

KIDS



Andover Townsman

Thursday, March 10, 2016

Turning squiggles into words

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
AP MEDICAL WRITER

Celebrate your child's scribbles. A novel experiment shows that even before learning their ABCs, youngsters start to recognize that a written word symbolizes language in a way a drawing doesn't — a developmental step on the path to reading.

Researchers used a puppet, line drawings and simple vocabulary to find that children as young as 3 are beginning to grasp that nuanced concept.

"Children at this very early age really know a lot more than we had previously thought," said developmental psychologist Rebecca Treiman of Washington University in St. Louis, who co-authored the study.

The research published recently in the journal *Child Development* suggests an additional way to consider reading readiness, beyond the emphasis on phonetics or being able to point out an "A" in the alphabet chart.

Appreciating that writing is "something that stands for something else, it actually is a vehicle for language — that's pretty powerful stuff," said Temple University psychology professor Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a specialist in literacy development who wasn't involved in the new work.

And tots' own scribbling is practice.

What a child calls a family portrait may look like a bunch of grapes but "those squiggles, that ability to use lines to represent

something bigger, to represent something deeper than what is on that page, is the great open door into the world of symbolic thought," Hirsh-Pasek said.

The idea: At some point, children learn that a squiggle on a page represents something, and then that the squiggle we call text has a more specific meaning than what we call a drawing. "Dog," for example, should be read the same way each time, while a canine drawing might appropriately be labeled a dog, or a puppy, or even their pet Rover.

Treiman and colleagues tested 114 preschoolers, 3- to 5-year-olds who hadn't received any formal instruction in reading or writing. Some youngsters were shown words such as dog, cat or doll, sometimes in cursive to rule out guessing if kids recognized a letter. Other children were shown simple drawings of those objects. Researchers would say what the word or drawing portrayed. Then they'd bring out a puppet and ask the child if they thought the puppet knew what the words or drawings were.

If the puppet indicated the word "doll" was "baby" or "dog" was "puppy," many children said the puppet was mistaken. But they more often accepted synonyms for the drawings, showing they were starting to understand that written words have a far more specific meaning than a drawing, Treiman said.

Language is "like a zoom lens on the world," said Hirsh-Pasek. This study shows "even 3-year-olds know

Linking written words to language

Reading to very young children is crucial to help them eventually learn to read. But researchers studying how kids begin to understand that text conveys meaning differently than pictures — an important concept for reading readiness — say parents should pay attention to writing, too.

Some suggestions:

■ Run a finger under the text when reading to youngsters so kids will learn to link written words to

spoken language, said Brett Miller of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development.

■ Show children how you write their names well before they can attempt it, said Temple University psychology professor Kathy Hirsh-Pasek. That's one of their first concrete examples that a mysterious squiggle on a page is a symbol for a word they know.

■ Often a child's name is his or her first written word, thanks to memorizing what it looks like. Encouraging youngsters to invent their own spellings of other words could spur them to write even more, said developmental psychologist Rebecca Treiman of Washington University in St. Louis.

■ When youngsters scribble, don't guess what they produced — ask, Hirsh-Pasek said. It's pretty discouraging if a tot is about to announce he wrote a story and mom thinks he drew a house.

■ Post a scribble they're proud of on the refrigerator, she said. Children are figuring out patterns with their scribbles, and that's more instructive than merely pasting copies of, say, apples onto a page to make a recognizable picture.

■ Give tots a pencil or pen instead of a crayon if they say they want to "write" rather than "draw" so it will look more like text, Treiman said.



TIM JEAN/Staff File Photo

Kindergartner Isabella D'Eon draws expressions of faces she reads in Spanish while learning the language at Danville Elementary School last year. Helping children to understand their squiggles and scribbles is often the first step toward inspiring them to read.

there's something special about written words."

It's not clear if children who

undergo that developmental step at a later age — say, 5 or 6 instead of 3 or 4 — might go on to need

extra help with learning to read, cautioned Brett Miller, an early learning specialist at the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, which helped fund the research.

But because some children did better than others in the experiment, Treiman plans to study that.

Scientists have long known that reading to very young children helps form the foundation for them to later learn to read, by introducing vocabulary, rhyming, and different speech sounds.

But it's important to include other activities that bring in writing, too, Treiman said. Look closely at a tot's scribbles. A child might say, "I'm writing my name," and eventually the crayon scribble can become smaller and closer to the line than the larger scrawl that the tot proclaims is a picture of a flower or mom, she said.

"It's very exciting to see this develop," she said.

Previous studies have shown it's helpful to run a finger under the text when reading to a youngster, because otherwise kids pay more attention to the pictures, Miller said. If the words aren't pointed out, "they get less exposure to looking at text, and less opportunity to learn that sort of relationship — that text is meaningful and text relates to sound," he said.

Make sure children see that you write for a purpose, maybe by having them tell you a story and watch you write it out, added Hirsh-Pasek.

"That's much richer than just learning what a B or a P is."

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POWERING UP

Kiddie tablets mature as competition expands

BY BREE FOWLER
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Kiddie tablets have grown up.

Tablets designed just for kids are getting more sophisticated as they face increased competition from regular tablets. The new products also have better screens, speedier chips and fashionably slim bodies. They let older children do more, yet hold their hands until they're ready for unsupervised access.

Although many of the tablets were originally conceived as educational toys for kids as old as middle schoolers, they've been more popular with younger children. Older kids have been apt to reject them in favor of their parents' tablet or smartphone.

That shift has prompted companies to focus more on preschoolers and kindergartners, as they create super-durable products that can withstand repeated abuse and develop games and apps that teach reading and math.

But now, some companies are looking to take back some of the sales to older kids. They are offering premium products — most with price tags of more than \$100 — that look and perform less like toys and more like those adults use.

LeapFrog, maker of the toy-like LeapPad, released its first Android tablet last year. And Kurio is branching out to Windows 10 and includes a full version of Microsoft Office in a new tablet-laptop combination.

The use of Android and Windows software, in place of the more basic, custom-made systems used in toy tablets, allows for more sophisticated apps and games and a range of content from standard app stores.

But parents still want educational content and safety features on tablets designed purely for kids. LeapFrog's Epic and other new tablets



AP PHOTO/Kathy Willens

Kurio's latest Android-based Xtreme 2 kids tablet comes with more than 60 preloaded games and apps.

for kids are attempting to bridge that gap.

The Epic looks like a regular Android tablet, but comes with a removable bright-green bumper. It is much faster than a LeapPad and can run versions of popular Android games such as "Fruit Ninja" and "Doodle Jump." There's access to the Internet, but it's limited to about 10,000 kid-safe websites (though parents can add others). Parents can also limit and track how much time a child spends watching videos, playing games or reading.

Lynn Schofield Clark, a professor of media studies at the University of Denver, said tablets geared at kids are a tough sell these days.

"Kids are always aspirational in their ages, and they're always interested in what older kids are doing," Clark said.

Meanwhile, most parents won't spend money on kids-only gadgets unless they believe they offer significant educational benefits.

Kurio aims to provide that with the Smart, a device that lets kids do things they previously might have needed their parents' laptop for, such as typing up and saving their homework online or playing video on their TV through an HDMI cable. The Smart is a Windows 10 laptop with a detachable screen

and comes with a free year of Microsoft Office.

Although older kids may be ready for adult tablets, the shift has left those 8 to 12 without age-appropriate devices, Levin says. The Smart tries to fix that.

Other makers of children's tablets have also gone high-end. Fuhu bills the Nabi Elev-8 as a premium, 8-inch tablet. But the company ran into financial problems and its products have been tough to find.

Nonetheless, adult tablets remain popular with kids.

Amazon touts its Fire tablet as something the entire family can use, eliminating the need to buy something just for the kids.

The tablet's FreeTime app lets parents set up profiles for each kid, with access to only content they approve.

It also lets parents limit time spent on various types of content such as videos or apps. For an additional fee, Amazon's FreeTime Unlimited service offers more than 10,000 books, apps, games and videos geared toward kids ages 3 to 10.

Amazon is selling a kids' edition tablet for \$100. It's essentially Amazon's bare-bones \$50 Fire tablet packaged with a colorful protective bumper and a year's subscription to FreeTime Unlimited.

From Epic to Xtreme: Kid-geared devices to check out

Want to get your child a tablet computer? Here's a look at some models designed for kids.

All of them feature parental controls and can toggle back and forth between kid and adult modes, so parents can use them to check their email or post on Twitter after their little ones go to bed.

■ LEAPFROG EPIC (\$140)

This is LeapFrog's first Android tablet. Like its toy-like predecessor, the LeapPad, this tablet has an educational focus. Content is based on a child's age. Various apps communicate with each other as they track a child's progress, helping to create a more customized experience. A connected stylus, familiar to LeapPad users, helps with writing practice. Web surfing is limited to 10,000 kid-safe sites.

■ KURIO XTREME 2 (\$130)

Similar to the Epic, the Xtreme 2 has a sharp screen, fast processor

and a decent amount of storage. It comes with games and apps, including a handful of motion games that are controlled by your child's movements as they pretend to do things like ski or swim. Kids can access the Internet, which can be filtered as much or as little as their parents desire.

■ KURIO SMART (\$200)

Geared toward older kids, this is something that they can type book reports on or do online research for a school project. It is the first tablet for kids to run on Windows 10. Parents can filter the Internet and set time limits on use. A laptop whose keyboard detaches to become a tablet, the device comes with a slew of games and apps, including the same motion games on the Xtreme 2.

■ AMAZON FIRE KIDS' EDITION (\$100)

This is Amazon's bare-bones \$50

Fire tablet packaged with a colorful protective bumper (pink or blue), a year's subscription to kids' content through Amazon's FreeTime Unlimited and free replacements for two years if the tablet breaks.

FreeTime Unlimited, which normally starts at \$3 per month, is what really shines. Kids have unlimited access to 10,000 kid-friendly books, videos and games. Ads and in-app purchases are disabled.

■ VTECH INNOTAB MAX (\$100)

Yes, VTech did get hacked last year, exposing personal information on more than 6 million children. Nonetheless, the Innotab Max is a decent product, particularly for younger children. Because it uses Google's Android, it has access to content made for that system. But it also features content designed by VTech.

— Bree Fowler, AP technology writer

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Nearly 50 high school and middle school students win arts awards

STAFF REPORT

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, presented by the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, announced the names and schools of all Gold Key, Silver Key, and Honorable Mention winners.

More than 14,000 pieces of art and 1,800 pieces of writing are entered annually, which is open to all students grade 7-12, in Massachusetts.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program is the country's longest-running and most prestigious national awards program that offers recognition of talent, exhibition opportunities, and scholarships for creative teenagers in grades 7-12.

Work is judged on originality, technical skill, and emergence of a personal



Audrey Gallacher, Silver Key, "London Night"

voice or vision. All work is judged blindly, without

knowledge of the student's gender, age or school.

Andover High School and Doherty Middle School students received 49 awards. Senior Fiona Jungmann, who received the highest award with a Gold Key American Vision Nominee, also won a \$5,000 scholarship from the Boston Globe Foundation. The art scholarship went to Jungmann for her fashion piece "Identity Thief Coat."

"The Boston Globe is proud to honor these gifted young artists and writers and provide them with the platform to amplify their message and artistic voice," said Linda Pizzuti Henry,

Boston Globe Managing Director. "The Boston Globe Scholastic Art & Writing Awards introduces the Boston community to a new generation of young artistic talent and is just one of the many ways the Globe and its audience of readers support local talent."

Kudos also go to Doherty Middle School English Language Arts teacher Catherine Cannon-Francis, Andover High School Language Arts Teacher Rebecca D'Alise, and Andover High School Art Teachers Jessica Daviso, Erica Frisk, Teresa Consentino, and Meghan Michaud for their guidance and teaching.

Scholastic Art Award Winners

Doherty Middle School

- Emma Kearny - honorable mention, flash fiction and short story. Teacher: Catherine Cannon-Francis.
- Christina Li - Gold Key, short story; honorable mention, personal essay/memoir; silver key, poetry. Teacher: Cannon-Francis.

Andover High School

- Sara Clark - honorable mention, poetry. Teacher: Rebecca D'Alise.
- Samara Dowe - honorable mention, photography; Silver Key, photography. Teacher: Erica Frisk.
- Natalie Elliott - 2 honorable mentions, Drawing and Illustration. Teacher: Jessica Daviso
- Audrey Gallacher - Silver Key, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Meghan Michaud.
- Emery Greason - 2 honorable mentions, Drawing and Illustration; 2 Silver Keys for art portfolio and digital arts. Teacher: Daviso.
- Donald Guidoboni - honorable mentions for ceramics, drawing and illustration; 2 Silver Keys, ceramics. Teacher: Daviso.
- Charlotte Guterman - honorable mention, poetry.
- Jonathan Hovor - honorable mention, drawing and illustration.
- Fiona Jungmann - 4 Gold Keys for fashion, mixed media, art portfolio, American Fashion. Gold Key Visions Nominee. Silver Key, fashion. Teacher: Daviso.
- Natalie Kushner - honorable mention, photography. Teacher: Frisk.

- Rebecca Lee - honorable mention, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Consentino.
- Caitlin Leyne - honorable mention, photography. Teacher: Frisk
- Juliana Lugg - Silver Key, photography. Teacher: Frisk.
- Sharon Mai - Silver Key, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Consentino.
- Nicholas Makiej - Gold Key, Painting; honorable mention, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Daviso.
- Angela McNamara - honorable mentions, art portfolio and mixed media. Teachers: Daviso and Frisk.
- Jennifer Monderer - honorable mention, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Daviso.
- Hannah Muhfelder - honorable mention, drawing and illustration. Teacher: Daviso.
- Grace O'hara - honorable mention, sculpture. Teacher: Daviso.
- Hayden Rungren - 2 honorable mentions, poetry. Teacher: D'Alise; outside of school.
- Zara Silva-Landry, honorable mention, mixed media. Teacher: Daviso.
- Alice Wang, Silver Key, drawing and illustration. Outside of school.
- Sophia Wang - honorable mention, painting. Teacher: Consentino.
- Elizabeth Zhang, Gold Key, drawing and illustration; honorable mention, drawing and illustration, Silver key, drawing and illustration. Outside of school.
- Samuel Zhang - Silver Key, drawing and illustration. Outside of school.

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Champions



The Andover Blue 6th Grade middle school hockey team won the Valley Middle School Hockey League championship on Sunday, Feb. 28, beating North Andover 1-0.

Front Row, left to right, are: Kevin DeMichaelis, Henry Pomeroy, Sam Elliott, Ned Williams, Chris DeFeo, Joey Paglia, Graham Dalton and Matt Shea.

Back Row, left to right: Jamie Lyman, Pat Flanagan, Assistant Coach Larry Shea, Preston Taylor, Owen Christopher, William Hughes, Adrian Lin, Nate Byers, Chad Cao, Assistant Coach Paul DeFeo, Head Coach Kevin DeMichaelis. Missing: Matt Conte.

Fortnight winners announced



Baystate Financial annually gives Player of the Fortnight awards to members of the Andover High School girls' and boys' varsity basketball teams.

This award is given for exemplary contributions to the team and the recipients are seldom those who score the most points or are frequently mentioned in headlines.

Pictured above are the 2015-2016 AHS varsity basketball team winners of the Baystate Financial Player of the Fortnight award, given for exceptional contributions to team excellence.

Front row, left to right: Elizabeth Bernardin, Brianna Goguen, Kayla Kobelski, Tori Roche, Meghan Stickney.

Back row, left to right: Coach E.J. Perry (girls' team), Ryan O'Connell, Jonathan Rodriguez, Ronald Hill of Baystate Financial, Angelo Carbone, D.J. Minor, Coach Dave Fazio (boys' team), and Michael Briggs.

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RAISING A TECHIE TYKE

Computer coding, programming keys into the younger set

BY BREE FOWLER
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Want even your younger kids to join the tech revolution by learning to code? Maybe you should get them a robot — or at least a video game.

That's the aim of entrepreneurs behind new coding toys for kids as young as 6. They're spurred by a desire to get children interested in computer science well before their opinions about what's cool and what's not start to gel, in effect hoping to turn young boys and girls — especially girls — into tomorrow's geeks.

"You really want kids to learn these building blocks as young as possible and then build on them," Apple CEO Tim Cook said in an interview at a recent coding workshop for third-graders. "I don't think you can start this too young."

Not everyone is excited about pushing first-graders to learn the nuts and bolts of how computers work. Some critics believe that too much technology too early can interfere with a child's natural development; others warn that pushing advanced concepts on younger kids could frustrate them and turn them off computer science completely.

But there's a nationwide

push to improve computer literacy in elementary school — and entrepreneurs are jumping aboard.

Growing up in India, Vikas Gupta learned to program at a young age and was amazed at what he could do with a basic computer and some software. Now, the father of two wants today's kids to get the same feeling from the coding robots his startup produces.

His company, Wonder Workshop, started shipping Dash and Dot, a pair of small, programmable blue-and-orange robots, late last year. Kids can interact with the devices in a variety of ways. In the most basic, kids draw a path for Dash, which resembles a small, wheeled pyramid made of spheres, on a tablet screen. They can then drag and drop actions onto its path that, for instance, might cause Dash to beep or flash its lights in different colors.

More advanced kids can use Google's kid-oriented Blockly language, or Wonder, the company's own programming language, to create and play games with both robots. The idea is to make building sets of increasingly complex instructions so intuitive and fun that it sparks children's natural curiosity about the way things work.

"It's going to be relevant

for whichever profession kids choose in 20 years," Gupta said. "Doctors, architects, anyone; they will need to be able to understand how machines work in order to be really, really good at their jobs."

Middle school may be too late to start robotics and coding classes, proponents say. By that point, most children have formed reasonably firm likes and dislikes, making them less likely to try new things. That's particularly true when it comes to girls; while robotics and coding activities tend to be popular with both genders early on, the percentage of girls involved drops dramatically as kids get older.

Toy robots can be very helpful in teaching coding basics, said Chase Cunningham, a father of 4- and 7-year-old girls who writes "The Cynja," a comic book about warriors who fight computer "bad guys" such as zombies, worms and botnets.

"Immediately, they get to see the return, because the robots move," said Cunningham, who by day handles threat intelligence for the cybersecurity firm Armor. "Kids need that immediate reward."

But these kinds of toys are so new that there's no way to know if they actually stimulate long-term interest in coding or whether

they affect healthy brain development.

"Kids need to directly experience things, to invent purely out of their imagination without any preprocessed experience," said Karen Sobel Lojeski, a Stony Brook University child-development researcher with a computer-science background. The introduction of electronic toys at a young age could hinder that, she said.

Nader Hamda, founder of a handful of tech and toy startups, loved seeing his two young daughters embrace technology, but like Lojeski worried when they spent hours alone with their tablets. So, he created Ozobot, a tiny programmable robot that kids can play with together.

"I wanted to recreate the experience of the family game night, where the whole family is huddled around the game," he said.

Kids can program Ozobot, which is smaller than a golf ball, simply by drawing different colored lines and shapes with markers. Older kids can also program in Blockly and can even see what their finished code would look like in Javascript, a language widely used to program websites. Hamda said roughly 400 schools currently use Ozobot as a hands-on teaching tool.

The SPRK, from Colorado



AP FILE PHOTO/Mark Lennihan

Third-grader Jaysean Erby raises his hands in excitement after solving a coding problem during a coding workshop at an Apple Store as Apple CEO Tim Cook watches from behind. There's a nationwide push to improve computer literacy at the elementary school level, and entrepreneurs are jumping aboard.

startup Sphero, has also found a niche in elementary and middle schools, which use the clear plastic robot ball to illustrate concepts such as algebra and geometry. Among other things, said Sphero CEO Paul Berberian, the robots teach kids that making mistakes is part of learning.

"It introduces the methodical process, how to go back and fix things," Berberian said. "There's no computer programmer in the world that gets it right the first time."

Puzzlets, created by Justin Sabo and some of his fellow Carnegie Mellon University graduates, also teaches trial-and-error thinking. There's no robot here, just a tray in which kids can place tiles representing commands that

move a character around an associated tablet-based video game called "Cork the Volcano."

If kids don't get it right the first time, they can switch out the tiles and run the program again. It's like a mash-up of chess and a classic video game, Sabo said. "Kids learn through play, learn by doing," he said. "It's meant to be social. It's meant to be hands on."

Jey Veerasamy, director of the Center for Computer Science Education & Outreach at the University of Texas at Dallas, recommends against introducing coding until at least second grade. Most kids will get the greatest benefits from third to fifth grades, when kids are most willing to explore — especially girls, he said.

Robot play: Putting coding toys to the test

It's no longer tough to find coding toys for young kids. Here's a look at your current options. All of the toys are either sold through major retailers or online.

■ DASH AND DOT (\$150 for Dash, \$50 for Dot, all ages)

Children can use a variety of apps to program Dash, the larger robot, to zip around their living room, perform tricks, or speak pre-recorded phrases. Accessories, sold separately, let kids teach Dash how to catapult balls into the air and play a xylophone. The budget choice, Dot, doesn't move, but still teaches basic programming and lets kids play a variety of games.

Both robots grow with the child. The simplest app lets pre-readers draw a path on the screen for their robot and then drag and drop in picture-based instructions. Older kids can use programming languages.

Online: makewonder.com

■ OZOBOT (\$60 for a single pack, ages 8 and up)

This tiny robot, smaller than a golf ball, lets kids create

their own programs, first by drawing colored lines with markers for it to follow. The robot's sensors scan for changes in color, which it interprets as code. The toy's block-based programming language offers five levels of difficulty, with corresponding tablet apps.

The toy's relatively low cost has made it popular with schools, while its small size lets kids play with it on a table, or pack it in their suitcase for a weekend away.

Online: ozobot.com

■ PUZZLETS (\$100 for a starter pack, ages 6 and up)

Kids place tiles in a cloud-shaped tray and use them to program the movements of a character through a game. Pictures on the tiles depict various directions, characters and other movements, so reading isn't required. If kids don't get the movements right the first time, they can run the program again, hopefully picking up some problem-solving skills along the way.

Parents can help until they, too, are stumped. Good

news: The game will email hints if it notices you're stuck on a level for an extended period of time.

Online: digitaldreamlabs.com

■ SPRK (\$130, ages 8 and up)

You can do a lot with this clear plastic ball. As with Dash and Dot, the youngest programmers will have fun driving SPRK around and changing the color of its lights. Older kids can use the company's Lightning Lab app and block-based programming language to build and share their programs. The SPRK also works with the slew of apps and games currently available for the original Sphero robotic ball. Most of those apps and games are free.

Though it's now available thorough major retailers, the bulk of SPRK sales have been to schools.

Online: sphero.com/sphero-sprk

— Bree Fowler, AP Technology Writer

Restoring order

New book urges parents to reassess life for the sake of kids

By LEANNE ITALIE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Dr. Leonard Sax has been a family physician and psychologist for 27 years, conducting workshops around the world for parents, teachers, social workers, counselors, school psychologists and juvenile justice professionals.

He's also a dad, and it's from all those perspectives that he took on his fourth book, an alarm bell of sorts titled, "The Collapse of Parenting," out recently from Basic Books.

Sax, who lives in Pennsylvania, argues that American families are facing a crisis of authority, where the kids are in charge, out of shape emotionally and physically, and suffering because of it. He calls for a reordering of family life in response.

A conversation with Dr. Leonard Sax:

The Associated Press: "What exactly do you mean by a collapse of parenting?"

Sax: "I wrote about an office visit with a 10-year-old boy who is sitting and playing a game on his mobile phone, ignoring me and his mom as I'm talking with his mom about his stomachache. And his mom is describing his stomachache and the boy says, 'Shut up, mom, you don't know what you're talking about.' And he laughs."

"That would have been very unusual in 1990 or 2000. It is now common: children, girls and boys, being disrespectful to parents, being disrespectful to one another, being disrespectful to themselves, verbally and otherwise. The mother did nothing, just looked a little embarrassed. The culture has changed in a profound way in a short period of time in ways that

have really harmed kids."

AP: "What is the book really about?"

Sax: "The transfer of authority from parents to kids. I think you should treat kids like grown-ups. I think you should expect them to be mature and to behave, and I think that's what it means to treat someone like a grown-up, among other things, although the phrase to treat someone like a grown-up is ambiguous."

"It's not about the abdication of authority. For example, it's common now in this country to find parents who are chauffeuring their 8-year-old or 12-year-old around to various schools, among families that are choosing a school, and the parent functions as educational consultant. The parent makes a recommendation, but the child makes the final decision. I know of cases where the kid was clearly making the wrong decision and the parents knew it, but nevertheless felt completely powerless to overrule their child. The child is the one who suffers."

AP: "What are some other examples?"

Sax: "The same is true with regard to a cellphone in the bedroom. You now find kids at 10, 12, 14, 16 years of age who have their phone in their bedroom at two (o'clock) in the morning. You take the device at night and you put it in the charger, which stays in the parents' bedroom. No child should have a phone in their bedroom unsupervised."

"That's not just my opinion. That is the official teaching of the American Academy of Pediatrics in guidelines published (in) October 2013. But you would be astonished, or maybe you wouldn't be, how many parents find that an impossible

recommendation. They feel that they have no authority over their child in many domains."

AP: "You refer to the value of family dinner."

Sax: "Research shows having a family meal at home without distractions is important. Every day. Not doing that indicates that time spent at home with parents is the least important priority. It doesn't matter. It can be overlooked and forgotten."

"By communicating that time at home as a family is our highest priority, you are sending the message that family matters. So many kids are in the race to nowhere, trying to add things on to their resume through extracurricular activities with no sense of why. They just burn out at 15 years of age."

AP: "What about time spent in the car?"

Sax: "No earbuds in the car. You commonly have this and kids are not engaging with their parents. Everybody's in a rush. That time in the car is precious. The time in the car is for you to listen to your child and your child to listen to you."

"My 9-year-old daughter and I know the lyrics to

almost every song from 'Mary Poppins.'"

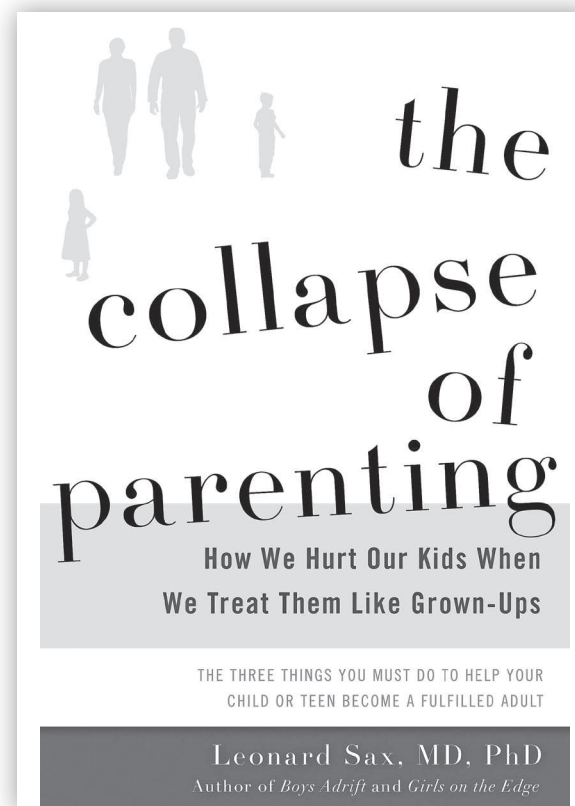
AP: "What types of things can parents do to help a child or teen become a fulfilled adult?"

Sax: "The first thing is to teach humility, which is now the most un-American of virtues. When I meet with kids, I ask them what they think it is and they literally have no idea. I've done that from third grade through 12th grade. The high school kids are more clueless than the third-graders."

"They have been indoctrinated in their own awesomeness with no understanding of how this culture of bloated self-esteem leads to resentment. I see it. I see the girl who was told how amazing she was who is now resentful at age 25 because she's working in a cubicle for a low wage and she's written two novels and she can't get an agent."

"The second thing is to enjoy the time with your child. Don't multitask. Get outdoors with your child."

"The last thing: Teach the meaning of life. It can't not be just about getting a good job. It's not just about achievement. It's about who you are as a human being. You must have an answer."



BASIC BOOKS VIA AP

Family physician and psychologist Leonard Sax, author of "The Collapse of Parenting: How We Hurt Our Kids When We Treat Them Like Grown-Ups," argues that American families are facing a crisis of authority, where the kids are in charge. He calls for a reordering of family life in response.



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Ava Pawlus, 11, Andover, concentrates on making her gummy roll stand up while creating a rainbow design on a chocolate cupcake.

Cupcake creations include minion, snowman, sheep

On Thursday, Feb. 18, Andover DCS hosted 13 young ladies in a Cupcake Workshop at Town Hall as part of the February Vacation week program.

During the two-hour workshop the participants frosted and designed six cupcakes each, and then got to take them home to show off and enjoy with their families. The decorations of the cupcakes ranged from snowmen to minions to rainbows to sheep.

Staff from the DCS office oversaw the program and directed and assisted as necessary. The Cupcake Workshop has been an annual



Lizzy Payne, 11, Andover, puts the finishing touches on her minion cupcake

favorite for many years and this year was no exception.