

D51 Gifted Education Newsletter

February 2024

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News from our GT Director

In our January newsletter, we referenced **motivation** as a key factor for success in the area of New Year's resolutions and goal setting. In the education of our gifted and talented students, motivation is such an important and complex factor within the cycle of learning. Del Siegle and D. Betsy McCoach dive deeper into motivation within the research article [Making a Difference: Motivating Gifted Students Who Are Not Achieving](#), published through the Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development at the University of Connecticut. Within this article, four questions connected to motivation are addressed. Our students ask:

D51

FOUR CORE BEHAVIORS

D51 focuses on the whole learner to foster growth and high achievement.

D51 believes in the strengths of our people, our schools, and our communities.

D51 values individuality, inclusivity, and belonging.

D51 commits to continuous improvement.

VISION

Engage, equip, and empower each and every student, each and every day.

MISSION

D51 engages our community, families, and staff to deliver individualized, collaborative, and challenging educational experiences to prepare each and every student for their brightest future.

- “Why try?”;
- “Am I smart enough?”;
- “Can I be successful with this challenge?”; and
- “How do I put this all together?”

McCoach and Siegle begin to tackle the first question by asking another question, “What motivates a student to put forth effort to accomplish a given learning task?” Two basic reasons surface. A student is excited about engaging when they enjoy the actual activity itself or when the student values the outcome of the activity. When the learning experience is personalized for the student, value and enjoyment increase, along with the motivation to complete the work (and achievement). This outcome is often referred to as “utility value.”

For a student to experience utility value, they must be motivated to see beyond the immediate activity and connect to the long-term benefits. In other words, they begin to answer the question “Why do we have to study this?” This drive can come extrinsically or intrinsically. Extrinsic motivation involves the drive to receive a reward that is external to the activity itself. One way to increase

the utility value of the learning experience is to positively reinforce students for completing the task. Extrinsic motivators include rewards such as special privileges, grades, prizes, material rewards, peer recognition, and adult attention. In contrast, intrinsic motivation and value often result from the enjoyment an activity produces for the student. When students enjoy scholastic tasks, they are intrinsically motivated to do well. Both interests and personal relevance produce intrinsic value for a student. Generally, students are intrinsically motivated to pursue activities that are moderately novel, interesting, enjoyable, exciting, and optimally challenging. Both utility value and intrinsic motivation play an important role in increasing a student's desire to TRY!

In regards to utility value, teachers should explain the purpose for an assignment or a lesson in a simple sentence or two stating “why we are learning about this and how it is useful.” For younger students, teachers may need to help students set short-term goals that are meaningful to the students themselves. For older students goals are important, but may not seem directly connected to an assignment. For example, a school project may not directly connect to a short-term or long-term goal, but may indirectly lead to an overall outcome such as acceptance into a prestigious university, a lucrative college scholarship, or a rewarding occupation that the student values.

In regards to intrinsic motivation, as a teacher connects the learning to their student's interests, skill range, and future goals, the higher the success rate for completion. For example, teachers can learn about student interests, and integrate these interests into actual assignments or projects. With authentic choices, students are better able to show learning and mastery of the materials in the class. Students are more likely to become engaged with optimally challenging material; students should be challenged, but not frustrated by the project. One last thought in regards to intrinsic motivation. Immediate feedback may be possible with select assignments or classwork. One reason that computer games are so popular is that immediate feedback enhances the psychological impact of the activity. For this reason, when possible, teachers should strive to build

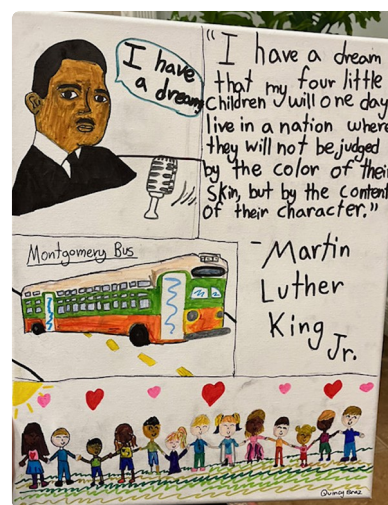
Realizing that most teachers and parents are aware of motivational techniques, answering this first question “Why try?” has brought forth some important reminders of why a student might not be excited to complete the task at hand. Underachievement can become a vicious cycle, and taking simple steps to redirect the success of our gifted learners is very important. The remaining three questions mentioned at the beginning of this article will be addressed in a future newsletter and may begin to complete the puzzle of what motivates your student to reach higher levels of success.

Martin Luther King Jr. Poster Contest

Submitted by Christena Nelson, GT teacher at Scenic and New Emerson Elementary

Quincy entered the art competition in honor of Martin Luther King Jr and won first place for all elementary school students. She received a certificate and a \$175 gift card. There was a luncheon on January 14, 2024, to honor the participants. Dr. Hill was there to congratulate those present.

Quincy loved participating in this project; it was meaningful for her as she has studied MLK Jr, even visiting his home, former church, and civil rights museums in Montgomery, Alabama.



Student Spotlight

Submitted by Sean Gregersen, *GT Teacher at Broadway Elementary and Thunder Mountain Elementary*

This month's student spotlight is on Lynn Chen, a 5th grade student at Thunder Mountain Elementary.

She has participated in the talent pool/Discovery group in literacy and math since 4th grade. She is an incredible artist. She likes to draw anime and sometimes different animals like cats and pandas. She studies reference material and other artists' work and puts lots of details and craftsmanship into her work. Besides drawing, she has also made clay creatures like an elf and panda. Another thing she likes to do at home is build Legos. She likes to construct buildings and is working on a moon palace. She enjoys playing with her younger sister and playing on her iPad. She has a pet bunny named Blueberry or Bunbun.

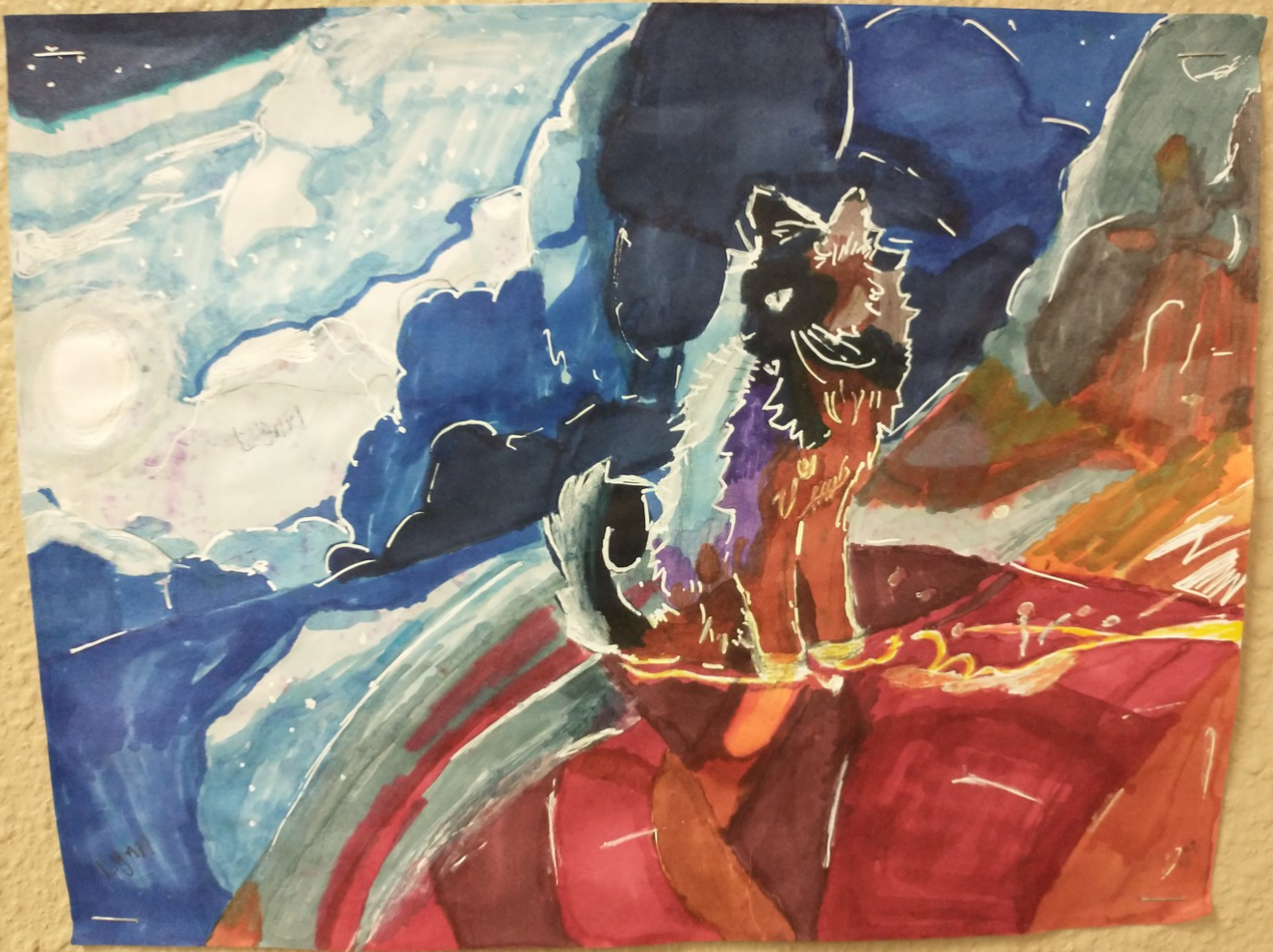


Lynn is multilingual and can fluently read, write, and speak in English and Chinese. She uses both languages with different family members. Lynn is a hard worker and helps her mom out when she can. She loves to eat the traditional Chinese food that her family makes. She also likes hot dogs, taco bowls, nachos, and grapes. One of Lynn's goals is to become a chef.

At school, her favorite subject is math. She enjoys reading graphic novels, and her favorites are Wings of Fire. She is a quick learner at whatever she takes on. For example, she significantly increased her skills at playing chess in a short period of time after being taught by Mrs. Aker.

This year, she traveled to China with her family to visit her grandparents. She got to spend lots of time hanging out with her grandparents and other family members. On the trip, she visited Shanghai where she went to Disneyland. Fast roller coasters are some of her favorite rides. She also went to the zoo there where she saw her favorite animal, the panda. In China, many people use motorbikes, and she enjoyed riding along with her family members.

Lynn Chen continually brings a unique perspective to the discovery groups and homeroom class and is an important part of the learning community.



Student Recommendation

Recommended by Shawn Carstensen Hays, GT teacher at Orchard Avenue Elementary School

One of the responsibilities of being a Gifted Education teacher in our district is to build the Talent Pool in our schools. By going into primary classrooms and engaging students in lessons that build critical, creative, and problem solving skills with all learners, we are able to observe and extend thinking while developing these talents. The focus at Orchard Avenue has been to think of fun ways for our learners to see themselves as creative and critical thinkers. The games we play have been a hit with our learners!

I would like to highlight the game *DISRUPTUS*.

We play [Disruptus: The Game Designed to Open Every Mind](#) each week. If you look at the age level on the box, it will say 10+, but don't let that stop you from playing the game in a simplified way with children who are 5-8 years old. The objective of DISRUPTUS revolves around coming up with new ways to CREATE, TRANSFORM, or IMPROVE ideas of objects.



For example, when the kindergarteners and first graders had to CREATE a new object or idea using any number of elements from each picture shown, which was a drill and a fork, they immediately turned and talked to their partner sharing their ideas. The ideas they generated were to replace the drill bit with the fork so you could use it to curl your hair or scratch your back.

When they had to IMPROVE the object of an umbrella, they shared how you could string lights on it and it could become a hanging light in your bedroom or it could be a new "toy box" to hold your stuffed animals, or be turned into a fun floatable boat for your stuffed animals that you could place in water.

Before I do a lesson, we play DISRUPTUS for five minutes. It is a fun and playful way for all learners to see themselves as creative innovative thinkers.

Check out this video, [Develop Disruptive Design Thinking Skills](#), to see how this game can be used in your classroom and other benefits, especially if you are providing learners the opportunity to do Design Thinking. I would recommend this for families and K-12 teachers.

Student Work

Submitted by Rochelle Morrison , GT Teacher at Tope Elementary School

"Black Cats"

By Eloise, 4th Grade

Winter ends, summer begins.

Green returns to leaves and grass.

Like black cats playing their violins.

As they play the breeze shakes the green on the newly grown trees.

The black cats prance around.

Creating happiness to everyone.

As they prance they create new sounds.

Sounds of joy, wonder because winter is done.

The black cats leave eventually

Sweeping through the trees

Before you know it, it's winter once again

"Polar Bears in the Winter"

By Nehemiah, 4th Grade

Usually in the winter other bears go away,

While all the polars bears stay up and play.

While the cubs are playing you hear a little bit,

Then the cubs notice the ice is slit.

The bears go inside into their home,

but then something is shown



Some fish from their mom,
And that was their dish.
And they all got happy and made a wish.

"Springtime Piglets"

By Piper T., 4th Grade

The morning comes
Along with fresh spring air
A sign of new life.
Piglets curly tail
Are the new leaves growing on a tree
Their little screeches are
Like the sound of grass and flowers begging
for water and sun
Playful feet are like dandelions in the spring
enjoying the fresh soil
Pink skin and cherry blossoms blowing in the wind
The beauty of the world is coming alive!

"Winter Wonders"

By Allison D., 4th Grade

As the winter comes to play
A bear gets ready to dream away
All dark and gloom inside it's cave
The memories from outside do not save

As the bear wakes up from his winter sleep
He comes out of his cave so deep
He sees the world and remembers it all
All things from short to tall
Till' another winter is near
He finds food and does not fear

"Summer Sloth"

By Eli M., 4th Grade

In the dreadful, muggy heat,
The rainforest calls the summer sloth
As three-clawed friends slowly eat,
They are never bothered by a moth.

As he lazily climbs up the tree, his brow with sweat,
He thinks, "Wow! What magnificent height!"
It begins to rain.
The branches are wet.
He grabs a leaf and enjoys a tasty bite!

"Hands"

My Hands are Important to me

I can write with my hands

I can fidget

They fall asleep

You can get hurt on your hands
when they catch your fall

Thumbs

You can give a thumbs up

You can play games with them

Like thumbs up seven up

Fingers

I can cross them

I can tie shoes with them

You can't make fingerprints if you don't have fingers

Nails

You can paint them

They're easy to clip

You can do a clasp with them

My Hands are Important to me

"Spring Birds"

By Lily S., 4th Grade

Their hatching is the new life

Their song is the breeze whistling

What are they

They are the birds

They are the birds

They are the birds of spring

The sing so sweetly and have
a voice that can drown out an orchestra
Even the ugliest birds sound beautiful

"Only Once"

By Wren W., 5th Grade

The warm gentle sun touches the frozen ground

Relieving it from the cold memories of winter

A robin flutters in
twittering and chirping excitedly

She waits knowing that a worm will soon cautiously poke its head out of the safety of the dirt

Smoke from a nearby cabin fills the air

Joy
at last when she gobbles down her well-earned snack!

Teacher Recommendation

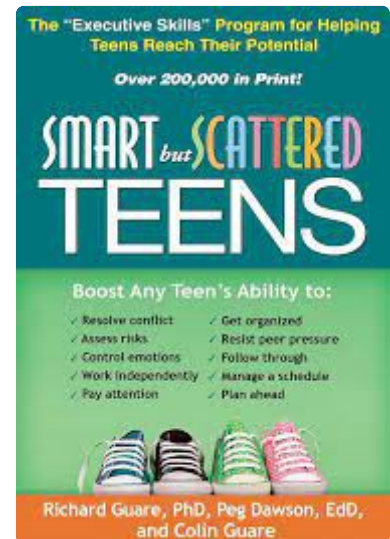
Submitted by Stacy Feather, GT teacher at Bookcliff Middle School

Book Recommendation:

Smart but Scattered Teens by Richard Guare, Peg Dawson and Colin Guare

Parents and Teachers will find this book an easy read with many applicable strategies.

11 executive function skills are addressed, with the two dimensions of thinking and doing. The book notes, that smart but scattered is not attributed to teens with a specific condition such as ADHD but rather the adolescent brain.



Here is an example of one of the book's executive functions: Teaching task initiation or how to get your teen to do a nonpreferred task. Parents, do I have your attention? This book gives ways to teach task initiation, a chart on **How Well Does Your Teen Initiate Nonpreferred Tasks?** A specific example of managing a high school assignment, a Q&A section, and second steps after progress is made.

This book is informative with easy application. Check out all the *Smart but Scattered* books and resources <https://www.smartbutscatteredkids.com/>.

Stacy Feather

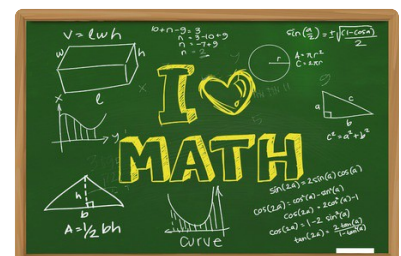
Parent of 18, 15, and 13-year-old girls and teacher at Bookcliff Middle School.

Finding Resilience in Math Competitions

submitted by Regina Black, GT Teacher at Clifton and Nisley Elementary

Finding Resilience in Math Competitions

Last month, I wrote about how playing Chess and running a Chess Club felt like a transformative experience for me and how my ideas about how an activity would benefit my students became much broader and more encompassing. Working with high-achieving and gifted students, educators and parents search for opportunities to develop creativity, persistence, resilience, independence and interdependence in their students. I have had the chance



to engage in two different clubs or activities that truly help my students learn all of these valuable skills while having fun. Chess club was my first and my second is competitive mathematics.

Competitive mathematics is the pursuit of intellect and learning that is not found in the general education classroom and may just elevate your learner in academic pursuits and personal growth. When students get involved in competitive mathematics, they immerse themselves in solving problems that are distinct from what they encounter in class. They have to be creative, persistent, and resilient to solve these problems. When training for competitions, students work together and independently on practice problems. There is groaning, discouragement, rallying of spirits, and the highs of completing difficult tasks. The students learn how to handle pressure and persevere through intense tasks.

Math competitions are offered at many levels. At elementary school, [Noetic Math](#) offers a contest for students starting at 2nd grade. By middle school and high school, there are many opportunities for students to compete including Noetic Math, [MathCounts](#), [Math Olympiad](#), and others. To train for these competitions, most of the groups offering the competition provide practice problems and previous competition tests. [The Center for Talented Youth at Johns Hopkins University](#) offers a series of courses focusing on competitive mathematics.

Competitive mathematics is another opportunity for your student to grow in their intellectual pursuits as well as their growth mindset and affective abilities. High-achieving and gifted students, particularly, need these opportunities to grow talents, find the outer limits of their learning, work with other talented students, and learn to engage in struggle. Most of all, it is fun.

Regina Black is the Team Leader for the math teams at Clifton and Nisley Elementary. She is also the Teacher for the Gifted and Talented program.

The Cooke Foundation's Young Scholars Program

The Jack Kent Cooke Foundation's [Young Scholars Program](#) application will open on **February 8, 2024**. The Young Scholars Program is a selective five-year, pre-college scholarship for high-performing 7th grade students with financial need. It provides academic advising, along with financial support for school, summer programs, internships, and other learning enrichment opportunities.



Eligible applicants should:

- Be current 7th graders and/or entering 8th grade in fall 2024.
- Have earned all As and Bs since the beginning of 6th grade.
- Reside in the U.S. and plan to attend high school in the U.S.
- Demonstrate financial need with a maximum adjusted gross income of \$95,000.

To receive updates about the program, [click here](#).



Scholarship Application

Scholarships are available to all D51 students to assist with tuition for enrichment programs.

2023-2024 Scholarship Application.pdf

[Download](#)
88.7 KB

2023-2024 Scholarship Application (spanish).pdf

[Download](#)
76.8 KB

Facebook

Westslope CO Gifted & Talented

This group is to support Westerslope Parents of Gifted & Talented and 2E kids.

We share hope, empowerment, ideas, opportunities, and overall support each other.



Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS



17th ANNUAL
Bank of Colorado
2025 CALENDAR CONTEST

SHOW US YOUR ARTISTIC TALENT & YOU MAY SEE
**YOUR ARTWORK PUBLISHED IN
OUR COMMUNITY CALENDAR**

COVER WINNER \$500
& YOUR ARTWORK WILL BE ON THE CALENDAR COVER

1ST PLACE WINNERS FROM EACH GRADE LEVEL \$300
& YOUR ARTWORK WILL BE FEATURED ON A PAGE OF THE CALENDAR

2nd PLACE WINNERS FROM EACH GRADE LEVEL \$200
3rd PLACE WINNERS FROM EACH GRADE LEVEL \$100

Submit your artwork in person at any Bank of Colorado in Grand Junction.

Open to ALL students in grades K-12 at Mesa County Valley School District 51 Schools
as well as private and home school students.

MASTERPIECES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY FRIDAY, MARCH 29, 2024

All monetary awards will be deposited in a Bank of Colorado Savings account. All entries must be accompanied by a completed entry form.
Need not be a Bank of Colorado customer to enter or win.



MARIANA CHAVEZ-CORDOVA
9th GRADE – GOAL HIGH SCHOOL

A RECEPTION WILL BE HELD

**WEDNESDAY
APRIL 24, 2024
AT 6:00 P.M.**

**BANK OF COLORADO
200 GRAND AVENUE
TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS
AND AWARD PRIZES.**

- Top 3 Finalists from each grade level will be notified the week of April 1st, 2024.
- The final selection of student artwork will be displayed on the Bank of Colorado Facebook page and within Grand Junction branch lobbies from April 8th - April 21st, 2024.

GRAND JUNCTION 200 Grand Ave. • 2903 Patterson Rd. • 2452 Patterson Rd. Ste.100 • 970.245.1600



**Colorado Department of Education's
Postsecondary Workforce Readiness team
is looking for family and student voices!**



You are invited to give your feedback on the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP).

What is ICAP?

The Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) is a tool that helps students make decisions about their education and career choices. An ICAP guides students in:

- exploring their interests
- developing their skills, and
- creating a plan for their future academic and career paths.

Your Feedback Matters!

Tell us how to improve ICAP and what you or your student need to feel ready for their future!

We are hosting virtual workshops where you can provide your feedback.

Workshop Interest Form:

If you are interested in participating, please fill out the following form.

- Two-hour virtual workshops will be scheduled in early to mid-February.
- Due to limited space, not everyone that expresses interest will be invited to participate.
- Our goal is to have a diverse group of students and parents from across the state.

[Link to ICAP Feedback Workshop Participation Form](#)

FMHS VOLLEYBALL



FRESHMAN VOLLEYBALL PREP CAMP

June 17-20, 2024

Open to **incoming Freshman girls and boys** from any school, who want to explore or refine volleyball skills.
9am-2pm

Wildkitten Kids Volleyball Camp

Grades: 3-8

June 10-13, 2024

Age divisions for athletes entering **grades 3-8, boys and girls from any school** are all welcome. Be ready for 4 days of VB fun.
3-5th grade: 8:30-10:30
6-7th grade: 11:00-1:00
8th grade: 1:30-3:30

Come learn new skills, experience game play, have fun, meet new friends, meet some of the high school players, get a t-shirt, and be part of our amazing FMHS volleyball family.



www.fmvolleyball.com



YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

WHO SHOULD KNOW MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

- Teachers.
- School Staff.
- Coaches.
- Camp Counselors.
- Youth Group Leaders.
- Parents.
- Adults who Work with Youth.

WHY YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID?

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches you how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental health and substance use challenges among children and adolescents ages 12-18.

10.2%

of youth will be diagnosed with a substance use disorder in their lifetime.

Source: Youth Mental Health First Aid**

1 IN 5

teens and young adults lives with a mental health condition.

Source: National Alliance for Mental Illness*

50%

of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, and 75% by the mid-20s.

Source: Archives of General Psychiatry***

Sources

* National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Kids. <https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Kids>

** Mental Health First Aid. (2020). *Mental Health First Aid USA* for adults assisting children and youth. National Council for Mental Wellbeing.

*** Kessler, R., Berglund, P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K.R., Walters, E.E. (2005, June). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62(6), 593-602. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.593

REGISTER TODAY!

Delivery Format:

In-Person, 6.5 hours

Date and Time:

Choose one of the following dates: 3/8, 8/16, 10/11

Location:

Locations vary and available upon registration

Where to Register:

www.suicidepreventionmc.org

The course will teach you how to apply the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE):

- **Assess** for risk of suicide or harm.
- **Listen** nonjudgmentally.
- **Give** reassurance and information.
- **Encourage** appropriate professional help.
- **Encourage** self-help and other support strategies.

Spring Season

Monument Little League

REGISTRATION OPEN!

TEE BALL \$120	COACH PITCH \$130	BEGINNER SOFTBALL \$130	ROOKIES \$140	MINORS \$165
MAJORS \$165	50/70 \$165	JR/SR \$165		

SOFTBALL AND BASEBALL

SIGN UP ONLINE TODAY!

MonumentLittleLeague.org

• **REGISTRATION CLOSSES APRIL 1ST** •

568 25 1/2 Road
Grand Junction, Colorado 81505

This event is not sponsored by or endorsed by District 51 and the District assumes no responsibility for the conduct or safety during the event. In consideration for the privilege to distribute this information/hold this event, the organization shall defend, indemnify and hold District 51 harmless from any and all claims, injuries, damages, losses or suites, including attorney fees, arising out of or in connection with this event, except for injuries and damages caused by the sole negligence of the district.



**Need help
affording
health
insurance?**

If your employer doesn't offer health insurance, or if you can't afford their coverage, we can help.

We help you apply for financial assistance to lower the monthly cost of health insurance

Get assistance navigating the online enrollment process, compare coverage options side-by-side, and learn if you qualify for a discount based on income - all in one day!

Monthly premiums starting from \$0 and copays from \$2

Our friendly staff make the application process fast and easy

Call (970) 244-0850 or visit hilltopshealthaccess.org





Tiger Elite camps 2024

TIGER ELITE CAMPS

START TRAINING

» **Middle School Lifting Camp**
5th grade-8th grade
January 16 - March 14
(18 Sessions Total)



Training Based on Safety & Ability

Proper lifting, increased flexibility, speed, and agility. The program is safe and designed for all ages and abilities.

Agility-Reaction-Footwork

Agility, footwork, and eye-hand coordination training everyday through a wide variety of drills

Physical Action

High activity level guaranteed to make you work and prepare you mentally and physically

18 SESSIONS
\$8 PER SESSION
AND A T-SHIRT **\$150**

Daily schedule will be adjusted on Jan. 16 (SIGN UP DAY) the first day of camp, depending on number of sign-ups.



Register Now

Call: 970-361-4443
Email: brgoff123@outlook.com

QUESTIONS?


CWPAC
Colorado West
Performing Arts Company

presents

LITTLE MERMAID

the historic
AVALON THEATRE
February 23 & 25

15% OFF
TICKETS
CODE:
PeachJar15



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Parent Voices on SEL



Xiaohong Li, a parent of three children in Naperville, Illinois, shares how social and emotional learning (SEL) impacted her family.

“For us, social and emotional learning really started from home. **We helped our children label their emotions, and be aware of their emotions in different situations.** We’d say, ‘Let’s think about it. Let’s think through this.’ And then we can calmly talk. We can exchange our thoughts, how we made that decision, and why we agree or disagree. By doing that, we can see each other’s perspectives.

Scan the QR code to hear more of Xiaohong Li story – and follow along on Instagram to learn more about SEL for students and families.



[instagram.com/caselorg](https://www.instagram.com/caselorg)

“After I realized how wonderful SEL is, I started a club with Chinese parents. Once we started practicing these skills at home, the children recognized them. They would get excited and say, ‘Mom, you’re doing stop, breathe, and count to 10!’ And parents saw, ‘Wow, this is really working.’ **That’s a very exciting moment, when children and parents come together with SEL.**

“I really think SEL is a foundation of human potential development. Think of a Lego. You only have a few types of Legos, but you can build anything you want to. With SEL, you only have five different components. **But you can build solutions for any problems, any challenges, or any dream you want to build.**”



Follow our new Instagram account for parents and caregivers seeking SEL content: [@caselorg](https://www.instagram.com/caselorg)

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Apply to The Challenge Program

at Orchard Mesa Middle School

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN A UNIQUE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE?
WE ARE INTERESTED IN SEEING YOUR APPLICATION!**

Come join a middle school program as exceptional as you.

-  Work with other students that LOVE learning
-  Build leadership skills
-  Discover friendships
-  Experience learning outdoors
-  Embrace challenges
-  Accelerate your learning to earn high school credit







contact us The Challenge Program
2736 C Road
Grand Junction, CO 81503
tina.steigh@d51schools.org

CAGT Happenings



Conversations With CAGT

Conversations With CAGT

1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month at 5:00 pm MST on Facebook Live

Conversations with CAGT provides timely, relevant topics by preeminent local, national, and international specialists in the field of gifted education! CWC programs premier on the **first and third Tuesdays of the month** at 5:00 pm MST on Facebook Live. [Check out past Conversations with CAGT programs on our website](#), where you may rewatch past videos anytime! *Conversations with CAGT* is an incredible opportunity to get expert advice on topics regarding giftedness for FREE with time to ask your questions. Questions from CAGT members get priority! Click the Facebook link below to access *Conversations with CAGT*.

Tuesday, February 6th: Julie Rutkovsky

"The Intersection of Queerness and Giftedness"

Tuesday, February 20th: Catherine Zakoian

"Gifted Empaths"

Davidson Fellows Scholarship

These scholarships recognize students age 18 and younger for completing a significant piece of work that has the potential to make a positive contribution to society. \$10,000 to \$50,000 scholarships awarded.

February 14th is the application deadline

[Click here for more information](#)

Parent Discussion of the Gifted/2e Journey

Sponsored by CAGT Affiliate: JAGC

In this virtual event, participants will watch and discuss a presentation by Dr. Karen Arnstein on "The Gifted/2e Journey: The Parent's Perspective."

Cost: Free

February 27th from 6:00-7:30pm

[Click here to register](#)

Rocky Mountain PBS Kids



Creating New Family Traditions for the New Year

It's a new year! While New Year's resolutions and goal-setting lists can feel overwhelming, I'm all for building thoughtful, easy-to-maintain activities into our family life. Instead of resolutions, consider adding simple rhythms or routines into the days ahead.



And remember, give your family — and yourself — grace when trying new things! Some activities will be instant hits and others just won't work for your family. Ages, stages, personalities, and family dynamics all differ, and that's OK! Incorporating new traditions and habits into your days together isn't about achieving perfection — it's about intentionally making time to spend with each other.

Here are 15 easy ways to connect as a family this year.

1. Gather around. Sharing a meal together doesn't have to be fancy! While coordinating schedules can be tricky, try to incorporate more shared meals this year. Our family goes around the table sharing our "highs" and "lows" of the day, and sometimes we do what we call "three things," where we share the top three moments of our day. Want to make dinnertime even more special? These [easy-to-create "Donkey Hodie" placemats](#) are fun for any meal!
2. Get cozy. Kids thrive on routine. Consider creating a special rhythm for bedtime that includes reading a book or two aloud. If your kids are a bit older, perhaps you could read a chapter from a larger book each night. (Need inspiration for the next time you're at the library? I love [this list](#) of eight charming books about families!)
3. Craft your own cards. The best gifts are made with love! We don't purchase greeting cards in our immediate family. We grab markers and crayons and put our personal spin on birthday cards or drawings for each other — no professional art skills required! Consider customizing kids' favorite characters, hobbies, colors, etc. (Speaking of birthdays, you might want to bookmark this huge selection of [PBS KIDS birthday party resources and ideas!](#))
4. Shake it off. Why not create a family handshake? No supplies or special commitments are needed to create this fun routine for the new year! A [cute personalized handshake](#) gives you and your child a secret, special way to communicate and greet each other. Try it out when you drop them off at daycare or school as a way to stay connected during the day.
5. Turn up the volume. Listen to podcasts together and learn as you listen! Whether we're in the car or at home making dinner, listening to podcasts with my kids has become a treasured way to spend time together. From diving into storytelling podcasts that tickle our imaginations to opting for educational episodes that open new worlds, we've found a little something for everyone in our search for family-friendly podcasts. In fact, I wrote [more about it!](#)
6. Collect your coins. [Save money together](#) toward a special goal. Can you put all your change in a family jar? A friend of mine did this for a few years to put toward a family trip, but you don't have to go big! If you start collecting in the winter, maybe you can plan for some fun ice cream out in the summer!
7. Save the date. Celebrate a [new-to-you holiday](#). Put a calendar in a shared living space that your kids can see, too, and pick some celebrations to learn more about. Why is it observed? How does it align with your values? Check out books from the library, research online, or see if your community has in-person celebrations that observe the holiday.
8. Write it out. Families are all unique. What makes your family extra special? Kick off the year by making your own memory book to celebrate you and your family. When we examine our past traditions, we can look forward with new eyes to what is to come! What made you laugh? What are your family traditions? [This Arthur printable](#) will get you started!
9. Form a party-planning committee. It's fun to plan something together! This year, make it a priority to celebrate. A party doesn't have to be big to be special. Honor a pet or stuffed animal's birthday by letting your little one help create the decor and set the table. Older kids can make invitations for family members. Here's to creating memories and celebrating together!
10. Pop the popcorn! Get into a rhythm of having family nights together. Once a week (or month)

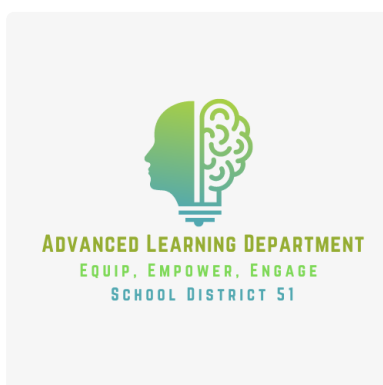
events featuring movie specials or themed programming. Watch, play and learn with your favorite PBS KIDS characters every Friday from 7 to 9 pm and repeating on Saturday and Sunday evenings.

11. Get into nature. Get outside and get some fresh air! Even a five-minute walk has benefits for our bodies and minds. Consider adding more outside time into your family's daily routine. (I love these tips for [exploring with young kids!](#))
12. Shut it down. Technology can be wonderful, but there are times in our home when we all need a screen break. We recently started "No Screen Wednesdays" in our home. Our kids got creative, creating race cars out of old boxes and building new things with Legos. Here's [a whole list of fun screen-free activities](#) to incorporate into your family rhythms.
13. Share a journal. Some kids (and grown-ups) feel more comfortable sharing their feelings through words or art. This year, create a shared notebook for your family to trade notes back and forth in or track three things you're thankful for. This is also a great way for kids to practice their literacy skills. Younger kids can draw instead of write. Bonus? At the end of the year, you'll have a book full of memories!
14. Volunteer. Connect with your community. Once a month, give back together. Rake leaves in the fall, shovel in the winter, help a neighbor with groceries, or donate to a little free library or little free pantry. (I'm bookmarking [this list](#) of volunteering ideas!)
15. Learn something new. Get into a rhythm of curiosity this year! Encourage kids to follow their curiosity, ask questions when they don't understand, and find answers using science inquiry skills – just like Elinor from "[Elinor Wonders Why](#)." Young children's ability [to ask why](#) makes them great scientists and engineers. By encouraging their inquisitive nature, you're building your child's ability to answer their own questions. What else would you add to the list? Here's to creating new memories and connecting with your little ones with one of these fresh, fun family traditions in the days to come!

Author:

[Kayla Craig](#) is a writer, podcaster, and author of [To Light Their Way: A Collection of Prayers & Liturgies for Parents](#). She's also a mom to four curious and messy young kids. She loves deep mugs of coffee, deeper belly laughs, and even deeper questions. She spends too much time on [Instagram](#).

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