Dear Parents,

Within days we enter the second quarter of the school year. While you may feel like time is flying by, keep in mind this is the perfect time for reflecting and refocusing efforts to make this the best school year ever. That is why parent-teacher conferences are planned for this time of year.

Conferences with teachers give parents an opportunity to speak directly with the teacher about your child's individual progress. You will see how well they are doing in their favorite subjects, find out any learning habits the teacher is seeing and hear ideas the teacher may have to help your child be successful. You will want to make the most of these moments with the teacher. Consider jotting down a few questions in advance. Take advantage of this opportunity to discuss your child's all-round performance. I suggest you talk to your child about the conference, before and after. Sometimes children are apprehensive about parents meeting with their teacher. They will be reassured when you tell them you will be talking about how well they are doing. You may also ask your child what subject she or he likes best and what they are most proud of. Does your child have something special that they want you to tell the teacher? And finally, I leave you with a little word to the wise, both from the perspective of a parent and a professional, a simple "thank you" for the teacher's hard work will create the kind of atmosphere that makes genuine communication possible.

The single most important indicator of a child's success in school is parent involvement. Your participation in your child's school life helps your child learn, improves our school and builds better citizens for our communities of tomorrow.

In light of the recent tragedies that have occurred in our nation's school, you may be assured we have redoubled our attention to follow safety procedures. Thank you for helping us maintain a safe environment by ensuring that you sign in and out of the building at the school office and follow our safety policies. Attending to the details required to protect the safety of children is at the forefront of our decision-making. If at any time you have any questions or just want to share an observation or opinion, please feel free to contact me.

I conclude with a sincere thank you to our parents and community for your generous support of Island Creek Elementary. As a result of PTA and REACH Week donations, we have purchased Smart Boards (the latest in instructional technology) for each grade level and for specialists (library, art, music and PE). In addition, we equipped our music and first grade classrooms with audio enhancement systems; soon, our kindergarden and second grade classrooms will also have this equipment. This system, which includes speakers set throughout the ceiling, a wireless microphone worn around the teacher's neck, and wireless microphones passed among students, spreads sound evenly throughout the room so that students in the back can hear just as well as those sitting close to the teacher. Research shows that classrooms with this system scored 10 - 15 percent higher on state assessments than students in other classrooms. English speakers of other languages (ESOL) recorded some of the greatest gains in test scores. We are so pleased to have these valuable additions to instruction.

Thank you for being our partner in your child's education,

Susan Z. Owner, Ph.D.
Principal

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**Student-Parent Survey Form**

Your student will be receiving a Student Parent Survey form in their November 2nd Take-Home Thursday packet. This form must be filled out and returned by every student in FCPS. This ensures that we receive appropriate school funding and is mandated by the state. Please fill out, sign and return the form with your student as soon as possible. Thanks for your help with this important process.
# November 2006

## Native American History Month

### Calendar

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<td>Patrol Meeting</td>
<td>Challenger Field Trip-Berman Drama Club (A) 6:30-8pm Math Night for Parents</td>
<td>1st Grade field trip to Frying Pan Park</td>
<td>Challenger Field Trip-Vaughan</td>
<td>Challenger Field Trip-Possanza</td>
<td>10:11am Parent Workshop—Learning Styles and Study Skills</td>
<td>Challenger Field Trip-Drake 2:00 Distinguished Student Recognition</td>
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### Important Dates

- **November 2nd**—PTA Craft Fair
- **December 14th**—Club & Group Photos

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**BOOK FAIR** **OPEN FROM 8:00 am - 4:00 pm - Please sign in at the office**

**STUDENT HOLIDAYS**

* Parent/Teacher Conferences *

**BOOK FAIR** **OPEN FROM 8:00 am - 4:00 pm**

**TWO-HOUR EARLY DISMISSAL**

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

December 2nd—PTA Craft Fair
December 14th—Club & Group Photos

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Heather Beaman is the new art teacher to Island Creek. Ms. Beaman is originally from a small town south of Buffalo New York. This is Ms. Beaman’s second year in Fairfax County Public Schools, previously teaching at Willow Springs, Flint Hill and Churchill Road elementary schools. She is very happy to have one home base school. Ms. Beaman is a graduate of Alfred University with a degree in fine arts/education, and is currently working on a masters of interdisciplinary studies from Virginia Commonwealth University. In her free time, Ms. Beaman enjoys running and spending time with friends and family.

Ms. Roberts is the Gifted and Talented teacher here at Island Creek. A native of Idaho, Cindy Roberts grew up in Iowa and Nebraska, attended the University of Northern Iowa, and began teaching in Iowa. Cindy earned her Master’s in science education, and after thirteen years of teaching in elementary classrooms, she was awarded the Presidential Award of Excellence in Science Teaching in Elementary Schools. Cindy and her husband enjoy the outdoors and have been ranger/naturalists in Yellowstone National Park for the last sixteen summers. Another love is travel, which took Cindy to teach in Kobe, Japan for eight years of travel throughout Asia, and three years teaching in Vienna, Austria, and traveling in Europe. She has taught third grade, sixth and seventh grade science, and has been a media specialist before teaching Gifted and Talented. Cindy Roberts is married to Tom Roberts, an art teacher, and they have two grown daughters and two grandchildren.
Gifted and Talented (GT) Programs—Levels of Service

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) offers a continuum of gifted services for all students in grades K-8. Learning experiences are designed to develop higher-level thinking through enrichment, acceleration, and extension of the Program of Studies. Teachers, administrators, and GT resource teachers work together to provide the following Levels of Service:

Level I GT services provide lessons in critical and creative thinking skills for all FCPS students in grades K-6.

Level II GT services include differentiated instruction at an advanced level for many FCPS students through collaboration between the classroom teacher and the GT resource teacher. The Young Scholars Model included in this level is designed to find and nurture gifted potential in students from historically underrepresented populations through more challenging curriculum and instruction. Middle school students who take one or two honors classes are receiving Level II services.

Level III GT services for identified students include the GT school-based program in grades 3-6; in middle school, students take three honors classes.

Level IV services are for those students found eligible for the full-time GT center program in grades 3-8 or taking full Honors at the middle school.

SCREENING—Multiple criteria are reviewed to determine eligibility for all FCPS gifted services. Formal identification begins with Level III services. The local school GT committee determines student eligibility for school-based GT services. The countywide GT Central Selection Committee determines eligibility for GT center placement.

TESTING-Each October/November all FCPS second grade students, as well as students in third through seventh grade who are missing an ability test score, are administered the Cognitive Ability Test and/or the Naglieri Nonverbal Test. A second grade GT center screening pool is established using these test results. Students in the second grade pool are automatically screened for GT center placement. Parents/guardians may exercise their one-time retest option during the October/November testing cycle.

REFERRAL-Parents/guardians of students not in the second grade screening pool may initiate the GT center screening process by completing and submitting a Gifted and Talented GT Center Referral form to the local school principal no later than February 1, 2007. No late referrals will be accepted for any reason. Second graders not in the pool and all third through seventh graders are screened only by referral. Forms are available on the GT web site and in the Parent Information Packet available at the local school.
Help Island Creek Elementary Get Free Merchandise!

Campbell’s Labels For Education™ Program Awards Free Educational Merchandise

You can help Island Creek Elementary PTA earn free merchandise for our school, such as computers, audio/visual equipment, physical education equipment, reference books, musical instruments or even a mini-van, simply by collecting Campbell product proofs of purchase and forwarding them to Island Creek Elementary School.

It’s easy to pitch in. Simply save product proofs of purchase from any of the following eligible Campbell products and send them to Island Creek Elementary School:

- Campbell’s® soups
- Campbell’s Supper Bakes® meal kits
- Campbell’s™ or Franco-American® SpaghettiOs® pasta
- Campbell’s® beans, gravies, and canned pasta
- Prego® pasta sauces
- Swanson® broths and canned poultry
- V8® vegetable juices and V8 Splash® juice drinks
- Campbell’s® tomato juice
- Pepperidge Farm® breads, cookies, crackers, and frozen products
- Pepperidge Farm® Goldfish® crackers
- Campbell’s® Foodservice products

Visit www.labelsforeducation.com for a complete list of eligible products or to make a Community Pledge. Simply visit the website and click into the “Community Pledge” link.

Parent Coffee
November 28, 2006

Topic: The Development of the School Improvement Plan

Please join us Tuesday, November 28th from 9:00–10:00 A.M. for a “Parent Coffee Hour.”

During our discussion we will provide you with an overview of our SOL scores, and how our school is performing in relation to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) standards. Most importantly, we will discuss how this information is used to develop our school plan.

We look forward to your presence and input as we continue to work together to meet and exceed the high educational standards you have set for your child.

This session is open to all parents and we strongly encourage you to attend.

Island Creek Elementary will be hosting Math Night for PARENTS only on Tuesday, November 14th from 6:30-8:00 in the Island Creek Cafeteria. This event will feature family friendly math games, supporting POS/SOL objectives. Parents will CREATE math games to take home and practice with family members. Preschool through sixth grade parents are invited to participate in this great demonstration of the fun of mathematics.

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Counselor’s Corner

RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility is the character word of the month. We will be going into the classrooms this month discussing responsibility.

Seven Habits of Highly Responsible Students:

1. They set goals: Goals keep kids focused on the future.
2. They plan their time: Responsible people meet their obligations – this takes planning. "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail."
3. They study every day: Learning any subject is like building a brick wall – you do it steadily, one step at a time.
4. They take notes in class: Students who earn all “A”s seem to have one thing in common – they take notes in class. They have learned that teachers will almost always spell out what they think is important (and what’s likely to be on the test).
5. They have the tools they need: They come prepared with pencils, paper and other tools they need.
6. They keep their commitments: Responsible people honor their commitments – to others and to themselves. They succeed in school by doing their assignments well and on time.

They get ready ahead of time: Responsible students have learned that being late, or being early, is not something that simply happens to them. It is a choice they make by completing homework, setting out clothes and making other necessary preparations the night before.

Help build responsible habits in 21 days. Experts say that if we repeat an action every day for just 21 days, it is likely to become automatic. So, for the next 21 days, encourage your child to act on the habits of responsible students. Your child will soon find that they do them even without thinking. And they’ll be more responsible – and more successful – in school as well.

Source: One of a series of Quick Tips from The Parent Institute, [www.parent-institute.com](http://www.parent-institute.com).

Your partners in character education,
Angela Harrison
Steff Shelesky
School Counselors
Meet Mr. Scott

Mr. Scott is our new PE teacher here at Island Creek. Mr. Scott graduated from the Ohio State University. He recently moved to the Washington, DC area and is coaching freshman girls basketball at South County Secondary School. Mr. Scott and Mr. Taguding are looking forward this year to working with all Island Creek students to improve on their health and fitness, and maintain a high level of activity.

Thank You, Parents!

Thank you to all of the parents who volunteered for field day. Both days were very successful and we are very fortunate that the weather cooperated. It is nice to know that we have the support of parents whenever we take on a big project. All the students had fun and we could not have done it without the help of our awesome parents!

Physical Fitness Testing

We recently completed physical fitness testing for all grade levels. We will be moving on to ball handling skills and rhythms. Stayed tuned for a surprise at the end of our rhythms unit!

6th Graders Vs. the Staff Annual Basketball Game

The staff and students are gearing up to square off again in another epic battle. The game is our concluding event to our ball-handling unit.

Blackboard Website

The Island Creek P.E. department now has a blackboard website. Please visit the website for all kinds of information including a syllabus, announcements, and more.
Bookwork Plantation Book Fair comes to Island Creek Elementary November 2-10, 2006 bringing wonderful books to our community. The book fair features traditional children’s favorites and new works by popular authors and illustrators. Parents and teachers will find plenty of items to interest them, too. When you visit the fair, look for the Classroom Wish List display to see how you can help build your child’s classroom library. For more contact Jill Woodall at 571-642-6319 or jill.woodall@fcps.edu.

Library Staff:
Jill Woodall, Librarian
Debi Poole, Library Asst.

UPCOMING EVENTS:
• Children’s Book Week
• Virginia Readers Choice
• Read Across America

Book Fair Hours

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*Student Holidays, book fair is open, remember to bring an adult!

6th Grade Book

The next meeting is November 16th at 7:30am in the library. This month we are reading “Double Identity” by Margaret Haddix. All sixth grade students are welcome to join us. New members are encouraged to attend!

Access the library catalog from home: http://libcat.fcps.edu/uhtbin/cgisirsi/x/0/3/57/49?user_id=429WEB
Use walks to learn about science

Sometimes the best way to learn about the world is just to enjoy it. Here are some fun walks you can take with your child to exercise and learn. Ask if she’d like to:

- **Stop, look and listen.** Walk 100 steps. Then stop for 30 seconds. Make a record of everything she sees and hears. Repeat.
- **Match leaves to trees.** Pick up a leaf and challenge your child to find a tree on which it could have grown. Then let her pick a leaf for you.
- **Look around.** Don’t always look straight ahead while walking. When it’s safe to do so, look down at the ground or above your head. What does she see? What do you see?
- **Ask questions.** Say what comes to mind about your surroundings. “Do all birds chirp?” “Why do leaves change color in the fall?” You don’t have to know the answers. You can look them up later.
- **Be silent.** Spend time talking with your child. Then simply listen to nature. What noises can you identify? Bugs? Animals? Wind rustling leaves?


Build your child’s sense of community

In the Lakota Sioux language, the word *tiospaye* means “the people with whom one lives.” Mary Pipher says children benefit from spending time with their families. She offers suggestions on how you can help:

- **Turn off appliances.** It’s hard for parents and children to connect if the TV or computer distracts them.
- **Relate to real people, not celebrities.** Let your child know that people nearby are willing to help.
- **Attend family reunions.** Show your child that he is part of an extended family.
- **Go outside.** This teaches kids that they are a part of something much larger than themselves.
- **Take action** to make your community a better place. Ask what you can do at your school.


---

**Solving school problems**

**Keep control of homework**

Most kids struggle with homework sometimes. Many problems can be addressed with tried-and-true homework strategies, such as:

- **Use a homework routine.** Your child should study in the same quiet place—at the same time—daily.
- **Monitor homework time.** Stay nearby to supervise, answer questions and compliment work.


**Building responsibility**

**Reduce stress before school**

Is dashing out the door at the last minute part of your child’s morning routine? Here are some ways to make getting ready for school easier:

- **Tape a folder** to the refrigerator door. Use it for school papers that need to be signed by parents. You check it at night and have your child check it in the morning.
- **Have your child** pack his backpack each evening and put it by the door.
- **Set the clocks** in your house five minutes fast. Before long, everyone may forget the clocks are “wrong” and be on time—or early!

**After school**

**Send your child on a word hunt**

Here’s a fun way to build language skills. Write down a word. Then have your child use its letters to make new words. (For example, the words tea and ate are in trace.) If your child can’t spell yet, have him hunt for letters.

---

How do teachers get children to behave?

Q: I wish I was better at getting my child to cooperate. How do teachers do it?

A: Teachers have lots of experience, and thankfully they’re willing to share their tips. Here are some recommendations from veteran elementary school teachers:

- **Provide meaningful activities.** Keep plenty of books, paper, crayons and toys within your child’s reach. Being busy and happy can prevent misbehavior.

- **Establish routines.** This helps your child remember what to do. For example, get dressed, brush teeth and eat breakfast before school.

- **Share your agenda.** Explain what's planned for the day or evening. “After homework, we'll go to the library. Then we'll have dinner with Grandpa.” This puts your child in the right mindset.

- **Make smooth transitions.** Don't expect your child to drop everything the minute you ask. Give a five- or 10-minute warning.

- **Use signals.** Touch your child on the shoulder to remind him to pay attention or settle down, for example.


---

**How did you do?** Each yes answer shows that reading is a family priority. For each no answer, try using that idea from the quiz.

1. **Do you have** reading rituals, such as reading every night before bed?
2. **Do you keep** books handy—around the house, in the car and even in a purse or backpack?
3. **Do you have** a family “library” where you keep favorite books to read again and again?
4. **Do you set** a good example by reading often and mentioning that you enjoy it?
5. **Do you plan** special reading events, such as a “reading dinner” or a “stay-up-late-read” night?

---

**Talk Back**

Parents: You can always make a child laugh by being a bad listener. Help your child with the next five questions.

1. **Have you heard of** mismatched parents?
2. **Do you agree** with people who say it’s all right to be a little cruel with your child?
3. **Do you** have strict rules for your child?
4. **Do you** have an “idea” of how your child is doing in school?
5. **Do you** have a child who is a “normal” child?

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**Interview** important people in history

Make history “come alive” for your child.

You can pretend to be a TV reporter, while she plays the role of a historical figure—perhaps someone she’s studying in school. Here’s the backstory:

- **Before** the “TV interview,” have her learn all she can about the person. She might read a biography, for example.
- **Then** ask questions your child is likely to answer, such as, “Mr. Lincoln, what do you think about slavery?”
- ** Afterwards**, tell your child how proud you are of her knowledge. Still curious? Do more research together!

Ayudando a los Niños a Aprender

Consejos que las Familias Pueden Usar para Ayudar a los Niños a Salir Mejor en la Escuela

NOVEMBER

Page 11

White Oaks Elementary School
Burke, Virginia

REFORZANDO EL APRENDIZAJE

Válgame de caminatas para aprender respecto a la ciencia

Algunas veces la mejor manera de aprender respecto al mundo es simplemente disfrutarlo. Aquí tiene algunas caminatas divertidas que puede hacer con su niño para ejercitarse y aprender. Pregúntele si le gustaría:

- Detenerse, mirar y escuchar. Caminen 100 pasos. Después deténganse durante 30 segundos. Haga un registro de todo lo que vea y escuche él. Vuelvan a hacerlo mismo.

- Cotejar las hojas con los árboles. Recoja una hoja y reté a su niño a que encuentre un árbol en la que ésta haya crecido. Después deje que su niño escoja una hoja para usted.

- Mirar por todos lados. No miren siempre al frente mientras caminan. Cuando sean seguro hacedo así, miren hacia abajo al terreno o hacia arriba de sus cabezas. ¿Qué ve él? ¿Qué ve usted?

- Hacer preguntas. Digan lo que se les ocurra respecto a su entorno. ¿Qué hay en los paisajes? ¿Por qué cambian de color las hojas en el otoño? No tienen que ser preguntas. Las pueden averiguar después.

- Estar callado. Pase tiempo hablando con su niño. Después simplemente escuchen el entorno. ¿Qué ruidos pueden identificar? ¿Sonidos? ¿Animales? ¿El viento haciendo susurros las hojas?


HACIENDO QUE EL TIEMPO RINDA

Desarrolle el sentido de comunidad de su niño

En el lenguaje Sioux Lakota, la palabra tiispaye significa, “la gente con quien uno vive.” Mary Pipher dice que los niños se benefician cuando pasan tiempo con sus familias. Ella nos hace sugerencias sobre cómo puede ayudar usted:

- Apagar los aparatos eléctricos. Es difícil para los padres y niños conectarse si la televisión o la computadora los distraen.

- Relacionarse con gente de verdad, no con celebridades. Hágale saber a su niño que hay gente cercana que está dispuesto a ayudar.

- Asistir a reuniones familiares. Muéstrelle a su niño que él es parte de una familia extensa.

- Salir al exterior. Esto les enseña a los niños que son una parte de algo mucho más grande que ellos mismos.

- Actuar para hacer su comunidad un mejor lugar. Pregúntele qué puede hacer en su escuela.


PROBLEMAS ESCOLARES

Supervise la tarea

La mayoría de los niños algunas veces pasan apuros con la tarea. Muchos problemas pueden encararse con estrategias de tarea probadas y auténticas, tales como:

- Valerse de una rutina de tarea. Su niño debe estudiar en el mismo lugar tranquilo—a la misma hora—diariamente.

- Monitorear la hora de la tarea. Permanezca cerca para supervisar, contestar preguntas y elogiar el trabajo.


RESPONSABILIDAD

Reduzca el estrés antes de ir a la escuela

¿Es salir corriendo al último momento parte de la rutina de la mañana de su niño? Aquí tiene algunas maneras de hacer más fácil que se prepare para la escuela:

- Pague una tapa da en la puerta del refrigerador. Utilicela para los papeles de la escuela que necesiten ser firmados por los padres. Usted la revisa en la noche y haga que su niño la revise en la mañana.

- Haga que su niño empague su mochila todas las tardes y que la ponga cerca de la puerta.

- Adelante cinco minutos los relojes de su casa. Al poco tiempo, todo el mundo puede olvidarse que los relojes están “mal” y llegar a tiempo—o temprano!

Mande a su niño a buscar palabras

Aqui tiene una manera divertida de desarrollar destrezas de lenguaje. Escribe una palabra. Después haga que su niño use las letras para formar palabras nuevas. (Por ejemplo, las palabras uno y sal están en desayuno.) Si su niño no puede deletrear todavía, haga que busque las letras.

¿Cómo logran los maestros que los niños se porten bien?

P: ¿Ojalá que yo fuera mejor para hacer que mi niño coopere. ¿Cómo lo hacen los maestros?
R: Los maestros tienen mucha experiencia, y afortunadamente están dispuestos a compartir sus consejos. Aquí tiene algunas recomendaciones de maestros veteranos de la escuela primaria:

- **Facilita actividades significativas.** Conserve muchos libros, papel, crayones y juguetes al alcance de su niño. Estar ocupado y contento puede evitar el mal comportamiento.
- **Establece rutinas.** Esto ayuda a su niño a recordar qué hacer. Por ejemplo, vestirse, cepillarse los dientes y desayunar antes de irse a la escuela.
- **Comparta su agenda.** Explíquelo lo que está planeado para el día o la tarde. “Después de la tarea, iremos a la biblioteca. Luego comeremos con el Abuelo.” Esto pone a su niño en el modo correcto de pensar.
- **Haga que las transiciones se realicen sin problemas.** No espere que su niño deje todo el instante que usted se lo pide. Déle un aviso con una anticipación de cinco a 10 minutos.
- **Use señales.** Toque a su niño en el hombro para recordarle que preste atención para que se calme, por ejemplo.


**CUESTIONARIO PARA PADRES**

¿Es la lectura parte de la rutina familiar?

Leer es muy importante para dejarlo al azar. Necesita ser un hábito. Conteste las siguientes preguntas con sí o no para ver si su familia está leyendo con regularidad.

1.  ¿Tiene rituales de lectura, tales como leer todas las noches antes de acostarse?
2.  ¿Conserva libros a mano—en la casa, en el auto o incluso en una bolsa de mano o mochila?
3.  ¿Tiene una “biblioteca” familiar donde guarda los libros favoritos para leerlos una y otra vez?
4.  ¿Da un buen ejemplo leyendo a menudo y diciendo que lo disfruta?
5.  ¿Planea eventos de lectura especial, tales como una “cena de lectura” o una noche de “quedarse levantados hasta tarde y leer?”

¿Cómo le fue? Cada respuesta de sí muestra que leer es una prioridad familiar. Para cada respuesta de no, pruebe usar esa idea del cuestionario.

**Planifique para las reuniones de padres**

¿Tiene una reunión próxima de padre y maestros? Asegúrese de planificar con antelación. Enlista las preguntas o comentarios que quiere hacer. De esta manera, no regresará a la casa deseando haberle preguntado sobre un asunto clave. Si olvida preguntar algo, no dude en ponerse en contacto con el maestro después.

**Los errores pueden enseñar lecciones importantes**

Su niño estresa su tarea con frustración. Habrá cometido otro error y está alborotado. Si está demasiado centrado en la perfección, asegúrese de que esté bien cometer errores. “¿Todo el mundo los comete?” Digale, “¿Te queme paseo lo que pase?”

**‘Entrevístalo’ a personas importantes de la historia**

Haga que la historia “cobre vida” para su niño. Usted puede fingir ser un reportero de televisión, al mismo tiempo que él juega su papel de algún personaje de la historia—quizás alguien que esté estudiando en la escuela. Aquí tiene cómo:

- **Antes de la “entrevista de televisión,”** haga que aprenda todo lo que pueda acerca de la persona. Podría leer una biografía, por ejemplo.
- **Después haga preguntas que probablemente pueda contestar su niño, como, “Sr. Lincoln, ¿qué piensa de la esclavitud?”**
- **Después, digale a su niño cuán orgulloso está de sus conocimientos. ¡Continúa siendo curioso! ¡Hagan más investigación juntos!”


**Ayudando a los Niños a Aprender**

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