

# Prepared, Passionate & Persistent *Parents*

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## Did You Know?

[Summit Metro Parks](#) opens [two children's Nature Play areas](#) this month. One is located in [Liberty Park's](#) Twinsburg Ledges Area, and the other will open in Akron's [Goodyear Heights](#) Metro Park on April 27. The park district opened the Nature Play areas to encourage more outdoor exploration among children in Summit County.

## Important Dates

[AMHA ECI's School  
Readiness Events](#)

## Spring Has Sprung

Dear Friends,

Spring has sprung! The days are longer, the air is warmer and the skies are brighter. When my four daughters were young, this meant we now had the perfect excuse to run off some of that boundless preschool energy outside.

Some of my fondest memories include flying kites in the big empty field near our house, catching lightning bugs in our backyard or just enjoying PB&Js outside on the grass. Nothing beats warm grass and sunshine for sharing giggles together. I like to think our hikes in the [Cuyahoga Valley National Park](#) sparked my girls' love of nature and adventure. In fact, the very same daughter who tumbled head over heels all the way down a steep hill at Blue Hen Falls as a three-year-old is now hiking the 2,200 miles of Appalachian Trail. (She's 525 miles in so far!)



Students from the [Akron Public Schools Early Learning Program](#) play together outside during a break from the classroom.

Interestingly, some preschools use nature not only as inspiration for lessons and activities but also as their classrooms. At these "[Nature Preschools](#)," children spend all or part of their days

outdoors. Imagine what a few hours outside everyday could do for *our* minds, bodies and

## Important Links

[Earth Day Books for Preschool Through Second Grade](#)

[Science in the Backyard](#)

[Summit County First Things First website](#)

["The Early Childhood Effect" School Readiness Summit resources](#)

[Early Literacy Tips from ODE](#)

[This City Reads! Civility Book List](#)

[Summit Education Initiative website](#)

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souls as adults, let alone how that could benefit our youngest learners.

In honor of the upcoming [Earth Day](#), think about ways you may incorporate outdoor exploration and play in your classroom lessons and even at home. I hope the following links and stories will inspire you.

If you have information to share or ideas you'd like us to consider for future e-newsletters, please feel free to [email me](#). In May we'll share with you tips and information on how to help children avoid the "summer slide" in reading skills over break.

Enjoy the warmer weather, and make sure your kids do, too!

Sincerely,



**Laura DiCola**

Early Childhood Strategy Leader  
Summit Education Initiative

## Little Ones Concerned With Litter

KSU's Child Development Center helps children with anti-litter campaign signage and posters

*"It's your responsibility to throw litter in the trash," Aiden, age 5, wrote.*

Kudos to the teachers at [Kent State University's Child Development Center](#) for not only using the outdoors to supplement classroom lessons, but also to encourage children to think about and act on environmental issues that matter to them. Children ages 3 to 5 had the opportunity to create an anti-litter campaign using posters and other signage after noticing the volume of litter in areas surrounding their school.

To read more about their project, [visit this link](#).

## Establishing a Love for Outdoors

Below are a few links with suggestions for introducing the benefits of nature to children



Looking for nature-related books to share with children this spring? Check out [this list of Earth Day books](#) for children in preschool and beyond.

Need some inspiration for ways you may introduce the natural world to your baby, toddler and/or students? [Visit this PBS article](#) that shares how science can help children learn, from seeing bubbles and feeling breezes to noticing plant textures.

## Mud Inspires School-Wide STEAM Project

**SCOPE Academy students become "Soil Scientists"**



Last week in kindergarten through fourth grade classrooms at [SCOPE Academy](#) in Akron, students started a school-wide STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Math) project focused on mud.

Students (a.k.a. "Soil Scientists") are working to determine solutions to questions such as "What can we do/invent to determine how all the mud is coming in to our school?" and "How can we contain mud where it needs to be?"

## PNC to Help Fund Pre-K Projects

Submit classroom requests to [DonorsChoose.org](#)

More than 320 [PNC](#) volunteers within the company's nine-county radius in Ohio, including Summit County, will each receive a \$50 voucher to donate toward [DonorsChoose.org](#) crowd funding requests. This supports [PNC Foundation's](#) efforts to further the mission of [PNC Grow Up Great®](#), a multi-year bilingual initiative in early childhood education.

So far, there are very few requests to be funded on [DonorsChoose.org](#) within Summit County and surrounding communities. **That's where our local preschool**

**teachers come in!** If you work within the public, charter or Head Start organizations in Summit County - or if you know someone who does - please visit [DonorsChoose.org](#) and submit a classroom project idea or resource in need.



For more information about this initiative, please visit [PNC's corporate website here](#).

Summit Education Initiative (SEI) is a nonprofit organization working to enhance the educational experiences of individuals and their families living in Summit County. We believe this helps ensure every student graduates prepared, passionate and persistent. The mission of SEI is to improve personal and regional prosperity through increased educational attainment.

If you would like to get involved or if you have any questions please contact **Derran Wimer** at **330.535.8833** or [dwimer@seisummit.org](mailto:dwimer@seisummit.org).