

July 2025



Check out this free early development resource! Lantern is the new name for Bright by Text. It is a free text messaging platform that supports parents and caregivers of children from prenatal to age 11 to make the most of everyday interactions.

The service uses texts to engage parents and caregivers. It delivers important tips, activities, and resources directly to their mobile device.

Simply text **SCETV** to **274448** to start receiving messages that will help you light the way in your child's learning journey.

For more information and to sign up for the service, visit **MyLantern.org**.

Simple Sensory Play: Fun & Learning for Growing Minds

Sensory play helps young children learn through touch, smell, sound, sight, and movement. Activities such as playing with water, sand, playdough, or bubbles support brain development. They also build fine motor skills. Sensory play can help children feel calm and focused. You don't need fancy toys—use everyday items like rice, scarves, or pots and pans. Let your child explore at their own pace. Join in, talk about what they're doing, and enjoy the moment. Sensory play is fun, easy, and important for growing minds and bodies!

- Provided by Early Learning Department:
Mankato Area Public Schools

Parenting Isn't Perfect — And That's Okay

Every parent or caregiver wants to do their best. That can feel like a lot of pressure! But the truth is—you don't have to be perfect. Just being *good enough* is okay.

As children grow and learn, parents and caregivers are learning too. You're learning how to connect with your child, how to teach them, how to stay calm, and how to help them manage their big feelings. It's a journey.

Here are two simple tips to help along the way:

1. Follow Your Child's Needs

It's not always easy to know what your child needs. But with time, practice, and paying attention, it gets easier. You may not know everything—and that's okay! Children need many things: food, rest, love, hugs, play, learning, health care, and time with others. Try your best. That's enough.

2. Think About Your Own Childhood

Sometimes it helps to remember your own childhood. What made you feel happy or safe? What was hard? These memories can help you understand how you parent today. They can show you what to keep and what to change.

Parenting isn't about being perfect. It's about trying, learning, and loving your child the best you can.

Over the next few months, take time to notice your child. Watch them play. Hug them. Listen. Go outside together. Have fun—and don't forget to take care of yourself. You're doing a great job.

COMMUNITY EVENTS



Bookmobile: The North Mankato Taylor Library Bookmobile makes weekly stops at the **Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota** on Wednesday afternoons from 2–3 PM. Join us for story time on the Lauri Kuch Memorial Stage each week!

Baby and Toddler Play: Fridays in August 10:30–11 AM at **Blue Earth County Library, Mankato**. Children ages 0-3. Self-guided toddler social hour. Simple activities available for your little one to explore with other early learners. **FREE**.

Creative Play Place: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 9–11 AM. Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5–7 PM at **St. Peter Community Center**. A space for families and their children to play and connect. Opportunities include: movement and large motor activities, development of fine motor skills, and creative activities. **FREE**.

Newborn Discovery: Wednesdays, 9–10:30 AM at **Center for Learning, Mankato**. An inclusive and informative class designed specifically for newborns aged 0–12 weeks and their parents or caregivers. Call ahead for free drop in child care for older siblings. **FREE**.

Read & Play: Mondays and Tuesdays, 10 AM at **North Mankato Taylor Library**. Children ages 1–5 and their parents/guardians are welcome for educational play, games, stories, crafts, and more! No registration required. **FREE**.

Wading Pool: Monday - Sunday, 12–7 PM at **Roy T. Lindenberg Memorial Outdoor Swimming Pool, St. Peter**. Ages 6 and under. Lifeguard on site. Children must be accompanied by an adult or responsible supervisor (18 years or older). Floatable and small toys are allowed. **FREE**.

8/1, 8/8: Baby and Toddler Play: Friday, Aug. 1 & 8, 10:30–11:30 AM at **Blue Earth County Library, Mankato**. Children ages 0–3. Self-guided toddler social hour. Simple activities available for your little one to explore with other early learners. **FREE**.

8/2: Fire Safety Education Day: Saturday, Aug. 2, 9 AM–2 PM. **Children's Museum of Southern Minnesota**. Emergency vehicles, view presentations inside the Museum and out, giveaways, photo opportunities with Smokey the Bear and much more! **FREE**.

8/1, 8/5, 8/15: Storytime at the Pool: Aug. 1, 5 & 15 at 9:30 AM at **North Mankato Swim Facility**. Children ages 1–5 and their parents/guardians are invited outside the swim facility for stories and more! No registration required. **FREE**.

8/5, 8/12, 8/19, & 8/26: Romp and Rhyme Story Time: Tuesdays, 10–10:30 AM at **Le Center Library**. From puppets to pumping music, from bubble machines to banging bands, these are not your average story times. The Library uses movement, STEAM activities, curiosity, imaginative play, and active learning to keep kids engaged. **FREE**.

8/9: Breakfast on the Farm: Saturday, Aug. 9, 7–11:30 AM. **Dauk Family Farm, 62536 Lake View Rd, Madison Lake**. Come and enjoy seeing farm animals, climbing in farm equipment, doing a scavenger hunt, and of course eating a delicious pancake breakfast. Hosted by Le Sueur & Blue Earth County Farm Bureau. Fun for all ages. **FREE**.

9/6: 11th Annual United Way Human Foosball Tournament & Block Party: Saturday, Sept. 6, 12–5 PM. **500 Block of South Front St, Mankato**. Watch as teams compete on four life-size foosball courts! **FREE for spectators**.

Have a free/affordable event for children or families in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet or Waseca counties? Send to MankatoUW@mankatounitedway.org!