

The Family Engagement Connection

February 2020

 Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind

VSDB Family Engagement and Family Resource Center

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Family Learning Series—call for requests!

VSDB Family Engagement is partnering with VSDB Outreach program to provide you with meaningful workshop opportunities in the ongoing Family Learning Series. We want to share information that is relevant to you, so we invite you to send in your requests of which topics you would like to see addressed in these upcoming training opportunities.

These topics can be addressed through webinars—pre-recorded or live, in-person workshops, written information included in an issue of this newsletter, or a combination of options.



Family Engagement is Important

Family engagement has been discussed with increasing frequency in the recent past...but, why?



The goal of family engagement is to create genuine

relationships with families and promote growth in students and their families. Many researchers have found a positive connection between family engagement in schools and student educational success. Family engagement in schools has been shown to improve student achievement, reduce absenteeism, and restore parents' confidence in their

children's education. Ongoing research has shown that students with involved parents or other caregivers earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills, and show improved behavior.

As VSDB's Family Engagement Specialist, I look forward to the opportunity to work with you and support your goals for your student and for your family.

Upcoming Webinars

Transition University

Feb 16—March 30

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/winter-2020-transition-university-virtual-training-registration-80298973391>

Transition University will offer a 5-session self-paced online series to help parents/guardians navigate the transition process for their school age child and prepare

for the adult world.

Join PEATC and VDOE for this FREE 5-week self-paced online course that focuses on providing parent-friendly transition information to help make transition planning easier. This course is designed for parents/caregivers of elementary, middle or high school students that receive special education services, but

is open to everyone. The goal is to share factual information on transition services and to help make the transition from school services to the adult services world less confusing.

Check these sections each issue to learn more about learning opportunities, events, and resources for your family!

Community Events

This section will showcase upcoming events in various locations in Virginia.

The National Federation of the Blind

Washington Seminar will be February 10-13. At NFB's Washington Seminar, members of the National Federation of the Blind convene to learn about and advocate for legislative initiatives that will improve the lives of blind Americans. The

first Washington Seminar took place in 1973. Today, more than five hundred people from the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico typically attend. Find more information at <https://www.nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/washington-seminar>

RVA On Stage—ASL Night!

February 9, 2:30pm Come see the ASL interpreted performance of "Daddy Long Legs" at Swift Creek Mill Theatre. One free ticket will be provided to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing patron and one guest. Additional tickets can be purchased for \$15. Contact Jacquie@RVSONStage.org www.swiftcreekmill.com/

Resource Spotlight of the Month - Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center

The Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center builds positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities in order to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life. Our special focus is children with disabilities. We do this by providing:

- Opportunities for strategic partnerships and advocacy for systemic improvement.
- Easy-to-understand, research-based information and training; and
- Services and support for families and professionals;

<http://www.peatc.org/>



VSDB Events

Kindness Week!

February 10-14, 2020

Guidance lessons will be taught throughout the week educating our students on the importance of being kind. Students will also participate in classroom activities during the week to reinforce the concept of showing kindness to others.

Students will participate in kindness activities all week such as tracking kind deeds, sending happy grams, creating kindness posters, and other fun activities.

You can find more information about promoting kindness at www.randomactsofkindness.org



Conversation Corner

Random Acts of Kindness:

- * Give positive notes to others
- * Let someone go ahead of you in line
- * Give a "just because" gift
- * Write a nice letter to someone

This month, try talking with your student about kindness. You can talk about how giving and receiving kindness makes him/her feel. This could spark a deeper conversation about all feelings your student experiences from time to time. Giving or receiving kindness can improve one's mood and creates a chain reaction of positivity.

In the News: Internet and Social Media Safety

On Feb. 11, 2020, Safer Internet Day will be celebrated in over 100 countries. The event is led by Connect Safely in the United States and encourages parents, students, and educators to come together to discuss digital issues and the responsible and respectable use of the internet and social media.

Safer Internet Day aims to create both a safer and a better internet, where everyone is empowered to use technology responsibly, respectfully, critically and creatively. By celebrating the positive power of the internet, the Safer Internet Day slogan of "Together for a better

internet" encourages everyone to join the movement, to participate, and to make the most of the internet's potential to bring people together.

Take some time to talk with your student about their internet and social media use and ensure their privacy settings are set up so that their

personal information is only shared with those whom your child actually knows.

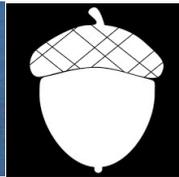
Join your student in promoting safe internet use by adding the hashtag #SID2020 to social media posts about the movement.

“ Kindness is igniting a light in someone else for no reason other than to watch them enjoy the glow. ”
- RAKtivist



Consider downloading a "kindness calendar" from www.randomactsofkindness.org/printables and work through the daily kindness activities as a family.

You could also create your own list of ideas to spread kindness.



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The Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind provides superior education for students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/vision impaired, deafblind, and deaf or blind with other disabilities. Our welcoming, fully-accessible learning environment fosters self-confident students who are contributing citizens and life-long learners. At VSDB, students share equal experiences and challenges and, often for the first time, feel equal to their peers, make friends, and become leaders.

Promoting independence for ALL students!

Connect with us!

Web: vsdb.k12.va.us

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/vsdb

Twitter:

twitter.com/vsdb

QR Code

A QR code is a type of barcode that gives you a "Quick Response" (QR) to a particular website or document. The *Family Engagement Connection* newsletter is posted on the VSDB website and you can easily access it by scanning this code with your smart-phone. You can also find our newsletters on the VSDB website under the "Parents" tab or at <https://vsdb.k12.va.us/parents/family-engagement-newsletter/>

Accessing the *Family Engagement Connection* online simplifies your ability to access the various links included in each newsletter.

To scan a QR code:

If you have an Apple device (iPhone, iPod, iPad) your camera should be able to recognize and open the QR code. If not, you can download a free QR code Reader app.

If you have an Android device you likely need to download a free QR code Reader app, as most Android camera apps are not able to open a QR code.

