



JAIME GREEN The Wichita Eagle

Ava Hiebert works with letters at Rolph Literacy Academy in Wichita.

Local resources that can help kids read

BY SUZANNE PEREZ TOBIAS
stobias@wichitaeagle.com

If you're looking for free children's books or advice for helping kids learn to read, several organizations in Wichita are here to help.

Here's a rundown of some local literacy resources:

WICHITA PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Wichita Public Library system has lots of programs and resources for children and families, including story times, summer reading programs and the Wichita Big Read.

As part of the "1,000 Books Before Kindergarten" reading challenge, parents of children 6 and under can pick up a free "1,000 Books" folder at any library branch. Inside is a track-

ing sheet that your child can color each time you read a book, along with book lists, language development tips and more. After you read your first 100 books, take the completed sheet to the library and exchange it for a free tote bag. Continue to read and collect more prizes along the way.

For more information, go to wichitalibrary.org.

STORYTIME VILLAGE

Storytime Village is a Kansas-based nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring a lifelong love of reading among underserved children from birth to age 8. Through community book drives and other events, the group gives away new books to children and families who have few, if any, books of their own.

For more information, call 316-350-4511, e-mail

info@storytimevillage.org, or visit www.storytimevillage.org.

UNITED WAY READ TO SUCCEED

The United Way Read to Succeed initiative focuses on helping children read at grade level by third grade, when students begin to transition from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Volunteer reading coaches are matched with at-risk students at more than a dozen Wichita elementary schools. They meet weekly with the student for 30 minutes to listen to them read and provide intervention tactics to help them improve their reading skills.

For more information, call 316-267-1321, or visit www.unitedwayplains.org/read-to-succeed-initiative.

DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting program that mails free, high-quality books to children from birth until they begin school, no matter their family's income.

For information about how to register, donate or become a community partner, go to imaginationlibrary.com.

TURN A PAGE, TOUCH A MIND

Through Turn a Page, Touch a Mind — an early literacy program sponsored by the Kansas Pediatric Foundation — physicians at more than 100 sites in Kansas give a new, developmentally appropriate book to children during their well-child exams and talk to parents about the importance of reading at home.

For information, go to www.kansaspediatricfoundation.org.

ROTARY CLUB OF WICHITA

The Rotary Club of Wichita partners with Reading is Fundamental, a

nationwide children's literacy organization, to provide free books to students at more than 20 Wichita public schools. The group also participates in the USA Dictionary Project each year, giving a free hardback Scholastic Dictionary to every third-grader who attends a Title I Wichita school.

For more information, visit www.wichitarotary.org.

PARENTS AS TEACHERS

Parents as Teachers programs across the country pair parents and their young children with parent educators who guide the children's development through home visits, play groups, developmental screenings and other activities.

There are nearly 70 Parents as Teachers programs in Kansas, including ones in the Wichita, Derby, Goddard, Maize, Haysville and Mulvane school districts. Services are available to any parent — including relatives as caregivers and foster parents — who has a child under age 3.

For more information, visit parentsasteachers.org or call your local school district office.

CHILD START

Child Start provides early childhood developmental services and is the local grantee for Head Start and Early Head Start, a federally funded program that provides child care to low-income families. The organization also maintains a database of local child care providers.

For information, call 316-682-1853 or visit childstart.org.

FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

Foster Grandparents, a program operated by Catholic Charities of Wichita, pairs senior citizens with children who have special or exceptional needs. Kids and seniors

spend time together talking, reading or in one-on-one tutoring.

For information, call 316-264-8344 or visit catholiccharitieswichita.org.

LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

A Little Free Library is a box — some look like barns, others like doll houses — where neighbors donate, borrow and share books on the honor system. Anyone can stop by and pick up a book or bring one to share.

There are several Little Free Libraries in the Wichita area, including one in the Fairmount neighborhood near Wichita State University. For more information or a directory of libraries, visit littlefreelibrary.org.

THE OPPORTUNITY PROJECT

The Opportunity Project, called TOP for short, is a nonprofit group dedicated to early education for children living in poverty. The group runs three preschools in the Wichita area — 4600 S. Clifton, 2330 Opportunity Drive, and 2665 N. Arkansas.

For more information, call 316-522-8677 or visit www.theopportunityproject.com.

FUNDAMENTAL LEARNING CENTER

The Fundamental Learning Center is a nonprofit organization that serves children with significant reading, spelling and writing difficulties, including children with dyslexia. The group operates Rolph Literacy Academy, a private school for children with reading difficulties, and also trains teachers through the Andeel Teacher Literacy Institute.

For more information, call 316-684-READ (7323), or visit www.funlearn.org.

This content was created with support from Impact Literacy, a strategic initiative of the Wichita Community Foundation.

FROM PAGE 1A

GADGETS

It's just a different way of them being able to show what they've learned and what they're comprehending."

In today's digitally fueled landscape, where

not even that," Wolf writes — "tl; dr (too long, didn't read)."

Technology in schools — including iPads, ChromeBooks and other devices, which are becoming

college students, scientists from Princeton and UCLA compared old-fashioned pen-and-paper note-taking to typing notes on a laptop and found that physically writing things down helped boost students' memory and performance.

At L'Ouverture Elementary, where a federal grant paid for an iPad for

But she directs her students to read at least 30 minutes a day — whatever they want and however they choose to do it — and rewards them using a digital program called Class Dojo.

"We talk about it at conferences, at Meet the Teacher Night — they know I want them reading

and reflection.

Gail Becker, supervisor of library media for the Wichita school district, said she hasn't noticed a decline in the number of kids reading for pleasure — or for sport. Circulation figures at school libraries are "very steady," she said, and Battle of the Books, a districtwide

to turn learning into a game. With reading apps such as Epic! or Hoopla, kids can get sucked into the magic of a book without even realizing it — like sneaking cauliflower into their pizza crust.

"Smart devices can be an extremely useful tool because of the engagement it allows," Irving

parents calm fussy toddlers with "Paw Patrol" on portable screens, many experts and educators worry that technology might not be just another distraction: It could be reshaping the way we read, learn and think.

In her new book, "Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain in a Digital World," cognitive neuroscientist Maryanne Wolf, an expert on the science of reading, considers the intellectual and cultural consequences of our increasing dependence on digital technology. Have our collections of electronic devices altered our capacity for critical reasoning, empathy and reflection?

"Young reading brains are evolving without a ripple of concern by most people, even though more and more of our youths are not reading other than what is required and often

ing ubiquitous at younger grades — "is no longer a choice," said Tiffanie Irving, deputy superintendent for Wichita schools.

"It is part of society. It's part of who we are now," she said. "We have been very intentional in recent years to ensure that our curriculum includes components where children are able to interact with technology . . . for literacy as well as for communication, researching, and all of those skills that are going to help them become more proficient and prepared."

But schools strive to balance digital technologies with traditional reading and writing using printed texts, Irving said, "because those have been developed and tested by educational experts." And recent research shows it may be worthwhile to stick to at least some old-school techniques.

In a study of American

every student, teachers regularly incorporate the devices into reading lessons.

Fourth-grader La'Ryah Martin said she likes using iPads in class because they're fun. She enjoys reading and listening to stories, she said, but doesn't often read for pleasure at home.

"I like to play on my phone," she said. "Or my Xbox 360."

Her classmate Brazil Adams said she still likes to check books out of the school library, especially volumes from the "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" and "Captain Underpants" series.

"Those are funny," she said. "I like to read because you get to learn."

Allen, a first-year teacher at L'Ouverture, said she often hears from students and parents that TV screens, computers, smart phones and video games outrank books at home.

at least 30 minutes," she said. "I don't care what it is. If they read their homework out loud, that's fine. If they're reading a book, that's fine. I don't necessarily know what that looks like at home, but most of my kids get their agendas signed and get the points."

Are books and screens interchangeable? In his 2010 book, "The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains," author Nicholas Carr explains how the printed book served to focus our attention, promoting deep and creative thought. By contrast, the Internet encourages the rapid, distracted sampling of small bits of information from many sources.

Not surprisingly, then, we have become a culture of skimmers, notes a recent article in The Guardian — ever more adept at scanning for facts but losing our capacity for deep thought

competition that tests students' reading comprehension in a game-show-style format, continues to be popular among fourth-through eighth-graders.

"I've never felt that it's more of a challenge because technology has entered into our world," Becker said. "You can still hook a kid into reading, and the way you do that is by finding out what they're interested in and finding a book that has those similar types of themes in it."

"Lots of our kids may be interested in technology or engineering or computers, so we just need to find those books. . . Our kids are so resilient that they could read on a page or on a screen, but I do think that some people have a preference."

Irving, the deputy superintendent, said one advantage of technology is that it often helps teachers

said. "You watch them playing a game, and they don't even realize all the things they're learning as they're doing that."

Allen's recent lesson with ChatterPix illustrated the point. Nine-year-old Mario Rodriguez uploaded a photo of Mr. Miyage from "The Karate Kid" and giggled as the character's mouth moved up and down with Mario's voice.

Meanwhile, Mario and his classmates learned new vocabulary words such as "memorable," "seafaring," "horrified" and "betrayed."

"There are readers and then there are kids who prefer to do other things in their recreational time," said Becker, the library supervisor. "That's always been the case."

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EAGLE EXECUTIVES

Dale Selwert, General Manager

316-268-6456

dseiwert@wichitaeeagle.com

Michael Roehrman, Editor

316-269-6753

mroehrman@wichitaeeagle.com

Phil Schroder, Regional VP, Audience Development

316-269-6728

pschroder@wichitaeeagle.com

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