

# **PARENTS AS PARTNERS**

*St. Johns County School District*

*Volume 9, Issue 4, Summer 2020*



***Congratulations  
to the Class of  
2020***



***Congratulations!***

## ESE Program Specialist Spotlight

### Sonia Howley

Ms. Howley has been working with students with communication disorders, hearing loss, and other disabilities in the public schools since 1995. She has served as Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program Specialist for the St. Johns County School District since 2014. Prior to that Ms. Howley spent 10 years working as a speech-language therapist and 8 years as a teacher of the Deaf in public schools in Memphis, Tennessee and Montgomery County Maryland. She was the founder and director of the non-profit, Deaf Family Literacy Mid-South in which deaf adult role models mentored families with children with hearing loss, concentrating on early literacy in both ASL and English. This experience led to an opportunity to serve as a National Deaf Family Literacy Consultant with the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy. She is a graduate of Ohio University with a Bachelor's of Science in Speech and Hearing Sciences and an M.A.T. from the University of Memphis in Educational and Curriculum Leadership with a concentration in Special Education and Deaf Studies.

In her off time Sonia enjoys creative endeavors such as painting, crafting, gardening, repurposing furniture, and swing/salsa dancing. She also loves a good bargain when thrifting. Sonia is also a gourmet chocolatier, NOT a gourmet cook. Her husband (who is a gourmet cook) and her two daughters have banned Sonia from visiting animal shelters as she already has 5 shelter animals (2 dogs, 2 cats, and a chinchilla), but she will probably stop in from time-to-time anyway.



Sonia, on behalf of the ESE Team, we would like to shine a light on the amazing work you do for our students. We appreciate all of your hard work. Thank you!



# Resources for Talking to Kids About Coronavirus



[Talking to Children About COVID-19](#)

[PBS Kids: How to Talk to Your Kids About Coronavirus](#)

[Just for Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus from NPR](#)

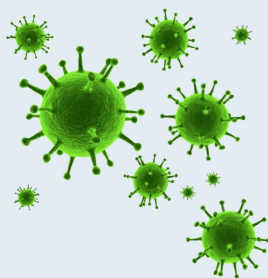
[Brain Pop Video About the Coronavirus](#)

[Talking to Children About COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\): A Parent Resource](#)

[How to Talk to Kids About the Coronavirus](#)

[Resources to Help You Talk to Your Kids About COVID-19](#)

[The Yucky Bug by Julia Cook](#)





## We Want to Find Some Very Special Children

Do you have any **concerns** about your child's . . .

- Speaking
- Understanding
- Moving or playing
- Seeing or hearing
- Getting along with other children
- Learning and paying attention
- Self-feeding, dressing, or toileting

### Child Find Provides FREE:

- Information about community programs for children with special needs
- Professional consultation for parents
- Screening in the areas of communication, motor development, vision, hearing, and preschool readiness skills
- Assistance in placing children with special needs in appropriate exceptional student education programs or other early intervention services

If you have questions or concerns about a child (Birth - 5 years of age), contact:

### FDLRS/NEFEC CHILD FIND

**Online Referral** – Click or go to the link below:

<http://www.fdlrsnefec.org/child-find-services>

Phone: (386) 329-3811 or Toll Free 1-800-227-6036



FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC AND LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM (FDLRS)  
NORTH EAST FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM (NEFEC)

Serving Baker, Bradford, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns and Union Counties and  
The Florida School for the Deaf and Blind

# Resource for Parents of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Jennifer Argentina and Dawn Smythe from FDLRS/NEFEC have created a short video for parents of students with significant cognitive disabilities addressing activities that they can do with their children at home.

<https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/cYfvo9B0ik>



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# Summer Activities for the Fine Motor Skills



1. Draw a picture outside with chalk.



2. Roll small balls and snakes from Play Doh.



3. Play with LEGOS.



4. Have your child sort the laundry.



5. Draw a line or curve on an index card or construction paper and let your child cut it out .



6. Work on self-help skills- fasteners (button/zippers), pulling up/ down pants, washing hangs, eating with utensils and opening packages.



7. Encourage proper pencil grip during wring activities. Here is a video on how to hold a pencil correctly: <https://youtu.be/kIFXZdpnLi8>



8. Peel Stickers off of a sticker sheet.



9. Cut a thin line into the top of a margarine or sour crème container. Let your child push pennies or buttons through the slit into the container using their "pinching fingers"- thumb and index finger.



10. Cut out different shapes from a magazine.



11. Tear strips of construction paper into tiny pieces to glue together to make a picture or collage.



12. Parents, check out the Learning Without Tears website. They are offering some free resources for handwriting and typing. [https://www.lwtears.com/programs/distance-learning?](https://www.lwtears.com/programs/distance-learning?utm_source=EMAIL&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=COVID_20200316_PROSPECTS_US&pc=COVID_20200316_PROSPECTS_US)



[www.lwtears.com/programs/distance-learning?utm\\_source=EMAIL&utm\\_medium=EMAIL&utm\\_campaign=COVID\\_20200316\\_PROSPECTS\\_US&pc=COVID\\_20200316\\_PROSPECTS\\_US](https://www.lwtears.com/programs/distance-learning?utm_source=EMAIL&utm_medium=EMAIL&utm_campaign=COVID_20200316_PROSPECTS_US&pc=COVID_20200316_PROSPECTS_US)



The OT/PT team hopes that you and your family are well. Below you will find suggested therapeutic activity ideas that you may complete with your child. Please choose activities that are appropriate for your child's ability.



## News Release

### **Betty Griffin Center Extends Deadline through May 31 for St. Johns County Submissions to the 2021 'A Day Without Violence' Art and Poetry Contest**

**St. Augustine, Fla.** (April 15, 2020) – Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Betty Griffin Center is extending the date to accept submissions from St. Johns County Students for the 2021 'A Day Without Violence' Art and Poetry Contest through May 31, 2020.

Also, instead of using the usual drop-off locations, further submissions must be mailed to the attention of Betty Griffin Center Event Coordinator Kenlie Kubart, at Betty Griffin Center's Main Outreach Office – located at 2450 Old Moultrie Rd., Suite 202, St. Augustine, Florida 32086. Any submissions made to area libraries and Betty Griffin Center Thrift Shoppe locations will be collected when those facilities reopen for business.

The project is open to all St. Johns County students in kindergarten through 12th grade, whether they attend public school, private school or are home-school. Last year, there were more than 1,000 entries.

"With so much disruption going on with our normal routines, we wanted to extend the deadline so our students will have more time to take part in our contest," said Betty Griffin Center CEO Joyce Mahr. "In addition, expressing themselves through their art and poetry is a great way to channel some energy into a positive activity during this stressful time."

Prizes are awarded to the winners, who are selected by a group of independent artists:

- 1st Place — \$50.00
- 2nd Place — \$25.00

11 honorable mentions will be presented \$10.00 each

Judges select the winning entries based on their effectiveness in conveying a positive impression of peacefulness and cooperation, artistic merit, originality, diversity of images and geographical diversity within St. Johns County.

The winners will receive special recognition during a St. Johns County School Board Meeting, and have their artwork displayed at a local art gallery throughout October during Domestic Violence Awareness Month. All 13 winning artists and 12 poets will have their work reproduced in the Betty Griffin Center 'A Day Without Violence 2021 Calendar.'

Contestants can print out the contest application and registration form at <https://bettygriffincenter.org/day-without-violence-calendar-contest/>.

To be eligible, artwork must be in color and able to be reproduced at 8 x 10 and suitable for framing (horizontal format only). All original 2D media is acceptable. The theme "A Day Without Violence" must be reflected in the art or words. An entry form must accompany each piece of art.

For more information, contact Kenlie Kubart at (904) 808-8544, extension 207, or email [kenliek@bettygriffincenter.org](mailto:kenliek@bettygriffincenter.org).

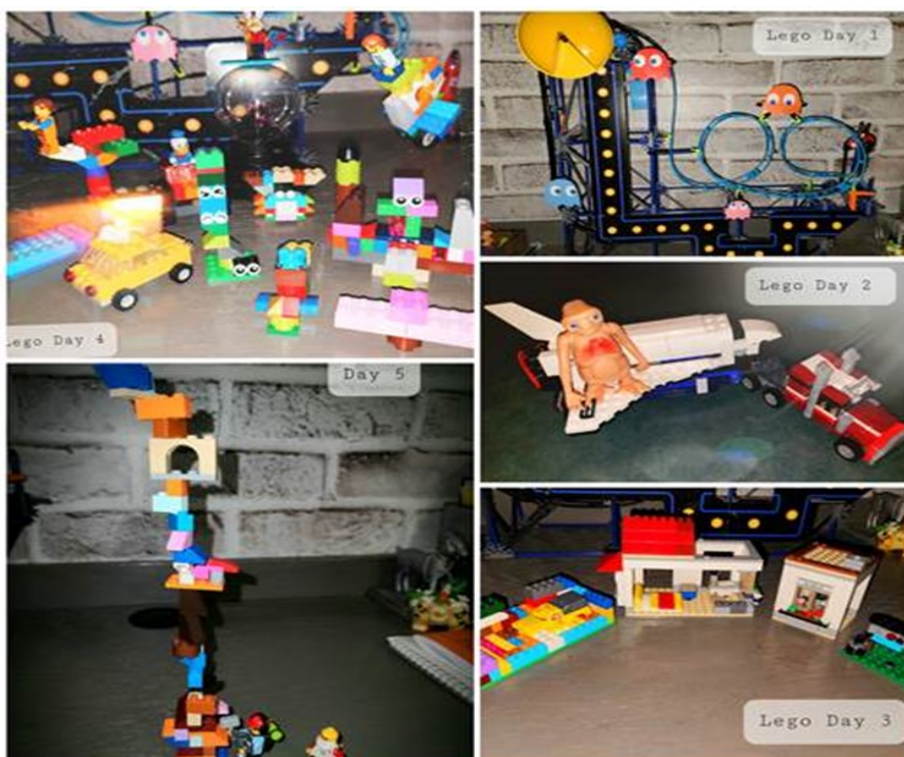
Any businesses or other donors interested in sponsoring the printing of the calendar should contact the Betty Griffin Center at [info@bettygriffincenter.org](mailto:info@bettygriffincenter.org).



30 Day LEGO Challenge						
Follow the instructions for each day. The only rule is to have fun and use your imagination!				Day 1 You were hired by an amusement park to create a new roller coaster.	Day 2 NASA needs you to build a new rocket.	Day 3 Your parents want you to build a new home and they want you to build it.
Day 4 Hollywood hires you to build a movie set for a new Star Wars movie.	Day 5 You enter a contest to build the world's tallest tower. Will you win?	Day 6 You are stuck on Mars and need to build a new ship to get home.	Day 7 Ford hires you to create the toughest pick up truck in the world.	Day 8 You and 4 friends are stranded on an island. Build a boat to find a way home.	Day 9 Captain Hook needs a new pirate ship and wants you to build it.	Day 10 You and your friends decide to build a tree house.
Day 11 Prince Charming hires you to build a castle for him & Cinderella.	Day 12 Dr. Who hires you to build a new TARDIS.	Day 13 You are asked by the President to build a new monument to George Washington.	Day 14 Mr. Hilton hires you to build a new hotel.	Day 15 There is a circus in town. Build a place for the performance.	Day 16 Help your fellow pioneers build a wagon to make it across the country.	Day 17 Build the fastest car around and join the big car race.
Day 18 Do you wanna build a snowman? Get in the winter mood and build a snow scene.	Day 19 The city wants you to build a bridge to connect one side of the town to the other.	Day 20 Pizza party! It is up to you to make a pizza for all the guests.	Day 21 You are hired to build a brand new hospital.	Day 22 The fence is broke and the dog keeps escaping. Build one he can't get out of.	Day 23 You are now in medieval times. You are commissioned to build a jousting arena.	Day 24 The local bank keeps getting robbed. Build a safe no one can crack.
Day 25 Design and build your dream bedroom.	Day 26 You are elected ruler. Build a flag for your land.	Day 27 Allens are invading and you need to build a war robot to defeat them.	Day 28 The aliens have taken over. They are impressed by your robot. They want you build one for them.	Day 29 You are hired to build a house entirely out of yellow Legos.	Day 30 There is blizzard. You will need to build a snowmobile.	 What was your favorite day?

## Did someone say LEGO Challenge?

Many gifted students have been participating in a 30-Day LEGO Challenge. The students are designing and constructing something based off the instructions from the calendar above. The students follow the calendar instructions and complete a new challenge daily. The requirement is to have fun and use their imagination. We have received pictures and stop motion videos of students taking this challenge.



Gifted students are using a Schoology group to access enrichment resources, such as LEGO challenges. Many students have shared their creations with their teacher and other members of the group. This has been a fun way to build community while social distancing.



# Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Team serving Deaf and Hard of Hearing students: Doing whatever it takes!

As we know, the past month has been a challenge for everyone in moving to remote learning. The team of Teachers of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Sign Language interpreters for St. Johns County School District have used creativity, collaboration and a willingness to learn multiple technologies to provide supports to students and families with hearing loss.

Because they serve the entire district, the team adjusted to using any technology and platform that each school and teacher was using. They were able to add interpreting into live class sessions as well as pre-recorded sessions from teachers around the district.

The ability to add closed captioning and getting video clarity good enough for clear sign language interpretation was quite a challenge as well. But after figuring out the logistics, the team was able to share how to add needed captions to virtual instruction and how to get high video clarity. This has helped educators around the county.

This team has also become a resource for Deaf families needing assistance in helping their students access on-line learning.

Some of our interpreters are using Schoology and Google Duo simultaneously while interpreting for a student, the teacher and a deaf parent all at the same time- It has been impressive!

**Thank you for all that you  
do DHH Team!!**



## PVPV/Rawlings Early Act Club

Gifted students from PVPV/  
Rawlings Early Act Club are still  
finding creative ways to  
incorporate service learning with  
online instruction. On April 11th,  
they supported the Jacksonville  
Humane Society by participating in  
the Mutt March, which raises funds  
for homeless animals in their  
community. Check out the video  
they created to spread their  
passion for animals:

<https://vimeo.com/406197812>



**Ethan and Zoey Fishman**

## Upcoming CARD Trainings/Events and Resources

### **\*\*New\*\*** Webinar – Online Game Group

**Weekly, Every Tuesday, 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM,** The CARD/FDLRS-MDC Online Game Group is a weekly opportunity for quality social interactions with peers using board games, card games, and other games online. Pre-requisite Requirements: Teens must be between ages of 13-18 years and registered with CARD or FDLRS-MDC, and speak with your CARD/FDLRS-MDC point of contact in order to determine if your teen meets the prerequisite skills needed to partake in this group. All group meetings are now held online via Zoom. CARD and FDLRS-MDC are discretionary projects of the Florida Department of Education. These grant funded programs do not charge for their services. For more information please contact Katrina Ressa at (904) 633-0765 or email [katrina.ressa@jax.ufl.edu](mailto:katrina.ressa@jax.ufl.edu). Click [here](#) to register online.

### Webinar – CARD-FAU – Little Owls Early Intervention Webinar

**Ends May 21, 10:30AM-11:30AM,** Do you want help to be the best parent you can be? Join CARD-FAU online for the Little Owls: Early Intervention webinar, which will take place every Tuesday and Thursday until May 21, 2020. Autism doesn't come with a manual, but when you know the facts, you can make confident decisions for your child. Topics include: What is Autism? Understanding and preventing problem behavior, Learning Unique ways a child with autism communicates and experiences the world, Keeping your child safe, Navigating resources (school system, scholarship, autism insurance bill), Tips on taking care of you, and more. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

### At-Home Activities & Resources

CARD-UM/NSU has created a downloadable pdf document full of their favorite resources for creating activities at home. Click [here](#) to view the document.

A photograph of Michael J. Fox, a man with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt and jeans, sitting and smiling against a dark background.

**Michael J. Fox**

The Back to the Future star was diagnosed with Parkinson's in 1991 when he was just 29 years old and his career was at its peak. He was told that he should withdraw from the stage, but he did not cease to be an actor. After more than 25 years and with the condition at a very advance stage, Michael J. Fox continues maintain his spirit of improvement. His foundation has already raised \$233 million for Parkinson's research.

<https://disabilityhorizons.com/2017/12/top-10-disabled-celebrities-across-world/>





# Lunch Time!

The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumers Services and USDA have approved meal service during the time of unanticipated school closures. This program focuses on areas of eligibility based on economic need. For meal service locations, please refer to the website, [www.summerbreakspot.org](http://www.summerbreakspot.org).

- Meals will be provided through a walk-up and drive-thru service in the parent drop off loop at the participating locations.
- The meals will be provided to children 18 years or younger. Children must be present to receive meals.
- Children may receive meals at the nearest participating site, even if it is not where they attend school. This eliminates the need for families to drive to multiple schools. Each day, lunch for that day and breakfast for the next day will be provided at the same time.
- All **school sites** will operate from **11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and will continue until further notice.**
- All **community sites** will operate **11 a.m. to Noon. and will continue until further notice.**

**Please note the list of participating locations below, as some sites which were listed previously are no longer included.**

## Participating School Sites

- John A. Crookshank Elementary
- Gamble Rogers Middle
- R.J. Murray Middle
- Osceola Elementary
- Sebastian Middle
- South Woods Elementary
- The Webster School

## Participating Community Sites

- W.E Harris Community Center in Hastings
- Woodlawn Apartments
- **NEW** – Buzz Mart located at 9895 CR 13, Hastings, FL 32145
- **NEW** – Flagler Estates Park located on Oliver Avenue near intersection of Kathy Street
- **NEW** – Intersection of Allison Avenue and Palatka Boulevard

**FREE  
MEALS  
FOR KIDS**

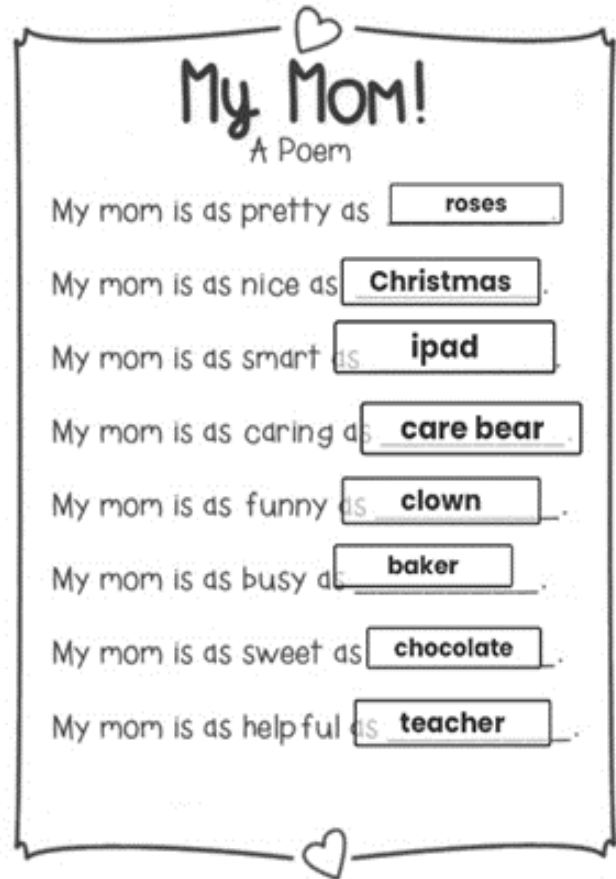
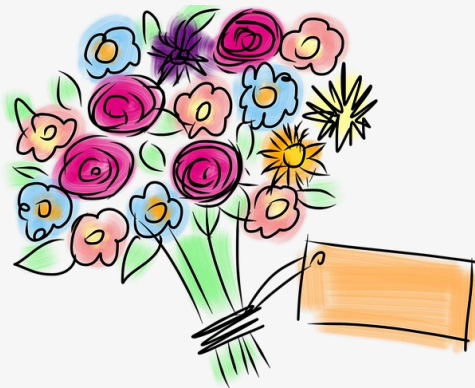
**FIND GRAB AND GO  
MEALS DURING SCHOOL  
CLOSURES BY:**

1. Visit [summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com](http://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com)
2. Text FLKIDSMEALS to 211-211
3. Call 2-1-1



# Students are Hard at Work at GRMS

Students at Gamble Rogers Middle School are stepping up their game with online learning! They are using a program call Seesaw and really rocking! Students are working similes right now and Tres created one for his mom for Mother's



In Science, Mrs. Banks' Class has been learning about seasons and weather and the effects it has on our daily lives.

Noelle loves Sesame Street so her weather activities were made just for her.





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### **Program Specialists**

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Private Instructional Personnel

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### **Mission Statement: To identify and meet the unique educational needs** **of exceptional students and to provide support and resources to enhance** **educational opportunities so they become productive citizens.**

ESE programs and services address the unique needs of students who are gifted in kindergarten through 12th grade and those with mild, moderate and severe disabilities from age three until they graduate with a regular diploma or until their 22nd birthday. ESE programs and services are designed to assist students in reaching their educational goals through the use of instructional and behavioral approaches which are research-based and exemplify best practices. Technology is used in many creative ways to meet student needs as well.

ESE services are available at all district schools for gifted students and students who have mild to moderate disabilities. PreK students with disabilities and students with more significant disabilities are served in cluster programs at selected sites. Program support is provided to students, parents and school personnel by program specialists based at the district office. Students with disabilities who are not eligible for services through the ESE program may be eligible for an accommodations plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

We hope that you find this newsletter informative and useful. *Parents As Partners Newsletters* are posted to the St. Johns County School District web site at:

<http://www.stjohns.k12.fl.us/ese/>