



By Skip Forsyth

A farmer was squatting on his heels by the edge of his field. His young grandchild, who lived in the suburbs, asked grandpa, "Wa'cha doin'?" "I'm looking at the future," he replied. "I don't see nothing," retorted the grandchild. Grandpa picked up a handful of dirt, sniffed the soil, and tossed it into the wind. The child was miffed. The farmer reached into his pocket then opened his hand, "What do you see?"

"Nothin' but a bunch of dry old seeds." "Yes, but there is more," grandpa paused and then explained. "In a few weeks these seeds will be planted in rows. Then watered. The corn will sprout and the field will be green and alive. The corn will grow taller than you sitting on my shoulders. The crop will be used for corn flakes and tortilla chips and corn syrup in candy and for feeding the farm animals." They both scanned the field to the horizon. "This ain't dirt," the young sprout replied, "This is the future." Grandpa beamed a smile.

When I walk into a school I see the future. What do you see? Sometimes we get so caught up in the test calendar that we measure the future by STAAR results. Or we become so weary we measure the future by the arrival of the next holiday. We have seniors in high school that will graduate in a few months. We need to help them see the future, and it is much more than FAFSA forms and portfolios for college applications. We have immigrant children who are unfamiliar with American schools. We need to help them see the future, and it is much more than surviving cafeteria food and completing homework in a language you cannot read. We have students that are fearful of taking multiple STAAR tests. We need to help them see the future, and it is much more than multiple choice tests.

The future can be measured as an ongoing series of events and the passing of time. Or, the future can be seen as vision, hope, and dreams. Some children seem to put their talents on display early and often, and we can see them gravitating to math and science or to the "arts" or to something requiring mechanical skills or to a connection with animals and the environment. Other children are more cautious and reserved. Their interests and skillset are less easy to define. Yet every child holds a dream and we need to cast a vision that reaches beyond the classroom. Their dream and our vision will promote the development of character and ambition more than career and apparent ability. Their dream and our vision will encourage them to take reasonable risks to discover who they are and how to become their best.

When I walk into a school I see the future. What do you see?

WHOSE CHILD IS THIS?

Author Unknown

"**W**hose child is this?" I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
"Mine," said the parent with a tender smile
"Mine to keep a little while
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell him what he is to wear
To prepare him that he may always be good
And each day do the things he should"

"**W**hose child is this?" I asked again
As the door opened and someone came in
"Mine," said the teacher with the same tender smile
"Mine, to keep just for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school"

"**W**hose child is this?" I ask once more
Just as the little one entered the door
"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
"Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever."



Help Your Child Avoid Spring Fever

The warmer springtime air beckons as the trees are budding and the ground is soggy with melted snow. But watch out for spring fever! Just as young minds are tempted to wander from school and homework, it's the time to buckle down, to prepare for the last months of school and the culmination of a year's worth of hard work.

Learn what to do when your child catches spring fever to help them stay focused in school until the final bell rings. After all, it's not summer vacation just yet.

Try these spring-fever busters to keep the spring fever at bay and help kids keep their school motivation:



1. Plan for Outside Time

Not only are the days longer, they're warmer and sunnier. Kids start feeling the call to be out of doors – and that's a good thing. Allow them time to enjoy the outdoors. Doing so will meet your children's need to get outside so they can better focus when they're back inside. How about encouraging one of these activities?

- ⇒ Doing homework outside.
- ⇒ Going to the park for a picnic dinner.
- ⇒ Playing a game of Frisbee after school.

Allow kids some down time. Help them learn how to let go of stress by doing things they enjoy. Let them decompress by playing with friends, watching a movie, or exercising. They'll come back from their break refreshed and ready to work.

2. Create a "study zone"

Create a place that's conducive to productive study and concentration. The area should be comfortable, quiet, void of distractions, and stocked with necessary supplies. Encourage your kids to put away cell phones and turn off their computer chatting programs. Designate a time period for homework, and try to have kids work at the same time each day. With these parameters in place, they'll be in the frame of mind to get down to business.

3. Keep Sleep Consistent

In the springtime, nature's schedule changes. But just because it's light outside later in the day doesn't mean your family schedule should drastically change. It's important to stick to a regular routine – especially for kids who have trouble focusing. Your child may want to stay up a lot later or go back to play after dinner, for instance. Resist the temptation to stray from your usual routine. Make a list of the non-negotiables and stick to them.

- ⇒ Go to bed at the same time every night.
- ⇒ Keep bedrooms dark & use blackout curtains if necessary.
- ⇒ Remove TV, computers & iPads from bedrooms.

4. Encourage Exercise

There's a built-in benefit to warmer weather; it lets kids blow off steam and burn energy outdoors. Studies show that exercise can actually help kids focus. So encourage your child to go for a run or a bike ride or play outdoor games.

5. Leave Room for Exceptions

If you allow a *little* wiggle room, the gratitude may go a long way. If it means you give them an extra reminder when it's time to come in and get ready for bed, don't worry. Compromising every now and then won't affect their overall ability to focus. And it might make them more motivated to get done the things they have to.

By implementing these strategies, you can help your kids complete the last months of school on a successful note. Then, when that final bell rings and the summer months begin, they will be able to truly enjoy their break, free from academic cares, knowing they finished at their best.

How to Help Your Child Avoid Spring Fever: <http://tinyurl.com/huolyes>

How to Keep Kids Focused in School When Spring Fever Hits: <http://tinyurl.com/hepd9i6>

How to Help Your Child Avoid Spring Fever: <http://tinyurl.com/gm279he>

FAFSA FACTS

No one loves the word “free” more than a college student.

By filling out the FAFSA, you can get more than freebie T-shirts and slices of pizza: You can get financial aid for college.

The FAFSA, officially known as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, is the form that families fill out to apply for federal grants, loans, and work-study funds for college students. It is administered by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides more than \$150 billion in student aid each year.

Your eligibility for federal grants (which don't have to be repaid) and federal loans (which do) will generally be based on your financial need, as determined by the information you supply on your FAFSA. You can get a preview of whether the FAFSA is likely to qualify you for federal grants by using the [FAFSA4caster](#) on the Department of Education website.



Even if the FAFSA4caster indicates that your family's income and assets put you out of the range for grants, it's still worth going ahead and completing the FAFSA. That's because most colleges, state scholarship agencies, and foundations use the FAFSA in deciding who gets their scholarship money, as well as how much each student will receive. Also, filing a FAFSA automatically qualifies you for low-cost federal student loans of at least \$5,500 a year.

CHANGES TO THE FAFSA® PROCESS FOR 2017-18

SUBMIT A FAFSA EARLIER: Students will be able to submit a 2017-18 FAFSA as early as October 1, 2016, rather than beginning on January 1, 2017. The earlier submission date will be a permanent change, enabling students to complete and submit their FAFSAs as early as October 1 every year. (There is NO CHANGE to the 2016-17 schedule. The 2016-17 FAFSA became available January 1, 2016.)

USE EARLIER INCOME AND TAX INFORMATION: Beginning with the 2017-18 FAFSA, students will be required to report income and tax information from an earlier tax year. For example, on the 2017-18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) will report their 2015 income and tax information, rather than their 2016 income and tax information.

Here's a summary of key dates for submitting the FAFSA depending on when you plan to go to school:

IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND COLLEGE FROM	YOU WILL SUBMIT THIS FAFSA	YOU CAN SUBMIT THE FAFSA FROM	USING INCOME AND TAX INFORMATION FROM
JULY 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2017	2016-17	JANUARY 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2017	2015
JULY 1, 2017 - JUNE 30, 2018	2017-18	OCTOBER 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2018	2015
JULY 1, 2018 - JUNE 30, 2019	2018-19	OCTOBER 1, 2017 - JUNE 30, 2019	2016

StudentAid.gov/fafsa, <http://time.com/money/4108122/what-is-fafsa-and-who-should-fill-it-out/>

You can find the application at fafsa.ed.gov. More information can be found at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/FAFSA>

**YOU KNOW YOU'RE A POOR COLLEGE STUDENT WHEN...
FEEDING THE POOR IS THE SAME AS BUYING YOURSELF RAMEN NOODLES.**

NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT

The passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2015 represented a shift from a prescriptive federal role in education under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) to more state and local flexibility. States now have more responsibility over their accountability systems, assessments, standards and school improvement plans than they had in the past 15 years. So what does this new law mean for your child's education and school?

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Accountability

- ◆ States had to develop and meet annual measurable objectives (AMOs) and adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals for subgroups of students.
- ◆ All subgroups were required to meet 100% proficiency on state assessments by the 2013-2014 school year.
- ◆ High schools were required to include graduation rates and elementary schools were required to use a different academic indicator in addition to assessment results to measure AYP.

Standards and Assessments

- ◆ State standards were required in reading, math and science at all grade levels and included three levels of performance for students: advanced, proficient and basic.
- ◆ Students were required to be assessed in math and reading/English language arts annually in grades 3-8 and once in grades 10-12 and in science once in each of the following grade spans: 3-5; 6-9 and 10-12. Schools had to assess at least 95% of each subgroup of students in their school.

Annual Report Cards

- ◆ State and local education agencies are required to prepare and make available to the public annual report cards on student achievement and other school information.

VS

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Accountability

- ◆ Eliminates AYP and the 100% proficiency requirement.
- ◆ States establish long-term goals and indicators for measuring the academic achievement of all students and each subgroup of students.
- ◆ States are required to measure student progress on multiple measures of student achievement that include assessments, student growth, English language proficiency, graduation rates and at least one other state-determined indicator of school quality or student success.

Standards and Assessments

- ◆ States must show they have adopted challenging academic and achievement standards in reading, math and science so students will be prepared to enter college or a career. The achievement standards also must include at least three state-defined levels of performance for students.
- ◆ Assessment requirements are the same as NCLB.

Annual Report Cards

- ◆ ESSA maintains the annual report card requirements from NCLB but includes more reporting requirements at each level.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Federal Education Programs

- ◆ Created individual programs such as Safe and Drug-Free Schools, school counseling programs, mental health programs and Parent Information Resource Centers (PIRCs).

Teacher and School Leaders

- ◆ Required all teachers in core academic subjects to be “highly qualified,” which meant teachers had to have a bachelor’s degree, demonstrated knowledge and hold a certificate in the subjects they taught.
- ◆ Did not require teacher or principal evaluations but were required in order to receive an NCLB flexibility waiver.

School Improvement

- ◆ Required states to take corrective action in schools that failed to meet AYP in consecutive years, with escalating interventions each year.



VS

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

Federal Education Programs

- ◆ Consolidates nearly 50 programs into one large grant called Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant which allows states to have greater flexibility on where to spend funds.

Teacher and School Leaders

- ◆ Eliminates the “highly qualified” teacher requirement. States determine the certification and licensing requirements for teachers in their state.
- ◆ Does not require teacher or principal evaluation systems.

School Improvement

- ◆ Requires states once every three years to identify a category of schools for comprehensive support and improvement which must include at least the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools, high schools with a graduation rate of 67% or less and schools where one or more subgroups of students are under-performing.
- ◆ Districts are required to partner with parents to develop the school improvement plans.

Want to learn more? Visit PTA.org/ESSA to find more resources like these to understand the new law and its impact on students and families.

<http://s3.amazonaws.com/rdcms-pta/files/production/public/NCLB%20vs%20ESSA.pdf>

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GOOD NUTRITION AND DAILY EXERCISE FOR KIDS?

Page 6

MENTAL AND BEHAVIORAL BENEFITS

Good nutrition is essential to healthy brain development in children which is, of course, critical to learning.

Children who exercise regularly and eat healthily are likely to:

- perform better academically
- feel better about themselves, their bodies and their abilities
- cope with stress and regulate their emotions better
- avoid feelings of low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression



Establishing healthy eating and exercise habits early in life can lead to long term healthy behavior in adulthood.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- Children need a wide variety of nutrients (e.g., protein, complex carbohydrates, healthy fats, minerals and vitamins) to assist in their daily growth and development and to protect them from childhood illnesses.
- Daily exercise also helps children to build stronger muscles and bones and limit excess body fat.
- Healthy eating also cuts down on risk for cavities, eating disorders and unhealthy weight control behaviors (i.e., fasting, skipping meals, eating very little food, vomiting, using diet pills, laxatives or diuretics), malnutrition and iron deficiency.
- Healthy eating and consistent physical activity help to prevent chronic illnesses that appear in adulthood associated with obesity, e.g., heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and several forms of cancer.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF DIFFERENT SETTINGS ON THE EATING AND EXERCISE HABITS OF KIDS?

IN THE HOME

- **Lack of access to healthy, wholesome foods and inadequate physical activity** contributes to kids becoming overweight and not getting adequate nutrition for their growth and development. Children need at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity in the form of physical play or sports.
- **Hunger** – kids who do not get enough to eat are at risk of developing chronic health conditions, behavioral problems, academic struggles, anxiety, depression and even obesity especially if they only have access to poor quality processed food.
- **Unhealthy weight control behaviors** have been found to co-occur with obesity. Many adolescents, particularly teenage girls, have body image concerns and engage in these behaviors threatening both their physical and mental health.
- **Media effects** from the following:
 - **Food advertising** targeted at children is dominated by commercials for unhealthy food (e.g., candy, sugary cereals, sugary beverages, processed snack foods, fast food restaurants). Food advertising is pervasive and can be found on multiple media platforms (TV, web and even embedded in computer games).
 - **Advertising by other industries** often objectifies girls and women, contributing to body dissatisfaction, eating disorders, low self-esteem and depression.
 - **Television** viewing is linked to childhood obesity because it displaces physical activity, increases snacking behavior while watching, exposes kids to potentially harmful advertising and reduces their resting metabolism.

AT SCHOOL

- **Risks to academic achievement** result from children not getting adequate nutrition and physical activity. Hunger can be particularly damaging to children's progress in school and cognitive development overall.
- **Overabundance of unhealthy foods** – too many schools offer poor nutritional choices in the form of unhealthy school lunches or even vending machines filled with candy, processed snacks and sugary beverages.
- **Lack of opportunities for physical activity** – many schools have scaled back requirements for a daily recess and do not prioritize physical education opportunities for children at every age.
- **Peer behaviors** – peers can serve as remarkably powerful role models for children and may share their unhealthy eating or exercise habits with them.
- **Stigma of being overweight** – can lead to social and psychological distress (e.g., depression, low self esteem). Bullying and teasing from peers can be particularly damaging.

<http://www.apa.org/topics/children/healthy-eating.aspx>

Moms

&

Dads



It's easy to fall into a mindset of just going through the motions. It's easy to go through the days without really seeing or caring or experiencing.

Moms, I want to encourage you to create a bucket list with your son. Fill your days together with plans, with dreams, and with adventure! Find things you both love and are passionate about, then chase recklessly after those dreams!

To help get you started, here are a few ideas:

- ⇒ When you have to repair something in the house, let him do it with you.
- ⇒ When cooking, teach him to cook your favorite recipes.
- ⇒ When driving somewhere new, teach him how to map it out and look for chances to teach along the way.
- ⇒ Teach him how to be a gentleman and how to treat a woman.
- ⇒ Buy him his first suit.
- ⇒ Redecorate his room using his ideas.

The most important thing is to spend quality time together. Enjoy it.

<https://www.susanme.com/mother-son-bucket-list/>

Tom: "Five minutes ago, she was sitting on my shoulders pointing



out cows in Munger's Field."

Kate: "And then you blinked."

Tom: "Yea"

Kate: "No more blinking."

- Cheaper by the Dozen

One moment your daughter is dancing on your feet in the kitchen, the next she is getting ready to dance with a boy at prom. One moment she is running to the door to hug you when you get home from work, the next she's walking out the door to head to college. One moment you are planning her 6th birthday party, the next you are planning her wedding.

Tell your daughter you want to make a bucket list with her. Ask her what she'd like to do. By coming up with a bucket list of things you'll do with your daughter, you will be able to dream dreams and then pursue them together.

Here are some general ideas to get you started in making your own father-daughter bucket list.

- ⇒ Go camping & teach her how to fish.
- ⇒ Teach her to dance.
- ⇒ Cook together.
- ⇒ Hug her often and tell her you love her.
- ⇒ Serve an elderly neighbor, widow, or widower.
- ⇒ Roast marshmallows & make s'mores in a fire pit.

<http://www.markmerrill.com/father-daughter-bucket-list/>

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is posted on our web site four times a year for parents and educators of Texas.

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Title I Statewide School Support and Family & Community Engagement Initiative



<http://www.esc16.net/dept/isserv/title1swi/index.html>

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