



YS NEWS



Focus: Tween Scene, *part 1*

This feature will focus on learning and reading development for different age groups, beginning with birth to five and eventually going through age 19.

This first article in the Tween Scene series—research on learning and reading development for children ages 10–12 and how libraries can best serve them and their parents—will discuss brain and learning development during the tween years.

Brain Development in the Tween Years

The tween years are awkward or uncomfortable for many. Developing bodies, increased independence and responsibility, peer pressure, and uncertain but curious romantic feelings can be exciting, confusing, and challenging. Throw in poverty, learning disabilities, physical disabilities, and a host of other challenges facing many preteens, and the tween years can be very challenging.

Pre-adolescent brains are changing rapidly too, opening pathways that allow for both great potential and risks, as we'll explore in this article.

"It's important to be involved with the life of young preteens and to set firm limits for them, while fostering independence, which is challenging."

-Barbara Brownell

Prefrontal Cortex Growth

The prefrontal cortex sits just behind the forehead. This area is like the brain's administrator as it controls organization, planning, focusing, working memory, taming impulses, foreseeing and weighing the consequences of behavior, and modulating emotions. Scientists have found that the [prefrontal cortex grows again](#) just before puberty, after retaining a relatively stable size since early childhood. Similar to that initial growth spurt, in preteen years (generally age 11 in girls, 12 in boys), the brain produces an overabundance of brain cells (neurons) and connections between brain cells (synapses), and then trims them back during early–mid adolescence, much like pruning a tree to cut back weak branches to let others thrive. Connections that are unused get eliminated, while those that preteens do use are kept.

This pruning improves basic cognitive abilities, logical reasoning, problem solving, and abstract thinking. It also means

Welcome to a new year of YS News!

This newsletter will feature articles on learning development, summer reading updates, timely tidbits, children's and teen literature news, and an exchange of what's happening in CO libraries.

Would you like to see a topic covered in the newsletter? Want to share info about your programs? Or perhaps contribute an article? Let me know!

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2013 SRP: News & Ideas

Meet the Artists

Shane Rebensheid—Adult Illustrator

Rebensheid designed the artwork for the adult program theme, "Groundbreaking Reads." He is best known for his photo illustrations, the realism of his 2D digital designs, and science-fiction and fantasy book covers. Since graduating from the Art Center College of Design in 1998, Shane's work has appeared in the Society of Illustrators Los Angeles and New York annuals as well as numerous national and international publications and advertising campaigns. Some of Rebensheid's clients include Harlequin, Penguin Group, Usborne Publishing, BBC, and Tor. See more of Shane's work [on his website](#).



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2013 Teen Video Contest

Reminder: Please let your teens know about the 2013 Colorado SRP Teen Video Contest! Go to [this webpage](#) to learn about the details and find the application forms. The submission deadline is **February 20!**

Summer Learning Conference: Save the Date and Call for Proposals

The National Summer Learning Association's [Summer Changes Everything™ conference](#) is the only national forum focused exclusively on improving the quality of summer programming and expanding its access. This year—its 10th—it will be held November 11–13 in Orlando, FL, with the theme of "Advancing Outcomes for Youth: Demonstrating Your Value in a Data-

Driven Age." NSLA is [seeking proposals for workshops](#); the submission deadline is March 8.

One Book 4 CO 2013



OB4C Voting

The OB4C voting ends at midnight on January 31! *Duck on a Bike* took an early lead and has maintained it throughout the voting period. Stay tuned for the final outcome!

OB4C Webinars

There will be 3 sessions of the same webinar about OB4C in February:

- Friday, February 8, 8:00–9:00 am
- Tuesday, February 12, 12:00–1:00 pm
- Thursday, February 21, 10:00–11:00 am

Topics will include project goals; logistics; PR resources; partnering opportunities; activities using the selected book; community events; project evaluation; and more.

There's no need to register; just go to connect.enetcolorado.org/youth-family-services/ shortly before the session you want to join. Unable to make any of the sessions? One of them will be archived for anyone to view at a later time.

Read to a Child Parent Resources

Check out the resources on the OB4C website under the [Read to a Child](#) tab for great early literacy tips and easy activities for parents. The section is divided into general tips and tips for parents of children 0–1, 1–3, 4–5, and 6–8 (and several include StoryBlocks videos). Many thanks to CLEL members Mary Kuehner and Melissa Depper for contributing these useful resources!

Book Nook

ALA Announces 2013 Book and Media Award Winners

January is the month when ALA announces the top books, video and audiobooks for children and young adults – including the Caldecott, Coretta Scott King, Newbery and Printz awards – at its Midwinter Meeting. A total of 21 award categories were announced; see [the whole list here](#). Check out a video of the [awards ceremony](#) too.

CATSIG's Mock Newbery Winner

CATSIG—Children and Teen Services Interest Group of the Colorado Association of Libraries—held its



own mock Newbery Award contest in January. The winner: *Wonder* by R.J. Palacio, with 2 honor books: *The One and Only Ivan* by Katherine Applegate, and *Crow* by Barbara Wright. And check out and follow [CATSIG's blog](#) for lots more on children's and teen literature and library services!

Timely Tidbits

SPELL

The SPELL (Supporting Parents in Early Literacy through Libraries) program's first big task, the environmental scan, is complete. The project's



wonderful Research Fellow, Vivienne Houghton, found

10 patterns amongst programs in CO and across the country that are very effective in reaching low-income parents of 0–3 year olds and

affecting positive changes in those families, such as parents reading more often to children. [These patterns](#) have significant implications for library early literacy programs that SPELL will be examining in more detail. Next up for SPELL: an in-depth literature review. Stay tuned.

Reforma CO Conference: Save the Date and Call for Proposals

Reforma Colorado is hosting Cuentos: a mini-conference on March 21st from 1–5 in Denver Public Library's Central branch. The conference will focus on:

- Outreach and Marketing to Latinos
- Programming and Instruction for Latinos
- Serving undocumented populations

The conference is calling for proposals to present sessions. You do not have to be a member of Reforma Colorado to present. Please submit one [Presenter Application Form](#)

for each topic you're interested in presenting. You may submit as many ideas as you'd like. All conference fees are waived for presenters!

State Grants to Libraries—You can help

In October, the CO Association of Libraries (CAL) Board voted to support an attempt to restore State Grants to Libraries in the State budget. If the legislature does appropriate the funds, they will be targeted to support early literacy efforts in all state-recognized libraries in CO. You can help get these funds to your libraries! Two actions you can take:

- Consider passing a resolution that mirrors [CAL's resolution](#).
- Contact your state legislators in support of the legislation. CAL provides [sample talking points](#) for this.

Have questions or concerns? Please contact either

of the CAL Legislative Committee chairs: Elena Rosenfeld (erosenfeld@highplains.us) or Dave Sanger (dsanger401@aol.com).

Free Online Courses for Youth Services

The Idaho Commission for Libraries offers [3 free, online classes](#) to those new to youth services and/or to the library field. The courses are:

- Early Childhood Services
- Services to School-Aged Children
- Young Adult (YA) Services

These at-your-own pace classes are a good intro to working with children, tweens and teens in a public library.

Parents Encouraging Parents (PEP) Conferences

PEP conferences bring parents and professionals together to share ideas, discuss concerns, celebrate successes, and obtain information relating to parenting, educating and supporting a child with a disability from birth to age 21. The conferences also promote partnerships between parents and professionals that are essential in supporting and including children with disabilities in schools and the community. There will be 2 conferences in February and March; [click here](#) for more info.

2010 Kids & Family Reading Report™:

Turning the Page in the Digital Age

More students are reading e-books than they were a few years ago, but are they doing enough reading for fun? Many parents are convinced that they're not. That's one of the findings in Scholastic's recently released annual survey of parents' and children's attitudes toward reading, the fourth of its kind. The survey underscores technology's increasing reach into the academic and personal lives of students. But it also seems to reveal lingering uncertainty among parents about whether young people's growing use of computers and devices is a good thing, and

whether both print and digital materials should have a place in their backpacks. [Read the full report](#) to learn more.

CO Graduation Rate Rises

The CO Department of Education released data showing the statewide on-time graduation rate for the class of 2012 increased 1.5 percentage points to 75.4% as compared to last year. Individual district, school and statewide data are [available online](#). This year's CO dropout rate declined by 0.1 percentage points from last year, to 2.9%. While graduation rate increases were seen across nearly all racial and ethnic groups, there are significant gaps amongst minority groups in graduation rates. [See the details here](#).

Statewide PreK-12 student enrollment grows

PreK-12 enrollment in CO for the 2012-2013 school year increased by 9,296 (1.1%) over the previous year, bringing the total to 863,561 public school students. [Read more here](#).

Digital Learning Day: February 6



The nation's second [Digital Learning Day](#)

on Feb. 6 is a national campaign that celebrates educators and highlights successful instructional practice and effective use of technology. The project's website has many resources for educators plus more info on the event. In addition, the Discovery Educator Network has [a few online activities planned](#) that you can tune into that day.

Girls Exploring Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (GESTEM)

[The GESTEM program](#) is coming back to the Colorado Convention Center on April 5, 2013! This exciting event exposes hundreds of middle school girls to the wide range of opportunities

that await them in potential careers in STEM fields through hands-on workshops and interaction with working professionals. In the next month, look for information on student registration, workshop choices, volunteer opportunities, and logistics. Registration will open on February 22.

Expanding Your Horizons Conference for Girls

In this [18th annual conference](#), girls in 6th–8th grade learn about STEM careers—science, technology, engineering and math—through hands-on workshops. The conference is on February 24, 10:00 am – 2:30 pm at the University of CO, with a \$15 fee that includes lunch. For teachers, parents, and other attending adults, the conference features informational workshops on topics ranging from planning for college to understanding adolescent girls.

Partnering with Local Rescue Groups for Pet Therapy Events

[This article](#) provides an overview of planning and hosting a pet therapy event in a library and partnering with a animal shelter.

Curious George Activity Guide

The team that produces the PBS Curious George series has developed a [free activity guide](#) that invites parents to join their children (grades K–1) in exploring science, engineering, and math through play. The guide can be used as a handout for children to bring home or as the basis for afterschool programming.

Colorado schools get a C

Colorado earned a C and ranked 32nd (up from 35th last year) in the nation in terms of the quality of its educational system, putting it behind the national score of C+. Colorado ranked low in the areas of teaching profession and school finance, according to data released by *Education Week* in

its annual Quality Counts report. [Learn more here.](#)

2010 Public Library Survey Results

Public libraries served 297.6 million people throughout the U.S. in 2010, or 96.4% of the total U.S. population, according to new research by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). There were 8,951 public libraries with 17,078 public library branches and bookmobiles. Nationally, public libraries have seen reductions in operating revenue, service hours, and staffing, while circulation, program attendance, and computer use continue to trend upward. The study also finds that public libraries continue to be an essential service for the nation's children, with attendance at children's programs reaching 60.50 million and circulation of children's materials increasing 28.3% over the last ten years. [Read more here.](#)

Register your Día de los Niños Programs

ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) is inviting libraries to share their Dia de los Niños programming via the 2013 [National Día Program Registry](#), a national database that showcases all types and sizes of Día programming. Your info will display on the website, in both the map and database

format, sharing it with other librarians and the public interested in learning more about Día programs happening around the country.

Graphic Novels Gaining Acceptance in Schools

[This article](#) examines the growing use of graphic novels in school curricula in the U.S. More educators are viewing graphic novels as keys to reinforce vocabulary and develop language and critical thinking skills. The format is also



specifically addressed in the Common Core standards.

Minorities Losing Ground in CO

The I-News Network at Rocky Mountain PBS has released a groundbreaking new report, "[Losing Ground.](#)" which uncovers startling facts about race, disparity, progress and the future of Colorado. Told through text, video, photos and graphics, this series examines the issue of inequity that, according to most experts, pose a significant future hurdle for a state in which minorities are a rising population. It includes segments on inequality in public education.

News from YALSA

- This Teen Tech Week™ (March 10 – 16, 2013), YALSA invites you to Check In @ your library! This year's theme encourages libraries to throw open their physical and virtual doors to teens and showcase the outstanding technology they offer, from services such as online homework help and digital literacy-focused programs to resources like e-books, movies, music, audiobooks, databases and more. Visit www.ala.org/teentechweek to join!



Perks of joining the site include a FREE "Maker Spaces 101, Teens, and You" webinar on February 7 at 2 p.m. ET. Discover how these new community spaces are engaging teens, encouraging research, and transforming activities from humdrum to home-run. Attendees will learn how to create a maker center when you have limited space and budget, how to apply Maker Space principles to their current programming, and take away ideas for new teen spaces.

- **Find YA Authors, Speakers & More in Your State:**
 - [YALSA Speakers' Bureau](#)
 - [YA Authors by State](#)
 - [State Contacts in Education, Out of School Time & More](#)
- **Virtual Town Hall on Libraries & Teens**
March 19, www.ala.org/yaforum
This is the first of 3 Virtual Town Halls that are part of YALSA's year-long National Forum on Libraries & Teens.

Contest for New Children's Authors

The National Association of Elementary School Principals's 3rd Annual National Children's Book Award Contest discovers, publishes and launches two aspiring writer's careers. Charlesbridge's (a top national publisher from Boston) will publish the works of the two winners, one for a picture book and one for a chapter book. Go to the [NAESP website](#) for more info and the application. The contest deadline is March 15th, 2013.

Resources on Drug Abuse

The National Institute on Drug Abuse has [free resources](#) for educators and parents in English and Spanish to talk with teens about drugs.

Scholarship Site for Youth with Disabilities

DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology) has a [new web site](#) with info about scholarships, including deadlines, award amounts, and eligibility. Using an interactive sorting tool, you can filter scholarships by disability or other criteria.

Why the Head Start Headlines Are Wrong

[A recent report](#) that looked at the long-term effectiveness of Head Start programs suggested that the positive effects of Head Start fade out by

third grade. The author [of this article](#), from the Marsico Institute at the University of Denver, takes a deeper look at the study and finds the findings more mixed, and makes a counter argument in favor of Head Start.

More Research Supporting Talking and Reading to Young Children

[A new study](#) investigated what, if anything, one can do in the first five years of life to raise a child's intelligence. The findings: sit down with your toddler and a good book for some interactive reading. Simple advice, but the implications for voters and policy-makers are profound. Teaching parents to engage in interactive reading and elaborative conversations with their little ones could go a long way towards eliminating economic disparities in intelligence test results in early childhood.

Common Core Reading Content Concerns

Many educators are concerned with Common Core's emphasis on nonfiction and de-emphasis on fiction (see [last month's YS News](#) for more on Common Core). Learn about the debate in this [article/audio](#), and check out the comments, too, which contain interesting discussion on libraries.

CO Libraries in the Press

Colorado Talking Book Library Video Airs

Colorado's Best, a consumer-oriented show on Colorado's Own Channel 2, ran a feature this month about the CO Talking Book Library. [Watch the video online](#) and learn about the great services that the library has to offer, including for children and teens that are unable to read standard print material due to visual, physical or learning disabilities. Learn more about their services [on their website](#).

Lego Mania in Fort Morgan focuses on robots

The Fort Morgan Public Library held its [fifth annual Lego Mania](#) in January. This year's theme was robots, and not only did the kids have to build robots, they had to write about what they look like, why they look like that and their functions. Library staff came up with these activities that are not only great fun but also improve cognitive ability, concentration, creative problem solving, perseverance, teamwork, design ability, planning, organization, communication and independent thinking.

Upcoming Grant Opportunities

[2013 Innovations in Reading Prize](#)

Deadline: February 20

Each year, the National Book Foundation awards a number of prizes of up to \$2,500 each to individuals and institutions—or partnerships between the two—that have developed innovative means of creating and sustaining a lifelong love of reading. All application materials must be postmarked or emailed by February 20. Details about the application process can be found in the application form. Contact Katie McDonough at kmcdonough@nationalbook.org with questions. (Last year, the [Poudre River Public Library District won this award](#) for its excellent Bookends program!)

[Dollar General Literacy Foundation Grants](#)

Deadline: February 28

Dollar General offers grants for programs in several categories: summer reading, adult literacy, school libraries, family literacy, and youth literacy. Guidelines and maximum grant amounts vary amongst the categories; go to the website for details and the online application form.

of great brain potential, as well as dangers. Positive as well as negative learning and activities will get hardwired during this time, and a lack of learning and activities, as well as trauma, chronic stress, abuse, and substance abuse, may well lead to a negative impact on brain development to last a lifetime. It's also a time when tweens may begin to specialize in certain activities, such as music, a certain sport, science, etc., and some may begin to associate their new-found specializations to be interests and talents that make them unique and special. [Brain plasticity](#) is the term used for this ability to shape the brain through experience.

Corpus Callosum

The [corpus callosum](#) is a fiber system that relays information between the hemispheres of the brain. During the tween and teen years, white matter increases in the corpus callosum; this increases communication between the brain hemispheres and allows more analytic thought and creativity, as well as increases brain efficiency.

Another interesting finding about the corpus callosum is that the fiber systems influencing language learning grow faster than surrounding regions before and during puberty but decline shortly after. These findings reinforce studies on language acquisition that show the ability to learn new languages declines after age 12.

Cerebellum

The [cerebellum](#) has long been known to help with physical coordination, but researchers also think it may play a role in cognitive coordination. From looking at functional imaging of the brain, such as MRIs, scientists now also believe that the cerebellum is active while the brain is processing mental tasks.

During pre- and adolescence, the cerebellum's functioning improves and increases, leading to the ability to engage in higher level thought, including decision making and social skills. This increasing ability to smooth out different intellectual processes help preteens to navigate their increasingly complicated social life. The cerebellum changes well into adolescence and even beyond.

Limbic System

The [limbic system](#), located in the cerebrum, consists of the amygdala, hippocampus, and hypothalamus. It's involved in the expression of emotions and motivation, particularly those related to survival like fear, anger, and the "fight or flight" response. It's also involved in feelings of pleasure and rewards for certain behaviors, like eating and sex.

This system, acting along with hormones released before and during puberty, increase pleasure-seeking behaviors in preteens and teens, as well as other impulsive behaviors and mood swings. These are major reasons why some preteens, especially in the later tween years, try very risky things (it's also a way of claiming their independence, and may also be influenced by peer pressure).

For more information:

- [Brain Development in Young Adolescents](#)
- [Inside the Teenage Brain](#)
- [Adolescent Brain Development](#)

10–12 Concise Learning Milestones Timeline

Generally, a 10, 11, or 12 child:

- Begins to use abstract thought but may revert to concrete thought under stress
- Extends thinking beyond personal experiences and knowledge and starts to view the world outside of a black–white/right–wrong perspective
- Is able to recognize cause and effect
- Is able to answer who, what, where, and when questions, but still may have problems with why questions
- Is able to understand complex, multi–clause sentences
- A 10–year–old can usually follow five commands or instructions in a row
- Has an emerging ability to carry on lengthy conversations about abstract topics
- Has an emerging to look beyond literal interpretations and detect sarcasm
- Is skilled in addition and subtraction and is building skills in multiplication, division, and fractions
- Has learned to write in cursive
- Can write simple stories
- Seeks out books to answer personal questions and curiosities
- Can converse easily with people of all different ages
- Has speech patterns that are nearly at an adult level
- Begins to see the point of view of others more clearly
- Continues to advance fine motor skills, including those needed for clearer handwriting
- Has an increased attention span
- Is able to sort items by recognizing more abstract and complex similarities
- Is beginning to form opinions based upon presented evidence
- Is mastering the ability to present own beliefs to peers and parents
- Is able to analyze a written story and categorize it as fiction or nonfiction
- Proofreads own writing for basic grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- May develop special interest in collections or hobbies
- Enjoys games with more complex rules
- Forms stronger, more complex friendships and peer relationships
- May be interested in volunteering
- Is critical of own artistic creations
- Likes rituals, rules, secrets, codes, and made–up languages
- Enjoys being a member of a club
- Understands concepts without hands–on experience
- Develops a definite (or perceived) taste in books
- Should be able to write several paragraphs supporting an argument by age 12
- Knows about 50,000 words at age 12