyme disease, Anaplasmosis, Babesiosis and *Borrelia miyamotoi* disease.
 - ○ American dog ticks, lone star ticks, and other related tick species are tested for Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Ehrlichiosis, and Tularemia.
 - ○ All ticks are tested for Powassan Virus and Heartland Virus
- Ticks do not need to be alive for testing. Ticks covered in bleach, acetone, or other harsh chemicals can not be tested. Ticks in alcohol can be tested.
- While testing ticks for clinical purposes is not recommended, data from tick testing is very helpful for surveillance and determining tick infection rates in the state.

Please check your child for ticks daily. For more information, please visit the Maine CDC at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/vector-borne/lyme/tick-prevention-and-property-management.shtml>

Nurse Sandy
sandy.fuller@fivetowns.net
(207) 785-4504, ext.103



Simply Second

Did you know the Greek letter for P represents PI which equals 3.14? Simply Second had a fun time celebrating PI Day on March 14th! We worked on PI packets, played math games, discovered the ratio of a circumference of a circle by its diameter, watched a fun PI video and read math books! Thank-you to the parents who joined us in our PI Day activities!



Field Day Help Wanted

We are looking for help planning and facilitating our end of the school year field day. If interested, please email jessica.davis@fivetowns.net.

Fifth Graders

Fifth graders have been learning about the engineering design process during science class. In reading, we have been doing activities to learn about alphabetical order, idioms, homophones, homographs and so much more! Check out the photos!



Fifth Grade Town

Fifth graders have started their own "town". Ask a fifth grade student about the "Apple Tree Village". We also have a weekly newsletter. Pick up a copy outside of our classroom.

Dear Parents,

You are invited to our spring concert and art show! Students K-5 will all be singing in the concert. Students in grades 5-8 who are in band, chorus and ukulele classes will be performing as well. We can't wait to share all we have learned this year with you!

When will this be? **Wednesday, April 10th**

The art show will start at **5:30 p.m.**

The concert will start at **6:00 p.m.**

Students in grade K-5 will go to their classrooms 5 minutes before the concert starts. Students who are in chorus, ukulele and band will go to an assigned classroom as well. The Concert and art show will be in the gym at Appleton Village School.

Performing students are to wear dressy clothes for this event. Dressy clothes include, but are not limited to, dress pants or dark colored pants, khaki pants, skirts, dresses, polo shirts, dress shirts, ties, sweaters, cardigans etc.

Basketball

The Windjammers 8th graders/soon to be high schoolers had a STRONG showing at the Great Harbor Shootout this past weekend. The boys took home the championship, and the girls were runner-up. Camden Hills Basketball here they come!!! 🏀 #JammerNation



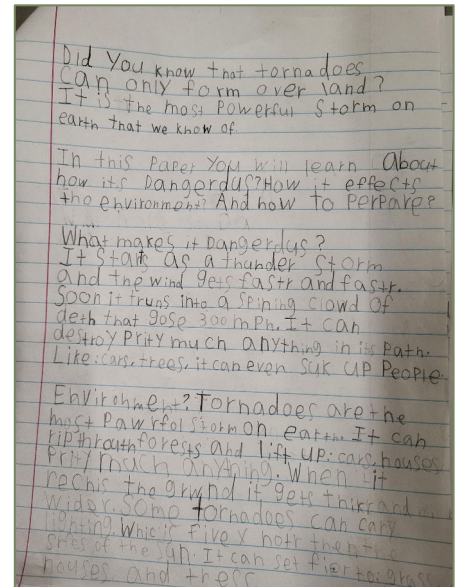
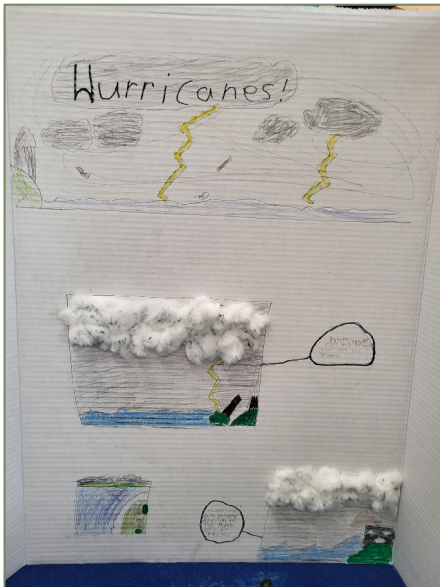
Third Grade News

Weather Fair!!

Students in third grade researched, wrote essays, and created projects to present to AVS students and families at our annual weather fair!

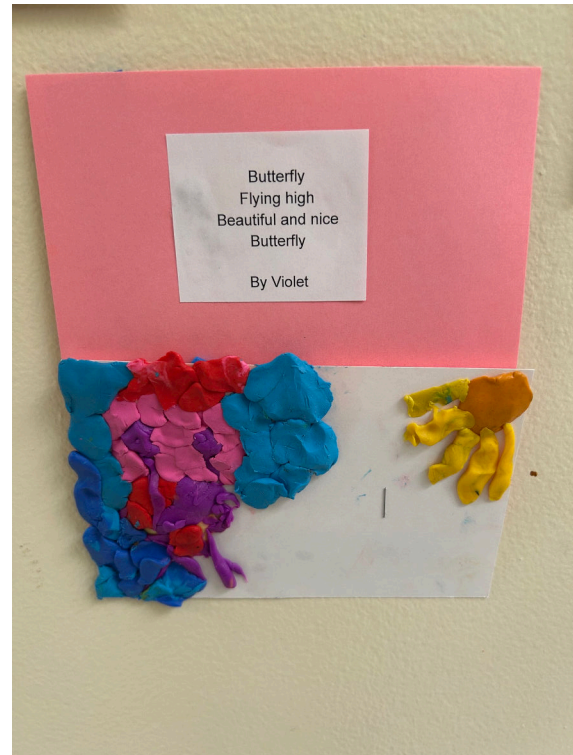
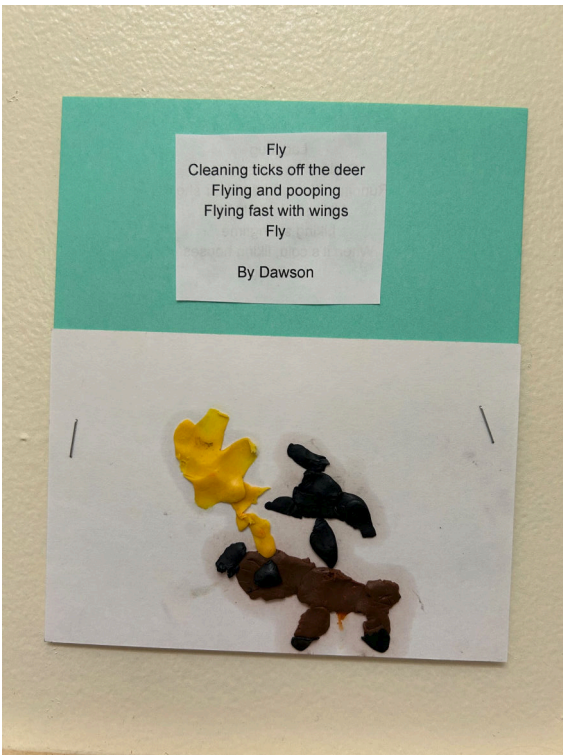
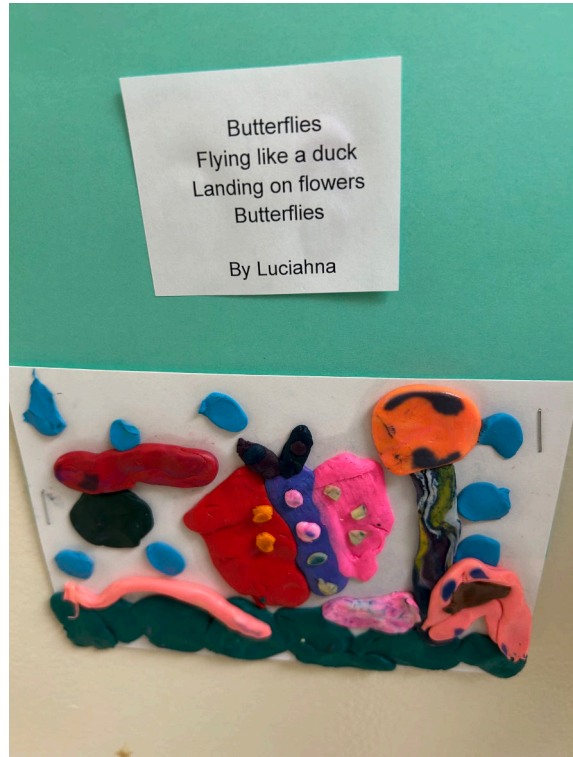
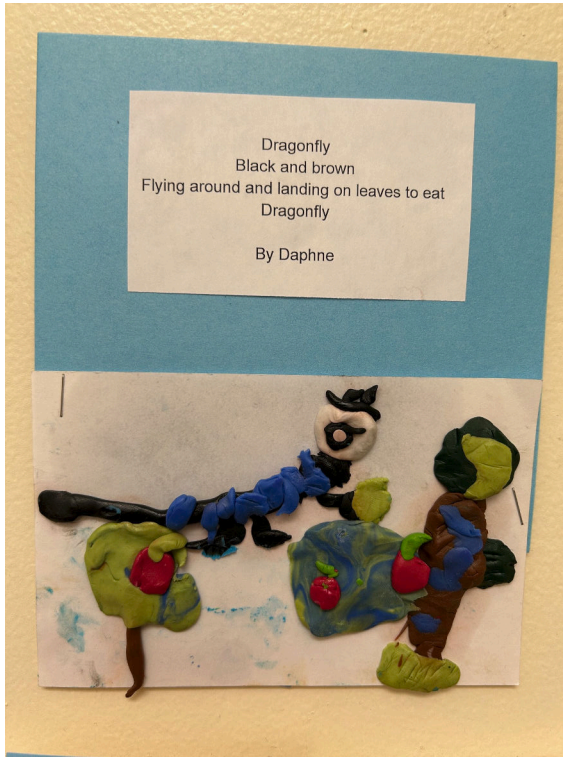
It happened to fall quite appropriately on one of the snowiest days of the school year too!

Thanks to all who supported the third grade, including donations from families, and making this an exciting learning experience.



First Grade

First-graders had fun learning about all things creepy and crawly last week. They enjoyed making clay insects and Arachnids and writing a poem to describe their creature.



4th Grade

On March 14th, grades 3, 4, and 5 traveled to the Strand Theatre in Rockland and enjoyed a live performance of *Charlotte's Web* presented by the Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine. Students represented Appleton well, and enjoyed watching this classic story of friendship.

Also on March 14th, we recognized PI Day by having math rotations in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classrooms. We enjoyed the activities and appreciated having family members join us! In writing class, fourth graders ended the 2nd trimester researching important historical figures. We learned about: George Washington; Albert Einstein; the Wright Brothers; Alexander Graham Bell; Galileo Galilei; Marie Curie, Harriet Tubman; Rosa Parks; Abraham Lincoln; Helen Keller; and Benjamin Franklin. We are now preparing to present the information we learned to our classmates.

Solar Glasses

Partners for Enrichment and Knox County Emergency Management have generously donated solar eclipse glasses to students and staff! They will be sent home with students in the coming days.



Busline League Baseball Registration

Busline League Registration registration is now open! HAL Baseball is offered to students from the Hope, Appleton, and Lincolnville Schools in grades 6-8. *Preference given to 7th and 8th graders in years where large numbers of participants make it unmanageable to successfully include all who wish to play.* LCS hosts baseball. All practices and home games will be held in Lincolnville.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfgnA-KHgfRzkLKSlnZTosnu7eimal5x_A08ndZ7t7xD4RX3A/viewform



HAL Softball Sign-ups

Busline League Softball registration is now open! HAL Softball is offered to students from the Hope, Appleton, and Lincolnville Schools in grades 6-8 who are interested in interscholastic competition. *Preference given to 7th and 8th graders in years where large numbers of participants make it unmanageable to successfully include all who wish to play.* HES hosts the Softball signups. LCS hosts the Baseball signups.

Sign up: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfbKy4bBrxUTIUBiR-wDGMEMT-4KGplZkf9YKvg2pQd5PCekw/viewform>

Stay tuned for more information about when the season will get underway.



Pre-K News

Pre-K has been busy in our continuing study of Birds! We have explored a Wren nest, a Robin nest and a Sparrow nest using magnifying glasses and also by holding them with very careful hands. The children marveled at how tiny the eggs of the Wren and Sparrow must be in order to fit in the nest along with the adult bird! We have also built our own nests out of pretzels, have sorted eggs by size and color and have shared a number of amazing picture books. This week, we will continue to learn about different nests (building materials, shapes, sizes) and will learn how birds build their nests without any hands! As a final nest activity, the children will try to build nests using small tongs as beaks-that will surely be fun!

As many of you already know, the "big" work for your children while they are in PreK is learning social skills that will allow them to succeed as they move on through elementary and secondary school (and into life as a whole.) This is no easy feat for young children and, as our society becomes more dependent on technology (which draws our eyes and attention away from faces) opportunities for unspoken and spoken learning of social skills lessen and become more difficult for children to understand.

There is a new book, Raising a Socially Successful Child by Dr. Stephen Nowicki, that I highly recommend to parents/caregivers to read. It is available on Amazon (or could be ordered from your local bookstore) and it is an easy read with family friendly language.

In a nutshell, the book describes the non-verbal information that your children must learn in order to be successful interacting with peers and adults alike.

Without these skills, which must be learned through meaningful human interactions, children are losing ground socially and academically as well. As adults, we take for granted the depth and complexity of social learning (after all, we did it so long ago and, most of us, have fine tuned it as we enter adulthood.)

Young children must learn six types of non-verbal communication in addition to verbal communication (words, tone of voice, etc.); rhythm, facial expressions, personal space, physical touch, body language and vocalics. When children struggle with these skills, social interactions will not be successful, no matter how kind or well intended our children may be.

Please take a moment to check this book out. It has ideas for activities for families in each section, many of which mirror what I do here in school.

The Goings On in Middle School ELA

With the new trimester, students are moving along with even more great learning opportunities!

6th grade:

Read aloud: *Westing Game* by Ellen Raskin

This read-aloud focuses on exploring the mystery genre and putting our inferencing skills to good use. Will we be able to figure out "who done it"? Knowing this group of 6th graders, we will!

Students in 6th grade will be participating in Literature Circles, as they explore the question: How do relationships shape us? Students will be practicing the key literary skills we have been focusing on this year as they read stories like *My Side of the Mountain* by Jean Craighead George or *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Down. Along the way, students will also be developing their descriptive writing skills and understanding of figurative language.

7th grade:

Read aloud: *The Wave* by Todd Strasser

The focus of this read-aloud is to read about the 1969 "classroom experiment that went too far" when exploring the question of why so many people followed Hitler during World War II and the Holocaust.

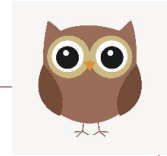
Students in 7th grade have started the Holocaust unit and will be reading the novel, *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry to explore how so many put their lives on the line to save their friends and neighbors. Throughout this unit, students will be exploring the question: Who are you in a crisis? by practicing their figurative language skills in a variety of poetry formats, writing argumentative pieces, and developing their understanding of symbolism and propaganda. By the end of this unit, students will be showcasing their learning in an artistic symbols project interpreting their story of the Holocaust.

8th grade:

Read aloud: *Hidden Figures: Young Readers Edition* by Margot Lee Shetterly

This read-aloud focuses on exploring the nuances and structural elements of literary nonfiction, all while learning more about the influential figures of the Civil Rights era and NASA.

Students in 8th grade have begun looking at the 1960s and the volatile elements of the Civil Rights Movement. We will be applying our understanding of literature and written elements to learn about the influential people of the time, compare the approaches of several leaders during the movement, and create a collaborative magazine to share our learning with the community. Knowing this group of students, they will put together an incredibly engaging presentation that will be enjoyed by many.



The rain drops
calm
Some people during a
storm

- Taylor B.; 6th grade

Cheesecake
is
so creamy and good.

- Noah M.; 8th grade

Owls eat rats
No!
Rats are NOT good!

- Mia K.; 7th grade

My mom loves LEGOS
When she sees them,
she's happy
She builds with LEGOS

- Ily D.; 6th grade

Stop and smell the rose
My heart flutters with the
smell
A perfect flower

- Marian J.; 8th grade

3D printer?
Wow!
Makes everyday special!

- Ms. B; Inspired by
an 8th grader

I eat pie
Kidding!
I don't like pie.

- Ethan F.; 8th grade

Ms. B. likes
to
drink Dr. Pepper

- Olivia G.; 8th grade

Pi-Ku Poetry

In recognition of Pi
Day, middle school
students explored
the poetic side of
3.14.

I love cows!
Cute!
They are so amazing!

- Karigan G.; 6th grade

Crispy, crunchy crust
Sweet filling with lots of
fruit
With vanilla cream

- Julia S.; 8th grade

Palette of a 9-year-old
Has no appreciation for a
good pie
Sadly, he likes chocolate pie
Pumpkin is superior!

- Jackson E. (7th
grade) & Ms. B
collaboration

Key Lime pie
Yum!
It tastes so good!

- Anonymous

Unicorns?
Wow!
They are so cool!

- Natalia D.; 7th Grade

Pencils

Always lost
Sharp
Always need more

- Whitney P.; 7th Grade

The perfect sweet
treat
A fruit filling, yum!
Eat pie. It is good!

- Mia K.; 7th Grade

Black and white
Cow
Cute and really fluffy

- Sophia T.; 7th Grade



HOPE APPLETON
LINCOLVILLE

SPRING

Dance

FRIDAY APRIL 5TH, 2024
FROM 6:30 PM TO 8:30 PM

Admission \$5

No phones

7th & 8th graders only

Hosted at AVS



The Wildcat Ambassadors host
K-6th grade

Family Dance

**APRIL
13TH**



ENTRY \$2.00 | 5:00pm to 7:00pm at AVS gym
All students MUST be accompanied by an adult
Concessions and photos will be available
(Photos taken on your own devices)
fmi - egrierson1982@gmail.com

All proceeds benefit Appleton Village School



Made with PosterMyWall.com



Happy Wanderers Guided Hikes

Join the Community Health team partnering with Coastal Mountains Land Trust to get outdoors and stay active with guided hikes this year. This hike is at a Georges River Land Trust trail; it is 2 miles and the level is easy. All levels are welcome; however, please leave pets at home. This group meets at trailheads throughout Knox and Waldo counties on the first Thursday of each month.

DATE: Thursday, April 4

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

LOCATION:
Gibson Preserve, Searsmont

COST: Free

Register online at
penbaywaldo.coursestorm.com or call 301-3950





Knox County Food Council Meeting

The Knox County Food Council, formed in 2019, is a cohort of citizens, organizations, and businesses in Knox County advocating for a community-based healthy food system for all. The Council’s monthly meetings are open to the public and are held at 5pm on the second Tuesday of every month. This meeting will be held at the Beebe Center at Pen Bay Medical Center, starting with a short walk on the Wellness Trail and then convening in the conference room on the first floor to address agenda items. For more information about KCFC, visit aldermere.org/kcfc or contact knoxcountyfoodcouncil@gmail.com.

DATE: Tuesday, April 9

TIME: 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION: The Beebe Center, 15 Anchor Drive, Rockport



DO YOU HAVE **concerns** about **falling?**



A MATTER OF
BALANCE

MANAGING CONCERNS ABOUT FALLS

Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A MATTER OF BALANCE is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.

This program emphasizes practical strategies to manage falls.

YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- view falls as controllable
- set goals for increasing activity
- make changes to reduce fall risks at home
- exercise to increase strength and balance

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

- anyone concerned about falls
- anyone interested in improving balance, flexibility and strength
- anyone who has fallen in the past
- anyone who has restricted activities because of falling concerns

Thursdays, April 4 - May 23
from noon to 2:00 p.m.

Rockland Public Library,
80 Union St, Rockland, Maine

FREE

For more information or to register,
please visit: penbaywaldo.coursestorm.com
Or call 301-3950



Pen Bay
Medical Center
MaineHealth



A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls Volunteer Lay Leader Model ©2006

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A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model

Recognized for Innovation and Quality in Healthcare and Aging, 2006, American Society on Aging.

A Matter of Balance Lay Leader Model was developed by a grant from the Administration on Aging (#90AM2780).

Helping Children Learn®

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School
 Appleton Village School



March 2024

Help your child think about how to learn and solve problems

Students learn more and stay more motivated to persist with schoolwork when they think about *how* they learn. Educators call this *metacognition*. When your child faces obstacles, one effective way to offer support is to talk about how your student thinks about and approaches problems.



When your child hits a snag with schoolwork:

- **Discuss ways to think** about it. Effective thinkers have a plan before they take action. They know if they need more information in order to proceed. And if they get new information later, they adapt their plan.
- **Point out your child's strengths** as a problem solver. "Remember that when you make a plan, things seem to fall into place."
- **Help your child draw** on past knowledge to address current problems. Your student may not have had an assignment just like this one, but your child has probably worked on other challenging tasks. Ask, "What did you learn then about ways to work through tough problems?"
- **Talk about what persistence** can do. "It's not that I'm so smart," Albert Einstein once said, "It's that I stick with a problem longer." Talk about the progress your child has already made, and offer assurance that by continuing to try, your child *can* reach the goal.

Source: A.L. Costa, *Developing Minds: A Resource Book for Teaching Thinking*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



Give learning a boost by guiding play

Play supports children's physical, academic and social development. While free play is important, play that's guided by an adult can better help your child learn specific skills or concepts. To guide your child's play:

- **Mix play** and everyday activities. Let your child play with measuring cups and spoons while you cook. Then, ask how many teaspoons of water will fill a tablespoon or how many ¼ cups of sugar will fit in one cup. On a walk outside, make up a story together about an animal or bird you see—using descriptive words and lots of details.
- **Place learning materials** with your child's toys. Provide a note pad and pen so your child can write prescriptions for stuffed animals while playing vet. Encourage engineering experiments by adding varied materials to your block bin (cardboard tubes, egg cartons, cut-up pool noodles, etc.).

Source: C.A. Wright and others, "Playful Learning and Joyful Parenting," The LEGO Foundation.

Keep tests in perspective

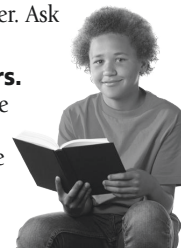
Standardized tests can make kids—and families—nervous. The teacher can tell you what the tests measure, but it's important to remember that one test doesn't represent a student's total abilities. Help your child stay calm and positive before a test. If anxiety rises, have your child take deep breaths and say, "I can do this!"



Boost reading for meaning

To improve your child's ability to understand meaning when reading fiction, talk about the material together. Ask your student to:

- **Discuss plot movers.** What problems did the characters face? Why did things turn out the way they did?
- **Find links.** What has your child learned or experienced that relates to the story?
- **Make choices.** Would your child make the same decisions a character did? How might other choices change the story?
- **Think about the author's point.** Did the story have a message?



Source: "Reading Comprehension and Higher Order Thinking Skills," K-12 Reader.

Discuss conflict resolution

Conflicts—from misunderstandings with teachers to disagreements with friends or family—are a part of all children's lives. To help resolve them, teach your child to:

- **Listen to the other person** and try to understand their point of view.
- **Take time to calm down** and think before acting.
- **Consider compromises.**
- **Ask for help** when needed.
- **Be willing to apologize** when at fault.

Helping Children Learn

Tips Families Can Use to Help Children Do Better in School

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

March 2024

Q&A What can I do to help my child stop procrastinating?

Q: My fifth grader puts everything off. In the morning, my child is late getting ready. Schoolwork and long-term projects turn into panicked mad rushes at the last minute. How can I help my child learn to manage time better?

A: Elementary schoolers are just beginning to learn time management—and it doesn't come naturally to many of them. But with your support, your child can learn to plan ahead.



Help your child establish regular routines for:

- **Getting organized.** Have your child do backpack, bedroom and study area tidy-ups. An organized space can make organized thinking easier.
- **Prioritizing.** Help your child make a to-do list with three headings: Must Do, Would Be Nice to Do and Could Skip This. Make it clear that items on the Must-Do list (such as schoolwork) have to come first.
- **Scheduling.** After setting priorities, figure out together when your child can do those Must Dos. Some children can draw up a schedule for the whole week and stick to it. Others need to make a daily schedule to stay on track. Make sure there is some time in the schedule for fun!
- **Sticking to the schedule.** This is the hardest step. Daily study times and morning and evening routines can help. Praise your child for sticking with them.

Parent Quiz

Are you reinforcing learning skills?

One of the best ways to help your child do well in school is to reinforce school skills at home. Are you helping your child apply things learned in class to daily life? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

- ___ 1. **Do you ask** your child to explain concepts that the class is learning about? Do you listen and ask questions?
- ___ 2. **Do you encourage** your child to help you solve problems around the house?
- ___ 3. **Do you help** your child apply school skills in hands-on ways, such as by writing stories or calculating averages?
- ___ 4. **Do you encourage** your child's interest in "grown-up" things, such as ways to save money on household costs?

- ___ 5. **Do you look up** answers together when questions arise?
- How well are you doing?**

More yes answers mean you are reinforcing and building on your child's knowledge. For each no try that idea.

*"For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them."
—Aristotle*

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Get ready for the big move

If your child will be heading to middle school in the fall, start preparing for the exciting transition now. To help:

- **Read the middle school website** together. Sign up to receive school communications so you and your child will know what's going on.
- **Foster school spirit.** Talk about your child's interests and new ways to pursue them in middle school.
- **Encourage school success habits**, such as fulfilling responsibilities, taking notes and making study plans.
- **Look for mentors.** Do neighbors and friends have children in the middle school? See if your child can talk to their students about what it's like.

Spring into gardening fun

Spring is just around the corner. For some seasonal fun that also teaches responsibility, allow your child to pick out some quick growing seeds, such as radishes or marigolds.



Help your elementary schooler plant the seeds in potting soil and place the pots in a sunny spot. Then, make your child responsible for the watering and care of the plants.

Make rules memorable

Creating catchy phrases that link rules with their consequences can help your child remember them. For example:

- **If you leave it out, you go without** (belongings not put away properly go into time-out for a week).
- **If you hit, you sit** (in time-out).
- **If you partake**, you take part (in meal prep or clean up).

Helping Children Learn®

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Helping Students Learn[®]

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School
Appleton Village School



March 2024

Help your child practice strategies for managing time effectively

Middle schoolers are expected to take on more responsibility for learning. Self-management skills are vital for doing this well. Research shows that developing these skills helps students earn higher grades and test scores, and increases the likelihood of graduation.

One of the self-management skills that can be challenging for middle schoolers is time management. To help your child learn to use time wisely:



- **Review the week ahead** together on Sundays. Block out commitments on a calendar. Help your child calculate the amount of time available to fulfill responsibilities and plan when to do them.
- **Promote the use of checklists.** Encourage your child to make daily lists of tasks to complete and to cross off completed tasks.
- **Help determine priorities.** There isn't always time for everything kids need and want to do. Ask your child, "What's the most important thing you have to do today? Do that first. What's the *next* most important?"
- **Demonstrate how to break down** large assignments into smaller parts and schedule a due date for each part.
- **Show how useful small amounts of time** can be. Your child could study flash cards on the way to practice, or solve a few math problems in the 10 minutes before dinner. Small chunks of time add up to big advantages.

Source: S. Claro and S. Loeb, "Self-Management Skills and Student Achievement Gains: Evidence from California's CORE Districts," Policy Analysis for California Education.



Keep your child on track to graduate

When it comes to helping students stay in school and graduate, the middle school years are key. Many students who drop out of school between ninth and twelfth grade start down that path in sixth, seventh or eighth grade.

Studies show that without intervention, sixth graders are 75 percent more likely to drop out if they:

- **Miss school** more than 20 percent of the time.
- **Fail a core class**, such as English or math.
- **Earn poor grades** as a result of behavior issues.
- **Express belief** in your middle schooler's ability to succeed.
- **Insist on attendance** in every class, unless your child is ill.
- **Encourage involvement** in extracurricular activities at school.
- **Work with the teachers** to support your child's learning.

Source: E.M. Allensworth and others, "5 Key Findings for Middle Grades," UChicago CCSR.

To help your child stay on track:

Encourage journal writing

Journaling helps students understand their feelings and behaviors so they can make better decisions. And it's great writing practice! Urge your child write in a journal a few minutes a day. Suggest prompts like:



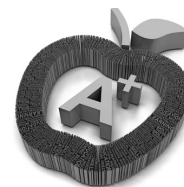
- *How are you feeling? What do you like to do when you feel this way?*
- *What thoughts do you have about changes you've noticed in the world recently?*
- *List four true sentences that start with "I will always remember..."*

Play a paraphrase game

To help your middle schooler practice listening and remembering spoken information, play a game at dinner. Take turns describing something that happened during the day. The next person to speak must correctly summarize what the previous person said before sharing their own news.

Boost math test success

Several test-taking strategies help students get every point they deserve on math tests. Encourage your child to:



- **Write down** any memorized formulas at the top of the test. Then your child can simply refer to them as needed.
- **Read the directions** carefully.
- **Show all work.** The teacher may give partial credit, even if the answer is wrong.
- **Use all the available time.** Your child should not feel pressured by how quickly others finish.
- **Double-check work**, and look for careless errors. Are the decimal points in the right place? Are graph axes labeled?

Helping Students Learn

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

March 2024

Q&A How can I get my child to take assignments seriously?

Q: My child always studies for tests and quizzes, and does fine on them. But homework is a different story. How can I get my child to take more responsibility for assignments?

A: Quizzes and tests may seem more significant to your child. But doing homework in middle school not only reinforces learning, it also helps students develop effective study habits they will need in high school.



To help your child take responsibility for schoolwork

- **Have a conversation** with your student. Spell out the issue clearly. "I've noticed that you are letting a lot of assignments slide. That is not OK, so let's figure out how to change this pattern."
- **Set a daily homework time.** Find a time that works for your child and make it part of daily routine. On days with no assignments, your middle schooler can use the time to review, work ahead or read.
- **Establish positive consequences.** "When your schoolwork is finished, you can relax with a game."
- **Follow up.** Say that you will be checking to see that all your child's assignments are turned in and complete. Decide on a consequence if you find they are not. If your strategies aren't working, get teachers involved.

Parent Quiz

Are you mentoring your middle schooler?

Mentors are wise and trusted counselors who teach and coach. You can be your child's strongest mentor. Are you actively guiding your middle schooler through these formative years? Answer *yes* or *no* to the questions below:

1. **Do you take** time to share your special interests, knowledge and experience with your child?
2. **Do you encourage** your student to observe, ask questions and keep an open mind?
3. **Do you help** your child set goals and work to reach them?
4. **Do you try** to find resources to help develop your child's abilities and talents?
5. **Do you praise** your child's progress and resilience, no matter what the outcome?

How well are you doing?

More *yes* answers mean that you are helping your child flourish in school and in life. For each *no*, try that idea.

"A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you than you see in yourself and helps bring it out of you."

—Bob Proctor

Better notes, more learning

Even if teachers provide handouts, taking notes in class will help your child remember explanations and what material was emphasized when it's time to study for tests. Share these note-taking tips with your child:

- **Take notes by hand.**
- **Don't try to write** everything down. Instead, listen for key facts and the relationships between them.
- **Write down** what the teacher repeats or writes down.
- **Review notes** each day, and expand on or clarify information so that it will still be understandable days or weeks later.

Support safety efforts

Safety at school is everyone's responsibility. One important way to help is to have open discussions with your child about:

- **The school's safety** and security procedures. If you don't know what they are, ask the school office.
- **School rules** and discipline policies. Talk about the reasons for them.
- **Strategies for solving** problems and resolving conflicts peacefully.

Also remember: If you hear something that concerns you, tell the school immediately.

Reduce digital time-wasters

Often, middle schoolers will stop to watch a video or play an online game "just for a minute," and not realize that half an hour has gone by. To build awareness, encourage your child to spend one week tracking recreational screen use and how much time is spent on what activities. Then, challenge your child to reduce the unproductive time the following week.



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Middle School

Daily Learning Planner

*Ideas families can use to help students
do well in school*

Appleton Village School



THE
PARENT
INSTITUTE

March • April • May 2024

March 2024

- 1. Ask your child, "If you could meet anyone from the past, who would it be? What questions would you ask?"
- 2. Have everyone in the family spend 30 minutes cleaning up your home. Many hands make light work.
- 3. Write your child a note of thanks. "It's such a help to the family when you vacuum the floor. Thank you!"
- 4. Stage a family fire drill. Make sure your smoke alarms work.
- 5. Ask what five rules your child would make if in charge of the household.
- 6. Discuss an international news event with your middle schooler. How is it affecting this country?
- 7. As you drive, talk with your child about traffic safety.
- 8. Have a rhyming conversation with your child. It may be tough at first, but you'll get better!
- 9. Discuss ways to conserve resources. Encourage your student to reuse old papers that are blank on one side.
- 10. Talk with your child about ways to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- 11. Focus on things your child does well today. Provide specific praise.
- 12. Peer pressure can be positive. Encourage group activities like sports and volunteering.
- 13. Ask your child, "If you could redesign your room any way you wanted, what would you do?" Consider making reasonable changes.
- 14. Today is Pi Day. Pi is a mathematical constant that starts with 3.14. Go online with your child to learn more about pi.
- 15. Make sure your child gets enough sleep every night—especially in the days and weeks leading up to tests.

Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Families Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 16. Give your child a plant to care for.
- 17. Let your child invite a friend to join your family for dinner one night.
- 18. Link responsibilities to freedom. By becoming more responsible, your child can earn more freedom.
- 19. On days without assignments, have your child use study time to review.
- 20. Create a word search for your child by hiding vocabulary words in a grid and surrounding them with random letters.
- 21. Challenge your child to do as many push-ups as possible.
- 22. Encourage your child to write a thank-you note to a favorite teacher.
- 23. Avoid disciplining your child in front of friends. Save it for when you are alone.
- 24. Visit a nearby museum together, or take a virtual museum tour online.
- 25. Talk with your child about romantic relationships. Share your values and standards.
- 26. Learn about the dangers of vaping. Talk about them with your child.
- 27. Ask your child to tell you about a favorite memory of family.
- 28. Encourage your child to review class notes, identify key ideas and draw pictures to illustrate them.
- 29. Have your child show you some websites or apps that have been helpful when doing schoolwork.
- 30. List your priorities in life, including family. Does your schedule reflect what's most important?
- 31. Challenge your child to find out how family first names would be pronounced in another language.

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April 2024

Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Families Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 1. April is Mathematics and Statistics Awareness Month. Take time to talk about math with your child each day this month.
- 2. Make a "world time" display with several clocks. Have your child set them to times in different countries.
- 3. Visit the grocery store spice aisle. Have your child calculate the difference in price per pound between the least and most expensive spices.
- 4. Look at a map together. Ask your child to show you the shortest route between two particular cities.
- 5. When disagreeing with your child, focus more on solutions than blame.
- 6. Do a library card "checkup." Does every member of the family have a card? If not, go sign up!
- 7. If your child gets nervous before tests, a pep talk can help. Say, "You know it. You studied hard. You can do it."
- 8. Encourage your child to try a sport. Studies show that sports participation has a positive effect on school performance.
- 9. Do a crossword puzzle with your child.
- 10. Tell your child why you value education. Talk about your student's long-range goals.
- 11. Say to your child, "If there's anything you want or need to talk about, I'm always willing to listen."
- 12. Have your child add two four-digit numbers. Can your middle schooler figure out the sum on paper before you can with a calculator?
- 13. Have your child list five questions most middle schoolers would like adults to ask them.
- 14. Sometime today, exchange notes with your child instead of talking. (This also works when things get noisy!)
- 15. Encourage reading by giving your child a book as a gift. Look for a title on a topic your child is interested in.
- 16. Experience is a great teacher. As long as it's safe, replace the phrase "It won't work" with "Why not try it?"
- 17. Find a place in your home to display things your child is proud of, such as awards and improved schoolwork.
- 18. When your child is studying history, acting out past events can bring lessons to life.
- 19. Ask to hear about the best dream your child has ever had.
- 20. Give your child old photos of family members to turn into a collage.
- 21. Write a letter about an important day in your middle schooler's early years. Send it to your child.
- 22. Make a list with your child of words that come from other languages. Here's a start: hummus, accident, alligator.
- 23. Go on a nature walk with your child.
- 24. With your child, learn how to say "I love you" in sign language.
- 25. Ask what your child thinks it means to be a leader.
- 26. Check on your student's grades. If necessary, discuss ways to raise them before the school year ends.
- 27. Does your child study well with others? Suggest forming a study group.
- 28. Together, look through your cupboards for foods produced in other countries. Have your child find these countries on a map.
- 29. Encourage your child to write a letter to a company to praise a product or express a concern.
- 30. Work on a hobby with your child.

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May 2024

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- 1. Drugs can be deadly the first time kids use them. Talk with your child and provide the facts.
- 2. Choose a book with an author's name that begins with "A." Read it together. Next, try a "B" book.
- 3. Help your child think of tough situations that might come up. How would your middle schooler handle them?
- 4. Don't use problems with schoolwork as an excuse to criticize or argue with your child about other issues.
- 5. Make a decision as a family. Give everyone a say before deciding.
- 6. It's Screen-Free Week. Have your child think of fun activities your family can do to replace digital entertainment.
- 7. Give your middle schooler a math-related household task to do. Can your child calculate your family's average monthly electricity expense?
- 8. Challenge your child to circle all the adjectives in a news article.
- 9. Play geography games as a family. Ask one another to name capitals or describe locations of different countries.
- 10. Does your child need more responsibility? More time to talk? More privacy? Ask what your middle schooler thinks.
- 11. Patiently explain the reason for a rule your child doesn't like.
- 12. Ask your child to help you plan and do the shopping for this week's dinner menu.
- 13. Visit the library with your child. Check out a book that will make you both laugh.
- 14. Memorize something with your child today. Try a poem or a quotation.
- 15. Do everyday tasks with your child, such as washing dishes, to gain more time together.
- 16. Help your child find opportunities to volunteer in the community.
- 17. Help your child use a few spare minutes to get a jump-start on schoolwork.
- 18. It's Physical Fitness and Sports Month. Enjoy a physical activity together as a family.
- 19. Look at family photos with your child. Tell stories about relatives.
- 20. Have your child give you examples of a complete sentence, an incomplete sentence and a run-on.
- 21. Have your child download an audiobook to listen to in the car.
- 22. At the grocery store, have your child estimate how many apples are in two pounds. Use the scales to check.
- 23. Open a book or newspaper to a random page. What new words can your child find there? Look up their definitions together.
- 24. Take a map with you in the car or on a walk. Point out where you are headed and let your child help navigate.
- 25. Ask your child, "What is your favorite time of day? Why?"
- 26. Ask your child to suggest new words that should be in the dictionary.
- 27. Watch your child's favorite show together. Ask questions, such as "What would you have done in that situation?"
- 28. Learn the symptoms of eating disorders. Help your child develop healthy eating habits.
- 29. Talk about one thing you admire most about your child as a student.
- 30. Avoid labeling your child (Emerson is the shy one). Kids tend to live up to roles cast for them by their families.
- 31. Discuss your child's accomplishments over the past school year.

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