
Art Beat

St. Pete Arts Alliance

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St. Petersburg Arts Alliance

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Behind Baby Talk

Why reading to infants really matters.

Noted education expert James McHale details the real reason why reading to newborns, infants, and toddlers is so crucial. Come hear this valuable information and participate in the discussion.

Monday, March 9
Presentation begins at 6 p.m.
Childs Park YMCA
691 43rd Street South, St. Petersburg

Free admission but you must
RSVP to intern@stpeteartsalliance.org

Junior League of St. Petersburg volunteers
will read to your children while you attend the presentation.



Part of SunLit Festival
Fourteen literary
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Why Reading to Infants really Matters

Presented by SunLit Festival

“**Behind Baby Talk: Why Reading to Infants Really Matters**” will be presented by Dr. James McHale on Monday, March 9 at 6 p.m. in the Childs Park YMCA, 691 43rd Street South, St. Petersburg. Presented by PNC Bank. Admission is free. The Junior League of St. Petersburg volunteers will read to children while parents attend the presentation.

Dr. James McHale is Director of the USF St. Petersburg Family Study Center and Past President of the Florida Association for Infant Mental Health. Dr. McHale details why reading to newborns, infants, and toddlers is so crucial. The presentation helps distinguish “socio-emotional readiness” from “cognitive readiness,” and reflects on the attitudes and practices central to any effective undertaking seeking to support families and children’s success from the earliest moments of life.

By age 3, children from economically advantaged families on average already know

1,100 words, while economically disadvantaged children know fewer than half as many – an average of 500 words. That gap only continues to grow as children age and enter formal schooling. Further, estimates are that up to 85% of brain development has been completed by the time children are 3 years of age.

“As the largest school-age childcare provider in St. Petersburg, we know that early learning fosters long term success, both academically and socially,” said David Jezek, Y President and CEO. “The YMCA of Greater St. Petersburg has established two local preschool academies providing quality, holistic education while also offering wraparound services to our preschool families. “

Behind Baby Talk is sponsored by PNC Bank. PNC’s Grow Up Great initiatives strengthen programming at early education centers serving at-risk children by providing professional development for teachers, enhancing children’s classroom experience and further engaging parents in their children’s learning.

“Vocabulary is the cornerstone of a child’s learning, but underserved children are far behind their peers in learning new words,” said Joe Meterchick, PNC Bank regional president for Florida West. “By engaging families, educators and community partners to narrow the vocabulary gap for underserved children in St. Pete, we can build on the early education progress PNC Grow Up Great has supported here.”

The SunLit Festival brings together various literary organizations and arts disciplines to celebrate literature, reading, and writing, March 7-14. The SunLit Festival is produced by the St. Petersburg Arts Alliance with our program partners. For more information please visit [facebook.com/SunLitFestival](https://www.facebook.com/SunLitFestival) and sunlitfestival.org. To attend Behind Baby Talk, please email intern@stpeteartsalliance.org.



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