

REVISED
UPPER DEERFIELD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT'S MONTHLY BULLETIN
MARCH 2018

Thurs., 3/1	Evening of Reading at Seabrook School: 6PM – 8PM
Fri., 3/2	Read Across America Day Woodruff School Spring Pictures
Mon., 3/5	PTO Meeting – Seabrook School Media Center: 6:30PM
Wed., 3/7	Mid Marking Period 3
Fri., 3/9	Woodruff School Student Council Dance: 7PM – 9PM
Sun., 3/11	Daylight Saving Time Begins – set clocks FORWARD 1 hour
Wed., 3.14	Family Night – No Homework PTO Talent Show
Sat., 3/17	HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY! 🍀
Tues., 3/20	Welcome Spring! 🌸🌷 Mrs. Ford's and Mrs. Freeman's Class Trip to Bayshore Center at Bivalve Board of Education Meeting: 7PM
Fri., 3/23	Blue & Gold Day Woodruff School Career Day
Thurs., 3/27	Board of Education Meeting – Woodruff School Library: 7PM
Thurs., 3/29	EARLY DISMISSAL AT 12:45
Fri., 3/30-Mon., 4/2	SCHOOL CLOSED – EASTER/SPRING BREAK

IMPORTANT CALENDAR CHANGE: As is posted on our school calendar, any snow days are first taken from the Easter/Spring Break. We did have two snow days which means we will have school on Thursday, March 29 and Tuesday, April 3. Thursday, March 29 will be a half-day with a 12:45 dismissal with lunch served and no CER. Tuesday, April 3 will be a full day of school. **Schools will be closed only on Friday, March 30 through Monday, April 2.** If there are any additional days of closure these make-up days will be added to the end of the school calendar.

Please note: Pre-K and Kindergarten Registration will be held on May 16 and May 23 from 8 – 10:30 at the Seabrook School.

Dr. Seuss' Birthday: March 2 is the birthday of Dr. Seuss. As a parent, you are your child's first and most important teacher. Your home is where your child first experiences books, and where your child sees you as a model for reading behaviors. You can use your time at home together to show your children how much you value reading! As you know, reading with your child is the best way to help them succeed in school.

Spring Forward: This is a reminder that on March 11, Daylight Saving Time begins. Set your clocks forward!

Supporting Reading: Even if your child is motivated to read, supporting him or her with a variety of ways and options will keep his or her momentum going. Here are 11 practical recommendations for helping preschoolers and school-age students learn to read:

1. Teaching reading will only help.

Sometimes, parents are told early teaching is harmful, but it isn't true. You simply can't introduce literacy too early. I started reading to my own children on the days they were each born! The "dangers of early teaching" has been a topic of study for more than 100 years, and no one has ever found any convincing evidence of harm. Moreover, there are hundreds of studies showing the benefits of reading to your children when they are young.

2. Teaching literacy isn't different than teaching other skills.

You don't need a Ph.D. to raise a happy, healthy, smart child. Parents have been doing it for thousands of years. Mothers and fathers successfully teach their kids to eat with a spoon, use a potty, keep their fingers out of their noses, and say "please." These things can be taught pleasantly, or they can be made into a painful chore. Being unpleasant (e.g. yelling, punishing, pressuring) doesn't work, and it can be frustrating for everyone. This notion applies to teaching literacy, too. If you show your 18-month-old a book and she shows no interest, then put it away and come back to it later. If your child tries to write her name and ends up with a backwards "D," no problem. No pressure. No hassle. You should enjoy the journey, and so should your child.

3. Talk to your kids (a lot).

Last year, I spent lots of time with our brand new granddaughter, Emily. I drowned her in language. Although "just a baby," I talked — and sang — to her about everything. I talked about her eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and fingers. I told her all about her family — her mom, dad, and older brother. I talked to her about whatever she did (yawning, sleeping, eating, burping). I talked to her so much that her parents thought I was nuts; she couldn't possibly understand me yet. But reading is a language activity, and if you want to learn language, you'd better hear it, and eventually, speak it. Too many moms and dads feel a bit dopey talking to a baby or young child, but studies have shown that exposing your child to a variety of words helps in her development of literacy skills.

4. Read to your kids.

I know everyone says this, but it really is a good idea — at least with preschoolers. One of my colleagues refers to this advice as the "chicken soup" of reading education. We prescribe it for everything. (Does it help? It couldn't hurt.) If a parent or caregiver can't read or can't read English, there are alternatives, such as using audiobooks; but for those who can, reading a book or story to a child is a great, easy way to advance literacy skills. Research shows benefits for kids as young as 9-months-old, and it could be effective even earlier than that. Reading to kids exposes them to richer vocabulary than they usually hear from the adults who speak to them, and can have positive impacts on their language, intelligence, and later literacy achievement. What should you read to them? There are so many wonderful children's books. Visit your local library, and you can get an armful of adventure. You can find

recommendations from kids at the [Children's Book Council website](#) or at the [International Literacy Association Children's Choices site](#), as well as free books online at other websites like [Search Lit](#) or [Unite for Literacy](#).

5. Have them tell you a "story."

One great way to introduce kids to literacy is to take their dictation. Have them recount an experience or make up a story. We're not talking "Moby Dick" here. A typical first story may be something like, "I like fish. I like my sister. I like grandpa." Write it as it is being told, and then read it aloud. Point at the words when you read them, or point at them when your child is trying to read the story. Over time, with lots of rereading, don't be surprised if your child starts to recognize words such as "I" or "like." (As children learn some of the words, you can write them on cards)

6. Teach phonemic awareness.

Young children don't hear the sounds within words. Thus, they hear "dog," but not the "duh"- "aw"- "guh." To become readers, they have to learn to hear these sounds (or phonemes). Play language games with your child. For instance, say a word, perhaps her name, and then change it by one phoneme: Jen-Pen, Jen-Hen, Jen-Men. Or, just break a word apart: chair... ch-ch-ch-air. Follow this link to learn more about [language development milestones in children](#).

7. Teach phonics (letter names and their sounds).

You can't sound out words or write them without knowing the letter sounds. Most kindergartens teach the letters, and parents can teach them, too. I just checked a toy store website and found 282 products based on letter names and another 88 on letter sounds, including ABC books, charts, cards, blocks, magnet letters, floor mats, puzzles, lampshades, bed sheets, and programs for tablets and computers. You don't need all of that (a pencil and paper are sufficient), but there is lots of support out there for parents to help kids learn these skills. Keep the lessons brief and fun, no more than 5-10 minutes for young'uns. Understanding the [different developmental stages of reading and writing skills](#) will help to guide your lessons and expectations.

8. Listen to your child read.

When your child starts bringing books home from school, have her read to you. If it doesn't sound good (mistakes, choppy reading), have her read it again. Or read it to her, and then have her try to read it herself. Studies show that this kind of repeated oral reading makes students better readers, even when it is done at home.

9. Promote writing.

Literacy involves reading and writing. Having books and magazines available for your child is a good idea, but it's also helpful to have pencils, crayons, markers, and paper. Encourage your child to write. One way to do this is to write notes or short letters to her. It won't be long before she is trying to write back to you.

10. Ask questions.

When your child reads, get her to retell the story or information. If it's a story, ask who it was about and what happened. If it's an informational text, have your child explain what it was about and how it worked, or what its parts were. Reading involves not just sounding out words, but thinking about and remembering ideas and events. [Improving reading comprehension skills early](#) will prepare her for subsequent success in more difficult texts.

11. Make reading a regular activity in your home.

Make reading a part of your daily life, and kids will learn to love it. When I was nine years old, my mom made me stay in for a half-hour after lunch to read. She took me to the library to get books to kick off this new part of my life. It made me a lifelong reader. Set aside some time when everyone turns off the TV and the web and does nothing but read. Make it fun, too. When my children finished reading a book that had been made into a film, we'd make popcorn and watch the movie together. The point is to make reading a regular enjoyable part of your family routine. Happy reading!

Sources:

Ritchie, S.J., & Bates, T.C. (2013). Enduring links from childhood mathematics and reading achievement to adult socioeconomic status. *Psychological Science*, 24, 1301-1308.

Karass J., & Braungart-Rieker J. (2005). Effects of shared parent-infant reading on early language acquisition. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 26, 133-148.

Anti-Bullying Theme: This month's Anti-Bullying theme is "**We are all different - but all equal!**"

Family Night: Upper Deerfield Township School District recognizes the importance of family and spending time together. This month we have designated Wednesday, March 14 as family night. No homework will be assigned in the district on this night. The PTO is sponsoring the variety show at Moore School at 6:30pm.

PTO: The Upper Deerfield Township PTO will be meeting this month on Monday, March 5 at 6:30pm in the Seabrook School Media Center. All are welcome to attend and support the PTO in their mission to assist all our schools in the district.

Board of Education: The Upper Deerfield Township Board of Education meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the Woodruff School Media Center, unless otherwise noted. This month the regularly scheduled meeting will be held on March 27. We will also be reviewing the budget for the 2018-19 school year.

Parking Lots: When picking children up from school, please do not block parked cars or traffic. This is a safety issue in case of an emergency. We ask that you please respect the rights of others who are abiding by the rules of parking lot etiquette. Thank you for your cooperation.

Save the Dates: The Woodruff School's ACE Music/Theatre Program will be presenting Madagascar, Jr. on April 12, 13, and 14. Show Times are at 7pm on the 12th and 13th with a matinee at 3pm on the 14th.

Cumberland Regional High School Night: Friday, April 27 2018 is the Cumberland Regional High School National Honor Society Benefit Night with a trip to the Phillies Game. Tickets are \$47 per ticket for section 109; \$30 per ticket for section 204 and \$20 per ticket for section 303. You can order tickets online at www.phillies.com/CRHS and enter code CRHS.

Quotes worth Quoting:

"The Earth laughs in flowers." – E.E. Cummings

"It is difficult to say what is impossible, for the dream of yesterday is the hope of today and the reality of tomorrow."
– Robert Schuller

"A rebirth of spiritual adversity causes us to become new creatures." – James E. Faust

Happy Easter to all on Sunday, April 1.