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SUNCOAST The Campaign for GRADE-LEVEL READING

3rd Grade Reading Success Matters

It's summertime, and families are moving about life outside of their typical school year schedule. That little (or big) shift from the "typical" has a way of drawing in new curiosities. Whether it's through camps, more playtime, time outside, or visiting new places, that shift can inspire wonder, a perfect springboard for learning.

We know that growing brains don't get put on hold just because school is out for summer. Leaning into wonder opens up opportunities for learning everywhere. The whole world becomes a classroom. Much like we saw with Suncoast Remake Learning Days, learning can happen from traditional places to unusual spaces and everything in between. Together with your child(ren), you can practice identifying these opportunities.

Start with the simple stuff. If you're prepping for the grocery store, ask your kiddo to write the list for you (writing, literacy, fine motor skills, language). If you're folding laundry, have them work on the towels (folding is math: geometry, fractions, and more!). With simple supplies, you can create fun learning moments, too. Building towers with paper cups, building bridges with toothpicks and marshmallows, and playing simple card games can help with counting, strategy, and number sense. Good old boredom can be a great catalyst for learning. What can your littles (or bigs) discover when you let them play and discover independently, without any screens in the mix?

Most important of all, keep the conversations going. Conversations are where children develop language and literacy skills that are vital to their success. Exchange questions with your kiddos. Talk them through your tasks, tell them the why's of things, listen to them carefully, and invite the natural back and forth of conversation. When you feel like you're running out of words, or the conversation feels too much like a task, grab the books! Read together and ask your child(ren) to talk to you about the story. They can describe the pictures, retell the story in

their own words, share what lesson they learned, talk about the emotions of the characters, and so much more.

Wonder is our biggest teacher, and nothing demonstrates that more than the curiosity and joy that erupts during Suncoast Remake Learning Days. For those who participated and for those who have yet to join us, check out this wonderful video recap from our 2026 festival. Watch as our four-county Suncoast region transforms into a world of possibilities for adults and children alike. The spirit and passion for learning are inescapable…and those who know, know that once you've experienced this hands-on learning festival, you'll keep coming back for more!

As we lead into the second half of summer, your minds may be turned toward school readiness. In this episode of Connecting Communities from last summer, host Leah Verier-Dunn and guests Alison Nichols, Director of Elementary Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Learning for the School District of Manatee County, and Jennifer Harrison, K–2 Curriculum Specialist for the School District of Manatee County, unpack what school readiness truly looks like.

Together, they explore the challenges children may face and offer practical tips and valuable resources for parents, caregivers, and educators to help every child start school with confidence.

With curiosity as our guide, learning has no limits. Mister Rogers questioned, “Did you know it's all right to wonder?” Before you sign off, take a quick moment to listen to his sage advice and let the spirit of wonder remain at the core of your family’s summer adventures.

Voter Education: Tip of the Month!

Primary elections are how political parties choose the candidates who will appear on the ballot in the general election. They set the course for what’s next, but the primaries are tricky and sometimes confusing. Why? Because it’s not just the primary races we’re voting on. There’s more on the ballot that we should pay attention to.

What else is on there? School Board elections, Hospital Board elections, ballot measures (a law, issue, or topic placed on a statewide or municipal ballot for

voters to decide through an election), and other final elections can also occur at the same time as the primaries.

Voter turnout is significantly lower during the primaries because of the misunderstanding of who can do what at the polls. Remember, election outcomes reflect who shows up at the polls.

We all get a voice in August. Let's use it!

Upcoming Election Information

- Voter Registration Deadline: Monday, July 20, 2026
- Vote-by-Mail Request Deadline: Thursday, August 6, 2026, by 5:00 PM
- Election Day: Tuesday, August 18, 2026, 7:00 AM–7:00 PM

Visit your county Supervisor of Elections website to check your registration, review your sample ballot, and find your voting options!

Let's Keep Connecting

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