



# SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM NEWS

Did You Know?

## Benefits of Nature to Children's Growth and Development

Spring is coming! Time to take children outside! National Institute of Health (NIH.gov) emphasizes the importance of nature to children's physical health, mental health and academic performance. According to studies, it can also help develop children's creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. Here are some of the benefits:

- **Motor skills:** Children develop gross motor skills, eye-hand coordination, balance, and agility
- **Bone health:** Vitamin D exposure helps prevent issues related to diabetes and heart disease
- **Weight:** Outdoor play can help prevent obesity. Open space keeps children moving.
- **Anxiety and stress:** Playing with dirt and being in nature can reduce anxiety and stress levels
- **Depression:** Children who live near green spaces have lower symptoms of depression
- **Attention deficit disorder:** Contact with nature can reduce symptoms of attention deficit disorder. Walking bare feet on grass is calming!
- **Critical thinking:** Nature-based learning and education can improve critical thinking skills. Children curiosity increases while interacting with natural resources.
- **Academic readiness:** Time outside and interactions with nature can prepare children for school.
- **Problem solving:** Exploring different natural settings can encourage problem-solving
- **Symbolic play:** Outdoor play can help develop symbolic play. Role playing and pretend play add to the children's imagination.
- **Social skills:** Spending time in nature in a group can help develop interaction with others, sharing, communication and other social skills
- **Confidence builder** giving children the freedom to create their own games and explore the outdoor environment.

These are just some of the benefits of being outside, not just for kids but also for us all, as serotonin levels increase in natural environment.

## April is Month of the Military Child

As of Jan. 2024, Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) reports there are approximately about 876,234 ages 0-18 years old children of active military families. VA has the largest number of 99,962 military children, followed by Texas (88,703), California (85,374) while Maryland with 27,213 kids from active duty.

Naval Support Activity South Potomac (NSASP) NSF Dahlgren is celebrating the event on April 24 from 3:30 to 5 pm at Dahlgren Library and Joy Park with arts and crafts, facepainting, outdoor relay, inflatables, etc.

“Spring's greatest joy beyond a doubt is when it brings the children out.” *Edgar Guest*

**MOVING OR TRANSITIONING WITH SCHOOL-AGE!  
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1. CCPS last day of school remains June 13 despite the use of inclement weather days. KGCS is May 22 and Dahlgren School is on June 6.
2. [Topside Credit Union](#) offers 5 incredible scholarships. Submit an essay by 1 April.
3. 2025 National STEM Festival is on April 11-13 at National Harbor, MD. Visit [2025 National STEM Festival](#) for more info.
4. [HealthyChildren.org](#) offers various training on health topics. March 28 is Tips and Tools in Managing your Child's Asthma.
5. [Home Base](#), a Veteran and Family organization offers parenting skills training.
6. Grades 3-12 are encouraged to participate in the [Americas Field Trip](#) contest to mark the US semi quincentennial, 250th anniversary in 2026 by sharing their perspective on What America means to you through arts or essays.
7. VA Advanced Enrollment In partnership with Zearn, the state's no-cost math personalized learning platform, is pleased to offer the [Zearn Math Intensive Series](#), a focused 4-to-6-week program to help 9th grade students prepare for Algebra I, and is great opportunity to help the high schoolers catch up and move ahead.
8. [Special Ed Connection](#), a website that supports families with special education topics. To receive free access, contact the School Liaison.

**VA & NDW Purple Up Day is April 23. Wear purple to honor the military children!**

**NSASP SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM** for NSF Dahlgren & NSF Indian Head

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