

# L.B.J. & C. NOTES

A Newsletter for the LBJC Head Start Community



## PRACTICING GRATITUDE

Being thankful often means we've taken some time to slow down, think about the things that are most important to us, and remember the people who have made positive impacts on our lives. And practicing gratitude — even in difficult times — is rewarding for the whole family. When we focus on what we are grateful for, it brings us happiness. To talk with your child about gratitude, thankfulness, and appreciating those who help us, start with a few picture books. Help them identify things that make them feel good inside, like a favorite stuffed animal or a visit from grandma. Then use the activities below to explore how your family can take time to recognize the things they're grateful for all year long.

### Questions to Ask Your Child

1. Point out when someone does something nice or helpful for your child. "Your box of books is so heavy! I saw your sister helped you carry it into the other room. What can you do to let her know that you appreciate her help?"
2. Build gratefulness into your routines to create a habit of being thankful. At dinnertime, before you go to sleep, or before your family starts the day, ask "What is something we're grateful for today?"

### Play and Learn Together With Children 2 to 5

For young children, practicing gratitude starts with saying "thank you." Have your child think of a few people who have been nice or helpful, then make DIY thank-you notes to show gratitude. Creating and displaying a paper gratitude turkey or a thankful tree in your home is a great way to help the whole family remember to be grateful. And you can add new leaves or feathers as new ideas come up!

Source: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/practicing-gratitude>

## TAKE A PEEK!

PRACTICING GRATITUDE

- 1

WHY LEARN LANGUAGES

- 2

FUN FAMILY ACTIVITIES  
DURING A PANDEMIC

- 3

TOP 10 TIPS TO TRANSITION  
INTO KINDERGARTEN

- 4

# IMPORTANT!

# Why Learn Languages

It's never too early to begin learning a language: it's fun, it promotes healthy development, and the many cognitive and social benefits will last a lifetime. Here are some of the reasons why learning a language puts your child at a significant advantage, and how you can help—whether or not you know another language.

## Give Them a Head Start

Children who learn another language before age five use the same part of the brain to acquire that second language that they use to learn their mother tongue. Younger learners are also uninhibited by the fear of making mistakes, which is sometimes an obstacle for older beginners.

## Benefits



## Start Early, Stay Long!

The length of time a student is able to devote to learning a language has a direct and positive correlation to cognitive development. Longer sequences also provide the opportunity for learners to grow alongside the additional language and culture, developing a deeper connection as they mature.

## Feed Their Brains

Research shows that learning a second language boosts problem-solving, critical-thinking, and listening skills, in addition to improving memory, concentration, and the ability to multitask. Children proficient in other languages also show signs of enhanced creativity and mental flexibility.

## Boost Their

### Academic Achievement

The cognitive benefits of learning a language have a direct impact on a child's academic achievement. Compared to those without an additional language, bilingual children have improved reading, writing, and math skills, and they generally score higher on standardized tests.

### Don't Hesitate: Go for Two... or Three

Contrary to popular belief, young children are not confused by the introduction of multiple languages at the same time. Not only do they naturally navigate multilingual environments, but acquiring a second language early in life primes the brain to learn multiple other languages, opening a world of opportunities for later on.

### Nurture Their Curiosity, Cultural Sensitivity, Empathy, and Tolerance

Children who are exposed early to other languages display more positive attitudes to the cultures associated with those languages. The experience of learning a language introduces them to the world in ways they might otherwise have not experienced.

## What You Can Do to Help Your Child

Whether you are bilingual or this is your first experience with another language, your support will make a tremendous difference to your child's success. You don't have to be fluent in the language your child is learning in order to create an encouraging and active learning environment. Provide as many opportunities for authentic experiences as you can and check out the many online tools and resources available at your fingertips.

# Fun Family Activities During a Pandemic

Summer activities during COVID-10 aren't quite the same as your traditional summer activities. As we continue social distancing and begin slowly reopening in the wake of the coronavirus epidemic, some summer traditions—summer camps, outdoor concerts, big fireworks displays, summer vacations—may be curtailed for everyone's safety.

**Don't focus on all the summer activities that have been canceled or put on the unsafe list—instead, think about the positive, and all the wonderful things you can still do at home or while social distancing this summer.**

If you're looking for fun things to do in the summer at home—or simply want to focus on the simple pleasures of the season—try some of these stellar summer activities and staycation ideas that are just as wonderful as your traditional summer vacation plans.



1. Make your own ice cream.
2. Run through a sprinkler
3. Camp out in the backyard
4. Make s'mores
5. Have a water balloon fight,
6. Go stargazing
7. Have a barbeque
8. Eat popsicles
9. Try your hand at face painting.
10. Drive in movie
11. Look for fireflies.
12. Grow a little garden.



13. Visit an outdoor farmer's market
14. Have fun at a virtual summer camp
15. Make massive ice cream sundaes
16. Master something new—a new hobby, or a new cooking technique
17. Do fun science experiments (the baking soda and vinegar volcano is a classic)
18. Create a virtual book club
19. Watch the sun set
20. Have a campfire in the backyard.



Source: <https://www.realsimple.com/holidays-entertaining/entertaining/seasonal-events/summer-activities-during-covid>

## Top 10 Tips for the Transition to Kindergarten

1. Help yourself first. We can be more helpful to our children if we acknowledge the ways in which this transition is a big life step for us, as well. Think about what will help us through this developmental event: information, support, networking, etc.
2. Say goodbyes before concentrating on hellos. Whether your child has been in preschool, child care, or at home with you, help him/her say goodbye to that familiar situation. Review her recent past experiences by looking at photos or helping her make memory books. Talk about what he most enjoyed, what he will miss, and how much he has grown. Point out ways you can help her stay in touch with important people.
3. Try to identify your child's big concerns about starting kindergarten. Is he worrying about not making new friends? Is she wondering about where the bathrooms will be? Investigate these concerns through your special knowledge of your child. Pay attention to what he/she is saying. Ask open-ended questions: "Sometimes children wonder what the teacher will be like. What do you wonder about?" Ease fears by talking about specifics such as drop-off and pick-up routines.
4. Think about how much advance preparation your child usually needs for big life changes. Some children need a lot more preparation than others. And children address big issues in little bits and pieces spread out over time-a few sentences here, a few questions there-and not in one big conversation.
5. Concentrate on building "bridges" between the old, familiar experience and the new, unfamiliar experience. For example, as kindergarten gets closer, you may be able to get a class list. If so, contact a few families about setting up one-on-one playdates before school starts. Visit the school if you can; if not, walk around the outside, peak inside the windows, and play on the playground. Let your child take photos.
6. Use your child's imagination. Play school. Read books about kindergarten. Make up your own stories or create a puppet show about going to school.
7. Acknowledge and support feelings, especially mixed feelings. Tell your own stories about your kindergarten and early school experiences. Stay positive, but don't be afraid to share anecdotes about minor missteps that ended well. You may also acknowledge your own mixed feelings about the transition: "You've grown up so fast, it's hard for me to believe that you're not a little baby anymore. You're ready for big-kid school!"
8. Encourage self-care skills. Being able to wash hands, use the bathroom successfully, dress, zip up a jacket, and so on not only increases your child's self-esteem; feeling secure about these skills will give him/her one less thing to worry about in kindergarten.
9. Expect stress. Limit other transitions when possible. Plan and put into effect a kindergarten routine for your child: Select and lay out school clothes each night, get the backpack ready for the morning, choose a reasonable bedtime, and so on.
10. Maintain a sympathetic yet positive attitude: "I know this life change has some big challenges in it, and I also know that you can learn to do it and have a great time. I have faith in you, and I'm here to help you-and so is your teacher!"

Source: <https://www.williamjames.edu/community/departments-of-community-engagement/freedman-center/top-ten-tips-kindergarten.cfm>

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## Apply Now

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[www.lbjc.org](http://www.lbjc.org)

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