

# IN THE LOOP

with LINK

Updates, Observations & Anecdotes for Parents  
from Julianne Allen,  
Family & Community LINK Coordinator



## WORD(s) of the MONTH

### KINSHIP

### CAREGIVER/CAREGIVING

Kinship caregivers are relatives  
who provide care for minor  
children

Ex) Grandfamilies are one of the forms  
of **kinship caregiving**, where biological  
grand or great-grandparents provide  
for the care of their grandchildren.



**1 8 5 , 4 6 9**

**185,469**  
children in the state of Ohio  
live with their grandparents.\*

## GRANDFAMILIES save the day!

If you are a grandfamily raising your grandchild(ren), or you know someone who fills this role and needs support, please do not hesitate to reach out to your grandchild's school. If you don't know where to begin, start by calling or e-mailing your grandchild's building principal. Contact information is available on our school website [HERE](#). Check out the link to the right for a new resource for grandfamilies.

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE!**

\*Source: The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center

### PARENT/FAMILY/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES & IMPORTANT DATES\*

- 2/1 ECC- Kindergarten Registration Online (started 1/29-ongoing)
- 2/3 OFHS- Virtual PSAT Review Night- 7:00 PM
- 2/11 OECPTA Meeting- 8:30 PM
- 2/11 OFHS- 8th Grade (incoming Freshman) Parent Night- 7:00 PM
- 2/15 President's Day- NO SCHOOL
- 2/19 OFIS PTA Meeting- 8:00 AM
- 2/22 OFMS PTA & OFHS PTA Combined Meeting- 7:00 PM
- 2/23 Falls-Lenox/ECC PTA- 7:00 PM

\*Most events are now virtual. Contact your building principal or visit [www.ofcs.net](http://www.ofcs.net) for details.

## GrandUnderstandings

The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center has developed resources to support Grandfamilies. Check out their [website](#) to find the "GrandUnderstandings" Resource Hub.





## Life is Like a Box of Chocolates...and so are your kids by Julianne Allen, Family & Community LINK Coordinator



I'm not a Forrest Gump super-fan (a Gumper?) but even I know that the title of this story is a twist on the classic line from the movie. Forrest actually says "Life WAS like a box of chocolates" when recalling what his mama used to always say. But you get the idea: in life, you never know what you're gonna get. I use this space each month to relay my thoughts and feelings about children and family life. Since February is the month when we are likely to encounter a box of chocolates I figured I could get away with this analogy. And the more I can type the word "chocolate" the better I feel.

Back to that box of chocolates...in it, you've got the sweet, the crunchy, the chewy, the salty, the bittersweet, and the just plain yucky (mystery fruity-filled chocolate, I'm talking to YOU.) As in life, you often don't know what you've gotten yourself into until you take a bite. And by then it is too late. When raising kids- whether as a biological parent, a kinship-caregiver (see page 1!), an adoptive, foster, or step-parent- you never know what you're gonna get. Like that chocolate, some days (years?) are better than others.

As a new parent, you may discover that all of your best-laid plans to be a perfect new mom or dad fly out the window. Often you're trudging zombie-like through your day because the new addition is a night owl. You do your best not to mess up too badly, but there were so many things people conveniently left out when they gushed about how great parenthood is! Every day is an adventure into the unknown with a new baby. Adventures can be fun! Adventures can also be terrifying! (Jurassic Park comes to mind.) When they hand you a baby you don't get to interview it to find out if you'll like this model. You don't know what you're gonna get, but you already know you're gonna love that baby anyway.

As a parent of young children, you quickly learn that things may not be what they seem. One second your perfect angel is napping quietly in their room and the next you are following a trail of bright pink lipstick on your carpet and walls only to find that your perfect angel has grown a couple of horns AND eaten the rest of the bright pink lipstick. Unlike the box of chocolates, you can't pick another kid just because yours was rotten. Hopefully, your perfect angel will find their halo (it might be a little bent) and just like a good piece of chocolate, they are perfectly sweet once again. Sigh.

As for raising tweens and teens, well, there have been entire years where I wondered what I had done to deserve my fate. It was like day after day of accidentally eating unsweetened baking chocolate. It's still chocolate, so you know you're supposed to love it, but it tastes awful and you want to toss it out. Can you put your teenagers on the curb on bulk pick-up week? Of course not, silly! (I've inquired.) So you hold out hope that maybe tomorrow will be a sweeter day. Maybe not. Maybe you'll find yourself hiding in your closet eating old Halloween candy to escape the bad moods and attitudes. At least with the Halloween candy, you know what you're getting.

See...life with kids really IS like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get. All you can do is take the yucky-orange-cream-filled days with the delicious salted caramel ones, and love them all the same. And keep a stash of old Halloween candy nearby. Just in case.



# LINK NOTES!

# THANK YOU



for attending the  
**E-ASSEMBLY  
FOR PARENTS**

## ICYMI

### IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

All resources from the January E-Assembly for Parents: **Pandemic Pressure**, including a recording of the presentation, are available **HERE**.

### TAKE NOTE!

The next E-Assembly Date and Topic will be announced **SOON!** In the mean time, catch up on what you missed!



"In The LOOP with LINK" is published periodically throughout the year for parents and caregivers in the Olmsted Falls School District. Have an idea for something you'd like to read about in future issues? E-mail your questions, comments, and suggestions to [OFCSLINK@ofcs.net](mailto:OFCSLINK@ofcs.net). Thanks for reading!

-Julianne Allen,  
OFCS Family & Community LINK  
Coordinator

### WHAT IS LINK?

LINK is an acronym for Learn, Inspire, Nurture, Know. The LINK Program is a district-wide family-community engagement resource. The goal of the program is to connect the Olmsted Falls School District with parents and families, to encourage two-way communication, and to help parents support their children's learning at home.

