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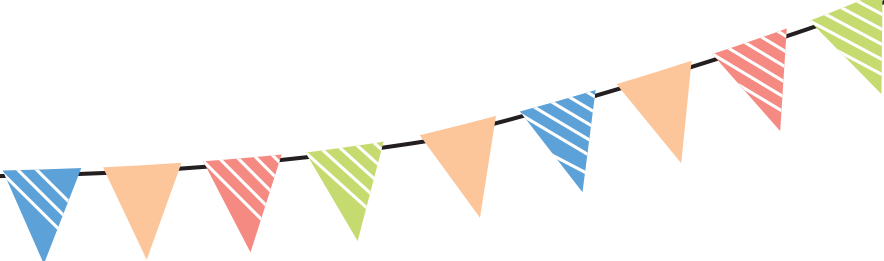
Northside
Adjacent to Target

Spring Creek
at Zion Crossroads

Downtown/Pantops
Near Martha Jefferson

cvilleorthodontics.com

Photo: Amy Nicole Photography



Just Between Us...

Dear Friends,

Spring break is right around the corner, and my favorite is a staycation. We are so lucky to live where we do with mountains, the oceans and some of the world's best museums and attractions within driving distance.

Sure, having the kids off from school for a whole week brings its own challenges to the usual family routine but it is also an opportunity. There are lots of fun, simple and relatively inexpensive activities you can plan to not only keep the kids happily occupied while at home but to also ensure their spring break is a memorable time. Most of the ideas on this list are things you can do in an afternoon or within the span of one day. Combining a bunch of these ideas could lead to the most fun spring break week ever!

Some of my favorite things have been to let the kids make the menu for the week. We still laugh about the time our youngest son's favorite thing was Kraft mac n cheese – not my delicious homemade version. Having store-bought and learning to make it himself was a big highlight of Spring Break that year. I would never have thought of that if I'd not had a big brainstorm with the kids for ideas. Here is a short list of some favorite ideas over the years that I hope can inspire you and your family. Be sure to visit the website for more fun ideas, events and daytrips and see the great story about Richmond's attractions for families on page 16.

Create a **DIY Spa Day**. Explore the neighborhood on a **Photo Safari Scavenger Hunt**. Get your heart pumping with an **At Home Olympics Contest** with homemade medals for the champs. An **Indoor Camping Trip** complete with tent forts, sleeping bags, campfire stories and microwave s'mores is always fun. Host a **Connect 4 Tournament** with brackets and prizes. Have a **Day at the Beach** at Chris Greene Lake or watch a beach-y movie and have a popsicle in your swimsuit and a beach towel if its cold. Turn your kitchen into a **Mad Scientist Laboratory** and try a few simple experiments (experiments at CharlottesvilleFamily.com). One of my all-time favorites is to open a **Family Bakery** and put your young chefs to work. The surplus makes great gifts to deliver to older neighbors! Host a **Family Art Show**. Go **Park or Playground Hopping**. We always love to visit a zoo, aquarium, farm or pet store to **See Animal Friends**. Lynchburg has a new Seaquest if you need something fresh. We also love to go for a **Pokemon Hunt** on the Downtown Mall or on Grounds and ever reliable, **Pack a Picnic and Hike**.

Happy Springtime Adventures!



Charlottesville Family

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So Love This!

Excited to try out the cookie recipe from a local favorite, Allen's Scottish shortbread, on page 31!
— Jen, co-founder & editor

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Editor's Pick

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CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS NEW NIGHT PROGRAM

Charlottesville City School (CHS) recently announced plans for a new education program, Knight School. The Knight School offers CHS students a chance to prepare for post-secondary education life. These students may struggle in the traditional high school setting, and allows them to work or volunteer during the day while maintaining their core studies in the evening. Following the November teacher sick-out event in response to increased student fighting, the start date for the Knight School was pushed up. The new program is now one of six alternative offerings available to City School students.

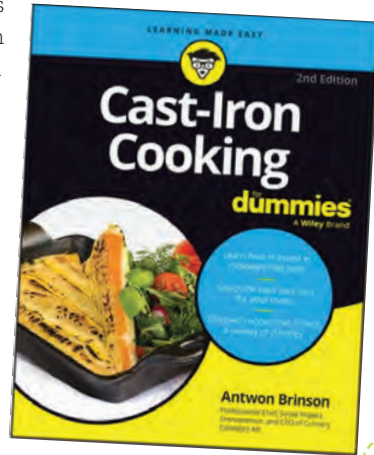
NEW VMFA INTERACTIVE FAMILY LOUNGE

The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts recently announced its new Interactive Family Lounge, the Memorial Foundation for Children Interactive Gallery. Children and adults are invited to rest, reflect, play, and explore colorful hands-on activities. Visitors can also experience A Closer Look, an interactive display inspired by a past installation of the same name. A Closer Look explores identity and works of art in the VMFA collection. With your identity in mind, visitors can go beyond the surface of the images within the space—and within VMFA itself.



DEBUT COOK BOOK FROM LOCAL DAD & CELEBRITY CHEF

Following his stint on HBO Max's *The Big Brunch*, local chef and social entrepreneur Antwon Brinson is debuting a cook book. "Cast Iron Cooking For Dummies" focuses on selecting the right cast iron for your cooking style, how to properly season and maintain pans so they last forever, foundational cooking techniques to take dishes from good to great, and the discovery of a world of new cultures and cuisines with recipes from around the world. Learn more at culinaryconceptsab.com.



NEW ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL CENTER

Following the success of the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC), Albemarle County is planning for a second high school center facility. Plans for the new center come after the city purchased the county's stake in CATEC. The new space will allow students to pursue courses outside of the traditional classroom setting and help alleviate overcrowding. County Schools hopes to serve up to 400 students per day in the 60,000 square foot space which will feature project studios, a digital fabrication lab and a fitness room.



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STAB LEGO ROBOTICS TEAM READY FOR NATIONALS

The St. Anne's-Belfield LEGO Robotics team is set to compete at the national competition. After beating out almost 60 teams across the state and Washington D.C., the group of eighth graders will travel to Houston, Texas in April for the 2024 FIRST Championship. While there the "Level Up" team will show hundreds of schools across the country their creations, which include a children's book about native plants aimed to convince children to plant trees and an autonomous robot that solves challenges.



NEW READING CURRICULUM FOR ALBEMARLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Albemarle County School Board voted to implement a new reading curriculum for kindergarten through fifth-grade students starting next school year. The HMH Into Reading Virginia program was recommended by an adoption committee made up of more than 60 ACPS teachers, administrators, academic coaches, parents and community members. The materials for each state-approved program under review were also sent to all 15 county elementary schools for further review by teachers, staff and families.

MOST POPULAR KIDS BOOKS IN CHARLOTTESVILLE

In 2023, Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (JMRL) cardholders checked out over 1.6 million items from the libraries. JMRL branches welcomes nearly 713,000 visitors and issued more than 12,000 new library cards. Top checked out Juvenile Fiction included *Diary of A Wimpy Kid* and *Dog Man* books. For young adults the most popular titles were *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins, *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins and *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier. In children's books the top 3 winners were *I Will Take a Nap*, *Should I Share My Ice Cream*, and *Piggy Makes Mistakes* all by Mo Willems. Leading the picture books categories were *Eric Carle's Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Yertle the Turtle* by Dr. Seuss and *Hot Dog* by Dog Salati.

The Buzz AROUND TOWN



Do you feel your school is handling
conflicts/fights effectively?

29% say "yes"

"Our principal does a good job of sharing with parents when there are any conflicts/social issues at our high school. The number of fights are down from previous years because of earlier intervention by staff to deescalate. Inviting parents and the community to be part of the conversation has been important too."

—Mom of 4

71% say "no"

"I think it is normal for parents to worry about their kids' safety while they are at school. Just like most things in the education system, there is always room for review and improvement upon current policies."

—Mom of 3, Charlottesville

"Recent events clearly show that local schools have some evaluating to do when it comes to conflicts and how teachers are meant to handle certain situations. If the teachers are fed up with it, the leaders must listen to that and make changes."

—Anonymous

Visit CharlottesvilleFamily.com to answer
next month's question.

BIZ BITS

OPENINGS

434th Street, Dairy Market, 946 Grady Avenue

Brookwood Therapeutic Services at Martha Jefferson House, 1600 Gordon Avenue

MTHD 434 Pilates Studio, 5790-A Three Notch'd Road

Rose's Inspiration Station, Piedmont Place Crozet, 2025 Library Avenue

CLOSINGS

Fry's Spring Station, 2115 Jefferson Park Avenue

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Albemarle County School Board again considered the implementation of a "7+1" academic schedule for all high schools, but agreed not to move forward with the plan in its present state.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin's new "Building Blocks for Virginia Families" plan will provide \$448 million for early childhood education to help address child care centers staff shortages and families who struggle to pay for care.

The Charlottesville City School Board has paused the school renaming initiative.

HERSports launched its "Speak Her Mind" program, a support group for local high school female athletes focused on prioritizing mental health.

Scottsville's James River Boys & Girls Club recently celebrated 10 years of serving local youth.

Piedmont CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) is expanding its service area to include Madison County. The nonprofit is now searching for more volunteers to help local foster children.

Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital once again ranked among the best hospitals in Virginia for maternity care in the "uncomplicated pregnancy" category by U.S. News and World Report.

Supporting Transformative Autism Research (STAR) has teamed up with UVA Professor Mandy Rispoli to develop a program that gives teachers strategies to better support students with Autism.

The Thomas Jefferson Foundation announced the appointment of Jane Kamensky, Ph.D., as the new President of Monticello. The Foundation also announced it has purchased Michie Tavern.

Submit Biz Bits to:
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Jill Trischman-Marks

Executive Director, Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

A landscape architect with almost 30 years of experience in the Central Virginia area, Jill Trischman-Marks now serves as the Executive Director of the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont. piedmontgarden.org.

How did you first get involved in the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont, and why is it such an important site?

I joined the Board of Directors in July 2017 because I believed in the efforts to build a public Garden for the community. At that time, we were focused mostly on the educational, recreational and aesthetic benefits a botanical garden would offer residents. After the events of August 12, 2017, it became obvious the Garden could also be a place where people of all ages and backgrounds could come to grow and heal together. As a result, healing and connection became central themes in the resulting Schematic Master Plan for the Garden—which won a national award from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2019.

Tell us about the trails and areas the space currently offers.

The Garden covers about 15 acres next to Charlottesville High School and today offers a myriad of mulch-lined paths, benches for quiet reflection, areas for kids to play and discover, and an assortment of native trees and plants. We have also added low to no cost amenities such as our mini amphitheater, a labyrinth, and other rustic infrastructure to welcome visitors and support our current programs.

We also try to incorporate the design and construction of the Garden into a learning opportunity. The stream that runs through the Garden is currently being restored to create a healthy place for aquatic life and a safe place for visitors.

What kind of educational classes and other programming for kids does the Garden offer?

The Garden is a great place to grow and not just for plants. In fact, we've recently hired an education coordinator who is expanding our events and programs for children of all ages and interests. In the past, we have offered children's programs in literacy, such as Explore to Read, where children explore trails looking for the next page in a story about nature; Create with Nature is an arts program led by local artists; opportunities to learn about and identify local trees and plants; bluebird house building and of course, our ever-popular butterfly walks. All are free and open to the public.

What does the future look like for the Garden?

We are in the second phase of designing the landscape and have begun designing the buildings that will house our offices, classrooms and event spaces. In addition, the restoration of the stream has been going on since last fall and when completed later this year, the City will build a bridge which will connect both sides of the Garden, as well as the Garden to the Rivanna Trail and the greater Central Virginia trail network.

The one thing it's important to be clear about is while the City of Charlottesville has designated the land for the Garden—that is where the tax payers' burden ends. We are responsible for raising the funds to design, construct and maintain the Garden.

What is your favorite thing to plant locally in the spring and why?

I've always been passionate about native plants, and, like anyone else who gardens, I'm particularly fond of plants that the deer won't eat. One of my current favorites, also happens to be the logo of BGP and the 2024 Virginia Native Plant Society Wildflower of the Year - White Turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*.



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Out & About

SPRING 2024




**Seasonal
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LEGO Ninjago

February 2–March 1 at LEGO Discovery Center

Families can become Spinjitzu masters with powered-up activities, experiences and LEGO builds at this special event.

The Year of the Dragon

February 7 at Crozet Library

Get ready for the Lunar New Year by listening to some great stories about our mythical fire breathing friends and creating your own dragon to celebrate.

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed

February 9–March 4 at Virginia Rep Center for Arts & Education

Kids and adults will love this rock ‘n roll parable based on the hit children’s book by Mo Willems.

C.S. Lewis On Stage

February 14 at The Paramount Theater

Actor Max McLean’s performance captures Lewis’ magnetic personality to create an experience venturing into the soul of one of the most influential thinkers of the past century.

Little Naturalists

February 17 at Ivy Creek Natural Area

Trained guides explore topics such as food chains, hibernation, how trees grow and more with 3–5 year olds and their adults. Event repeats monthly.

Richmond Ballet Presents: Dracula

February 16–18 at Dominion Energy Center

A bold, dramatic ballet, Dracula takes the classic tale of the titular vampire and his brides to all new heights.

Mathemagicians

February 24 at Northside Library

This club is a combination of games puzzles, riddles, special sequences, and math problems. Ages 11–18. Snacks are provided.

Peter and the Wolf Presented by the Richmond Symphony

March 2 at Carpenter Theatre

Introduce the children in your life to Prokofiev’s enchanting take told by Really Inventive Stuff’s Michael Boudewyns.

Roald Dahl’s James and the Giant Peach

March 15 at DMR Adventures

Based on one of Roald Dahl’s most poignantly quirky stories, enjoy a brand new musical take on this “masterpeach” of a tale.

Here Wee Grow Again Spring Sale

March 16–24 at Aldersgate United Methodist

This popular children’s seasonal consignment sale features thousands of items. Bring a laundry basket to gather your treasures.

Virginia Festival of the Book

March 20–24

This staple local festival brings together writers and readers to promote and celebrate books, reading, literacy, and literary culture.

ArtFest in the West

March 22 at Western Albemarle High School

Enjoy a night of performances from all six schools, a sneak peek of Western’s spring play, art, and a silent auction. 100% of funds support the arts in Western schools.




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JMRL Book Swap

March 23 at Central Library

Swap your gently used books for something new to you at this annual event. It's free, it's fun and for all ages.

Once Upon a Find Spring Pop-Up Shop

March 24 at Mudhouse Crozet

Enjoy a warm beverage while you shop for vintage kids' decor, gifts, books, and toys. Free storytime and coloring crafts.

Hop Into Spring

March 30–31 at Chiles Peach Orchard

Enjoy an eggsciting celebration with festive entertainment, tasty treats and live animals. Ticketed event.

Harlem Globetrotters World Tour

April 16 at John Paul Jones Arena

Your favorite Globetrotter stars are bringing out their amazing basketball skills, outrageous athleticism and a non-stop good time.

Lego Block Party

April 16 at Gordon Avenue Library

Get together with LEGO-minded people to build great things. All you need to bring is your creativity and natural ability; JMRL will have the building blocks for your next creation.

Hot Wheels Monster Trucks Live

April 20 & 21

This event brings fans' favorite Hot Wheels Monster Trucks to life including the new HW 5-Alarm, the firetruck hero! Enjoy a dance party, laser light shows, and giveaways.

National Park Free Fee Day

April 20 at Shenandoah National Park

Enjoy free admission to Shenandoah National Park in recognition of the first day of National Park Week.

Healthy Kids Day

April 20 at Brooks Family YMCA

Fun indoor & outdoor activities including a sack race, corn hole, bingo, kids Zumba, LaBlast, and Knock Out. Enjoy free swim and a fun coin dive for kids. Free and open to the public.

Charlottesville Ballet: Snow White

May 4 at The Paramount Theater

A ballet based on the beloved Grimm's fairy tale, follows the fairest of them all as she meets a forest full of friends, the Seven Dwarfs, and a dashing Prince.

Crozet Spring Arts & Crafts Festival

May 11–13 at Claudius Crozet Park

With 120 fine artists and contemporary craft artisans from around the country, the Festival is central Virginia's premier juried arts and crafts event.

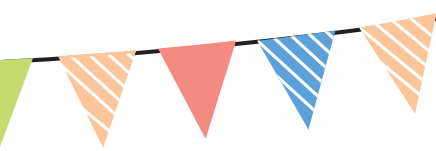
Broadway at The Paramount

May 18 at The Paramount Theater

This event brings together Broadway artists, over 100 students from DMR Adventures, and local talent for two incredible performances.







• Daytrip FUN! •

RICHMOND DAYTRIPS

Family Fun Just a Short Ride Away

by Jennifer Waldera

Whether in the warmth of spring and summer or the brisker days of fall and winter, there are always interesting and exciting destinations to explore in Richmond, the capital of Virginia. While you can easily spend a day strolling or cycling by Belle Isle along the James River or traversing the Potterfield Bridge and either kayaking or rafting, there are tons of historical sites and gorgeous gardens as well as myriad museums.

Since there's no shortage of ways for families to spend a day in the city of Richmond, we've rounded up some of the best places that are perfect destinations for a one-day family road trip.

Maymont

For a whole day of exploration that will be as entertaining for children as adults, head to Richmond's historic Maymont. The award-winning destination features expansive grounds, beautiful gardens (including a stunning Japanese Garden and Italian Garden), a butterfly trail, and a farm full of animals that visitors can feed. Visitors can also stroll through 40 acres of wildlife habitats with the chance to see animals that range from red foxes and Bald Eagles to black bears and bobcats.

A majority of Maymont can be accessed at no cost, but there are other exhibits that can be explored for a small fee. The Robins Nature Center is a dream destination for nature lovers, home to aquatic creatures like crabs, alligators, otters, turtles, and fish, and offers numerous opportunities for interactive learning and play. Maymont also hosts multiple events throughout the year from a massive herb and plant sale and an Easter celebration to summertime concerts, a holiday market, and a family-friendly German-style festival.

While Maymont has vending machines for snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, you can also pack a picnic or bring snacks. The estate is also only a five-minute drive to Carytown which is chock-full of child-friendly spots for dining and shopping.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA)


This free museum in Carytown is open every day of the year and features an impressive collection of artwork throughout its four floors. The museum's permanent collection itself contains more than 50,000 pieces of artwork that span across numerous cultures, countries of origin, and time periods.

In addition to its permanent collection, there are over a dozen featured exhibitions and the museum houses a rare book collection, too. Outside, visitors can continue to

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explore, strolling through the museum's impressive sculpture garden.

To prepare for a trip to the museum, access the VMFA's website for a variety of activities that children can participate in, including guides and hunts. The museum's art education wing offers interactive activities and the opportunity for children to get creative. There are also guided tours available on a regular schedule or for groups by reservation and audio tours are available for some exhibitions.

While food and drinks cannot be brought into the museum, VMFA does have several onsite options. For an upscale experience, try scheduling a tea time at Floris or a meal at Amuse, overlooking the sculpture garden. For a casual visit, pop into the Best Café for soups, sandwiches, pizzas, and salads.

Virginia Museum of History and Culture (VMHC)

Located alongside the VMFA in Richmond's Museum District, Virginia Museum of History and Culture explores the rich history of the Commonwealth through its extensive collections of over 9 million pieces of artwork, artifacts, and other objects. From portraits of people of historical significance and photographs of important events that shaped both Virginia and the United States as a whole to Arthur Ashe's tennis equipment, the museum offers a unique experience to learn about history. With an eye on Virginia's influence, VMHC explores a wide range of topics through its various exhibitions that have covered everything from space exploration, the Civil War, and equality to Virginia's beverage history and toys from various eras.

VMHC also offers a multitude of events throughout the year including a lecture series, demonstrations, and First Fridays which feature free admission and family-friendly activities. The museum will also have a number of events, publications, and exhibits over the next two years leading up to the United States' 250th anniversary.

A casual café is also available for visitors to relax with a drink, snack, or full meal. The cozy spot also features a shop that everyone can enjoy with toys, art, clothes, and home decor.

Science Museum of Virginia (SMV)

Also located in the Museum District, the Science Museum of Virginia is open Tuesday through Sunday. The four-floor museum offers a number of exhibitions and demonstrations as well as numerous hands-on and interactive activities suitable for a range of ages, from early childhood to teens. SMV also offers a makerspace called The Forge which is focused on innovation and design with events that include creating apparel, working with paper or wood, soldering, screen printing, and collaborative building. SMV's The Dome experience is one that no one will want to miss out on.

Throughout the day, the museum projects shows onto

its 76-foot screen—the shows cover numerous topics like exploration of the universe, oceans, caves, and animals.

Once the whole family has worked up an appetite, you can stop by the museum's café for snacks or lunch. The concession stand outside of The Dome also serves up some drinks and popcorn to enjoy during the show.

Children's Museum of Richmond (CMoR)

For families with children eight years old or younger, the Children's Museum of Richmond is the perfect place to spend the day. The interactive museum has two locations—one in Downtown and one in Chesterfield. With an eye on helping young children develop social-emotional and literacy skills, the museum offers a number of exhibits like Little Farm and Hospital and Ambulance that encourage children to learn through pretend play as well as an art studio, a children's theatre, and a music exhibit in which

children can play various instruments.

During the holidays, CMoR also offers an experience of visiting with Santa that can include photos or even watching Santa come down the chimney. The event also offers the opportunity for children to shop on their own for gifts for family or friends. In the lobby of the museum, children can also learn about other holidays that are celebrated around the world including Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Eid, Diwali, and LuVisitors can bring their own snacks to keep their little ones' bellies full (in designated areas). Or, drinks or light snacks can be purchased as well.

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden

With over 50 acres of property just north of Downtown Richmond, Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden is a unique attraction for visitors of any age. Open all year, guests can enjoy the beauty of nature in any season. Take specialized

tours that focus on Virginia's native plants or blooming in the spring or learn about the conservatories in colder months. During the holidays, the botanical garden becomes even more magical with an incredible light display called GardenFest. The garden also hosts classes for adults from beekeeping and entomology to creating gorgeous floral arrangements or improving gardening skills.

While everyone in the family will undoubtedly enjoy the beauty of Lewis Ginter's many gardens, the young visitors in a group have lots of opportunities to learn and play in the Children's Garden. Little ones can explore the International Village, full of plants and architecture from various cultures, or plant and care for fruits and vegetables in the Jane Quinn Saunders Farm Garden. They can also play and learn in the Garden Keeper's Cottage, go on a hunt following clues (and ultimately winning a prize), or cool off on the splash pad in the summer. Tree-climbing and an ascent up the Klaus Family Tree House give

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children a different perspective of the gardens, too.

Grab salads, soups, sandwiches, and snacks at the Garden Café when all of that exploration works up an appetite. During GardenFest, there are additional dining options as well.

Metro Richmond Zoo

A little over a half hour outside of Downtown Richmond, the Metro Richmond Zoo is home to thousands of animals representing nearly 200 species. The largest zoo in the Commonwealth, Metro Richmond Zoo is nestled on 150 acres and is open all year. Visitors can navigate the zoo on their own or create a special experience by scheduling to meet a caretaker with a specific animal, from penguins or parrots to snakes or armadillos.

In addition to observing the animals, guests can feed giraffes or birds and pet some goats, chickens, sheep, llamas, and more. There are also learning opportunities in the form of free keeper talks or a 15-minute safari ride led by a

conductor full of intricate knowledge of the animals. For the adventurous, there are rides like a 30-foot high drop tower or sign up to zipline across the zoo.

The Metro Richmond Zoo has four separate dining areas and a variety of places to settle in to eat. Visitors can also bring food into the zoo, though glass containers and plastic bags are not allowed.

Where to Eat and Shop

While many attractions have food options, it's important to note that Richmond has become known for its food scene—food enthusiasts on a day trip have no shortage of options when it comes to spots to stop for a bite. Plus, there are plenty of fun shops to enjoy as a family, too.

If you're visiting destinations like Maymont, VMFA, or VMHC, it only takes a few minutes to drive to Carytown. Stop into The Daily Kitchen & Bar for a meal made from organic, local, and sustainable ingredients. The comprehensive menu features food

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that works with nearly any palate and the kids' menu features options from burgers, quesadillas, and grilled cheese to pizza, pasta, or a stir-fry.

For mouthwatering, authentic Greek food, stop into family-friendly Greek on Cary—grab a seat near the window to keep children (and adults) busy with people-watching on bustling Cary Street. For other kid-friendly food options, try Baker's Crust, Mary Angela's Pizzeria, or Galaxy Diner.

As for shops, readers will love a stop into the adorable bbgb bookstore and toy lovers of all ages will enjoy World of Mirth. For day-trippers on the lookout for deals on clothes, stop into the award-winning Clover, a children's consignment shop, or its sister stores Clementine or Ashby, for adult clothing or accessories. Sweets lovers will also want to complete their trip with a stop at Richmond's longtime candy shop, For the Love of Chocolate.

While visitors to attractions like the Children's Museum of Richmond and the Science Museum of Virginia can also get to Carytown in a matter of minutes,

Scott's Addition is even closer. Tazza Kitchen has customizable pizzas and tacos that children are bound to enjoy as well as an ample amount of creative salads and mains. For meat lovers, ZZQ Texas Craft Barbeque is a top spot and Lunch.Supper! has a comprehensive Southern-inspired menu that features items for kids as well as all-day brunch in addition to all of its other salads, starters, sandwiches, and mains.

Meanwhile, if coffee aficionados need a little boost after keeping up with the kids all day, Grit Coffee's Scott's Addition location is the place to stop—and there are plenty of locally roasted beans to buy to take home too. The neighborhood also has a shop for those looking to depart from their trip with some high-quality food items. Stop into Stella's Grocery for salads and sandwiches to take on the road (or eat in) or for specialty foods, candies, or gifts. And, if the whole family likes to hunt for interesting finds at thrift and antique shops, there are a few of those in and around the area, too.

A drive into Richmond from Lewis

Ginter Botanical Gardens will only take a little over ten minutes, affording day-trippers the opportunity to peruse either Carytown, Scott's Addition, or any of Richmond's other cozy neighborhoods. Meanwhile, the Metro Richmond Zoo is at least 30 minutes from the downtown area so visitors should be prepared to tack on a little extra time to their day trip if they intend to explore Richmond's eateries.

Whether family trips are focused on nature, history, art, or adventure, the Commonwealth's capital is rich with opportunities to learn and explore together.



Jennifer Waldera shares her curiosity about food, travel, and drinks as a freelance writer for numerous mid-Atlantic publications. Read more of her work at jenniferwaldera.com.



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by Sarah Lyons

Boost Baby's Brain Power

Tips for Development From the Start

Your baby's brain grows faster from birth to five years old than any other time in their life. Each day they are discovering how the world works, understanding both verbal and nonverbal communication, learning fine motor and gross motor skills, how their bodies work, and how they relate to others around them. As parents, we want to create a nurturing environment that encourages learning and makes baby feel loved. Here are some tips to boost your baby's brain power.

Baby Talk

One of the best ways to boost your child's language skills is to talk to them. Babies love to hear your voice, listen to the inflections in your tone, and watch your facial expressions. Talk to your child about the world around them as you explore together. On a walk you can point out the trees and the sky or whether the breeze feels hot or cold. Try singing songs or reciting nursery rhymes. Heather Lewis, mom of three and music teacher suggests incorporating music through singing lullabies and playing music in the car. "I used to sing the alphabet song, recite the pledge of allegiance, recite our address and phone number while they were strapped in the stroller on walks or in the car." says Stephanie Loux, mom of three. You can even use diaper changing time to smile, talk, and sing to your child.

Book Club

Reading books with your child is a great way to help them learn new things. Bright, colorful books or books with contrasting colors are fun to look at. Point out objects, shapes, and colors as you read. Mom and preschool teacher, Kara Thomas, suggests printing high contrast cards and hanging them by your baby's changing table. Babies' attention spans are short so don't stress if they quickly lose patience with reading. Reading and interacting with them, even for a short time, makes a difference.

Healthy Choices

A diet that includes healthy protein, fruits and vegetables are important to fuel your child's growing brain. It's also important to make sure the baby is getting adequate rest both at night and during regular naps.

Snuggle

Another way to boost your child's development is to make them feel safe and loved. "I consoled them and held them whenever they were upset." says Angela Leaver, mom and early childhood education teacher. "I think this helps them form a healthy attachment to their parents. Social emotional health is super important." Physical touch is vital in showing your children they are loved and helps your baby's brain develop.

Role Model

If you are stressed, angry, or sad your baby will respond to your emotions. Creating a space that is safe for your baby to experience the highs and lows of their emotions and how to appropriately respond to feelings is important. Take care of your physical and mental health so you can provide the best environment for your child. You can also model good communication skills and other healthy choices.

During the first years of life your child is learning to talk, walk, and how the world works. You can give them a solid foundation by interacting and stimulating their already curious minds.

New Mom



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Sarah is a freelance writer and mom of six kids including triplets. She enjoys reading, writing, and spending time outdoors with her family.



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by Bob Taibbi

Expert Advice

Your Parenting Questions Answered

My 7-year-old son easily gets upset—melts down over homework, tantrums in stores. It's wearing me out, and I'm unsure what to do.

Helping children learn to manage their emotions is one of the primary skills they need to learn to succeed. It is about skills, not bad behavior; your son is doing the best he can. The starting point is you—remaining calm when these meltdowns happen—not ramping up yourself or being punitive. After all, what you model has the biggest impact on your child.

If your son is in a total meltdown, your goal is to help him lower the emotional temperature. You may want to sit next to him on the couch for 5 minutes or hold him. You can do deep breathing with him—having him take a deep breath and then say a vowel sound as he exhales.

But ideally, you want to act as soon as you can tell your son is becoming frustrated. Suggest that he take a break when you can tell he's starting to get frustrated with his homework. Coach him through a situation—offer to show him how to do one math problem but then let him try the rest on his own; focus on his frustration, not the math, so he becomes more sensitive to his mood. If he throws tantrums at the store, lay out the rules before going in the store and build in a reward for good behavior: If you stay by me and do not whine for treats, we can get ice cream afterward. Finally, if your child has trouble with transitions—turning off the TV or videogame—give them a heads up—a 5-minute warning, and then it's time to get ready for bed.

The keys are having a plan of action for yourself, catching it early, coaching your child through their emotions, and rewarding good behavior.

My teenage daughter and I are battling over the use of her phone. I feel I should be able to track where she is in case of emergencies and know what she is texting about so she is not getting into dangerous situations. She, of course, feels that I'm being controlling and invading her privacy.

Parents tend to fall into two camps—those who feel they should have access to their kid's phone and those who believe a child's privacy is a top priority. The various child and family experts are in the middle, but here are some of their guidelines:

- Yes, parents legally have a right to access their child's phone. This is part of being a parent, making sure your child isn't being bullied or dealing with a predator.
- That said, your level of supervision should fit their age. You may block your tween from social media or monitor texts but be more relaxed with a 16-year-old.
- Keep in mind your child's capabilities. Some 16-year-olds are more emotionally vulnerable or impulsive than their peers. Use your knowledge of your child to guide how much supervision they may need.
- Realize that kids do need privacy. Having privacy is a natural and essential part of a teen's development.
- Educate your child about media. They need to know, for example, that they shouldn't write a text that they wouldn't want the world to see...because there's a chance that the world could see it.
- Make this a conversation and be willing to negotiate. Help your child understand your concerns while understanding their desire for privacy. Seek win-win compromises; devise a plan, try it out, and then circle back to finetune.

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Email your parenting concerns and queries to editor@IvyLifeandStyleMedia.com. Yours might be included in an upcoming issue!

Dear Bob



Bob is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with 47 years of clinical experience. He has published 13 books and over 300 articles, as well as provides trainings nationally and internationally. He is in private practice in Charlottesville.



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by Sarah Lyons

Foster Healthy Sibling Relationships

Encouraging Teamwork & the Importance of Family

As a mom of six kids, I have witnessed my share of sibling disagreements. I have also had the pleasure of seeing the heart-melting moments when siblings stick up for each other, cheer each other on, and generally love being together. While sibling fights are normal, and even healthy, as kids learn to work through disagreements in an appropriate way, most parents want to foster sibling relationships that will stand the test of time. Here are some tips to help your kids build healthy, lasting friendships with one another.

Encourage teamwork

Working towards a common goal can help people feel connected and build stronger relationships. This is why companies spend time doing team building exercises with their staff. The same is true in families. Give the kids a project, like cleaning the toy room or freshening up the yard and have them work on it as a team. You can even try making it a competition such as challenging the kids to clean a room faster than the parents. Playing board games or backyard sports can also have the same effects.

Have fun together

Spending time together as a family is a simple way to build bonds. Pick something that everyone can participate in such as a bike ride, a movie night, or a fun outing that builds memories. "My kids love having sleepovers in each other's rooms each weekend." says Stephanie Loux, mom of three. "It makes a mess and it's not always convenient for us as parents, but we love and encourage their excitement for spending time together."

Healthy conflict

Settling disagreements in a respectful way is a tool that all of us need to learn. A sibling is usually the first person in our lives we disagree with on a regular basis. This gives parents an opportunity to teach kids how to handle conflict. "We teach them to tell each other when they are hurting emotionally or physically." says Abby Vanden Hull, mom of four. "In the beginning that means helping them find the words and talk to each other kindly. It also means stepping back and letting them sort out their problems whenever possible." Teach kids to listen, take turns speaking, use kind words, refrain from violence, and compromise whenever possible.

Do not compare

Each child has their own unique gifts to foster and challenges to face. Try to focus on appreciating their gifts and encouraging everyone in the family to do so. When they are struggling with behaviors that other kids may not have, be patient and help them work through it. When kids feel like their parents are comparing them, it can cause jealousy and competition. Alternatively, when they feel like their gifts are cultivated and appreciated they feel loved and valued.

The importance of family

Siblings are our first friends and have a unique perspective to us because they experienced nearly everything we did during childhood. This often leads to a relationship that includes understanding and support for challenges we may face. This concept is difficult to explain to children, but the importance of family can be shown through actions rather than words.

Healthy Family

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Sarah is a freelance writer and stay-at-home mom to six children who enjoys encouraging other parents with her writing.





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GUIDE TO GROWING

wildflowers



“There is poetry among the wildflowers.”

—Rachel Irene Stevenson

by Mandy Reynolds

Why

Growing wildflowers is one of the fastest growing at-home gardening trends. Yielding vivacious blooms year after year, wildflowers not only make your garden beautiful, but also attract pollinators, encourage native biodiversity, require less maintenance and can help with soil conversion. Sewing wildflowers generally takes less work than traditional bulbed-flower varieties while being able to cover large or hard to reach areas of ground.

What

When it comes to picking the right wildflowers for your space, there are a few rules of (green)thumb to keep in mind. Are the varieties you chose native to your area and are they annuals or perennials?

Choosing native wildflowers varieties is important for a myriad of reasons. They will be hardy to the soil and weather conditions of the region, meaning that if they can grow in the

wild, they will thrive with minimal TLC in your garden. Some gorgeous wildflowers native to Charlottesville and the surrounding Piedmont are Wild Columbine, Black Eyed Susan, Wild Geranium and Goldenrod.

You should also consider how often you want to replant your wildflower bed, as annual varieties will need to be reseeded yearly while perennials will naturally return with little to no effort.

Many local garden shops offer a good variety of wildflower seed types that you can mix and match for a swath of bespoke blooms like Galilee Larkspur or Calendula from Fifth Season Gardening Co. Or, try a mixed seed packet that is chosen specifically to flourish in your local region like the Virginia Wildflower Seed Mix from Eden Brothers.

When

For Spring planting, it is best to plant within a month after the final frost of the winter season in order to give your seeds the best chance. Try to plant

before grasses break their dormancy and old growth has been cleared away. In the Southeast, the typical planting time ranges from the end of March to the beginning of April, depending on your hardiness zone. The USDA's original and most widely used system on hardiness zones is comprised of 13 overall zones based on the annual minimum winter temperature. With Charlottesville falling right in the middle, zone 7A, it is in one of the most temperate zones where many popular wildflowers thrive, like Echinacea and Yarrow.

Where

If you've chosen wildflowers that are native to your region and good for spring planting, your garden plot or yard's soil conditions are probably already perfect for wildflowers. To see if an area will support wildflower growth just use the simple principle—if anything is growing in the area, so will wildflowers. If your soil is particularly sandy or full of clay (not generally a



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problem in the Charlottesville region), you can add some organic matter or top soil to the area. However, wildflowers are extremely adaptable and do well in even poor soils.

If you're still trying to decide where to place your wildflower bed, consider an area of the yard with partial to full sunlight with good drainage. Most types of wildflowers will prosper under these conditions.

You should also make sure your ground area is large enough to see the optimum growth. Crowding and competition can cause weak plants, and will undermine the health of your flowers. Try scattering seeds with intention into a larger patch of land in order to get the whimsical effects of meadowscaping. If the wildflower seeds are crowded they will not grow, but the existing grass or weed seeds still will.

How

Once you've chosen which wildflowers to plant and where, the final step is the actual leg work. Since wildflowers are very self sufficient once planted, the most important thing to do is prepare your pre-chosen garden or yard area. The better you prep your area the more likely your seeds will germinate quicker and stronger, which ensures beautiful blooms and also helps keep unwanted weeds at bay.

To ready the bed, there are four main soil preparation techniques you can choose from that are eco-friendly: rototilling, solarization/smothering, hand tools and herbicides. You should choose which method you use based on the size of the area you are preparing and how much lead time you have before planting. For instance, to meadowscape a whole yard, you might want to choose a rototiller, but for a small garden, hand tools (like these gorgeous ones from Be Just) are just as effective. Likewise, if you have planned your project about 8 weeks out, smothering might be a good choice as it takes more time.

Like all seeds, wildflowers need moisture to germinate and grow. Make sure to soak the planted areas and maintain consistence moisture for up to six weeks before gradually reducing to let Mother Nature take over. Most seeds will germinate and begin to grow within 2 to 8 weeks depending on the type of flower.

Lastly, enjoy the bountiful blooming eco-friendly garden you've just created for years to come!



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Mandy enjoys reading, traveling and exploring local gems with her lovable puppy.





Laura Allen's

Millionaire's Shortbread Recipe

A classic Scottish treat sure to satisfy any sweet tooth. Caramel shortbread, also known as caramel squares, caramel slice, millionaire's shortbread, millionaire's slice, chocolate caramel shortbread, and Wellington squares is a biscuit confectionery item composed of a rectangular, triangular or circular shortbread biscuit base topped with caramel and milk chocolate.

Read the local story behind this wonderful recipe at CharlottesvilleFamily.com!

Ingredients

- 1 box Traditional Allen's Scottish Shortbread
- 14 oz Condensed Milk
- 8 oz Ghiradelli Chocolate

Instructions

Caramelized Condensed Milk

1. Fill a large saucepan with water and bring to a boil over medium heat
2. Place unopened can of condensed milk in the boiling water, cover and let simmer for three hours, turning the can every half hour to prevent scorching
3. Remove the can and let cool

Chocolate Layer

1. Break the chocolate up into small pieces
2. Microwave for 30 second intervals, stirring in between rounds until fully melted

Millionaire Shortbread

1. Open box of shortbread
2. Spread a layer of the caramelized condensed milk on top of the shortbread layer and chill.
3. Spread a layer of melted chocolate over the chilled caramel and shortbread base and sprinkle with sea salt. Chill in the fridge until your millionaire's shortbread is set.

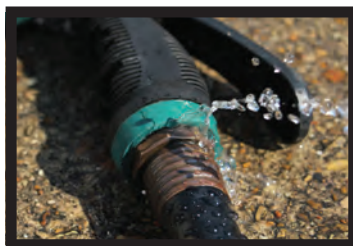
Tip: Millionaire's Shortbread keeps best when cut into squares, individually wrapped in tinfoil and frozen.

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Homework Help

Should You Assist Your Kids with Homework?

Here is a scenario most parents can relate to: it's late afternoon and your children come home from school exhausted, weighed down like turtles by school bags full of homework. What do you do: 1) insist they do their homework or cut them some slack, and 2) sit down to help them with it, or encourage them to do it on their own?

The answer to the first question is a resounding “Yes! Make sure that your children do their homework.” The best available evidence shows that the more conscientious children are about doing their homework, the better they do academically. They retain more factual information, understand the material better, and even get higher grades. More generally, research shows that by doing their homework on a consistent basis, children develop good study habits and skills, learn how to plan and manage their time, and become self-directed and self-disciplined.

The answer to the second question is “It depends.” In the most comprehensive summary of the scientific literature to date, researchers from Duke University concluded that whether or not parents should help their children with their homework depends on: 1) the grade level of the children, 2) how knowledgeable parents are about the subject matter of the homework, and 3) how parents go about helping their children with it.

Before you sit down with your children to help them with their homework, you should consider their age. Sounds cryptic? Surprising as it may seem, researchers have consistently found that homework assistance is beneficial for children in elementary and high school, only not for middle-school-aged children. So if your children are in middle school, you are better off letting them do their homework on their own.

Why? Researchers believe that parental assistance with homework for children in

elementary school helps because they are young and impressionable, and your help is about more than just completing the homework: you are also teaching them how to study in the first place. Erica Patall, the lead author of the research summary, says “Homework is an especially good opportunity for parents to help young kids develop self-regulatory skills, by modeling study strategies and helping students set goals and make plans for completing homework.” Also, since their homework is still simple and straightforward, as a parent you are unlikely to make any mistakes when you help out.

The situation is quite different when it comes to high-school-aged students. Here, researchers speculate that your involvement adds value because you are only likely to help out when you have particular expertise to share. When you know little or nothing about the subject matter of their homework, you are more likely to let your children do it on their own. As Judith Locke, a clinical psychologist at Queensland University of Technology in Australia succinctly puts it, “Parental assistance with homework should slowly reduce as a child gets older.”

Why, then, would it be detrimental for you to sit down with your middle-schoolers to help them out with their homework? Here, researchers think that the issue is their specific developmental stage. As budding teenagers caught between childhood and adulthood, middle-school-aged children have a strong need for autonomy and are likely to resist any





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effort on your part to interfere in their affairs. As Erika Patall says, “It’s probably because it’s a time when kids are trying to be independent Even if a parent is effective at helping a child develop skills, there’s a psychological barrier.”

As the father of a 14-year-old son who is about to enter high school, I recognize these behaviors from my own experiences. When my son was in elementary school, he absolutely loved when we did his homework together; it was a great occasion for father-son bonding. Over time, he developed some impressive study habits and skills that have served him well in middle school, and which I hope will continue in high school. Although we still share many great moments together, it is safe to say that they rarely involve his homework. In middle school he has undergone a noticeable change; now, he wants to take care of everything himself, especially his homework. Any interference by me or my wife is generally met with indifference or outright opposition, and is definitely unsolicited and unwanted.

Before deciding whether or not to help your children with their homework, you should also consider whether or not you are qualified to do so. Researchers have discovered that the more parents know about the subject matter, the more children learn from getting help with it. This makes intuitive sense. You may even teach your children how to use different ways to accomplish certain tasks. However, when you know little or nothing about the topic, your children are likely to get frustrated by your inability to help out, and you might even make mistakes in their homework.

Researchers have found that, in general, parents are better able to help their children with reading and writing than with math homework. They attribute that to the fact that when it comes to reading and writing, most parents are simply better at it. The opposite is the case with respect to math. Here, parents often know less, are less up-to-date with the latest instructional strategies, and a parent’s old instructional strategies often conflict with those contemporary methods taught at school.

I experience this with my son. While he has always been very receptive to my suggestions when I have helped him edit his book reviews, essays, and other types of writing, I cannot count how many times our math homework sessions have ended with him saying in frustration “That’s not how the teacher explained it in class. It’s not how we are supposed to do it!”

Helping when you can and where appropriate is important, but it is even more important that you stay within the proper bounds of involvement. One of the most consistent findings is that children benefit the most when parents support them in their own efforts to do the homework rather than help them out every step of the way. Linda Cameron, a homework researcher at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in Canada, says, “Be at the elbow but don’t hold the pen.”

There is nothing wrong with working very closely with your elementary-school-aged children on their homework since this will help them develop great study habits and skills. Yet, the most effective form of involvement overall



is simply to set clear expectations and guidelines, and then to reward good behavior when those expectations and guidelines are met.

One important aspect is to set clear rules for when, where, and how your children’s homework is supposed to be completed. As Erika Patall puts it, “Be as specific as possible about what the procedures are every day.” She argues that “students who have a clearly defined routine around homework—a set time, a set place and a set way to complete homework—are more likely to believe they can overcome challenges while doing homework, take

more responsibility for learning, and ultimately do better in school.”

Research indicates that when parents engage in proper rule-setting, children spend more time on their homework, use that time more effectively, and most importantly, internalize those rules so that they become routine, good habits over time.

Whatever you ultimately decide to do, don’t despair if once in a while, you overstep your bounds. This can happen to even the best of people. Eva Pomerantz, a homework researcher at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and a mother of two,

occasionally finds herself taking over the process of doing homework from her children even though she knows better. She admits “I do that because I’m naturally a controlling person... Then I always have to remember that the child is the one who needs to be in the chair doing the strategizing.”



Tanni has a Ph.D. and is a Professor in the Department of Communication Arts, Sciences, and Disorders at the City University of New York–Brooklyn College.



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by Jody Hobbs Hesler

AUTONOMY & CURIOSITY

Exploring Learning at Renaissance School



With its trio of gracious brick row houses just two short blocks from the Downtown Mall on Charlottesville's Court Square, Renaissance School blends perfectly into the surrounding historic downtown district and does not look like what we might expect a typical school to look like. From a learning perspective, the school is at the intersection of autonomy and curiosity.

That makes sense, because how many school buildings are repurposed old-homes-cum-law-offices? Renaissance School first opened in September of 1999 on the Downtown Mall, moved to a corner row house on Court Square in 2008, and expanded into the neighboring two row houses just this year, allowing it to grow from its initial roster of 14 students to its current 55, with the hope of eventually reaching 20-25 students per grade.

Inside, the full quirk of old buildings remains intact, resulting in a cobbled network of classroom, administrative, and student hangout spaces that

interlock fluidly and creatively to serve the school's needs. During my tour, students nestled into study areas solo, in pairs, and in small groups, or they crowded into their music studio classroom for a drum lesson or left the grounds altogether, perhaps to explore the Downtown Mall's lunch options or to attend a class across town at UVA.

Autonomy and flexibility define the school's spaces as much as their educational philosophy, so it makes yet more sense for the buildings not to look like a typical school. According to Head of School Sara Johnson, "Very little is 'typical' at Renaissance School." A

statement that student Madeline C. ('25) echoes when she describes the school's eclectic vibe: "I walk in and everyone's talking about The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, or the Catalonian Civil War, or Hilary Hanh's performance of Tchaikovsky, or Manchester United's last game."

Some "typically atypical" Renaissance School features include their focus on differentiated, student-driven learning and the student portfolio and senior thesis. Differentiated learning has become something of a buzzword in the educational world, so its meaning



varies across school settings. At Renaissance, “Differentiated education is key to ensuring all students are challenged but not overwhelmed,” says Academic Dean Bethany Farris.

This means that no matter how much, or how little, prior exposure or mastery someone brings to a subject, “we can ensure that the student is neither lost nor bored in the class,” Farris says. This benefits everyone in the classroom. “The excellent questions of the beginning student can challenge the assumptions of the advanced student,” says Farris, “and the passion of the student who is an aficionado of

the subject can be contagious to the neutral or skeptical student.”

This student-centered philosophy finds expression in the school’s emphasis on portfolio building, which prioritizes gaining and using knowledge in a variety of ways over receiving grades. This way, according to Farris, “students are encouraged to pursue their areas of academic interest through thesis work, internships, college-level classes, and delivering final products to real-world audiences, from playwright competitions to EMT training, to radio broadcasts, to university laboratories.

The senior thesis is sort of the

ultimate portfolio project of a Renaissance student. These require two years of independent work that culminates in a 20-page research paper, a schoolwide presentation, and a thesis defense in front of the faculty. “The core skills developed in research, academic writing, and public speaking are central components of our college prep approach,” says Johnson. On top of that, after presenting their theses, “students feel an enormous sense of accomplishment.”

These projects can dig deep. One student, who was fulfilling their language requirement by studying

{resources *private schools*}

American Sign Language, found inspiration for their senior thesis while training to become an EMT. “While shadowing EMTs, this student came across two instances where, in an emergency, EMTs were tasked with communicating to deaf and hard-of-hearing patients,” says Johnson. “This student recognized there was a gap in EMT training when it came to supporting deaf and hard-of-hearing patients, so [for their senior thesis], they created a curriculum for EMTs that offered sign language training specific to their unique communication needs.” The work didn’t stop with a school project either. They went on to train area EMTs with the curriculum they created.

Another memorable project from several years ago came from a student who “used senior thesis as an opportunity to explore their indigenous identity and to build community,” says Johnson. “They studied the preservation of indigenous languages, arts, and dance as part of their thesis work.” Again, the thesis didn’t end in

the classroom. Afterward, Johnson says, “the student organized a community event for area Native Americans at PVCC, where languages, arts, and dance were celebrated, and community was formed.” Now this earlier work is inspiring a current student to shape a similar thesis around celebrating Nigerian community and culture.

The recent expansion of building space has facilitated expansion of programming. “As the state’s leading arts school with one of the best arts programs in the country,” says Johnson, “expanding our focus to integrate technology and engineering is a natural next step.” The newest of the buildings, still in its planning stages, will likely house two new programs—Innovative Engineering Arts and a Business and Entrepreneurship program—and will feature meeting rooms as well as maker spaces and collaborative computer engineering labs for robotics and video game design projects and other applications.

This latest array of opportunities rounds out an already innovative

science department. About ten years ago, UVA’s iGem (International Genetically Engineered Machine) team introduced a genetic engineering program to the school. In this class, “The students do experiments that sometimes involve CRISPR [technology],” says Synthetic Biology Teacher, Anna Minutella. Scientists, including Renaissance School science students, can use CRISPR, or Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats, to edit living organisms’ DNA, by imitating genomic modifications that occur naturally in bacteria.

This class and its lab place Renaissance students at the forefront of cutting-edge science. “For instance,” says Minutella, “we just did an experiment that used CRISPR to knock out the ability for E. coli to metabolize lactose,” which involved having E. coli produce a molecule known as cadaverine. Research like this has real-world, right-now applications. Examples like this project could potentially reduce the environmental



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Free Union Country School

434-978-1700

freeunioncountryschool.org

Pre-K–Grade 5

Learning centers around curiosity, ideas, play, nature, and most of all, people. Teachers, parents, and students all play a part, but the school's philosophy begins with the child. *See ad page 27*

Frost Montessori School

434-979-5223, frostmontessori.com

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Grymes Memorial School

540-672-1010, grymesschool.org

Pre-K–Grade 8

A co-educational independent day school that inspires joy in discovery through hands-on learning. Curious students discover the spark that leads to lives of purpose, growth, and contribution. *See ad page 41*

North Branch School

540-456-8450, north-branch-school.org

Pre-K–Grade 8

Rooted in a love of learning with an emphasis on hands-on projects, environmental stewardship, community involvement and cooperation. *See ad page 25*

Peabody School

434-296-6901, peabodyschool.org

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Serving academically advanced students, Peabody School believes education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire. *See ad page 34*

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Renaissance School

434-984-1952, renaissanceschool.org

Grades 9–12

A college preparatory school for students in the arts, sciences and humanities. Embraces the whole student, including higher thinking and their role as a social being through differentiated and experiential learning. *See ad page 38*

Tandem Friends School

434-951-9314, tandemfs.org

Grades 5–12

A co-educational day school rooted in Quaker values that prepares young people for higher education and fulfilling lives of integrity, creative expression and service. *See page 11*

Woodberry Forest School

540-672-3900, woodberry.org

Grades 9–12

A school built for boys. A Woodberry education, centered around a century-old, student-run honor system, emphasizes intellectual thoroughness and moral integrity. *See ad page 45*

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impact of oil production.

Another Renaissance tradition that arises from the school's student-driven focus, and thinking outside the school "box," is the Arts Practicum. Scheduled for a couple hours every Wednesday afternoon, it encompasses a wide range of interests. In past years, practicum time has resulted in partnerships with local organizations like Light House, Live Arts, and the Music Resource Center for arts experiences outside the classroom. "Other years, we've used it to focus on life skills, from changing a tire to self-defense and mental health first aid," says Johnson. "This year, we've partnered with Community Attention Foster Families and the Virginia Discovery Museum to provide students the opportunity for service within our community."

Pretty much every angle of the Renaissance school experience reflects its student-driven educational philosophy, which builds on students' curiosities and fosters their independence. From involving students in designing their own courses of study to teaching them fluency with public transportation for navigating the city and attending UVA classes, the Renaissance approach relies on student motivation and autonomy.

Independence and autonomy aren't everything though. Connection matters too. "Renaissance School has a very tight-knit community, not just between students but also between the students and teachers," says Blake H. ('24), "one where you're pushed to be the best you, no matter who you are or what your interests are."



As a mom, Jody has chaperoned her share of school tours of local historic places, and every time she learns something new. Viva la history! Learn more about Jody's writing at jodyhobbshesler.com.





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by Jill Morgenstern



THE IMPORTANCE OF **DAY CAMP**

Seven Reasons to Send Your Child to Camp



Whoever coined the term, “the lazy days of summer” must not have had young children! Certainly it’s great not to have the pressures of the school year, but many working parents still need childcare when school is out. Summer day camps not only fill this gap, but can provide an enriching atmosphere where children can thrive and grow during the summer months.

SOCIAL GROWTH

Children attending day camp have the chance to socialize in a way that is not always possible at school. Whether engaged in team building in sports or problem solving puzzles, children are encouraged to interact with each other. This is likely to be a very different experience than being at school where individual accomplishments are often the focus.

Michelle Renfrow, licensed professional counselor and owner of Colorful Creations Art and Therapy services, “It also offers an opportunity to meet like-minded individuals who share a passion for something that they do.” She says of two of her campers who bonded over an interest in trains, “They weren’t the same age; they didn’t go to the same school; they didn’t have the same upbringing; but they had something in common that connected them. From a clinical standpoint,

finding somebody that you have a connection with is greatly important to the development of our children.”

NEW SKILLS AND LEARNING

The variety in day camps is really incredible. Some day camps offer a range of activities each day. Other camps may focus on learning specific skills like science or magic tricks, arts and crafts or sports. Children can often switch activities week by week, giving them exposure to many different experiences. The learning and growing doesn’t stop there. Says Renfrow of her art themed day camps, “We do a lot of taking moments for students to show off their artwork and allow others to give them constructive and positive feedback.” In this way the children learn not only the artistic concepts being taught but also how to give and receive feedback.

EXERCISE

Many day camps offer activities to help combat our increasingly sedentary lifestyle. Choosing a gymnastics, dance, soccer, or other sport related day camp will obviously get your child moving. But even day camps focused on arts and crafts or theater may offer daily swimming or time outdoors.

TIME UNPLUGGED

Screens are becoming more and more integrated into our lives both in and out of school. But there are good reasons to limit children’s screen times. Day camps can vary in their use of electronics from those that don’t allow them at all, to those that rely on them for various activities. If you want your child’s eyes to have a break from screens, find out the day camp’s policies on screen time in advance.

(continued on page 46)

2024 CAMP GUIDE

It's just as certain as hot weather and afternoon thunderstorms: Come summer, thousands of Charlottesville kids will pack their bags for sleep-away camp. For parents (and kids, too) choosing a camp can be daunting because reservations need to be made early, so we are sharing our **Guide to Summer Camps** to make the planning just a little bit easier. So, make your list and start prepping now for loads of summer fun!

* This exclusive guide of terrific summer camps includes only the camps advertising here.

Camp Friendship

See ad page 4

Camp Horizons

See ad page 41

Charlottesville Ballet

See ad backcover

Charlottesville Waldorf School

See ad page 25

DMR Adventures

See ad page 39

First Tee – Virginia Blue Ridge

See ad page 46

Foster Art

See ad page 20

Frost Montessori School

See ad page 13

Lee Alter Watercolor Painting

See ad page 44

Light House Studio

See ad page 46

Living Earth School

See ad page 39

Piedmont Family YMCA

See ad page 13

Renaissance School

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READY FOR SLEEP-AWAY CAMP?

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1. My child stays overnight with grandparents or with friends without tears and anxiety.
2. My child willingly asks adults other than me for help.
3. My child willingly eats food other than what I cook.
4. My child easily warms up to new situations and people.
5. My child enjoys a wide range of experiences.
6. My child makes friends easily.
7. My child keeps track of clothes, money, school supplies and homework.

If you answered a 4 or 5 for most of these questions, your child will likely thrive. If there are one or two trouble spots, don't worry too much. Camp just might help your child learn to keep track of things or try new activities more easily. If most of your responses are 1, 2 or 3, you might think about delaying sleepaway camp for a year or two.

Be sure to give your child a realistic idea of what camp life is like. If your child seems reluctant, don't push. Overnight camp isn't right for everyone, and there's always next year.



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Boys ages 9-16

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{resources *summer camps*}

(continued from page 43)

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Day camp can be a place to increase confidence as children are exposed to activities they may not have experienced during the school year. Many camps offer the opportunity to build skills in sports or in the arts. This can be especially beneficial to a child who struggles at school, giving them a chance to excel and explore talents that might be less obvious during the school year. Renfrow has watched children blossom before her eyes. "I cannot tell you the excitement and relief they feel when they finally 'get it' and then they just flourish from there!" she says of her campers who have begun to master knitting and crocheting.

FLEXIBILITY

While school has the same rules all year long, day camp is more flexible. Your child might go to theater camp one week but baseball camp the next.

Each will have its own routines and expectations. This can help encourage your child to stay flexible in their expectations. Children who need more time to adjust to new experiences may benefit from multiple weeks at the same camp. Many summer day camps operate on a week by week basis, so that if your child is not enjoying the experience, he or she can opt out when the week is over.

POSITIVE ROLE MODELS

Day camps may employ teens or college aged youth for their first summer jobs. This can expose children to a new dynamic they may not have encountered, especially if they do not have older siblings. Renfrow believes having people of all ages is essential to running a great day camp. Even middle schoolers are included in her camps as well supervised counselors-in-training. According to Renfrow, this relationship can be every bit as good for the young employees as it is for the campers.



All in all, quality day camps offer an incredible chance for children to learn and grow all while having fun and getting a much needed break from the rigors of school. They can explore their interests in a healthy environment, and make new friends and fond memories while they're at it!



Jill Morgenstern is a mother to four. She has over 20 years of teaching experience in various settings and a Master's Degree in Teaching Reading.



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by Rick Epstein

Dad's Little Rule Book



A Dad's Humorous Reflections

"Wendy!" I said, "What happened to your dress?" It was a cute little green number my wife Betsy had bought for our daughter to wear in the school concert. Up near the nape of her neck, there was a ragged hole big enough for a butterfly to sail through.

Wendy reddened, tears welled in her eyes, and she said, "I was cutting the label out of it..." I understand that to a child's sensitive skin, a tag inside a garment feels like a double-edged razor blade. But this \$48 dress looked as though Wendy had draped it over a stump and thrown tomahawks at it.

I sat down on a chair so I'd be the same height as the culprit and said, "Look, you've cut up a brand-new dress and that makes me very mad. But if you promise you will Never Ever Again cut a tag out of your clothes, I won't yell at you or punish you." She nodded earnest agreement.

I picked up her new sweater figuring it would hide the hole, but it too had undergone the tomahawk treatment.

I looked at Wendy and she shrugged; the damage had been done back when chopping holes in new clothes had still been

perfectly OK.

With three kids, I've made the Never Ever Again speech many, many times.

As a service to the readers of this fine publication, I've boiled down 14 years of Never Ever Again speeches into a few plainly worded ordinances.

GROOMING

- Do not cut your own hair.
- Do not cut your sibling's hair.
- Do not paint your lips with markers.

GRACIOUS LIVING

- Do not take garbage out of the compost and use it as doll food.
- Do not use yogurt as paint.

INDOOR LIVING

- Do not draw or write on the walls. Or doors. Or window sills.
- Do not hang on cabinet doors.

- Never put chalk in the toilet. Or soap.
- Do not fill a sink with water, blow a bubble-gum bubble, float it in the water and pretend that it's a whale and that a large needle with thread attached is a harpoon.

CULINARY RULES

- Do not put buttered bread into the toaster. (Yes, the toast it produces is unparalleled, but butter will drip down inside the toaster and just when someone is poking a fork in there, the toaster will burst into flames.)
- Do not use the dryer to defrost meat, especially hamburger. (Whoever didn't tell me about this rule caused big trouble in my boyhood home.)

AVOIDING BLOODSHED

- Do not tease dogs/cats. But when you do, protect your face.
- Do not run with scissors. (This rule is not important, because by the time you realize your kids are old enough to run, they will have run off with all your scissors and lost them.)

FIRE SAFETY

- Do not play with matches.
- Do not set off any kind of fireworks in the house. (And that includes, but is not limited to, taking a small plastic dog, fashioning balsa-wood water-skis for him, floating him in the bathtub, tearing open one end of a firecracker, attaching it to his back and lighting it.)
- Do not put lighted candles on the Christmas tree. I don't know anyone who has ever done this. It's an admonition that I read long ago and it intrigued me that someone might be wild enough to try it. It was my favorite rule until I went to a Scandinavian Saint Lucia festival and saw something that inspires an even-better rule:
- Do not wear lighted candles on your head.

So, there it is, a body of law accumulated at great expense all ready for implementation at your house. If it seems kind of grim and repressive, don't worry, you'll still have plenty of discussions like this:

DAD (with feeling): "Sally, don't throw pillows at the lamp!"

SALLY (quizzically): "DON'T throw pillows at the lamp?"

DAD: "Right!"

SALLY: "Which lamp?"

Do not use the dryer to defrost meat, especially hamburger. (Whoever didn't tell me about this rule caused big trouble in my boyhood home.)



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