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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

We've all heard the saying "If mama ain't happy, ain't nobody happy!" As moms, we have a lot of influence over our kid's emotions, and attitudes. If we're having a bad day, they know. If we're mad about something, they get mad about it as well. Happiness Happens Day falls annually on August 8th. This year, make happiness happen in your house. Push aside the stress and worry as much as you can and spread a little joy in your family and friend's lives. (We have a list to get you started) Your positive vibes will go a long way in making your kids feel more confident as the world around them is out of their control.

If you have school aged kids, make sure you check out our Education and After School Directories—many of the businesses on these lists have modified their business offerings to accommodate kids during school hours and assist them with their learning. If you have that covered, but are looking for some extra-curricular options, you can find that in the After School Activities Directory. (Check out their Covid safety plans on their websites, or give them a quick call.)

Back to School is going to look different this year. We have a list of Back to Homeschool Tips and Traditions, and most of them will also apply to public school kids that are distance learning. We also have a list of quick brain breaks to keep your kids (and you) from throwing their laptops across the room!

As we know, this is going to be a challenging time for us as parents, and for our kids. Keeping a positive outlook and an attitude of making the best of a difficult situation will go a long way in easing the back to school transition. Wishing the best for everyone as we embark on the Fall of 2020.

Kim Carlisle, Editor

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BACK 2 Homeschool Tips & Traditions

Sure, homeschooling is a bit different from brick-and-mortar school, but some things are similar. Here are some things to consider when you are getting your child ready for a new school year at home:

1. Set a start date.

It's important for your entire family to know when school is starting. Vacations and events should be scheduled around the first day of homeschooling.

2. Go back-to-school shopping.

While some virtual schools will provide needed supplies, your kids will enjoy some new things to call their own. Let them choose something like a colorful fabric bin to keep all their homeschooling goodies and projects in, or a new set of markers or special notebook. If your budget allows, this is a great time to update their wardrobe with a new outfit or two.

3. Plan some freezer meals.

You'll want to focus on figuring out the routine and rhythm for your kids and for yourself. Having some freezer meals (or the pizza delivery place on speed dial) ready to go, will save your sanity and help you focus on the lessons each day during those first few weeks.

4. Plan some extracurricular, active and social activities.

Add in plenty of time to play and socialize during the school year by putting events in your planner or on your calendar so the kids can look forward to them. Plan some field trips with other families or groups so your kids can meet up with other homeschooled kids while you get some time to meet other homeschooling parents. (This might look different at the beginning of the school year, keeping social distancing in mind.)

5. Review the curriculum ahead of time.

Take some time to check out the curriculum so you are prepared to teach the first week of lessons. Fill in a lesson plan book for the first week to set your mind at ease.

6. Start the day right.

Prepare a special breakfast to get that brainpower going for the whole family.

7. Don't forget to take a first day photo.

The photo of the first day of school is always one to treasure and look back on with fondness.

8. Celebrate the first day of school.

You might want to go a little bit light and ease into your first day of school, which is a wonderful benefit of homeschooling. After you're done for the day, consider going out for ice cream or heading to a park so you can all blow off some steam.

9. Finally, have your students keep a journal for the year.

This can be an inexpensive spiral-bound notebook or something fancy your kids create and decorate themselves, but the point is to try to jot something down daily throughout the school year. Even little ones can draw a picture of how they are feeling or of something they did that day.



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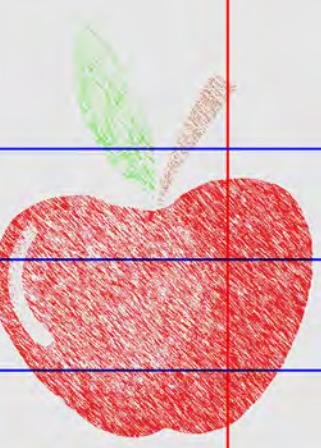
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AVA & JADE

Ava & Jada are the sweetest three years olds you will ever meet; they don't let anyone pass by without saying hello. On weekends you can find these two best friends in the water, shopping, bike riding, crafting or eating donuts.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Jada: Outside--I LOVEEEE the swings
Ava: I like coloring the best mama

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

Ava: A teacher like you mama
Jada: The Easter Bunny



ABBY

Abby is 8 years old and loves ballet, tap, gymnastics, and playing Minecraft.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Abby loves to READ!

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

She wants to be a performer at Disney World when she grows up and then an animal trainer at the zoo.



LIAM

This is Liam he is 6 year's old. Liam loves riding his bike and playing in the pool. He is a very curious little boy who loves to learn new things.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

His favorite subject in school is science

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

When he grows up he wants to be a doctor.



KENDALL

Kendall is a smart, strong willed, nearly-three-year-old girl who adores her baby sister.

She loves cupcakes, Elsa, bubbles, playing games, and dinosaurs. (Rawr!)

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Kendall hopes to finger paint, color, and squeeze Play-doh at school.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

She wants to be a mommy when she grows up.



HUNTER

Hunter is 8 years old and loves sports, hanging out with his friends and the University of Houston Cougars. Since quarantined he has become an avid bike rider.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Hunter's favorite subject in school is math.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

He wants to be a baseball player when he grows up.



ARACELI

Araceli is a 4 year old girl who enjoys playing the "Don't Wake Daddy" board game with her family. She is a very creative girl that sings Frozen songs at the top of her lungs while playing Star Wars make-believe with her two older brothers. She loves cheetahs, fishing, dancing, and icecream

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Araceli's favorite subject at home school is reading

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

When she grows up she wants to be a Doctor.

COVER CUTIES



MIA MARIE

Mia Marie is 8 and loves swimming and anything beach related. She will be going into the 3rd grade this year. She loves science and wants to be on Americas got talent one day for her singing.

SOPHIA

Sophia is 6 and loves slime and having sleep overs with her friends. When she grows up she wants to be a veterinarian. Her favorite thing about school is her teachers.



RYAN

Ryan is 9 years old and enjoys gymnastics, robotics, fishing, and playing Minecraft.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Science is his favorite subject in school.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

He wants to be a race car driver when he grows up.



Landon Curtis (age 5) and Peyton Marie (age 4). We look like twins, drive our momma crazy, and are the babies of our family.

LANDON

Landon is a smart, sweet, and caring child. His favorite subject at school is lunch and he wants to be a basketball player when he grows up. He has 2 sisters and 1 brother.



PEYTON

Peyton is sassy, wild, and full of personality. Her favorite subject at school is math and she wants to be a doctor when she grows up so she can help people. She has 2 brothers and 1 sister.



CENICEYA

Ceniceya is 8 yrs old and she loves to design and create barbie clothes out of socks as well as watching Netflix and helping with laundry and dishes.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Her favorite subjects are Math and Science in school.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

She aspires to be a doctor when she grows up.



HANNAH

Hannah will turn 13 years old on August 5th. She will be an 8th-grade cheerleader at Victory Lakes Intermediate this upcoming school year. Hannah enjoys playing golf, volleyball, tumbling, and going camping.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Hannah's favorite subject in school is English/Language Arts.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

Hannah wants to be a lawyer and work with the FBI when she grows up.



HADIE

Hadie is 15 years old and will be going to 10th grade at Dickinson High School. She loves playing softball, baking and cooking.

FAVORITE SUBJECT:

Hadie's favorite subject is History.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GROW UP?

Hadie wants to be a veterinarian when she grows up.

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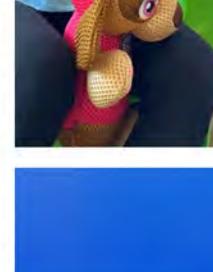
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RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Now more than ever, we need happiness in our lives. Times are hard, people are angry about what is going on in the world, and worried about the future. Spread some cheer with these 15 simple ways to make happiness happen!

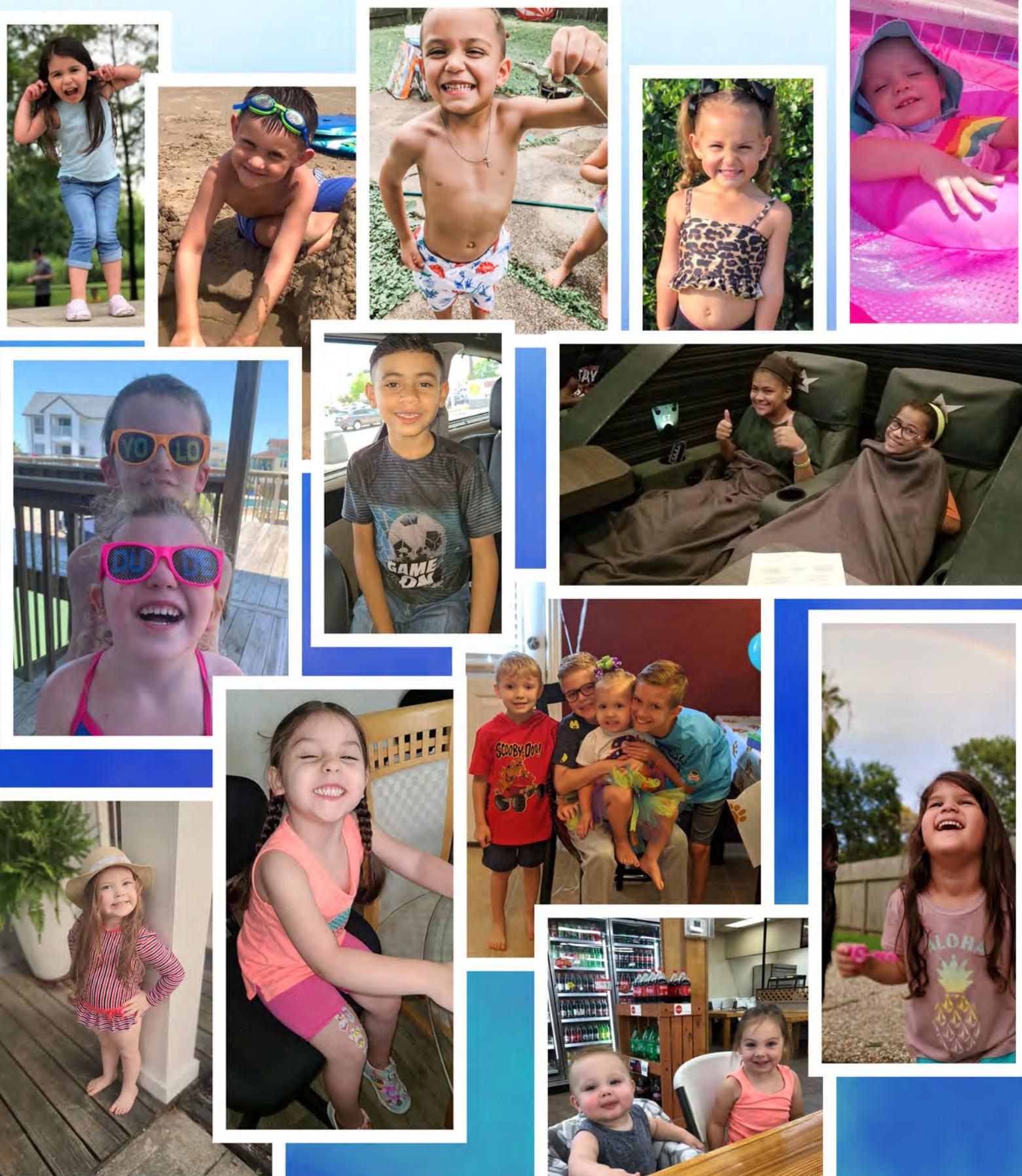
- ♥ Watch funny animal videos with your kids
- ♥ Blow Bubbles in the front yard and wave to everyone that drives by
- ♥ Sing a silly song to everyone in your house
- ♥ Throw everyone's pj's in the dryer for 10 minutes before they put them on
- ♥ Dance like no one is watching, while they are watching
- ♥ Put bubbles in the kids bath
- ♥ Do a family skit – record to share
- ♥ Compliment a stranger
- ♥ Take flowers to a neighbor
- ♥ Leave a nice note for a server
- ♥ Grocery shop for a new mom
- ♥ Share old photos to give someone a walk down memory lane
- ♥ Call a friend you haven't talked to in awhile
- ♥ Compliment someone on their child's behavior
- ♥ Smile- it's contagious!

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www.YMCAGreaterHouston.org
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8 QUICK BRAIN BREAKS!



Whether kids are doing school virtually, or just have a tough afternoon of homework, taking a quick break occasionally not only relieves stress, but will refocus the mind to complete tasks as needed. Here is a quick list of ideas for when they just can't stare at that screen any longer.

1 SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE

(For those of you over 40, I apologize for the ear worm!) Get up a dance! 5-10 minutes of dancing is a great way to release tension.

2 OM

Learn a few yoga poses and stress relief is at the tip of your fingertips...with your legs behind your head, of course!

3 JUST BREATHE (THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!)

Teaching kids how to slow down and just take some deep breaths helps clear the mind. You can use an app to guide you, or just turn off all the noise, slow down, and breathe.

4 FEED THE BELLY

Being hungry can be very distracting. Taking a (healthy) snack break when the tummy starts to rumble will help refocus the brain on more important tasks.

5 JUMP

Just a few minutes of vigorous physical activity gets the blood pumping. Jumping jacks, jumping on the bed, or jumping on the trampoline will all do the trick. So, go ahead and jump! (there I go with the ear worms again!)

6 IMAGINATION STATION

Color, paint, sidewalk chalk- let the brain loose to create a masterpiece!

7 PLAY BALL

Shoot some hoops, play fetch with the dog, or grab a tennis ball for some Wall Ball. Again, the specific activity isn't as important as activity itself.

8 LISTEN UP

Music is a great stress reliever. Tune Alexa to your favorite station or genre, and sit back and relax. Singing along is even better!

This school year is going to be hard on everyone, kids and parents alike. By staying focused on what you can control and making the best of a not so great situation, your whole family will benefit. Join the kids for these mental breaks and feel the stress melt away.

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STAY CONNECTED

WHILE APART

Game On!

Play video games with friends. Many games from Fortnite, to Animal Crossing, allow in chat gaming & playing together. Roblox is also a very popular game for kids of all ages!



Get Physical!

There are several activities you can do together, outside, while keeping a safe distance. Tennis, golf, walking/hiking, rollerblading or biking, fishing, etc... Get creative & get outside.

Make it Fun!

FaceTime, Zoom, Facebook & Google all have ways to video chat with friends & add fun stickers & animations to your screen!



Playdate!

It's not just for little kids anymore! Host a virtual playdate- you can do crafts, games or even storytime. Older kids can plan their own activities.



Go Old School!

The CDC has stated that the chances of getting COVID from your mail are extremely low. You can make a "pen pal kit" with stationary, cool pens & stickers with a friend and start exchanging letters.



Movie Time!

Netflix will allow you to host a watch party with your Netflix subscribing friends where you can all watch the same movie & chat in real-time. This is only supported on Chrome web browsers.



Become a Fairy!

Leave small gifts on the porches of families with kids, or your friends. These can include coloring books, crayons, sticker books, etc... Let your imagination run as wild as your budget will allow.

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August 12th

National Middle Child Day!





10 ways to make your middle child feel extra special.

- 1) Make their favorite meal or let them choose their favorite take out dinner.
- 2) Share a story that is just about them- the day they were born, when they lost their first tooth, etc...
- 3) Play a game together- just the two of you.
- 4) Buy them something new just for them (no hand me downs).
- 5) Take them out for a treat.
- 6) Write them a letter telling them how special they are to you.
- 7) Read a book together.
- 8) Point out characteristics they got from other family members to help them feel connected.
- 9) Take time to learn about their hobbies and interests.
- 10) Give them a hug and simply tell them how loved they are.





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