

## School Calendar

### This Week

#### Thursday, March 7

5<sup>th</sup> grade play 8:45 am & 6:30 pm

#### Friday, March 8

5<sup>th</sup> grade play 8:45 am

### Looking Ahead

#### Monday-Friday, March 11-15

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Hawthorne Valley Farm Trip

#### Thursday-Friday, March 15-16

5<sup>th</sup> Grade to Penn Museum – Overnight Field Trip

#### Wednesday, March 27

Grade School Assembly 6:30 pm

#### Thursday-Friday, March 28-29

No-School – Parent-Teacher Conferences

#### Sunday, March 31

Committee for Social Justice Meeting

#### How to Contact Us

info@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
lc@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
bot@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org  
pc@rivervalley.waldorfschool.org



Please join us for a celebratory evening of dinner, dancing, live music, silent & live auctions, open beer/wine bar and more. The fun starts at 6:00 at the Durham Springs Event Center (formerly the Cascade Lodge) 5065 Lehnenburg Road, Kintnersville, PA  
Cocktail Attire - Valet Parking

Tickets are \$100 per person and can be purchased online <https://rvws.ejoinme.org/2019auction> or by check made out the RVWS

Join us for our biggest fundraiser of the year as we celebrate community and 100 years of Waldorf Education

Enjoy local and seasonal cuisine by Executive Chef Francesco Martorella and dance the night away to live music by Moonshine & Millet

Whether or not you can attend, please join us by bidding in our online auction or donating auction items. Or consider a staff ticket donation. All proceeds benefit the River Valley Waldorf School.

### Please join the Committee for Social Justice on Sunday, March 31

at 779 Cafferty Road in Upper Black Eddy from 1 to 4 for another book discussion! We will be talking about *Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nahisi Coates.

The Committee for Social Justice meets every 3rd Monday from 3:30 to 4:30 in the second grade classroom.

It's time once again for our monthly column from Paul Ritchie. You will find this month's virtue inside the Current.

The Auction Item Procurement form is on the back page.

### Sweet Deal from Moonshine and Millet

Moonshine and Millet will once again grace the stage of our Auction! This is reason alone to get your tickets today! But we're going to sweeten the deal...

#### Want to have Moonshine and Millet play your song at the auction?!

Hear your favorite tune transformed into a high energy blue grass rendition, as only our favorite Strummin', Fiddlin', Finger-pickin', Bass-thumpin' musicians can do!

Only one caveat – every now and then, there's a song that just doesn't translate well to the Moonshine and Millet style. It's not likely, but if the winning bidder's first choice fits into this rare category, the band will reach out to the winner to pick another of favorite song.

Start the bidding here! <https://rvws2019.ggo.bid/>



### Student Auction Offering

Led by local fiber artist Mallory Zondag, our 1st through 8<sup>th</sup> grade students collaborated to create a Fiber Living Wall! Students wet felted leaves, flowers, stones and vines to create this forest floor wall hanging, which is 5-feet wide and about 4-feet long. The inherent nature of this work beautifully reflects the aesthetic values of our community and incorporates one of the Waldorf100 core projects of "Bees and Trees" into its theme. Find the right place on your wall and come ready to bid at the live auction!



### For the Good of the Hive

At this year's auction, as we celebrate the intricate web of volunteerism, professionalism and giving that brings life to our school. We will be raising funds this evening to revitalize the courtyard...the heart of the hive in our community.

#### Revitalization efforts may include:

*A honey bee mural*  
*Honey bee friendly plantings*  
*Improved habitat for turtles*

As the health of our hive relies heavily on the connections within our community, our students will be part of this revitalization effort, where we intend to inspire curiosity and awareness of our diversity while celebrating the power of human connection.



## From Administration

### New windows were installed over the February break!

We are feeling toasty and warm with the new windows in place, thanks to double-paned glass and well-constructed framing. The window replacement project is funded by the Capital Campaign, and we thank our generous donors and community for this gift. More Capital Campaign news coming early in March, so be on the lookout!

## **A Behind the Scenes Look at Snow Day Decisions**

Dr. Bridget O'Connell, Superintendent of Palisades School District, sent this email to Palisades families on Monday and we thought you might find it interesting.

Dear Families,

I have fielded several questions about having school today following the two-hour delay so I wanted to reach out to you to describe the various factors that impact if school is open, delayed or closed.

### **Timing of storm:**

- How much time will it take for our staff to clear lots, sidewalks and buses?
- How much time will it take for townships and PennDot to plow/treat roads?

### **Type of storm**

- Is this a snow or ice event?
- How are temperatures impacting conditions?
- What are the wind speeds and how quickly will roads dry?

### **Power:**

- Do our buildings have power?

Each storm presents itself differently. In today's case these were the factors I considered:

### **Timing of storm:**

- Since the timing of this storm began yesterday evening with the bulk of the accumulation overnight and ending very early this morning, district and road crews were able to begin clearing around 10 last night with another pass this morning to ensure everything was ready to go on the two hour delay schedule.
- Our buses were cleared and ready to roll with the two-hour delay.

### **Type of storm:**

- Our most recent storms have had ice and freezing rain as a factor at some point in the storm. This storm was a snow event (albeit heavy snow which caused power lines and trees to come down).
- Additionally, temps remained in the low 30s preventing refreezing like we saw with previous storms.

### **Power:**

- If our buildings have power, are warm, can serve hot meals and are ready to welcome students, I will open schools for educational purposes and to serve as a respite for those students that may be without power at home. This approach is likely a holdover in my mind from when our buildings served as shelters.
- Tincum Elementary lost power very early this morning and MetEd anticipated restoration by 8PM tonight. Since the power went out very early on a Monday, the building was not as warm as it was when we lost power at Tincum very recently.

In closing, I want to thank you for sharing your comments regarding today's snow event or any other item causing concern. I am glad to take this opportunity to share my thoughts with you today and I, for one, am looking forward to spring!

## **Governor Wolf Encourages Pennsylvanians to Donate to Their Local Food Bank**

Harrisburg, PA – Even though the federal government is back to business as usual, millions of Pennsylvanians continue to feel the ramifications of the 35-day shutdown, and likely will for weeks to come. Food banks and pantries across the country also are feeling the effects of the shutdown and Governor Tom Wolf is encouraging Pennsylvanians who can to donate to their local charitable food organization.

*"Food banks and pantries across Pennsylvania felt the effects of the federal government shutdown during the time of year when resources are already strained due to weather," Gov. Wolf said. "If you already donated to your food bank, thank you. If you haven't or can give more, I encourage you to do so. It can go a long way to restock shelves and make sure our community members in need do not have to go without a necessity of life – food."*

Food banks say that cash donations and volunteer support are most needed, but residents should check with their local food bank or pantry to find out about any specific needs.

## Do you ever shop at Giant Food Stores in PA or Stop & Shop in NJ?

### PA shoppers:

- Visit [www.giantfoodstore.com](http://www.giantfoodstore.com); click on Sign In, Manage my Account, Savings & Rewards to log on to your online account or, for **first time users**, click register to create your online account. Once you are logged in to your account, you can select up to 2 registered schools for A+ Rewards. Our school ID is: 06546
- If you have a Giant card but do not know your 12-digit Giant card number, call the Giant card hotline at 1-877-366-2668 and select Option #1. The representatives will be able to provide you your Giant card number.

**NJ shoppers:** visit [www.stopandshop.com](http://www.stopandshop.com) and follow the directions for PA

To earn points, use your registered BonusCard each time you shop at either store and you will earn cash for River Valley Waldorf School. You can confirm your school selection anytime by logging into your account. At the end of each month your points are calculated and converted to cash rewards. These cash rewards for our school are updated monthly. You can track our progress when you sign in to your online account.

Our school will receive a Cash rewards check and can use this cash for any of our educational needs. Please encourage your family members and friends to support our school!

## From The Faculty

### What the Children are Learning:

First Grade – Language Arts/Consonants & Blends

Second Grade – Math

Third Grade – Drama/Language Arts

Fourth Grade – Norse Mythology

Fifth Grade – Drama

Sixth Grade – Physics

Seventh Grade – Geometry

Eighth Grade – Chemistry

## From The Board



### Have you heard the Buzz?

### We need YOU to make our Auction a success!

Share your talents, creativity or time! We need 3 auction items from each family --  
Nourish a belly or soul, host a game night, offer your services or solicit gift certificates from your favorite shops.  
For more ideas or suggestions reach us at [auktion@rivervalley.school.org](mailto:auktion@rivervalley.school.org)



### What do you love about River Valley?

Check out what our community loves about our amazing school on Facebook and Instagram and receive an auction raffle ticket for each share!

## Class Fundraisers

### Handcrafted River Valley Jewelry for Sale to Support the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Emily Langmade has handcrafted jewelry with the RVWS crest especially for an 8th grade fundraiser. Choose from pendants, earrings, beads, and attachable charms. All items are available in brass or silver, and with or without oxidation. Samples will be available in the lobby on the 8th grade fundraising table this coming Wednesday and Friday. All proceeds will benefit the 8th grade for their class trip. The jewelry has been generously provided for the cost of the materials only; learn more about the artist and visit her online store at [lockandspoon.com](http://lockandspoon.com).



## From Parent Council

### Hello River Valley Waldorf Parents,

It is time to begin planning for Mayfaire! This annual event is both beloved and very important to our children, the community and our school. We recognize that planning a large event can be a considerable commitment of time and effort. Parent Council would like to simplify Mayfaire this year and try a different approach to holding the festival. The new approach distributes the effort across the entire school community, which we believe will help to make this event (as well as Winter Fair) more sustainable over time.

What is changing:

1. Each grade will be assigned and be responsible for a task from start to finish. Parent Council, the Leadership Council and the Administrative Team are here to support each class and to provide guidance, advice and assistance. Communication is the key to success in this process. The class coordinators will be the point people for each class. Please cc: us ([lc@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:lc@rivervalleyschool.org) and [pc@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:pc@rivervalleyschool.org) ) when you send an e-mail. We will need to work together to ensure that all aspects of the activities are covered.

2. PC meetings will focus on Mayfaire preparations. Notes will be shared with anyone who can't attend. Upcoming meetings are March 4th at 2:00 pm at Homestead and March 20th at 7:00 pm at Frenchtown Inn (please let us know if you're coming so we can reserve a table.) Everyone is welcome to join us – it is a very pleasant way to take care of business! If you have any questions about the meetings – let us know.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to PC (Liz Davachi and Lorissa Lock) with any questions or help that you need.

We look forward to working with the whole community for another fantastic event.

Thank you very much,  
Liz & Lorissa, your PC Co-chairs

### Artisan Market at Mayfaire!

If any of the grades or students would like to participate in selling their handmade creations at the Mayfaire this year, please email lvy at [karunagoddess@gmail.com](mailto:karunagoddess@gmail.com)

## From the Community

### Slow Flow Yoga w. Ivy Giacchino-Berrocal

Tuesdays at RiverSoul Yoga. 9:00-10:15a  
\$12 drop-ins - space is limited, please email Ivy to reserve: karunagoddess@gmail.com

RiverSoul Yoga - 18 Bridge St. Milford

### Break and Make - An art workshop for kids

Simon Keller, potter/ceramic artist, will lead a fun and physical art workshop where kids will smash pots and use the fragments to create original pieces of art. Simon has over twenty years of experience in both traditional and experimental ceramic arts. Since 2007, he has taught authentic Japanese ceramic techniques and experimental ceramic art workshops at duCret School of Arts in Plainfield, NJ.

March 16, 2-5 PM  
Raritan Learning Cooperative 168 Main St. Flemington, NJ, For Kids ages 12 - 17. Cost: \$15.

To register contact:  
[scott@raritanlearningcooperative.org](mailto:scott@raritanlearningcooperative.org)

### Very Special Grand Piano for Sale:

Knabe and Co, Baltimore, 1900's

- warm brown walnut, ivory keys, beautiful interior, carved legs, lovely sound
- professionally refinished 10 years ago, temp control system
- needs tuning and a loving home, \$6500

Annie - 203-556-2162, [aporter@rivervalleyschool.org](mailto:aporter@rivervalleyschool.org)  
I can email pics, and you are welcome to come try it out!

### Plowshare Farms CSA

Registration is now open! River Valley Waldorf School family, Teddy, Faith, and Clement Moynihan raise chemical-free, naturally-grown produce in Pipersville, and offer a 24 week, on-farm CSA, June through Thanksgiving. From garden variety veggies to heirloom oddities, we have been growing food for our community for six seasons, and are eager to share the bounty with our new community--Clement just joined the Acorn Room in September. Please check out what we're all about at [plowsharefarms.com](http://plowsharefarms.com) or [@plowsharefarms](https://twitter.com/plowsharefarms).

### Lenape Chamber Ensemble

#### Children's Concert in the Round

For children ages 4-12, featuring music by Mozart, Widor & Prokofiev for flute, violins, viola, cello, & piano. Refreshments and Instruments demonstrations.

**Saturday, March 9th**, 10-11 am at Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium, 700 Butler Avenue at State Street and Rt. 611, Doylestown, PA 18901. Children: \$2, Adults Free.

#### Lenape Chamber Ensemble Concerts

**Friday, March 8th**, 8:15 pm, Upper Tinicum Lutheran Church, 188 Upper Tinicum Church Rd., UBE

**Sunday, March 10th**, 3 pm, Delaware Valley University Life Sciences Auditorium (See above for address.)  
Music by Mozart, Widor & Prokofiev

Adults \$18, Students and Seniors \$15, Children \$5 For information: 610-294-9361 or [www.lenapechamberensemble.org](http://www.lenapechamberensemble.org)

### Film Screening and Discussion - I'm Not Racist...Am I?

Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 1:00PM

Location: The Newtown Theatre - 120 N. State St. Newtown, PA

Cost: Free will donation

Contact: Holly Olson. [hollybqc@verizon.net](mailto:hollybqc@verizon.net), 215-860-9747

Bucks Quarterly Meeting's Outreach Committee is excited to host a screening and discussion of the feature documentary, I'm Not Racist... Am I? The film follows a diverse group of teens through a yearlong exploration to get at the heart of racism. Through some tense and painful moments, we see how these difficult conversations affect their relationships with friends and parents, and ultimately challenge them to look deep within themselves. By the end of their time together, we'll see these remarkable young people develop deeper bonds, a stronger resolve and a bigger, more significant definition of racism than any of us ever imagined. Unfortunately, our work to eradicate racism from our society will not be over any time soon. Come to this engaging event to become more enlightened.

One of the producers of the film, André Robert Lee will lead the discussion following the film. Appropriate for teens in grades 7 and up. The event is open to the general public.

### **Please Consider Supporting RVWS Parent's Kickstarter Campaign!**

Kevin Bott, father of Lev (2nd grade) and Valor (5th grade) has been developing the non-profit Ritual4Return ([www.ritual4return.org](http://www.ritual4return.org)) for the past 10 years. R4R is an arts-based rite of passage program designed to help formerly incarcerated people overcome the shame, stigma, and trauma of incarceration. Raising \$15K to launch Manhattan program this spring.

Please visit [www.kickstarter.com](http://www.kickstarter.com) and search for "Ritual4Return" or "Kevin Bott."  
The campaign ends at 8:59am on Wednesday, March 13!

### **River Ballet Company presents Swan Lake**

March 30th at 11:30am

Music Mountain Theater, 1483 Rt 179. Lambertville, NJ \*\*Great show for Kids and Adults.

Tickets: [www.tututix.com/riverballet](http://www.tututix.com/riverballet)

### **Help for a Friend**

Hi Friends:

Pamela Hobson, mother of Olivia, is in need of financial assistance while she fights cervical cancer. We have set up a fundraiser where those who wish to help can set up a monthly donation to assist with food and other bills. The link is:

<https://www.patreon.com/user?u=2568187>

Thanks, Andy Wander

In addition to ongoing donations, RVWS is collecting money to purchase gift cards for Kimberton Whole Foods for Pamela. Please see Cindy, Robbie or Tiffany to leave your donation.

### **Need Help?**

Aaron McKay, father of Lily (Grade 2), is a local carpenter offering services ranging from home repair and renovations (drywall, framing, doors, windows, trim, built-ins, kitchen installations, crown) and made-to-order handcrafted shelving, cabinetry, and furniture (barn board dining tables, benches, cubbies, desks, bookcases, doors, bed frames, dressers, work benches). Basically, if you can imagine it, Aaron can build it. Style is clean and simple with all hidden fasteners and mortice and tenon joinery. Projects incorporate reclaimed wood, whenever possible. Feel free to email or call Aaron to discuss your carpentry needs: [welcometothewoodshop@gmail.com](mailto:welcometothewoodshop@gmail.com), (908) 274-0731

### **Artyard**

**Exhibition: The Creative Commons: Progressive Studio Practice - January 12 – April 15**

#### **Upcoming Events:**

**Saturday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2 pm**

Capturing Grace followed by a talk by Dave Leventhal from the Mark Morris Dance Group

**Sunday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 pm**

Build Your Own Bird Costume for Artyard's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hatch

**March 23 - 24 & April 6-7**

Sacred Harp Singing School Workshops with Grecory Corbino, (singing & potluck on May 19<sup>th</sup>.)

**Sunday, March 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm**

Crank Night – This year's theme is *Questions*.

**Friday, April 5, 7:30 pm**

Please join us for a night of musical celebration with The Lovestruck Balladeers

**Saturday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm**

Screening of Paper Moon, the 1973 comedy drama starring Ryan O'Neal and Tatum O'Neal

**Saturday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 7:30 pm**

Screening of Finding Vivian Maier, directed by John Maloof and Charlie Siskel followed by a communal, bring your own picnic

Go to: [artyard.org](http://artyard.org) for tickets and more information about all of these events.

ArtYard, 62A Trenton Avenue, Frenchtown, NJ 08825. Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM.

## **Sacred Harp Singing with Gregory Corbino at Artyard Alumni of Bread and Puppet and 2017 ArtYard Cranky Fest performer**

Over the course of two days, singers of all abilities are welcome to join music director Gregory Corbino for a weekend of learning and singing in the tradition of the Sacred Harp, also known as shape note singing. There will be two workshops; one March 23-24 and the second April 6-7. We will also have a Sacred Harp Singing celebration and potluck in May. For more information and tickets go to [ArtYard.org](http://ArtYard.org).

## **Code Blue Shelter**

If you're lacking inside shelter in Upper Bucks County during periods of extreme, life-threatening weather (temperature or wind chill of 26°F or below) between November 15 and April 15, your neighbors and friends are ready with an Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter at the Quakertown Masonic Lodge (501 W Broad St, Quakertown, PA 18951) from 8:15 PM to 7:00 AM the following morning. We'll have a hot meal and breakfast for you as well as shelter.

**Car rides will be provided from the following stops—call 267.450.5191 to request a ride:**

□ Turkey Hill @ Ottsville/Harrow 7:45 PM      □ Perkasie Square Shopping Center 7.45 PM

To find out if the shelter is open, contact the Code Blue Status Line: 267.450.5191 after 1:00 PM

The Upper Bucks Code Blue Shelter is a ministry of Advocates for the Homeless of Upper Bucks (AHUB)

## **Learning Virtue, Living Virtue**

### **Learning Virtue, Living Virtue by Paul Ritchie March – Fortitude**

“Courage involves deliberate choice in the face of painful or fearful circumstances for the sake of a worthy goal. There is a close connection between fear and confidence. The excessively fearless person is nameless, while the one who is excessively confident is rash; the one who is excessively afraid and deficient in confidence is cowardly.”  
*Aristotle*

The world admires its heroes, who do great, even mythic, deeds. The world's eyes loom large to drink in their entire stories, replete with honors, benefits and monuments. Celebrants and objects of celebration alike have their motives, sometimes closely kept, some to accrue present and/or future gain.

*I don't get it. What's so “bad” about being celebrated?*

The virtue of fortitude is realized only when ably steered by the virtue of prudence. What we can accomplish must be purposeful to have meaning. Fortitude alone is not enough; it requires prudence, too.

To qualify as a virtue, fortitude must withstand the challenge of extremism. On the one hand, there is the path of martyrdom. It is a flinty, demanding view. If fortitude is not carefully measured by the cardinal virtue of prudence, perseverance may be purposeless.

Its counterpoint is softness, which presents itself as a reward. But it is a sham reward. It is a siren song of respite which, if we permitted it, can turn our soul's focus from the labor and self-denial at the very heart of fortitude.

*Are we talking about more ‘soul work?’*

Yes, we are. There can be no possibility of fortitude without vulnerability. To be brave actually means we are able to suffer injury. It is a sober eye-, heart- and soul-opening commitment to consider that we would willingly forfeit comfort and inner peace and in exchange, invite pain and harm, fright and oppression.

*This sounds pretty extreme. Isn't there a more moderate approach?*

We face numerous small choices of courage every day, even though they don't loudly declare themselves as such. And then there are big issues, too.

*Even death?*

Even death. Of course, very few injuries – and very few situations – demand life or death responses, but it becomes a question of what we stand for and what we're willing to face up to. This means that every courageous action has as its deepest root, the readiness and commitment to take action, even in dire circumstances.

*(Continued on next page.)*



*Does this mean we should seek out "opportunities" to suffer?*

To be brave does not mean suffering injury for its own sake. Again, the virtue of prudence helps to steer us the right way. There is no moral imperative that simply considers a life of little worth. As Thomas Aquinas wrote, "We love our lives with the natural, life-asserting forces of the body and the moral forces of the spiritual soul."

*So how do we engage these life forces to make good decisions?*

It is possible to be genuinely brave only when **all options** are in play. The virtue of fortitude keeps a person from so loving her own life that she loses it. This principle – that whosoever loves her life – is valid for all of human reality. Psychology gives us the insight that it is a lack of courage to accept injury that is linked to the incapability of self-sacrifice.

Neuroses seem to share the common symptom of egocentric anxiety, self-centered concern for security; in short, the regard and love for one's own life that makes it impossible to fully give of that life to another.

*What does it benefit society as a whole if these virtues are observed, even honored?*

Thomas Hobbes, 17<sup>th</sup> century English philosopher, stated that virtues were investments of the public good. "Courage is a strength of mind. It is meant to act in the interest of all the citizenry who face lives that are solitary, poor, brutish and short."

David Hume, 18<sup>th</sup> century Scottish philosopher, stated, "Since the soul, when elevated with courage, meets and employs us. Courage defends us."

As Jesus said, "whosoever loves his life loses it, and whosoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life." (ESV, John 12:25)

Paradoxically, the willingness to make the most of one's life, to "make a difference," speaks poorly to those who clutch tightly to their lives and speaks well to those who dispense of life's gifts most fully. Our ability to bring greater meaning into our lives depends on what actions we take with our fullest measure of fortitude.

From the Washington Post

## **6 Ways Parents can Help Kids Strike a Balance Between Screen Time and the Real World**

By Mari-Jane Williams

When it comes to kids and screens, it often feels as though parents are wearing headphones with conflicting messages piped into each ear. On one side: a steady drumbeat of increasingly dire warnings about game addictions and the developmental consequences of letting kids spend too much time on devices. On the other side: the powerful siren song of phones, laptops, tablets and video games. Our kids are constantly nagging us for access — more time for playing games, doing homework, catching up with friends or watching endless hours of YouTube.

As with everything, it's up to parents to find balance. We need to figure out where the line is between what is necessary, or at least acceptable, and what is too much. Although there are general guidelines on how to set those limits, the answer will vary from family to family, and even from one child to another within a family, says David Hill, a pediatrician and father of five in Chapel Hill, N.C.

As you come up with a plan, it's important to look at your needs and your child's needs, and tailor the guidelines appropriately. For example, Hill, the chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Communications and Media, says that for a travel soccer player who spends 90 minutes at practice three times a week, on top of homework, sleeping and socializing, the right amount may be five minutes a day. Another child who has fewer activities and obligations may have time for more. It also depends on what the child is doing on the device, Hill says. Working on a school project with friends is not the same thing as playing a first-person shooter game. And don't get caught up in the peer pressure or the hype, he says.

*(Continued on next page.)*

"We've been sold this idea that these things are highly addictive and appealing to children, whereas children, especially young children, have a pretty good idea what they need," he added. "This isn't as hard as it might look on the surface."

We asked Hill and other experts how parents can help kids fight the lure of the screen. Here are their suggestions.

### **Keep playing with your kids**

There's this weird thing that happens as our children get older and no longer require constant supervision. Parents tend to retreat into the background, leaving kids to figure out how to amuse themselves. A certain amount of that is a good thing. But the best way to get a child interested in doing something, whether it's a jigsaw puzzle, a card game or shooting baskets, is to do it with them, says Katie Hurley, a psychotherapist in Los Angeles and the author of "The Happy Kid Handbook."

"Play changes as kids grow, but they don't stop needing that meaningful connection with parents," Hurley says. Teach them to play your favorite card game, bake with them or find another activity you can share. "They may say no at first, but keep trying."

Lynne Ticknor, the education director at the Parent Encouragement Program in Kensington, Md., agrees that directly engaging with kids is a good way to get them interested in device-free activities. She suggests incorporating music or food that your child enjoys as part of the activity to draw them in.

### **Just say no**

"A lot of parents seem to feel great difficulty with saying no to their kids," says Roberta Michnick Golinkoff, a professor of education, psychology, linguistics and cognitive science at the University of Delaware and the author of "Becoming Brilliant." She suggests taking a page from former first lady Nancy Reagan's anti-drug campaign.

"Everything is about moderation, right?" she says. "I'm not a Luddite; I'm not saying keep these electronic devices from kids. But there is a way in which parents can modify what happens."

Hurley says it's often harder for parents to set limits because kids are accustomed to negotiating. In the 1970s, she says, kids had a lot of freedom, but they knew that a no from their parents was the end of the conversation. These days, she says, kids are more inclined to bargain. Parents need to stand their ground.

"Acknowledge the struggle, but stick to the limits," she says. "We're in charge of their emotional health. Twelve-year-olds are not known for making the best decisions."

And although there may be tears initially, after the first week or so, the children get used to the new reality, and adapt.

### **Slow down on purging toys**

Organizing, decluttering and minimizing are all the rage at the moment. But before deciding those old American Girl dolls no longer spark joy for your tween, hit the pause button, Hurley says. Children have a tendency to revisit items they've seemingly outgrown, and having a healthy amount of kid clutter at the ready can promote imaginative play.

"Kids have a way of going back to things when they're struggling, to go back to a safer time," she says. "They'll use all kinds of everyday things to create play scenarios. But if it's all taken away and we're all living in perfectly clean spaces that aren't playful, they're not going to play."

Providing them with options for analog play, whether it's crayons and paper, blocks, board games, or cardboard boxes they can use to create a fort, can help them resist devices.

### **Let them be bored**

"We've become very uncomfortable with boredom, for adults as well," says Hill, the pediatrician from North Carolina. "We're on the elevator, looking at our phones. . . . The idea that there has to be a thing at all times is pervasive."

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He says brain imaging studies have shown that when people are bored, their brains “light up like crazy” as they engage in creative thought. When one of his children, who are now ages 14 to 20, would come to him complaining that they were bored, he says, he would tell them, “Good. Now go find something to do.” When he would hear a crash from the other room 30 minutes later, Hill says, he would know they had come up with something.

Hurley says that once the device is gone “and they go through being bored but realize it’s not coming back, they start going into that higher level of play that is so wonderful and educational.”

### **Get their input early**

Before bringing devices into the picture, sit down as a family and talk about the expectations of how, and how much, they will be used, Hill says.

“The idea is not to introduce the screens and then a year later say ‘Hey, this is not what we wanted,’ ” he says. “Be thoughtful about it and say, ‘Here’s what we agree this is for, here’s the uses that are not so good, and here are the consequences if the device is misused.’ ”

Involving the kids in an open and honest discussion on the front end will set clear boundaries and ensure that everyone is working from the same set of guidelines.

“Then when you have to initiate a consequence you can say, ‘This is what we agreed to.’ That enhances a sense of ownership for the kids. Childhood is a time when you don’t have a lot of control, so offering some control is a constructive way to have a conversation,” he says.

### **Walk the walk**

It’s hard to convince kids they should be doing something other than staring at their phones when that’s how we spend most of our free time.

“I worry about this next generation,” Golinkoff says. “Remember when you used to push a stroller, you would talk to the kid about what you were seeing. Now adults are pushing a stroller and talking on their cellphone, so the kids are getting less input. . . . We need to put the phones away and interact with children. Then we’re making ourselves available and sending the message that the relationship we have is more important than anything.”

From the New York Times

## **States Consider Longer School Recess, and the Adults Aren’t Complaining**

By Laura M. Holson

Four years ago, Lucy Dathan moved to New Canaan, Conn., where she enrolled her three children in public elementary school. They met new classmates. Their teachers were attentive. But something was amiss: Recess was limited to a 20-minute break after lunch, or about half the time as at their previous school, in California.

Ms. Dathan said a shift in her children’s mood was palpable. They found it difficult to focus on homework. They were restless and sometimes cranky after school, which she attributed to pent-up energy. With so little time for schoolyard play, she worried they were losing the ability to navigate personal relationships. “It was hard for them to adjust to only one recess,” she said in an interview.

So Ms. Dathan, who was elected to the Connecticut legislature in November, agreed to support a state bill that would require schools to provide at least 50 minutes of daily undirected play for students enrolled in preschool through fifth grade. “I haven’t had one person ask, ‘Why are you doing this?’ ” she said of parents, students and teachers who have contacted her. “I think playtime fosters the creativity that we need to solve crazy world problems, like global warming, or other issues we need to face as a planet.”

*(Continued on next page.)*

Ms. Dathan is not alone in her observation. Last April, Arizona legislators passed a law that provided two daily recesses for the state's elementary school students. Teachers have already seen encouraging results, reporting fewer disciplinary actions, enhanced test scores and improvement in children's overall health. And just last week, youngsters from Arkansas, where a similar move is also being considered, sent letters to state legislators asking they be given a longer recess break.

The current discussion around playtime reflects an emerging body of thought about creativity and childhood. Neuroscientists and others say creative problem solving will be essential for the future as computers become more powerful and artificial intelligence commonplace. "Creativity in children involves the ability to make things up and generate ideas on their own," said Sandra Russ, a professor in the department of psychological sciences at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

That includes group play, storytelling and building with blocks and other toys that stimulate, not inhibit, wonder and curiosity. Robert Bilder is a clinical neuropsychologist and a director of the Tennenbaum Center for the Biology of Creativity in Los Angeles who studies creativity and the brain. "What is valuable for children is freedom where they are solving problems with no predictable answer," he said. "When it is open-ended, they retain the curiosity to learn more things. And that is going to be essential for their futures."

Dr. Bilder headed the "Big C Project" at the University of California, Los Angeles, where researchers studied the brains of accomplished artists, scientists and others to understand how creative genius worked. "They showed a pattern of functional connectivity that was more random," he said. "It's not clear what promotes it. But it is established at an early age."

One might surmise that highly creative people explore relationships that other people miss. Children who are given an open-ended problem are more apt to explore a variety of relationships and patterns, unlike when they are given a toy with preset instructions or uses. "The 'thing' should not be dictating the activity," Dr. Bilder said of toys. "The person dictates the activity."

Take, for instance, a cardboard fort made out of an old appliance box. Cardboard boxes were once so ubiquitous as play toys that in 2005 they were named to the National Toy Hall of Fame. Now, parents can buy a prefabricated cardboard kit on Amazon. Or their children can simulate building a fort in an online game.

"It is a shame that kids aren't playing with cardboard boxes as much as they used to," said Mark Runco, a researcher who studies creativity at Southern Oregon University and who is the founding editor of *Creativity Research Journal*. "Our whole world is changing now. There are people who think you can have digital or remote playtime. You experience it in different ways."

There are trade-offs, of course, to replacing an outdoor playground with a digital one. "There is good and bad," he said. "We now have a community all over the world. But there is a loss of face-to-face interactions."

Dr. Runco, like Dr. Bilder, warned that more undirected free time at school does not guarantee that children will become more creative thinkers. What's important is how they use the time they have. And home life and community play a part, too. "People are intrinsically creative," Dr. Runco said. "But they need the environment. Creativity is most important when people are making choices. Getting dressed. Choosing alternative routes to work or school. Too often people align creative thinking with painting, writing or drawing."

For Ms. Dathan, though, having Connecticut's children spend 50 minutes on the playground every day is a good place to start. "It will be interesting to hear what people have to say in our upcoming public hearings," she said. "Creativity does get stifled. You need to give kids an opportunity to learn social skills. It's good for overall happiness. And playtime builds relationships."

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