



PARENTS ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

# Family

## ENGAGEMENT

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 74

It's that time of year again — March break is upon us

This issue is devoted to suggestions for families to enjoy the break and some learning tips that will assist parents in assisting their kids.

March is often the time when school council members can begin to feel the stress of trying to look at new ways to engage parents, plan events and raise money. This is especially true for councils that have a limited number of members which means everyone has to work that much harder. In this issue, we provide some tips to avoid burnout. It is a good time to show appreciation for all the work that your council has accomplished so far and readdress your plans for the balance of the year so all members feel positive about their involvement as the school year comes to a close.

I hope every that every parent takes a special moment over the break to hug each of your children tight and ask them how they are doing. A parent's heart will tell them if their child needs some time to express their feelings and let their parent help them resolve in a positive way.

Happy March Break to parents, caregivers, educators, administrators, school staff and mostly to our kids!!

Theresa Pastore,  
Executive Director,  
Parents Engaged in Education

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# MARCH BREAK ACTIVITIES IF YOU'RE STAYING HOME

*Written by: Well Being - Blog-well.ca*

We know spending March break at home can be a bit nerve-racking: how on earth will you entertain the littles all week, especially if the weather is bad? To help, we asked around (we have more than a few moms who work here, you know!) and collected the best ideas to keep everyone busy and happy –without breaking the bank.

## **VISIT A MUSEUM, ZOO, LIBRARY, ACQUARIUM OR SCIENCE CENTRE**

With the perfect mix of learning and fun, these are always a great place to go with the kids.

## **HAVE A CIRCUS DAY**

Go to the circus? Heck no! Bring it home! Make popcorn and hot dogs and watch a circus-themed movie while you paint each other's faces. Apply some face paint, read a few circus-themed books, and snuggle up with all the stuffed animals you can find.

## **HAVE A BEACH DAY**

Go for a swim at the local pool and then have a picnic either out (in a mall food court, lunch out at a restaurant or set up a blanket and have one at home).

## **SET UP A SCAVENGER HUNT**

Create a list of things, people or places for the kids to find, set them loose (with supervision, if necessary) to find the items on their list. Be sure to have a prize for the winner, and prizes for the other players.

## **HAVE A SPA DAY**

Arrange the bathroom or a bedroom like a spa. Take out all the moisturizers and sweet smelling oils

you have and let them go crazy. Put on nail polish and even some makeup and give each other a hand massage. Pamper them and yourself at the same time.

## **GO FOR A NATURE HIKE**

Spend some time in the great outdoors, whether it's at a provincial park or just a forest nearby. Make a day trip of it and pack a lunch and snacks, and don't forget to bring lots of water and sunscreen!

## **GO CAMPING IN YOUR LIVING ROOM**

Instead of the usual movie night have a camp-out. Eat easy, simple food for dinner and then serve the fixing for s'mores for dessert. Everyone can even sleep on the floor in sleeping bags and have a round of ghost stories before bed.

## **HAVE A RESTAURANT DAY**

Let them pick what's for dinner or dessert. Take them to the store to get the ingredients and allow them to choose the veggies or fruits that go into it. Then get them to help out in the kitchen or just supervise while they cook, depending on how old they are. Make sure you're stocked up on things like sprinkles, cookie cutters, and muffin cups if they want to do a serious baking session!

## **GO SKATING**

Don't forget to have hot chocolate and stay warm. Wear layers and just enjoy the sound of skates on ice for a while. Pad the kids with snow pants, helmets and jackets so if they fall it won't hurt.



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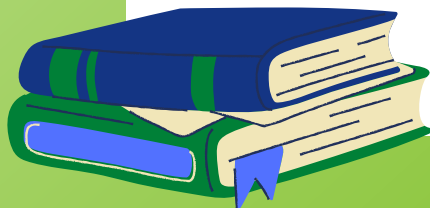
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# HOW I MADE A TRAIN PLAY MAT OUT OF A RECYCLED BAG



Written & Photos by: Mara Shaugnessy, cbc.ca

Ask many parents, and they'll tell you that their kid has a thing for trains.

Maybe it's because they like shows like *Mighty Express* or *Thomas the Tank Engine*. Or perhaps they are just budding mechanical engineers. At any rate, they have that za za zoo for things that go choo choo choo.

A lot of wooden train sets are made for specific kinds of trains. And they can get expensive! So I wanted to make a train play mat that was easy on the wallet, but no less fun. And I made it by recycling a leaf bag!

Ready to get started? Well, all aboard! Let's go.

## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Leaf bag
- Scissors
- Markers
- Paint
- Mini-roller
- Brushes
- Plate
- Water container
- Coloured paper
- Glue
- Tablecloth or newsprint to protect your work surface

## HOW IT'S MADE



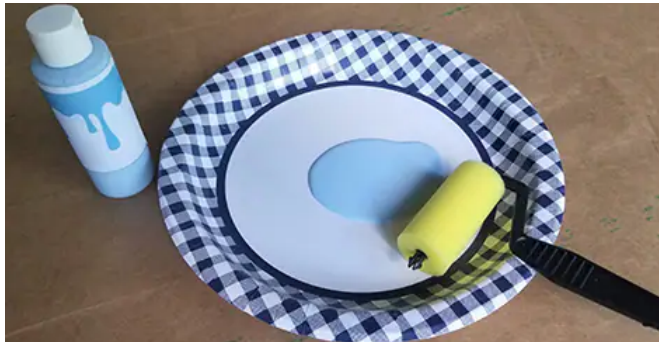
Use a pair of scissors to cut the bottom from your leaf bag. You'll be left with a paper "tube."

Cut down one seam of your tube, then spread open to reveal your giant play mat!



Lay out your tablecloth or newsprint. Squeeze out a bit of paint on your plate and get your roller ready.





Have run rolling tracks all around the mat. Try tracks that run in loops, circles, zig-zags and wavy lines. NOTE: If you're not in the mood for a paint project, you can have just as much fun making tracks with markers or cut paper.



Our track started out as a giant loop.



Then we added lots of diagonal and curving connecting lines.

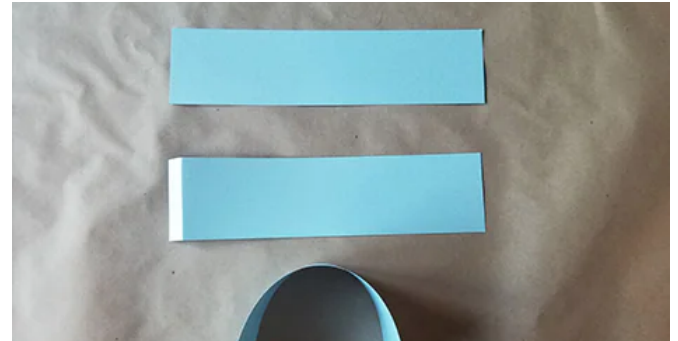


Decide how you'd like to fill the space between your train tracks. We were inspired by the rolling green hills in *Mighty Express!*

We even added a pond.

Set your mat aside to dry.

In the meantime, you can use cut paper to create things like bridges and tunnels. Cut strips of paper and fold tabs on each end. A bit of white glue on each tab will help to stick your tunnels and bridges in place on your mat.



You can also make your favourite stations! Ours is Farm Station. We made a simple red barn, and folded a tab along the bottom to attach it to the mat.



Ta-da!

Here's our bridge that goes over the pond.



And here's Farm Station.



Dress up your mat with fun things from inside your toy box — train sets, animals, blocks and whichever bits and pieces you like!

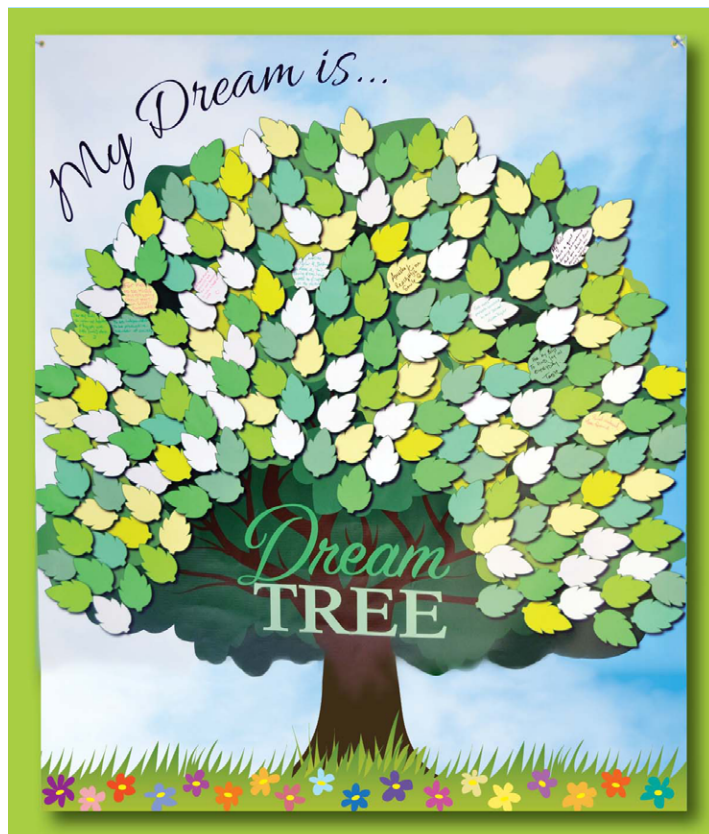


Add some play tools to create a Mission Station, boats to make a Port Station or maybe some dinosaurs and other curiosities to make a Museum Station! Ready for today's Mega Mission? Let's get the trains on the move!

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### MARA SHAUGHNESSY

Mara is a children's book author and illustrator who's big into scissors and glue, making cake from the box, wrestling with her dogs and doodling with felt tip pens. You can check out her latest work at [The Little Monster](#) or craft along with her at [Craft University](#).



Parents Engaged in Education have designed a "DREAM TREE" banner. This vinyl banner is 5' x 6.5' with hundreds of blank leaves for parents and students to write their dreams.

This is a wonderful example of positive messages which will inspire the entire school community all year round.

GREAT FOR CURRICULUM OR  
PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEW NIGHTS!!

Our aim is to raise enough funds this year to offer priority schools in challenged communities a "DREAM TREE" to encourage their communities to strive for the best they can be.

While we work on this program, if your school would like to purchase a "DREAM TREE" for your community you may do so by contacting [Theresa.pastore@parentsengagedineducation.ca](mailto:Theresa.pastore@parentsengagedineducation.ca).

**The cost is \$200.00 plus shipping**

(This is cost recovery only,  
we do not charge in excess of our cost)



## ACTIVITIES

# CAPITAL CITY SCAVENGER HUNT TORONTO, ONTARIO

*Written by: Kevin Naulls, CBC Parents Staff, cbc.ca*

There's this perfunctory joke some people make about Toronto.

It goes like this: Toronto only has two seasons, winter and construction.

It's the kind of joke your dad might tell. Maybe your dad tells it every year. Maybe you've asked him to stop.

But I'm here to tell you that as much as there is an annoying amount of construction, and streetcars short turn way too often, and the heat makes it feel like you're perpetually sitting in a bowl of soup, summer in Toronto is arguably the most alive the city ever is.

Which is why it was a lot of fun taking our next stop on our tour of capital cities for our scavenger hunt series.

Toronto has its icons, like the CN tower. After looking up, way up, at its majesty, tour the city streets to find a local pigeon (there are many), a streetcar and a Blue Jays cap.

And yep, you'll even have to spot some construction.

### **NOT IN TORONTO?**

I know not everyone is flying out to places these days, but I don't want that to stop you from

having a great time with this scavenger hunt (and the six more to come!). Here are some thoughts to make Toronto come to you:

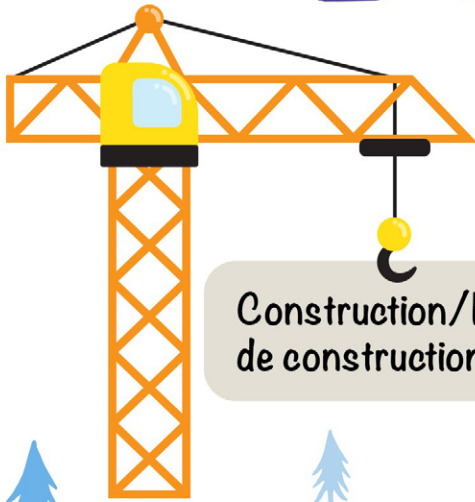
- Print out the printable next page and cut out each item. If you don't have a printer, check out your local library.
- Once you've cut out each item, hide the items around your home, some in trickier places than others. If you have access to some outdoor space (backyard, public park, etc.), choose a nice day and hide them outside.
- When your little ones are done collecting the items (either print out a second sheet for them to keep track, or have the printable up on a device), it's a great opportunity to research some of the landmarks on Google Maps. What do the items look like in real life?
- After that, if any of the items inspire questions from your kids, do a bit of further research with them. Each scavenger hunt is an invitation to honour and celebrate places across Canada!

Ready to start searching? Check out the printables on the next page! Print colour or b/w.

# TORONTO

Ontario

Find all 9! / Trouvez les 9!



Construction / Des travaux de construction



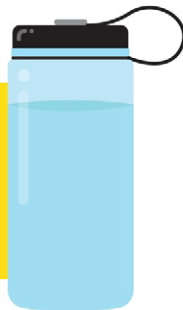
CN Tower /  
La Tour CN



Pigeon /  
Un pigeon



Sunglasses / Des lunettes de soleil



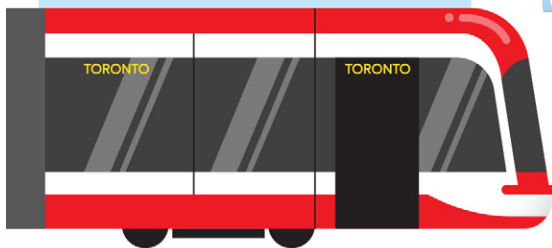
Water Bottle /  
Une bouteille d'eau réutilisable



Backpack /  
Un sac à dos



Streetcar / Un tramway



Blue Jays Baseball  
Cap / Une casquette  
des Blue Jays



Toronto Sign At Nathan  
Phillips Square /

Un enseigne de Toronto  
au square Nathan Phillips



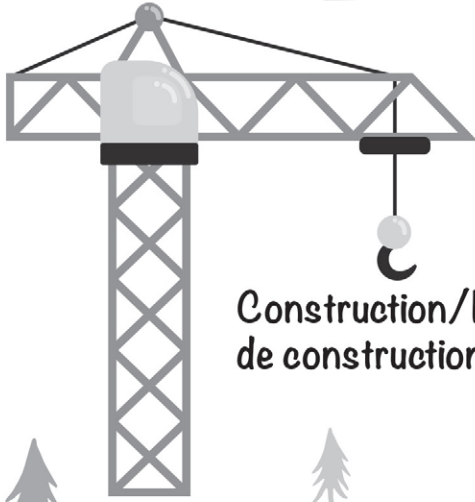
# TORONTO



# TORONTO

Ontario

Find all 9! / Trouvez les 9!



Construction / Des travaux de construction



CN Tower / La Tour CN



Pigeon / Un pigeon



Sunglasses / Des lunettes de soleil



Water Bottle / Une bouteille d'eau réutilisable



Streetcar / Un tramway



Backpack / Un sac à dos

Blue Jays Baseball Cap / Une casquette des Blue Jays



Toronto Sign At Nathan Phillips Square /

Un enseigne de Toronto au square Nathan Phillips





I DON'T THINK WE'RE DOING ENOUGH TO

# DEAL WITH BULLYING

Written by: Karen Habashi, cbc.ca

Bullying is a word I hear a lot, whether it's from anti-bullying days at school or campaigns.

You'd think by 2022 there would be more awareness and less bullying, but I don't think that there is.

I pride myself on raising strong girls.

Defiant girls who speak their mind.

I always tell them to speak up and speak out.

I never thought my beautiful, kind and defiant girl would one day be bullied and feel weak in front of her bully.

But it happened.

## THE BULLIES CONTINUE TO BULLY

She always loved going to school ever since she was in preschool.

But this changed suddenly.

Mornings became hard — she just didn't want to go. She wanted to stay home with me.

I talked to the teacher, expressed my concerns and he told me some girls are being a bit mean.

That day I took her for a mommy-and-daughter date after school.

"Mornings became hard — she just didn't want to go."

I asked her about school, and about other girls in her classroom.

Her face changed and she said, "I don't want to talk about it."

I took this opportunity and slowly tried to let her talk about everything. Girls were mean to her. They made fun of her, like about how she dresses.

They were teasing her, telling her she can't play with them.

In Grade 1, a time when all kids are still getting to have a connection with the outer world. All I could think was: These are first graders?

I was simply stunned!

## FINDING FRIENDS IS HARD

I told her to try and play with other kids and ignore her bullies, which she did. But still, she didn't have a close friend.

She played well with boys from her classroom and other girls in our complex. But girls at school were different.

I had many nights where I cried.

Because, really, all any parent wants is for their kids to be happy and healthy.

"I wanted my cheerful, school-loving girl back."

I prayed that she would have one friend at school. I wanted my cheerful, school-loving girl back.

It didn't happen easily.

But life is sometimes unpredictable and weird.

Just as it was for my daughter.

## SHARED EXPERIENCES

This year, she finally had a new best friend.

It was a girl who moved from another city after having some issues herself.

This girl was also bullied at her school.

Imagine: a family not having any options except uprooting their whole family, to help their child's mental and physical well-being.

It's upsetting to think that it should ever come to this, but it does.

And when that happens, kids must leave friends and abandon the places they've known their entire lives.

They move houses, and they have to quit their activities and sports.

And all because not enough could be done to stop the bullying.

Childhood bullying may seem inconsequential to some, but tell that to these families who reach a crossroads where their only option is to leave.

## A BLOSSOMING FRIENDSHIP

Although both girls faced bullying on different levels, they didn't lose hope of trying to have connections with others again.

Which I'm so grateful for.

When they both met at school, and they sat next to each other, by coincidence or fate, they bonded instantly.

Both girls are very sensitive and empathetic, they love to help others, and they're very kind. A beautiful friendship blossomed from a traumatic event.

"It can affect their relationships, warp concepts like trust and skew how they view themselves."

And schools try their best to highlight bullying and try to teach kids kindness, but unfortunately, it's a very passive approach.

There are severe and tragic endings to bullying, and

there are emotional and mental scars that the kids carry around and grow up with.

It can affect their relationships, warp concepts like trust and skew how they view themselves.

At such pivotal and early developmental stages, bullying can really set off a terrible chain of events if left unchecked.

## MORE HELP NOW

In my opinion, I don't think the schools are doing enough to tackle bullying.

This is not a "kids will be kids" situation — this is serious.

We need to provide more mental health strategies and programs that not only focus on the bullied, but the bully as well.

Maybe the bully is dealing with issues that are contributing to their anger at school.

The parents also need to be included in the conversation, to find the root of this epidemic and try to work together as a community for a better future for our kids.

This should be one of our priorities.

"Some will feel like they have to navigate their bullying alone.

I'm grateful, and my heart is full, knowing that my daughter found a friend who understands her.

She no longer dreads recess and is becoming more outgoing and confident.

But she's lucky.

Not everyone will have the same kind of generous, caring person sit next to them at random.

Some will feel like they have to navigate their bullying alone.

And I don't think any kid should ever have to feel that way.

# TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT RACE AND RACISM

Reviewed by: [Roger R. Harrison, PhD](#)

[Psychology \(Behavioral Health\) at Nemours Children's Health](#)

Race and the harmful effects of racism are common topics of conversation for some families. Other parents, though, might talk about racism and discrimination with their kids rarely, or not at all.

But when parents stay silent, kids can get the message that racism doesn't matter or that it's someone else's problem. To help put an end to racism, everyone has to take an active role, no matter who they are.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TALK ABOUT RACE AND RACISM?

When we teach kids early on that it's OK to talk about race, we help them to understand, respect, and appreciate the differences between people.

This builds empathy and compassion for others so that kids are better able to see when things in their world seem unjust or unfair — and can do something about it.

## WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO TALK ABOUT RACE AND RACISM?

There's no "right" way to talk to your kids about race or racism. For each family, that conversation will be different, depending on your own race, nationality, and personal experience with racism.

**Here are some ways to get the conversation started, and keep it going:**

### FIRST, GET THE FACTS.

By learning about the issues, you'll be better able

to report them. Listen to a podcast, watch a show, or read up on the history of racism and civil rights so that you're prepared to talk and answer any questions.

### CLARIFY YOUR FAMILY'S VALUES.

Use your words, your example, and your actions to show your children what you believe in. Values to focus on can include equal treatment for all, justice, standing up for those who are suffering, and respecting all people no matter the color of their skin, the language they speak, or other differences.

### SPEAK IN SIMPLE TERMS.

Don't overwhelm kids with too much information. State the facts, simply and clearly. If you want to address something that's happened in the news, be honest about what happened, but don't give kids more info than they need.

### BE AGE-APPROPRIATE.

**Topics of race and racism are big-picture issues, and this can be hard for younger kids to grasp. Here are suggestions for addressing it by age:**

- **Preschoolers:**  
Kids this age are learning about right and wrong, and have a keen sense of fairness (and they'll let you know about it!). So talk about what's fair and what's not. Give examples kids can relate to, such as: "What if someone made a rule that says everyone with [your child's hair or

eye color] has to eat a different snack at snack time than the rest of the class? Does that seem fair?”

- **School-age kids:**

Use practical examples from everyday life to help school-age kids understand how they might feel if they're discriminated against or left out on purpose. Something like, “How would you feel if someone held on to all the swings during recess and didn't give any other kids a turn?” Or, “How would you feel if you saw a fifth-grader bullying a first-grader?” Then, connect these questions to real-life examples of groups of people who have been discriminated against. Asking questions like these helps to increase kids' empathy and spark their passion to stand up for others.

- **Preteens and teens:**

Older kids and teens are better prepared to tackle tougher topics. They can understand how someone might feel if they are a target of racism, but they may feel helpless to do anything about it. Brainstorming ways to help — such as speaking up for a friend who's bullied or excluded because of skin color, or writing letters to school principals or elected officials — can help kids feel empowered.

### **SK QUESTIONS – LOTS OF THEM.**

Help your child process thoughts and feelings by asking questions like, “What do you think about what you saw on TV?”, “What have you heard?” or “What are your friends talking about?” This helps you get a sense of your child's understanding so you can fill in any gaps with facts or emphasize the values that you hold in your family.

### **CREATE A SAFE PLACE TO SHARE FEELINGS.**

Tough conversations like these bring up strong emotions, like anger, sadness, confusion, and others. Kids who have been victims of racism, or have family members who have been, might have even stronger feelings or fears around these topics. Let your child know that their feelings are important and OK. It

helps to share your own feelings in a healthy way. Say something like, “I feel sad right now and that's OK. I won't always feel this way.” This helps kids put things into perspective.

### **KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING.**

Talking to your kids about race and racism shouldn't be a one-time thing. Encourage your child to come to you with questions and continue to talk about it.

### **RACE AND RACISM: WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER?**

It's OK not to have all the answers. If you don't know how to answer something, be honest and say so. Tell your child that you'll find out and share what you've learned.

### **RACE AND RACISM: WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO AS A FAMILY?**

Parents can do many things to raise compassionate kids who want to help others. Here are some to do together as a family:

#### **BEFRIEND PEOPLE WHO ARE DIFFERENT.**

Consider choosing a school, daycare, or club with kids from other areas and different backgrounds. This way, kids learn that they can find friends anywhere.

#### **LEARN ABOUT OTHER CULTURES.**

Learn together about people from other places and cultures. Read books, watch movies, listen to music, and learn about celebrations that aren't part of your own traditions. Attend cultural fairs and museums that highlight stories, art, and the history of people who are different from you.

#### **SPEAK UP.**

When you see something that isn't fair, do something about it. Say something. Write a letter. Create art that supports a cause — or start one. And encourage your kids to do the same.

Talk often as a family and do things together to learn about and celebrate the differences between people. You'll help nurture your child's empathy for other people, and your own.

# 10 TIPS TO HELP YOUR CHILD FALL IN LOVE WITH READING

Written by: Sheila Razdan, MD, MPH

Now more than ever, reading can be a great way for children to relax and escape to a different world.

Here are 10 ways parents can help build and support a child's love of reading.

## HOW TO BRING READING INTO YOUR CHILD'S LIFE

Reading is good for kids. When books are part of the family routine, kids' language skills grow. Books can also help parents teach important values and understand difficult events in real life. They can read alone, or you can make it a family affair.

**Here are some tips to bring a love of reading into your child's life.**

- **Model good reading behavior.**

If kids see you reading, they will be more likely to pick up a book themselves.

- **Read together before bedtime.**

Get quality time together at the end of the day. Reading out loud helps kids bring the words to life. Talk about the story together. Ask questions like, "What do you think will happen next?" You can switch things up some nights and ask your school-age child to read a book to you!

- **Get a library card.**

Most communities offer free library access. Some libraries have reading programs with games and prizes to keep kids busy when school is out. Many also offer contact-free ways to check out books or participate in

- **Read what they read.**

Follow their interests by keeping up with what your kids read. It makes it more fun and gives you something enjoyable to talk about.

- **Activities.**

Activities, such as e-book loans and virtual story times.

- **All reading is good reading.**

Let kids know that reading is great no matter what they're interested in. Anything goes: fiction, biographies, kids magazines, comic books or even reading a cookbook in the kitchen!

- **Create a reading nook.**

A cozy, snuggle-friendly area in your home can be turned into the family "reading zone." Just add blankets, pillows, a bean bag chair, and a window or lamp!





Photo by Stephen Andrews on Unsplash

- **Read with friends.**

A book club with friends can give kids a way to share and learn about different views. If local public health guidelines allow, put on your cloth face coverings and find an open area for a physically distanced meet-up. Kids can talk about a book, their favorite characters, or how they think the book could have ended differently.

- **Keep books around.**

If there's always a book within reach, kids will be more likely to pick one up and read, even for a few minutes at a time.

- **Travel with reading material.**

Bring books for car rides, for example, or waiting to see a doctor. Books are a great option instead of a tablet or a smartphone.

- **A gift that keeps giving.**

Friends and family can give the gift of books for a birthday or a holiday. Make it personal by asking the gift-giver to write a message inside the book cover. Your child can cherish the book and message from a loved one for years to come.

## REMEMBER

Keep reading to your child and with your child after they learn how to read. Continuing to read together brings strong, lasting connections throughout their childhood.

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**Source** American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Early Childhood (Copyright © 2020)

The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

### DR. SHEILA RAZDAN

Sheila Razdan, MD, MPH, Chief Resident in Pediatrics at St. Louis Children's Hospital, is a member of the Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Follow her at [@SheilaRazdan](https://twitter.com/SheilaRazdan)

# 10 KEYS FOR COMMUNICATION TO BETTER IMPROVE PARENT INVOLVEMENT

*Written by: Parents Engaged In Education*

## **USE THESE 10 KEYS FOR COMMUNICATION TO HELP YOU REACH OUT TO MORE PARENTS.**

Remember the ways you reach out to parents can either help build involvement, or it can work against your school council. These tips should help put you on the right path.

### **1. Invite parents to get involved.**

Make sure your school community knows that they are welcome at all school council activities.

### **2. Make it easy to volunteer.**

Be sure to use a bulletin board in school, or get familiar with and use Google Forms as a place where parents can sign up to volunteer for events. Be sure to include a photo to attract volunteers to your event. Most importantly, remember to include contact information on all your correspondences.

### **3. Show volunteers you value them.**

Being appreciative is key. Remember to always thank your volunteers.

### **4. Communicate regularly.**

Send newsletters, e-newsletters and update your school councils social media channels regularly.

### **5. Promote school council accomplishments**

So parents know how the group's efforts are benefiting the school.

### **6. Recognize volunteers.**

Include the name and photo of each person along with their accomplishments. Use your various communication channels to applaud these volunteers.

### **7. Display photos of volunteers and school council participants**

To show that the school council is fun and inclusive.

### **8. Use technology to involve parents.**

If parents at your school are online, you should be too. Just be sure to keep paper copies of your communications available for those who want or need them.

### **9. Translate school council communication**

For non-English speaking members of your school community. Doing this whenever possible is a great way of making them feel included.

### **10. Use person-to-person contact.**

Recruit others to pass on flyers and school council information. Never miss an opportunity to engage parents, especially those who might view the school council as a clique. Sometimes the simplest method of word-of-mouth works best.

# 5 WAYS TO REDUCE YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL STRESS

*Written by: Parents Engaged In Education*

## **TRY THESE 5 TIPS AND SMART IDEAS TO MAKE YOUR SCHOOL COUNCIL LIFE EASIER**

We all know that COVID-19 has brought all our stress levels up to an all time high. Sometimes we tend to do things the hard way which doesn't contribute to lowering our stress levels at all. As a leader of a school council, I have learned that you could be trapped into this pattern because you always feel the need to lead by example. Sometimes working harder doesn't mean working smarter.

Here is a list of tips, ideas and strategies that are aimed at trying to make your life a little easier. Some are simple, others take more time. Try and use the tips that best fit your current situation.

### **TIPS**

#### **IT DOESN'T ALWAYS NEED TO BE PERFECT.**

You may see all the flaws and might-have-beens when you organize an event or program. But others aren't aware of that—they see the big picture, not the imperfections. If you're something of a perfectionist, ease up a bit and enjoy your success. You deserve it.

#### **DO WHAT YOU AND YOUR RESOURCES ALLOW YOU TO DO.**

Plan with what you have, if you are short on volunteers, think about reducing the events scale. A bunch of small events are more effective than trying to complete a large one and not being able to pull it off. Remember overambitious events could lead to burnout.

#### **LEARN TO SAY NO.**

For many of us this is easier said than done. As leaders it can be hard to say no, but sometimes it's better to say you can't organize that last-minute event, take on that big task for the school principal, or make a meeting that would require you to cancel a personal appointment. It's OK—nobody can do everything.

#### **DELEGATE-IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT LEADERSHIP SKILL, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE ONE OF THE HARDEST TO MASTER.**

Many hands make light work. Sharing the workload is important in so many ways. It not only takes the pressure off you; it also allows others to develop skills and know-how that will pay off big in the long run. Delegating doesn't mean you are passing the buck, it means you are valuing and trusting the contributions of others.

#### **CREATE A PLAN AND A BUDGET.**

Planning for an entire year can seem daunting, but remember it is a good way to setup a framework for the year ahead. You will be surprised how quickly your plans come together once you get started. Remember that your plan should be flexible, especially considering the current situation. Create a routine of revisiting your plan at least once a month to see if you are on course or if you will need to make adjustments.

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