

Minerva Summer Story Time Programs

During the spring, the Minerva Library's Book Beginnings Story Time is held on Wednesdays from 10:00-10:30 a.m. for children 3 years old and younger, and from 10:30-11:00 a.m. for 4 and 5 year olds. This spring schedule will end on May 31.

Starting June 5, you and your child can sign up for summer reading programs at the Minerva Public Library. Book Beginnings Summer Story Times are held on Wednesdays (starting on June 7) from 10:00-10:30 a.m. for 0-3 year olds and their parents or caregivers.

Beginning June 9, the "Book and Bag It" program will be held every Friday from 12:00-1:00 p.m. This is a family story time where you can bring your lunches and blankets to listen to stories, check out books, and become eligible to win weekly prizes.

Visit The SPARK Website Today!

If you would like to learn more about the SPARK program, please visit our website. The web address is: www.sparkohio.org

You can find the following information on the site:

- Program details
- Frequently asked questions (FAQs)
- Program benefits
- Parenting tips
- SPARK team members & parent partners
- Community event schedule
- Newsletters
- Contact information & registration forms



Dear Dr. Cece

Dear Dr. Cece, I just do not know what to do! This July, my son will turn 5. He is the age where he can go to kindergarten. I am not sure whether I should send him. Or should he wait until next year? What would be better for him? Will he do all right if he is one of the youngest students in his class? OR should he wait and be one of the oldest students in his class? How does a parent decide?

*Signed,
Perplexed Parent*

Dear Perplexed,
You are right to feel perplexed. Even the experts are perplexed about the best time to enter kindergarten. Some studies say that older students perform better in many areas that are important for success in school. Other studies say that any differences in learning between younger and older students goes away by the time they are in the upper grades. Most studies say that there are no important differences in behavior and social development.

Every year over 7% of parents decide to wait an extra year to send their child to kindergarten. This is a very difficult and thoughtful decision for parents to make. They must ask themselves:

- What will my child do if he does not go to kindergarten? Where will my child receive education and care if he is not in kindergarten?
- How does the education and care available for my child, compare to the education and care that will be provided in kindergarten?
- How ready for kindergarten does my child seem? How are his skills in listening and following directions? How are his motor skills, his problem solving, his social skills? Do I think that if he gets a little older that these areas will improve so much that it will make a difference in kindergarten and later school?

As you can see, these are very difficult questions and not easy to answer. To make things harder, it has been usually found that tests of readiness are not that effective.

So guess what the experts who study this have to say? They say that when a child reaches the age to be allowed to go to kindergarten, they should go to kindergarten!

Your school system knows this opinion of the experts. That is why they work so hard to be ready for ALL students with all kinds of skills and all kinds of different experiences.

Just think---in any kindergarten class there is a large group of children who may range from just turned 5 years old to an older 6 year old. You can see what a challenging job it is to teach kindergarten.

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If you would like to submit your questions to Dr. Cece, please contact your Parent Partner or mail to: Spark Ohio/Dr. Cece Column, 220 Market Avenue S. Suite 310, Canton, OH 44702

Is Your Child Ready For KINDERGARTEN?

Get Ready for Kindergarten SPARK Program for 3 or 4 year old children who will attend Canton City's Belle Stone, Gibbs or McGregor schools or Minerva Local Schools

Each monthly visit, children receive:

- FREE** • A new book
- A fun activity to do
- Art supplies for your home

For enrollment information, please call a SPARK recruiter in your neighborhood:

For Canton City's Belle Stone, Gibbs or McGregor schools:

Contact: Joanne Wilhelm (330) 833-8000 or Chanté Weir (330) 493-5679

For Minerva Local School District:

Contact: Beth Holderbaum (330) 868-5988

DEAR DR. CECE - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

I hope this gives you some things to consider as you make your decision. You can think about what the experts say. And you can think about your unique child and your options. You will weigh all your information and opinions. From that, it should become clear what is in the best interest of your son.

BOOK AND SUMMER ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS FROM THE SPARK TEAM - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

- Use a paper plate. Let children draw or cut out pictures of food to make a healthy meal on their plate.
- Take a piece of construction paper and fold it in half. Ask children to draw pictures on the inside of their favorite toys. Another time, they can draw their favorite animals, etc. You can title their book and label the pictures that they draw.
- Using a tablet of drawing or writing paper, paste or draw a picture of common things. Label the picture underneath and let children try to write the word, too, copying your label.
- When you read a book to your child, talk about the front, the back, the author, the title, even the illustrator of the book. Many children really enjoy "writing" books of their own by drawing pictures and you labeling or by scribbling and pretending to write.
- Use the front of a cereal box and cut it up into puzzle pieces. Put the pieces into a sandwich bag and let your child put the puzzle together anytime.
- Help children pretend their body is a letter of the alphabet. Some, like the letter X are easy to form. Others, like, D are easier if a friend and your child do it together and on the floor.
- When riding in the car, have your child name something that rhymes with things they see. For example, say "car" and see if they can come up with "star."
- Help children guess how many words are in a sentence by clapping as you say a sentence. Later they will enjoy clapping to show how many syllables are in a word.
- Read lots of nursery rhymes or poems aloud to your child. Hearing rhyming words is a huge step in learning to read.

Speech and Reading are Related: *Let's Talk*

Your child's speech is a direct link to their future. Research shows that young children with "below average" speaking skills have a difficult time reading in later grades. *Let's Talk* is a program to help your child develop verbally before entering kindergarten. Parents are an important part of speech development, and there are activities that you can do to boost your child's speech level. Working on conversation at home puts children on the path to success. The *Let's Talk* program has all the tools you need to prepare your child to read.

***Let's Talk* includes:**

- 30 minute sessions (once a week for 6 weeks) that develop your child's communication skills
- Teachers and aides to work with the children
- Speech activity sessions for parents
- A Verbal Language Kit for home practice

For more information on joining future *Let's Talk* programs, contact Carolyn Laughlin at (330) 580-3010 for Canton City or Deborah White at (330) 868-6533 for Minerva Local.



"When we give unconditional love to children, we give the most valuable gift we have."

- Katherine M. Olson



**SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION
of Canton**

A Ministry of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine

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SPARK CONTACT INFORMATION

COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

Minerva Local:

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The SPARK Plug (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

child, don't worry, it's not too late. Although it's never too late to register your child, we encourage you to do it now. Early registration helps schools to assign teachers and children to classrooms. Even more important, parents can use that "milestone" to celebrate and build excitement for their child's kindergarten year. If you have questions about registering your child for kindergarten, please speak with your SPARK Parent Partner or call Carolyn Laughlin, Canton City Schools at (330) 580-3010 or Deborah White, Minerva Local Schools at (330) 868-6533. We hope that you and your family enjoy these summer activities as much as the SPARK team enjoys sharing them with you.

We also encourage parents to visit our website, www.sparkohio.org for updated information and future SPARK events. The website recently underwent a "spring makeover" and we are excited for you to visit our new online "home."

As always, we thank you for spending time with us. Our SPARK family continues to grow and flourish and we know we couldn't do it without YOU.

Joni T. Close
SPARK Project Director

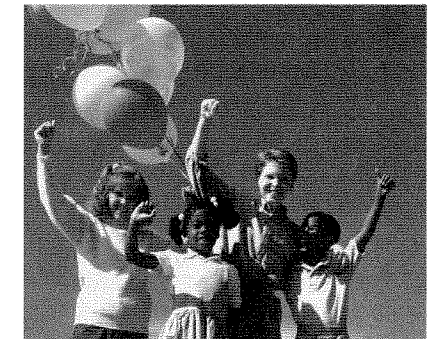


**SISTERS OF CHARITY FOUNDATION
of Canton**

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PARENT NEWSLETTER
SPRING 2006

**Book and Summer Activity
Suggestions from
the SPARK Team**



Most parents think that learning to read is a real milestone in a child's cognitive development. Actually, children read very early. They "read" the McDonald's sign almost as soon as they speak. They "read" the word STOP because they see it so often. You can make a fun book for your child by cutting pictures from magazines or other printed materials that stand for words your child will recognize and glue them into a book.

A good book to read to your child is *Have You Seen My Cat* by Eric Carle. Children can memorize it easily and "read" it back to you. Memorizing is an important step in learning to read and should be encouraged.

Below are more suggestions for summer activities you can do with your preschool-aged children:

- Let children "paint" the porch or sidewalk with a soup can of water and an old paint brush.
- Use the top from a pizza box or any other piece of cardboard and provide a lot of items from around the house for children to glue onto the cardboard. For example, they can use small pieces of paper, toothpicks, cereal (Cheerios), etc.
- Go to the library at least once a week and let your child choose 4 or 5 books to take home for the week. Most libraries will let children get their own card when they can write their own name.
- When you go to a restaurant, talk with your child about the menu. What is its purpose? What do the pictures tell us? What do the numbers (price) mean?



Dear Parents,

As summer approaches, we are excited to tell our SPARK families about a variety of great summertime programs and activities available through SPARK and your communities. The SPARK sponsored *Let's Talk* program has already begun in Minerva and will soon be available in Canton City. If additional sessions are offered in the summer or early fall—we'll be sure to let you know. Please take advantage of your wonderful local libraries and their summer story time offerings. And, of course, our spring newsletter is full of creative activities that you can do with your child that are fun and will help them to be ready for school.

Kindergarten registration in both Minerva Local and Canton City began in early April. If you still have not registered your

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SPRING/SUMMER EVENT SCHEDULE

CANTON CITY

- May 7 FACES "Celebrating the Family" Fair
Canton Memorial Civic Center
12:30 P.M. - 4:00 P.M.
- May 10 Gibbs Elementary Math Night
3:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M.
- May 10 McGregor Elementary Public
Education Week Event
9:00 A.M. - 2:30 P.M.
- MAY 12 CHOICES High School Family
Health Fair/Literacy
816 30th St. N.W., Canton
12:00 P.M. - 2:00 P.M.
- May 18 Belle Stone Family Carnival
4:00 P.M. - 6:30 P.M.
- June 12 Mondays at Stark County Main Library
Market Avenue, Canton
11:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

*Crafts, Activities, & Free Book with enrollment
Summer 2006 Door-2-Door Campaign SPARK Community Partners will be visiting the neighborhoods of Gibbs, McGregor, and Belle Stone schools from May 1 - August 12 to distribute information and enroll eligible 3 and 4 year old children in the SPARK program.

MINERVA

- June 21-24 Minerva Homecoming
6:00 P.M. - 10:00 P.M.
Featuring Sparkles the Clown!
- July 8 Assembly of God Carnival
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
- August 5 Kishman's Kids Fest
10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

Minerva's SPARK Preschool Winter Carnival



See the SPARK website
www.sparkohio.org
for additional events.

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