

# Take

# 15!

**For the Family**



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

Achievement Matters Most

# Dear Reader,

Welcome to **Family Connections**, a publication that highlights a new statewide program designed to encourage Maryland families to dedicate at least 15 minutes each day to doing everyday activities, like eating together or going to the library, and turning those moments into learning opportunities. The goals of our program – Take 15 for the Family...Building a Lifetime of Learning – are to build awareness among parents that involvement in their children’s education is critical and to provide resources that make this involvement easy and fun. We hope that the tips, activities, and other resources found in **Family Connections** do just that.

Public libraries are a vital family resource where families can “take 15” and also learn about other activities that can enhance children’s lives. This publication is for you. Please feel free to share it with friends, reprint articles, or talk with your librarian about other ways the library can help your family to “take 15.”

*Just a little bit of time makes a big difference in the life of a child!*

Sincerely,

*Nancy S. Grasmick*  
Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools



This is a joint publication of the Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of School and Student Services, Division of Library Development and Services, and Communications & Strategic Planning Office for Take 15 for the Family...Building a Lifetime of Learning. The publication was made possible through The Baltimore Sun and federal grants.

**Maryland State Department of Education**  
**200 West Baltimore Street**  
**Baltimore, MD 21201**  
**410-767-0600 or 888-246-0016 (TOLL-FREE Public Information Line)**  
**410-333-2275 (Fax)**  
**410-333-3045 (TTY/TDD)**

- [www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org)**
- for press releases, program information, and more
- [www.marylandpublicschools.org/family\\_literacy/take15.htm](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/family_literacy/take15.htm)**
- for Take 15 for the Family tips, activities, links to Maryland Public Libraries, and more
- [www.mdk12.org](http://www.mdk12.org)**
- for information on instruction, school improvement teams, and more
- [www.msp.msde.state.md.us](http://www.msp.msde.state.md.us)**
- for school performance data

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# Assignment: Media Literacy

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**A**ssignment: Media Literacy is a resource being used at schools throughout the state to help students in elementary, middle, and high school build critical thinking and communication skills. Media literacy is a set of skills that enables students to access, analyze, and critically evaluate all forms of media messages from printed texts to television, film, video, computer games and the Internet.

Once equipped with these critical thinking skills, young people can apply them to the media messages they encounter in any setting.

Students, parents, and teachers can view samples of student work and access lesson plans by logging on to [www.marylandpublicschools.org/assignment\\_media\\_lit/home.html](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/assignment_media_lit/home.html). Try these activities at home as a family to build critical thinking skills about media and technology:

## **Watch While They Surf** *(Middle and High)*

Watch as your son or daughter takes you on a “virtual tour” of his or her favorite Web sites. Ask why he or she likes these special sites or what is the best part about the Internet?



## **Use the Mute** *(Elementary and Middle)*

While you’re watching TV together, use the mute button on the remote control and ask, “What do you think is going to happen next?” Encourage your child to make predictions. This is a good way to check on his or her understanding of what he or she is seeing and hearing.

## **Share Your Emotional Responses** *(High)*

As you watch, talk about the feelings you experience; share your enjoyment and your displeasure so your son or daughter can understand how you interpret messages.

## **Try a Media Fast** *(Elementary, Middle, High)*

For one day, use no media or technology in your home: no car radio, no Internet, no TV, no books or magazines. What do you notice about the role of these media in your family’s life?

## **Play “Spot the Target Audience”** *(Elementary, Middle, High)*

As you watch TV, see if family members can identify the target audience for a favorite TV show or a commercial. Depending on your child’s age, help him or her recognize that some media messages are for adults and others are designed for young people.



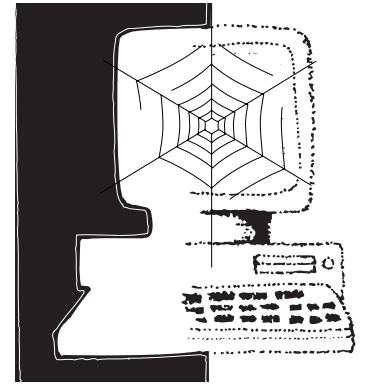
## **Use the TV Guide** *(Elementary, Middle, High)*

Use the TV guide to read the program descriptions. Try to pick out a show that will appeal to all family members and watch it together.

To learn more about Assignment: Media Literacy, contact Lynn R. Widdowson, Staff Specialist, Maryland State Department of Education, at 410-767-0277 or [lwiddowson@msde.state.md.us](mailto:lwiddowson@msde.state.md.us).

# Family Book Clubs & Web Programs

In addition to book clubs, libraries often offer **FREE** computer classes, and some are for the whole family.



Family programs have helped families search the Web together for vacation spots, get family cooking ideas, and learn more about their own heritage.

**M**any public libraries offer book clubs. Did you know that some library branches offer Mother/Daughter Book Clubs or Parent Child/Parent Teen Book Clubs? These clubs are a time for family connections. Families can share picture books with toddlers; grandparents and grandchildren can share old favorites and create new memories; and parents and teens can explore topics and issues that are important to them. Remember, all you need is two or more people to make up a “club.”

The purpose of these groups is to encourage reading and to have fun. But a reading club isn’t something you can do only in a library. With time at a premium, you may need to be a little creative. Try listening to a book on tape or CD during your car travel or as a family in the evening. Then talk about it.

To find out about book clubs or other programs offered by your public library, contact your local library (*phone numbers and Web sites are printed on page 11*). More and more opportunities are available to participate in online book discussions, too.



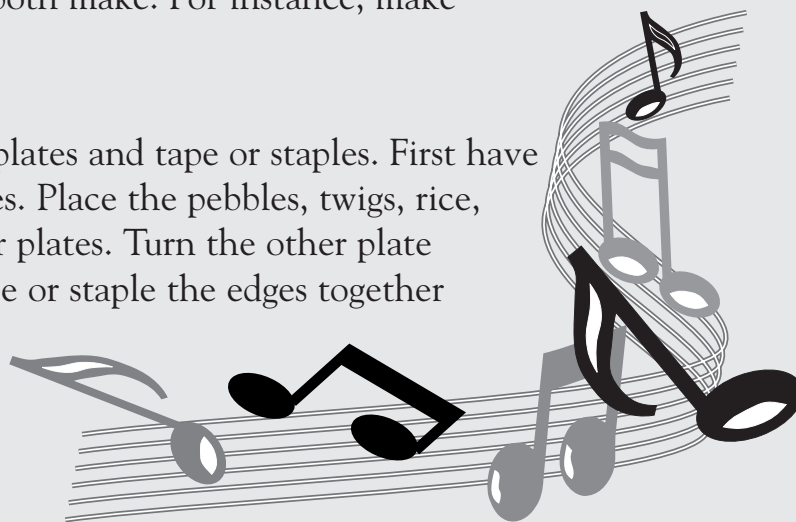
# Musical Connections

Music can be fun for children and adults of all ages. But did you know it could also be a learning experience? Singing rhyming songs and chants helps young children, especially those from ages 3 to 5, learn the patterns of language. The actual rhymes help children focus on the sounds within the words. Both help children get ready to read.

**Here's a simple activity that you can do at home with the whole family, even getting the older kids involved.**

The maraca is a rhythm instrument. You can use household items to make one. Place pebbles, twigs, rice, uncooked beans, or even pasta in an empty, clear container. Try a dishwashing liquid bottle or milk/juice container. Glue or tape the lid on for safety. Make another maraca using a different material and compare the sounds that they both make. For instance, make one with rice and one with pasta.

You can do the same thing using two paper plates and tape or staples. First have your child decorate the bottom of both plates. Place the pebbles, twigs, rice, uncooked beans or pasta on one of the paper plates. Turn the other plate upside down and on top of the first one. Tape or staple the edges together carefully. Then *shake, shake, shake!*



Strike wooden spoons against each other or on upside down bowls, plastic containers, or pots. How many different sounds can you make?

Use these instruments to make up rhymes as you and your family rap, rhyme, and sing together. For younger children, try “Hey Diddle, Diddle” and “Humpty Dumpty.” Be creative and make up your own rap, rhyme, or song.



Some information generously provided by “Between the Lions presents...Talking, Singing, Rhyming” by WGBH Educational Programming and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI USA).

# School Assignment Connections

**“Schools and public libraries have long been two important cornerstones of our local communities,” said State Superintendent of Schools Nancy S. Grasmick. “Offering online homework assistance along with traditional reference resources and services at no cost to families through public libraries not only provides all Maryland students with increased opportunities but also reinforces the critical partnership between our schools and libraries.”**

**Are you looking for ways to transform homework into a time for parent/child conversation and learning by all? Maryland’s public librarians have developed and offer homework support for students, parents, and educators. In fact, the most frequently asked questions by school-age visitors during the school year, whether in-person, by phone, or over the Web, are about school assignments.**

**Whether you need to know the capital of Alaska, create a science fair project or write a paper on the Pharaohs, QUEST for Homework Success will fit the bill. QUEST is a mnemonic device created by Maryland librarians to help the memory. It is used across the country to help students from kindergarten through high school complete homework assignments.**

**Take the...**



# QUEST

## CHALLENGE

**Take  
15**



## Worksheet

### **Q** – Question

I need to find this information:

These important words are part of my assignment:

### **U** – Understand

This is what my assignment is about \_\_\_\_\_

I have my assignment sheet: Yes/No

My assignment is due on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **E** – Envision

I will present my project as a: (book report, speech, poster, etc.)

### **S** – Strategize

I need to take these supplies to the library: (assignment sheet paper, pencil, library card, textbook, money).

I will go to these sources for information: (encyclopedia, books, Internet, databases, librarian).

### **T** – Target

I need to include the following things in my project to earn that “A”:

Did I do everything I need to do? \_\_\_\_\_

You can also log on to the Baltimore County Public Library’s Web site at [www.bcplonline.org/kidspage/quest/kids\\_quest.html](http://www.bcplonline.org/kidspage/quest/kids_quest.html) to print a copy of the QUEST Worksheet.

# Activities

# Calendar



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Help your child send e-mails to friends and relatives. This is a great way to motivate him or her to write. Remember, your local public library provides free access to computers!		Bring a book along to read when you ride the bus together, wait in line at the store, or go to the doctor’s office. Reading is a great way to keep children occupied and happy when you’re waiting.			Talk about gender stereotypes in society and encourage your child to think critically about how girls and women are portrayed.	
Hug your family today!	Play an age-appropriate board game with your child. Make sure you explain and follow the rules.		Teens are often more interested in their schoolwork if they can see the link to the real world. Is he or she learning a foreign language? Rent a movie (with sub-titles) in that language and watch it together.			Take your child to a local museum.
Did you ask your child about school today?	Talk to your teen about an embarrassing moment you had when you were a teen.		Let your child teach you something—a magic trick, how to kick a soccer ball, etc.		Check the movie ads and set a date to see a movie with your teen.	
Find time for one-on-one play with your child. Take advantage of different schedules. Play with one child while the other naps or goes to school.		When your kids ask questions you can’t answer, write them down. The next time you visit the library, choose one question and see if you both can find out the answer.			What’s the best toy to a baby? It may be free. Try pots and pans with lids. Empty boxes. Water and cups to fill and dump out.	
Talk about fire safety. Discuss an escape route and have a mock fire drill.	Have your child help create a grocery list.	Household jobs can sharpen math skills. Before or after washing laundry, have your youngster count the number of socks or towels.		Draw a picture of each other.	Get involved in community service activities that you and your child can do together.	

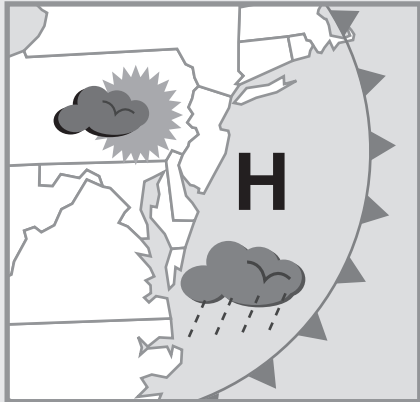


# Parents & Newspapers

*The newspaper is a wonderful resource to keep families reading and interacting.*

## Weather Smarts

*Look at the weather map.*



Find 3 facts that might help someone planning to rent a boat to go fishing today.

Find 3 facts that might help a pilot flying to Denver, Los Angeles, then Tokyo.

What are the record temperatures in Baltimore?

How can you tell if we are still experiencing drought conditions?

Pretend you are a weather forecaster. Tell today's and tomorrow's weather.

*Beautiful,*  
**Kind** *Intelligent,*  
*Silly, Sweet,* **Tall**

Skim through a newspaper to find 3 positive adjectives describing your child or parent. Circle them. Share how and why you made your decisions.

## Go Shopping...

For birthday gifts, furniture, food for a picnic (under \$10), for new cars, used cars, pets, etc.

## Look for Jobs...

Circle abbreviations in the Help Wanted Ads. Write a help wanted ad for your dream job.

## A Comic a Day...!



Find your favorite comic for the day. Tell why it is your favorite.

Find a comic that another family member will enjoy.

Write a title for your favorite comic.

Cut the frames and ask

children to sequence them.

White out the bubbles and create new dialogue for the characters.

Make predictions.

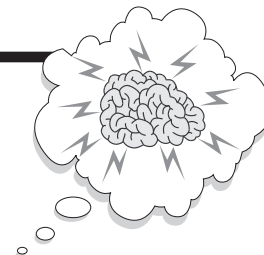
## Go Hunting...

For nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, conjunctions, punctuation marks, etc.

## Stump the Mom

(Dad, Grandmom, Brother, Babysitter...)

**Look for words they won't be able to spell or know the meaning of or both. Have a family spelling bee or definition contest.**



# resourceDirectory

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**T**he following organizations can help you learn more about student achievement and school improvement. You may access the various Web sites directly or through SAILOR, Maryland's free Internet service, at one of more than 200 local public libraries or ask your librarian for assistance.

## **Maryland State Department of Education**

200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Public Information Line:  
410-767-0600 or 888-246-0016  
410-333-2275 (FAX)  
410-333-3045 (TTY/TDD)  
[www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org)

## **Maryland Higher Education Commission**

839 Bestgate Road, Suite 400  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-260-4500 or 1-800-974-0203  
for general information  
410-260-4565 or 1-800-974-1024  
for financial assistance information  
410-260-3200 (FAX)  
800-735-2258 (TTY)  
[www.mhec.state.md.us](http://www.mhec.state.md.us)

## **Maryland PTA**

5 Central Avenue  
Glen Burnie, MD 21061  
410-760-6221  
410-760-6344 (FAX)  
[www.mdpta.org](http://www.mdpta.org)

## **National Coalition**

### **for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPiE)**

3929 Old Lee Highway, Suite 91-A  
Fairfax, VA 22030-2401  
703-359-8973  
703-359-0972 (FAX)  
[www.ncpie.org](http://www.ncpie.org)

## **National Network**

### **of Partnership Schools**

3003 N. Charles Street  
Suite 200  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
410-516-8800  
410-516-8890 (FAX)  
[www.partnershipschools.org](http://www.partnershipschools.org)

## **The Family Works**

610 East Diamond Avenue  
Suite 100  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877  
301-840-3214  
1-877-WE-RFMLY  
301-840-8933 (FAX)  
[www.thefamilyworks.org](http://www.thefamilyworks.org)

## **U.S. Department of Education**

400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
1-800-USA-LEARN  
202-401-0689 (FAX)  
1-800-437-0833 (TTY/TDD)  
[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

for general information

[www.nochildrenleftbehind.org](http://www.nochildrenleftbehind.org)

for information on the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

# Public Libraries

in

# Maryland



- Allegany County Library -  
301-777-1200; <http://lib.allconet.org>
- Anne Arundel County Public Library  
410-222-7371; <http://www.aacpl.net>
- Enoch Pratt Free Library (Baltimore City)  
410-396-5402  
<http://www.pratt.lib.md.us>
- Baltimore County Public Library  
410-887-6166 <http://www.bcplonline.org>
- Calvert County Library  
410-535-0291  
<http://www.somd.lib.md.us/CALV/Libraries>
- Caroline County Public Library  
410-479-1343; <http://www.caro.lib.md.us/library>
- Carroll County Public Library  
410-386-4490; <http://www.library.carr.org>
- Cecil County Public Library  
410-996-5600; <http://www.ebranch.cecil.lib.md.us>
- Charles County Public Library  
301-645-2864; <http://www.ccplonline.org>
- Dorchester County Public Library  
410-228-7331; <http://www.dorchesterlibrary.org>
- Eastern Shore Regional Library, Inc.  
<http://www.esrl.lib.md.us>
- Frederick County Public Library  
301-694-1630; <http://www.fcpl.org>
- Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County  
301-334-3996; <http://www.relib.net>
- Harford County Public Library  
410-638-3151; <http://www.harf.lib.md.us>
- Howard County Library  
410-313-7800; <http://www.howa.lib.md.us>
- Kent County Public Library  
410-778-3636; <http://www.kent.lib.md.us>
- Montgomery County Public Library  
240-777-0005; <http://www.montgomerylibrary.org>
- Prince George's County Memorial Library  
301-699-3500; <http://www.prge.lib.md.us>
- Queen Anne's County Free Library  
410-758-0980; <http://www.quan.lib.md.us>
- St. Mary's County Memorial Library  
301-475-2846; <http://www.stmalib.org>
- Somerset County Library  
410-651-0852; <http://www.stmalib.org>
- Southern Maryland Regional Library Inc.  
<http://access-somd.org>
- Talbot County Free Library  
410-822-1626; <http://www.talb.lib.md.us>
- Washington County Free Library  
301-739-3250; <http://pilot.wash.lib.md.us/wcfl>
- Western Maryland Public Libraries  
<http://www.wmpl.net>
- Wicomico County Free Library  
410-749-5171; <http://www.co.wicomico.md.us/library>
- Worcester County Library  
410-632-2600  
<http://www.worc.lib.md.us/library/home.html>
- Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped  
410-230-2424

Log on to:

# Take 15 for the Family

## Web Site

Parents can learn new and interesting ways to help their children learn by accessing the Maryland State Department of Education's new Take 15 for the Family Web site at [marylandpublicschools.org](http://marylandpublicschools.org). Click on the Take 15 for the Family icon in the lower left

corner or go directly to: [marylandpublicschools.org/family\\_literacy/take15.htm](http://marylandpublicschools.org/family_literacy/take15.htm)

### Parent Tips

Content is provided by the Parent Institute and updated daily. It includes information and resources, such as:

- \_ Today's Tip for Parents
- \_ Idea of the Day
- \_ Weekly Quiz
- \_ Timely Topics
- \_ Ask the Experts
- \_ School Success Library

### Monthly Calendar of Activities

Activities Ideas for how to Take 15 for the Family each day of the month are highlighted.

### Activities and Tip Sheets

This section provides helpful hints and activities from how to use the public library to helping your teen make the jump from middle to high school. Content is updated on an ongoing basis and will include downloadable documents in multiple languages.

### What's New/News

Highlights will include new announcements, press releases, newsletters, updates on activities happening around the state, and more.

### Family Literacy Links

Do you want more information? Here you'll find links to organizations, companies, and other helpful resources for your family.

For more information about Take 15 for the Family, contact MSDE's Public Information Line at 410-767-0600 or 888-246-0016.