



COMMUNITY RAMS NEWS

DODGE PARK ELEMENTARY

*We are Resilient Rams **ONE** Team, **ONE** Dream!*

November - January 2024

301-883-4220

3401 Hubbard Road, Landover, MD 20785

Dodge Park Elementary is a Community School that provides wraparound services and resources for our students, staff, families, and community.

A Message to Our Families

Greetings Dodge Park Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to Quarter 2 of the school year! We want to take this opportunity to say thank you for your continued support and partnership. You are appreciated!

We remain committed to **GLEAMing a Culture of Excellence**. As such, we ask that children attend school daily (unless sick). We also ask that students arrive at school on time each day (by 7:45 am). Finally, we ask that you continue to be involved in our school community by joining us each month for our Meet & Chat with the principal as well as the upcoming parent meetings sponsored by Ms. Boston (Parent Engagement Assistant) and Ms. Addulahaad (Community Schools Coordinator).

We are always happy to serve you. If you need support or have questions, do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher via Class Dojo or email.

Josette Moise, Principal
KeyShaze Ward, Assistant Principal

“No school can work well for children if parents and teachers do not act in partnership on behalf of the children's best interests”
Dorothy H Cohen



November 28, 2023
STEAM Parent Workshop (In-Person)
5:30 – 7:00 pm

Monday, December 4, 2023
Community School Committee Meeting (Virtual)
2:45 pm – 3:45 pm

December 2023
Zumba and Mental Health Parent Night Workshop (In-Person)
Time TBD

Wednesday, December 20, 2023
Parent Council Meeting (In-Person)
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Friday, December 22, 2023
Meet and Chat with Principal (Virtual)
2:15 – 3:15 pm

Monday-Friday, December 25-29, 2023 and Monday-Tuesday, January 1-2, 2024
Winter Break
Schools and Offices Closed

Wednesday, January 3, 2024
Community School Committee Meeting (Virtual)
2:45 pm – 3:45 pm

Monday, January 15, 2024
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Schools and Offices Closed

Wednesday, January 17, 2024
Parent Council Meeting (In-Person)
4:00 pm – 6:00 pm



Friday, January 19, 2024
End of Second Quarter

January 2024
Parent Workshop
Time TBD

Monday, January 22, 2024
Professional Development Day for Teachers – ½ Day Asynchronous Learning for Students
Schools Closed

Friday, January 26, 2024
Meet and Chat with Principal (Virtual)
2:15 pm – 3:15 pm



● Did You Know...

- School attendance plays a major part in your child's academic success.
- Too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school and makes it harder to learn how to read.
- Building good habits in prekindergarten/elementary school helps children learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

● What You Can Do To Help

- Ensure that all school-age children in your care are in school and on time daily.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack lunches and backpacks the night before.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments or extended trips during school days.
- Make back-up plans for getting your child to school if something comes up.

● How to Communicate with the School

- First, read the Prince George's County Public Schools Attendance Policy.
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. Make sure teachers and school staff have your up-to-date contact information.
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.

Adapted from Attendance Works



#PGCPSAttendanceMatters

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS • www.pgcps.org

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Building Resilient Children by Dr. Gordon, School Psychologist



Helping Parents Initiate Tough Conversations!

We are living in challenging times where there seems to be so much happening in the world — from disasters, war, political strife, and community violence— whether in our community, across the nation, or across the globe. These events are challenging for us as adults and even more so for our children, who are often more aware of what is happening in the world than we may think. As parents then, we must be ready and equipped to initiate uncomfortable and difficulty conversations with our children so that they may work through their feelings at home in a safe place.



- ❖ **Think ahead of your conversation!** Remember what you say, how much you say, and the type of vocabulary you use, will depend on the age of your child. Begin by asking what they know and then allow them to guide the conversation. The younger your child avoid long conversations with scary details. It is critical to remind your children about the importance of kindness, empathy, and love, no matter the topic.
- ❖ **Set aside a special time and place!** You need time to give your child your undivided attention without being distracted by chores, screens, or other activities. You must give enough time for feelings and questions, and to decompress afterwards. Keep the lines of communication open especially for older children as they work through these topics.
- ❖ **Let your child know you are in a safe space!** It is so easy for our children to hear traumatic news from the news, social media, and peers. Remind them that they should come to you with any questions and talk about their feelings as some of these topics may be overwhelming to them.
- ❖ **Explore topics through reading!** There are books that explore many of the difficult topics that we may need to discuss with our children. A trip to your local library and a discussion with the local librarian will allow you and your children to select books on a range of topics that you may use to guide these discussions. Check out titles at websites such as [Little Books, Big Issues: 20 Books To Help Children Process Tough Topics \(amexessentials.com\)](http://amexessentials.com) and [A Kids Book About - Inspirational Children's Books \(akidsco.com\)](http://akidsco.com)
- ❖ **Filter News Coverage!** Children do not need to be exposed to repeated coverage of scary and tragic events. Establish age-appropriate restrictions on internet access and the types of websites children can view. Consider watching or listening to the news at times when children are not present. With older children, watching the news with them will allow you to explain what is being presented and to answer questions that may come up.
- ❖ **Empower them with tools!** Create calming spaces in your home where your child may go to process feelings. Help them identify a self of coping skills that they may use when experiencing stress, strong feelings, or feelings of being overwhelmed. Journals and drawing books are very helpful for children in which to write or draw about their feelings. Encouraging them to write about things that they are thankful for is also great for their well-being!
- ❖ **Foster resilience by guiding them in taking steps forward!** Help your child explore all the different ways that they can feel more prepared to face the future and where appropriate make contributions. This may include talking to a counselor, volunteering in a local organization, donating to a cause, getting involved in community events, writing thank-you letters, or even standing up for themselves.
- ❖ Take time to explore these additional resources so that you will be prepared to have these difficult discussions as your child grows and develops!

Common Sense Media | A resource for parents and teachers to understand which actions are appropriate based on a child's age.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/blog/explaining-the-news-to-our-kids>

American Psychological Association | A resource for parents to help their children manage distress.

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/aftermath.aspx>

The Center for Parenting Education | A collection of free articles, recommended books, and a resource directory to help parents raise children who will become caring, confident, and responsible adults.

<https://centerforparentingeducation.org/>

Sources: Information adapted from “How to Help Children Navigate Controversial Topics: A Guide for Parents and Teachers” and Tackling Tough Topics with Young Children

Special events!



Dodge Park ES Book Character Parade



Coat Donations – Interdenominational Church Ushers' Association of Washington, DC & Vicinity, Inc.



Dodge Park 1st Parent Council Meeting



MATH TIPS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Here is an activity that families can do at home. I am focusing on fun math using games.

A simple deck of traditional cards can yield countless math games for students at varying skill levels. Every game offers the flexibility to make the play easier, harder, or more complex – you get to decide! With just a standard deck of cards, you can bring math learning with you anywhere you go: car trips, restaurants, or just relaxing at home!

Game: First to 100

Whether you are a parent, teacher, or homeschooler you will love this **addition game** that makes gaining fluency fun and EASY! Use this as extra practice at home. For this game, you can either **remove the face cards** and play with the numbers 1-10, or you can **include face cards** to represent the following values: Jack-11, Queen-12, King-13, Ace-0.

* Then **shuffle the deck** well and place it **face down in the middle** of the playing area. **The object of the game** is to be the first player to reach 100 without going over.

Directions: To begin, each player starts with a score of zero. Then player one draws a card and places it face up in front of them. They then add the value of that card to their starting value (0). Players then take turns drawing cards, on each turn **adding the new value to their previous score**. Any player whose score **goes over 100** is out of the game. **The first player to reach 100 exactly wins. Or, after all cards are drawn, the player with a score closest to 100 without going over wins.** Depending on the age and ability of your kids, there are lots of different variations to this game that you can try. This might be a fun way to change up a family favorite, or a way to provide a greater challenge to older kids. For example, you could **add a Joker card** to the deck to mean that a player must **start over at zero**. Or you could practice subtraction by having each player **start with a score of 100** and **subtract the value of each card** to be the first player to zero. Or for older kids who need practice with multiplication, change the rules so that **the goal is to reach 1,000** without going over. Then have kids **draw 2 cards and multiply them**, adding up the total as they go. (In this variation, all face cards are equal to 10). Finally, challenge middle schoolers by making **black cards equal to positive values** and **red cards equal to negative values**. Then add/subtract integers on each turn.

Have fun families.



READING TIPS – AT HOME READING GAMES

1. Letter Hunt Reading Game

Whether you're taking a stroll down to the local shops, or on a family road trip, letter hunts are a fun way to build your child's reading and spelling skills. Ask your child to spell a word that they know, such as their first name, then try to find each letter of that word printed somewhere around you.

Make the most of long car drives with reading games to keep the kids happy.

Start by trying to find the first letter of the word on objects such as license plates, road signs, billboards, and posters. You can prompt your child with something like, "The first letter in your name is 'S', can you find a sign or poster with an 'S' on it", and so on.

2. Re-enact stories

Children love dramatic play, and when your child acts out or retells the stories you've read together, they're demonstrating and enhancing their comprehension skills – an essential part of learning to read.

Ask your child to act out a story in the right order and take on different roles. This will help them gain an understanding of narrative structure and consider how different characters have different personalities and motivations.

3. A Matching Rimes and Onsets Reading Game for Kids

A fun way to help your child learn crucial decoding skills is by playing with rimes and onsets. A rime refers to the string of letters that follow an onset, which is the first phonological unit of any word.

You can play with rimes and onsets by cutting out pieces of cards and writing a phoneme on each one, for example, **b c f p r s m** and **h**. Write the letters at on a separate piece of paper. Ask your child to look at the rime at and decide if they have a phoneme that would correctly complete the word (e.g., **b + at = bat**).

READING TIPS – AT HOME READING GAMES Cont'd.

4. Easter Hunts

The classic Easter hunt is a fantastic opportunity to practice reading and comprehension skills. Hide your Easter eggs around the house or in the garden. If it's not Easter, you can use different items like your child's favorite treat, books, or toys.

Write some fun clues on a piece of paper, for example, "I'm bound to get wet in the place I'm hiding" (shower, sink, near the hose), "You might find me admiring my reflection" (by the mirror), or "Flowery and green is where I can be seen" (plants). Hand out your written clues to participants and let them have fun helping each other read and decipher each one.

5. Category Reading Games for Children

You can play category games with your child after reading a book as a helpful way to recall new words and ideas, building their reading comprehension and vocabulary skills. If the book features animals, ask your child to name as many animals as they can think of, including any new ones they may have learned from the book.

Play reading games to help build vocabulary and comprehension skills.

You can look at grouping them in different ways, such as by where they live or their number of legs. If the book is about Egyptian history, ask them to list words under categories such as diet, buildings, rituals, or fashion. Encourage your child to choose a book about their favorite topics, from mythical lands or farm animals and watch their enthusiasm as they play this game.

6. Online Reading Games for Kids

Online reading games are another great way to get kids practicing their reading skills. Children love the cute characters, bright colors, and fantastical worlds these games offer. Carve out a short amount of time they can look forward to – 15 minutes a day is enough. Choose positive screen time for your child with online reading games that focus on the five keys to reading success:

- phonics
- phonemic awareness
- vocabulary
- fluency
- reading comprehension

Positive screen time with fun online games for kids can enhance their educational experience.

<https://readingeggs.com/articles/2016-01-25-reading-games/>

Parent Resources

HOLIDAY BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS

1. Have a holiday movie marathon (perfect if the weather is cold and dreary).
2. Get competitive with family game night!
3. Bake and decorate cookies! For kids who love baking, a personalized book like **Baking Cookies Together** is a sweet winter gift that has their favorite cookie recipe and photo. The gift set even comes with an apron for mess-free fun in the kitchen!
4. Create a family vacation indoors! Who says you have to leave your house to go on vacation? Have a vacation at home by setting up a camping tent inside and making s'mores. Have a picnic on the living room floor or make a Hawaiian-themed dinner with music and alcohol-free pineapple drinks.
5. Build a castle fort and defend it from the mysterious shadow trolls! Indulge in this imaginative play all day. All you need are chairs and a blanket to create a fun fort kids will play in for hours.
6. Build a cardboard car. Recycle those leftover boxes from your holiday gifts into a cardboard vehicle kids can wear and ride! Cut a hole in the center of the box for the child's body and add straps that go over the child's shoulders. Decorate the box like a car and take a ride in your DIY cardboard-mobile!
7. Read books out loud together. Gather around the fire or snuggle in bed for a cozy story time. Personalized Christmas books are perfect this time of year and engage the child to practice reading, with their name in the story and illustrations!
8. Make funny videos or TikTok videos. Let kids show off their goofy, silly side and make videos you can re-watch or send to relatives.
9. Create a photo scrapbook. Smartphones are perfect for storing lots of photos, but we sometimes forget them in our camera roll. Print out some of your favorite photos and put them into a physical scrapbook. Kids can express their creativity and draw or write on the pages. Photo books are hands-on keepsakes you can pull out and enjoy every year.
10. Make an obstacle course. Use household objects (pillows, couch cushions, chairs, etc.) to create a fun obstacle course around the house!
11. Have a dance party marathon while you prepare dinner. Groove to your favorite holiday tunes and keep kids entertained while you prepare the family meal.

HOLIDAY BREAK ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS Cont'd.

12. Try simple science experiments. Use a magnifying glass to examine snowflakes up close. When the weather is below freezing, blow bubbles and watch the bubbles freeze!
13. Make your own snowman bowling game and play at home! Draw snowman faces onto white plastic cups that are upside-down. Stack the cups into a pyramid and roll a ball to knock them over.
14. Embark on a candy cane treasure hunt. Hide candy canes around the house, for kids to find!
15. Put together a puzzle. Personalized puzzles, with the child's name or photo, are especially engaging and rewarding. Kids will see their own name or image come together as they connect the puzzle pieces!
16. Have fun with pool noodles. Foam noodles are ideal for indoor or outdoor play. They are especially fun to use in the snow! Battle with your foam noodle to be champion of the backyard! These lightweight weapons are kid-friendly and easy to use for the youngest of warriors.
17. Bundle up and visit a playground.
18. Send handmade "thinking of you" cards to relatives or grandparents, with a family photo inside.
19. Play an animal sound game. Try to guess the animal that matches their sound! Play sounds of animals that live in winter climates, like the moose, wolf, penguin, owl, polar bear, and caribou. This winter game is fun and educational for younger and older kids.
20. Visit the zoo to see the animals.
21. Zoom call with relatives, friends, or grandparents. Check-in with your loved ones and talk about all the things you've done during the holiday break.
22. Create a kids' art gallery wall, with winter as your art theme! Have kids draw winter scenes on pieces of paper and display them on one wall like an art gallery display.
23. Watch an educational documentary that's kid-friendly on a free streaming video service. Learn about volcanoes, white lions, or the mysteries of the ocean from the comfort of your home!
24. Take a good morning yoga class for kids to jumpstart your day.
25. Redecorate a child's bedroom. Give their room a refresh with new decorative items and a different furniture layout.

<https://www.iseeme.com/blog/2020/12/03/35-fun-things-kids-holiday-break/>

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY FOOD ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):

- SNAP provides low-income individuals and families with grocery money that can be used at most grocery stores and farmers' markets.
- Apply for SNAP online at dhs.maryland.gov/benefits or by calling 1-800-332-6347.
- For application assistance and questions, call Maryland Hunger Solutions at 866-821-5552 or another SNAP Outreach Community Based Organizations listed at: bit.ly/SNAPpartnersPGC.
- For free legal help accessing SNAP benefits, call the Homeless Persons Representation Project hotline at 1-800-613-2518.

Women, Infants, & Children (WIC):

- WIC is a program that provides healthy food, nutrition education, and health services to new mothers, pregnant women, infants, and children.
- To apply, applicants must set up an appointment with a WIC office located in the county. For information on how to apply, visit MDWIC.org or call the Prince George's County Health Department at 301-856-9600; CCI Health Services Greenbelt at 301-856-9600; or Greater Baden Medical Center at 301-324-1874.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION

- Free food pantries are available throughout Prince George's County for anyone in need. For weekly updates on charitable food and meal distributions, visit bit.ly/pgcfoodresources.
- You can find information on free & reduced-cost food pantries & resources in your area at findhelp.org.
- The Capital Area Food Bank operates a Hunger Lifeline. For more information on food distribution locations and meal services, visit capitalareafoodbank.org/find-food-assistance or call 202-644-9807.
- You can also call 2-1-1 for distributions near you.

SCHOOL MEALS

- Children from low-income families are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during the school year. Families must apply. Applications are available at all public schools and can be submitted at any time and turned into any public school. Find more information at pgcps.org/offices/food-and-nutrition/free-and-reduced-meals.
- All children can receive free meals throughout the summer. For more information, meal service locations, and times, visit pgcps.org/offices/food-and-nutrition/summer-meals.
- Pandemic-EBT is a program that helps families purchase food while schooling is impacted due to COVID-19. For more information, visit dhs.maryland.gov/p-ebt/.

HOME FOOD & MEAL DELIVERIES

- Meal delivery services are available for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Meals are provided by the Prince George's County Department of Family Services, Senior Nutrition Program. For more information, visit princegeorgescountymd.gov/1723/Nutrition-Services or call 301-265-8475.
- Meals-on-Wheels provides meals to seniors. For more information or to enroll call 410-558-0827 or apply online at mealsonwheelsmd.org/client-application.
- For more information on other resources, please call 2-1-1.

Do you need emergency food assistance? Call 2-1-1 and ask for a food distribution site near

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- ✓ **The Community Food Distributions** and further food assistance resources are also available on the FEC's website (in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)).
- ✓ **In-School Dental Care at NO COST to you.** This service will be provided by Oral Health Impact Project (OHIP). Please contact Ms. Abdulahad at 301-883-4220 for further information and application.
- ✓ **Before and After School Care** is provided to students who do not ride the school bus. For more information, please contact us at 301-883-4220.
- ✓ **Math and Reading After School Tutoring** - To Be Announced, check with your child's homeroom teacher for information.
- ✓ **English Classes for Parents:** For more information, please contact Mr. Huerta at 301-883-4220.
- ✓ **SHABACH! Community Giveaway** for coats, clothing, and surprises. **This event is "BY INVITATION ONLY," so you must register. Those who are in need must call 240-532-7003 to register.** Please help us to spread the word about this event to those who are in need. **REMEMBER YOU MUST REGISTER.**

1. Department of Social Services

425 Brightseat Road, Landover, MD 20785 20737 – 301-909-6300

Summary of Services: Offers provide emergency funds for everything from back rent to water or heating bills. (i.e., Burial Assistance, Child Care Scholarship (CCS), Earned Income Tax Credit, Emergency Assistance, Energy Assistance, Homelessness Prevention Program, Medical Assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance, Temporary Disability Assistance, Transportation Assistance, Weathering Tough Times).

2. Community Ministry of Prince George

311 68th Place, Seat Pleasant, MD 20743 – 301-499-2319

Summary of Services: Offers financial assistance for utility bills, free food, information, and education programs to residents of Prince George's County. For example, they can refer people to Maryland pro bono mortgage programs.

3. Financial Empowerment Center

301 Largo Road, Largo, MD 20774 – 301-546-5296

Summary of Services: Offers direct access to high-quality financial services and guidance in a welcoming, professional environment at no cost.

4. Sowing Empowerment and Economic Development, SEED

6201 Riverdale Road, Suite 200, Riverdale, MD 20737 – 301-458-9808

Summary of Services: SEED offers a bilingual pre-purchase and post-education housing counseling program committed to increasing homeownership and decreasing foreclosures while providing financial education.

5. Salvation Army, Prince George's County

4825 Edmonston Road, Hyattsville, MD 20737 – 301-277-6103

Summary of Services: Offers Fuel fund - Help with heating bills and provide fuel.

Emergency food - Groceries, food, and other household products, utility bills Assistance for water bills, electric, and other energy expenses. School aid - Clothes, shoes, backpacks, and other free supplies for children.



All volunteers must complete a volunteer application, be fingerprinted and background checked and complete Safe School courses. If you are interested or want additional information, please contact Ms. Boston, Parent Engagement Assistant (PEA), at Carolyn.boston@pgcps.org or call 301-883-4220.

Fingerprinting and Background Check Locations

Sasscer Administration Building – BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

14201 School Lane, Room #128
 Upper Marlboro, MD 20774
 410-707-1657 / 410-962-1188 Ext. 49
Online Scheduler for Prince George's County Public Schools BITHGROUP Technologies Inc.
 (scheduling.com)

Fingerprinting and Child Protective Services (CPS) Clearance \$62.25

For all PGCPS employees, volunteers assisting on campus more than once each school year with students and/or chaperoning on field trips, and independent contractors. Fee may be waived if volunteer parent or guardian has a child in the Free and Reduced Meal Program (FARM). Parent or guardian must bring a copy of the FARM letter to the fingerprint office to qualify for the free fingerprint.

Commercial Background Check \$15

(online only at www.myschoolbucks.com) – Only referees, athletic officials and independent contractors who do not have unsupervised access to students may utilize the Commercial Background Check.

Special thanks to all our DPES Community Partners!

- First Baptist Church of Glenarden
- First Good Samaritan Baptist Church
- 100 Black Men of Prince George's
- Project Bridges
- Leveling the Playing Field
- Fort Washington Boating Association
- Love A.M.E. Church
- Giant Foods
- Shabach Ministries
- St. Joseph Catholic Church
- Journey's Inc.
- Evictions Prevention Project
- Solutions in Hometown Connections
- Organization of Hope
- Kappa Alpha Psi – Sandy Spring Alumni
- Mil-Net Inc.
- Brighter Bites
- Benjamin Moore Paint Company
- Wegmans
- Staples
- Custom Ink
- Positive Promotions
- Metro Landover Bus Division
- Park and Planning
- Fire and EMS Department
- Coalition for Public Safety Training in School, Inc.
- Interdenominational Church Ushers' Association of Washington, DC & Vicinity, Inc.
- Helping Hands Ministry

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING DODGE PARK ES PARENT COUNCIL GROUP, PLEASE CONTACT MS. BOSTON AT 301-883-4220