

'BEST BUDDIES'



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Achieve the Dream Stories

Middle School's 'Best Buddies' Help Special Needs Students

Longtime Coleman Middle School's Best Buddies program is the reason Ari Weitzman has friends.

The 12-year-old seventh-grader is one of just 100 people in the world with the chromosomal disorder Ring 14, which manifests as a combination of autism, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome, said his mother, Silvia Weitzman.

A neurologist told Weitzman that Ari needed to interact with "typical kids" more often. So she enrolled him at Coleman, which offered Best Buddies as an elective. The program was created by a national organization that pairs disabled kids with regular "best buddies."

Through Best Buddies, Weitzman said, Ari gained friends and had fewer episodes of bad behavior. Hannah Wise was Ari's "best buddy" last school year. See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/coleman-middle-retains-best-buddies-as-a-club-though-one-mom-wishes-it-was/1190208>.



Best Buddy Hannah Wise and Ari Weitzman read a book at Ari's house recently. "When you make a friend, you just don't stop hanging out with them," Hannah said. "He makes me smile." (Photo by the St. Petersburg Times.)

Temple Terrace Opens Playground for All Abilities

Longtime Temple Terrace resident James Chambers remembers his childhood days when playground swings at the city's parks were like 'cast metal rockets' and the ground that caught his occasional falls from some of the assorted equipment was sheer ouch-inducing asphalt.

But those issues are no longer a concern for children or their parents at the Lightfoot Recreation Center's park.

On July 28, Chambers, who today is the city's director

of leisure services, was on hand for the dedication at the park's new playground that is much more child-friendly and able to accommodate youngsters of all abilities. The nearly 1-acre site contains a heavy-duty plastic swing set with deep, safety-belted seats designed for wheelchair-bound youngsters. Another area features a sharp-edges-free spinner seat and some small colorful creatures built for youngsters to bounce on. Both sections of the mostly tree-covered site are covered with mulch.

'We've come a long way,' said Chambers, who credited and commended Temple Terrace resident Renee Blain for starting the movement to revamp a couple of the city's parks and playgrounds to make them accessible to those with special needs.

See <http://tiny.cc/6yb1w>.



Photo by the Tampa Tribune

It Was Her 'Destini' to Win a Computer for Doing Good Deeds



When Tampa dentist Randall Diez had an essay contest, called "Do a Good Deed," to reward a deserving youth under the age of 18 with a computer, he didn't know he was going to end up with not one, but two young winners. One of those, Destini Duckett, who recently turned 13, was very well qualified. Duckett, a bright, polite, well-mannered young woman in need of a computer to do schoolwork for Florida Virtual School, also does a lot of volunteer work that benefits her family, the West Tampa community and the homeless.

On Sept. 14, Dr. Diez' wife, Lori, delivered a brand new laptop - as well as a computer desk and an electronic piano - to Destini at her home in West Tampa. *(Pictured at left are Lori Diez with Destini Duckett and her new laptop. Diez is also an author and supporter of the **Children's Board** Heart Gallery of Tampa Bay.)*

Here is Destini's winning essay entry in the Good Deeds contest sponsored by Dr. Diez:

'Doing My Good Deeds' - by Destini Duckett:

Hi, I am a 12 year old named Destini Duckett; I am the oldest of five, two brothers, and two sisters and we live with our father. I was so excited when I heard about this contest, because I could really use a computer. I am currently homeschooling at Florida Virtual School, and I share a computer with my family which limits my time. Volunteering is our family's favorite hobby, we help our community in many ways. I do my part by helping the people at Metropolitan Ministries which is a shelter for the homeless. I volunteer at my brothers and sisters school in many ways like being a helper in the classroom, helping my dad (Marlo Duckett) with the PTA, and helping in the front office.

I am a Girl Scout who does things around the community like passing out the flyers for neighborhood meetings and also do my part by serving as a hostess. I tried to start recycling, but we don't have a car so I noticed that homeless people around my house look through the garbage for cans, so I told my dad we can save our cans and hand them out so they don't have to dig in the trash which seem to work out great! My dad has a newspaper called Time Prevents Crime which goes out to 600+ people in our community and I help with the typing and delivery. My dad has done many things as far as volunteering and he is my biggest role model who has taught me that even one person can make a difference in many peoples' lives. I hope to one day be a psychiatrist and give people guidance.

East Hillsborough Summer Program a Success, Residents Say

More than two years ago, the **Children's Board of Hillsborough County** set up an office to offer services and programs to improve the community. The Network of East Hillsborough Neighborhoods, 639 E. Alexander St., has lived up to expectations, officials and residents alike say. It has provided computer tutoring, employment counseling and a host of other services, including a recent summer program to promote the arts for children. Natalie Clamp, who runs the Network office in Plant City, said the summer arts program was a big success.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/breaking-news/2011/sep/11/summer-program-a-success-agency-and-residents-say-ar-256117/>

Case Manager Praises Commitment of Children's Board to Families

The **Children's Board** received an email from a case manager recently as a reminder of why funding quality programs and services to children is important. The e-mail reads:

"Your commitment to be tolerant and understanding, giving empathic patient support is what fuels the CM (Case Manager) to keep giving tirelessly to the families to lift them out of physical, mental and emotional agony. I thank all of you at the **Children's Board** for being our teammates, cheering us on. We will work hard to bring in the trophies. Our trophies are every child, every parent, every grandparent sensing that they are loved by the people of Hillsborough County. Our trophies are every home with one child going to sleep less anxious; one adult feeling less angry and worthless; one more day with no news of a child or parent being hurt. It is my great honor to partner with the **Children's Board** to do this very noble task of letting every child, every parenting adult know "You are a person of infinite worth, your dreams are worth growing. We will keep working to help you on to the path of stability and success."



Marcel Mitchell works with nurse Linda Labart in University Community Hospital's neonatal unit. Labart once treated Marcel. (Photo by the Tampa Tribune.)

Teen Returns to Hospital to Give Back

A teenager is giving back to an institution that he believes he owes his life to. Marcel Mitchell, born 17 years ago at the Women's Center at University Community Hospital nine weeks premature, dedicated part of his summer break to helping out in the hospital's neonatal intensive care unit.

It's where he spent the first three months of his life struggling to survive his early delivery, low birth weight and a multitude of other health issues. Marcel, who today is a healthy rising senior at Tampa Bay Tech, was one of the hospital's 100 "Volunteens" earning community service hours required for graduation.

"It feels kind of special coming back and helping here, especially knowing that I was helped with all of my problems," said Marcel.

See <http://m2.tbo.com/content/2011/aug/08/PMNEWSO3-teen-returns-to-hospital-to-give-back/news-metro/>

Hillsborough County Bully Busters Program Wins State Award

Hillsborough County's Bully Busters Program received the 2011 Crystal Award from the Florida Government Communicator Association (FGCA). The Bully Busters Program was selected out of more than 40 entries. Bully Busters is a comprehensive public awareness campaign developed by the County's Criminal Justice Office to bring attention to the problem of bullying; educate the public; encourage reporting bullying behavior; and promote a zero-tolerance attitude toward bullying in Hillsborough County.

See http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/communications/news/releaseoutput.cfm?r_id=10790

Local News

Hills. County Property Tax Revenues Will be \$23.3 Million Less Than Last Year –

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/news/2011/aug/12/menewso3-tax-notice-head-to-mailboxes-ar-250012>

Drop in Property Tax Revenues Forces CBHC to Reduce 2012 Budgets

The **Children's Board of Hillsborough County** will likely cut funding to social service providers by 18 percent or more in the coming fiscal year because of steep declines in property tax collections. But **Children's Board** executive director Luanne Panacek said providers were willing to take deeper cuts up front in return for a full year's funding. "At the same time, we have to balance tax revenues with our actual budget," Panacek said.

The **Children's Board** funds 97 nonprofit organizations that focus on the health, welfare and education of children and families. Much of the agency's funding comes from a voter-approved property tax. Overall the **Children's Board** budget will drop from \$42.4 million this fiscal year to \$34.9 million in fiscal 2012 if approved by its governing board. The agency is looking a reduction of \$1.3 million in property tax collections because of lower property valuations in the county. Board officials have decided not to tap reserves this year as they have in the past. The final Truth in Millage (TRIM) hearing by the board will be Sept. 21.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/politics/2011/aug/23/cuts-to-child-services-providers-likely-to-be-stee-ar-252219/> and <http://www.tampabay.com/news/localgovernment/dozens-of-child-welfare-programs-in-hillsborough-face-funding-cuts/1188045>

Number of Tampa Bay Area Households Getting Tax Credits Increases

The number of Florida households getting the federal earned-income tax credit rose between 2007 and 2008 — another indicator of how far down the economic ladder millions of Floridians have fallen since the housing bubble burst. In the Tampa Bay area, more than 284,000 households in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties qualified for the tax credit in 2008, the most recent year numbers were available. Earned-income recipients amounted to one in five local households that year. Those credits pumped nearly \$590 million — an average \$5,000 per qualifying household — into the region's economy. In 2008, the United Way reported 1,858 of its Hillsborough County clients qualified for the credit.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/news/2011/aug/08/menewso1-more-tapping-into-tax-credits-ar-249079/>

KidzCreate Art Is On Display at Glazer Museum Through Oct. 1

The **Children's Board** KidzCreate Gallery of Children's Art, VSA Florida – the state organization on arts and disability – and the Glazer Children's Museum debuted a new exhibition of children's art, "We Live Here," Aug. 5 at the Glazer Museum in Tampa. KidzCreate Gallery, VSA arts and Glazer Children's Museum created the new exhibits with children in the community over a period of two months.

The exhibition will be on display at the Glazer Children's Museum through October 1. The art will then tour Tampa Bay and visit the galleries at the **Children's Board** in 2012. The exhibit is sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

Current travel locations for KidzCreate include: HKI (2), DACCO (2), Tampa History Center, Center for Girls/ Center for Women (2), Mary Lee House, Early Learning Coalition (2), Tampa General Hospital Neonatal Intensive Care Unit permanent exhibit and book, and St. Joseph's Children's Hospital (2 exhibits for two years).



Pictured is a montage from the opening of the exhibit.

'Hope Heal Inspire' KidzCreate Book Available for Preview, Purchase

In 2010 Tampa General Hospital and the **Children's Board's** KidzCreate Gallery of Children's Art designed an art exhibit together with Tampa General Hospital Staff. A team of people from both organizations made this art exhibit happen. This book, "Hope Heal Inspire," documents the creation of the healing exhibit of art for the hospital. Art experiences bond communities together. To preview the book and to purchase, go to http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/2430459?ce=blurb_ew&utm_source=widget

Gorski Co-Authors Child Development Section of AAP Guidelines

The **Children's Board's** Dr. Peter Gorski has co-authored the child development section of the guidelines just published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, The American Public Health Association and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education titled "Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, Third Edition." These guidelines, updated every few years, serve to ensure that family and center-based child care and early education programs meet standards for providing children with safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate levels of high quality care. The project is funded by the U.S. Dept of HHS Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

HYC Youth Educate About the Plight of the Hungry

Ashira Pelt watched the children she counsels at the Boys & Girls Clubs gather for lunch and noticed a few seemed overly eager. "You can tell the ones that really need the food," said Pelt, a Hillsborough High graduate who moves on to Mount Holyoke College this fall. "They're not getting lunch as much as they're trying to stock up on food."

Kevin Ramirez, a fellow Hillsborough grad who will attend the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, got up close with people who wondered where their next meal was coming from when he helped the Homeless Coalition of Tampa Bay survey the county's homeless. "I saw the faces and heard what they had to say." Rafael Migoyo moves on from Jesuit High to Saint Leo University. He will take with him the memory of the downtrodden he helped serve at Trinity Cafe. "I was touched not only by the amount of people who volunteer, but the amount of people who need help," Migoyo said.

On Saturday, Aug. 13 these three teens, members of the **Children's Board**-funded Hillsborough Youth Collaborative, joined others across the state to continue their volunteer work through a new organization called Florida Youth Against Hunger. Members held events in Tampa, Tallahassee and Miami to raise awareness of hunger. The Tampa event was at the patio area at Ybor City's Cuban Club, 2010 N Avenida Republica De Cuba, and featured performances from local youth bands, dancers and spoken word poets.

So how did three kids end up choosing to take on the daunting task of combating hunger? Well, it started with a special program in Tallahassee in April. Spurred by their involvement in Children's Week and the Teens Only Town Hall Meeting during the legislative session, the three 18-year-olds and their newfound friends from that event vowed to do more after meeting with state officials and representatives.

Fellow panelist Matthew Morris turned their attention to the plight of hungry in Florida. They soon learned that 17.1 percent of Florida households are "food insecure," meaning they lack consistent access to a nutritious, well-balanced diet. More than 20 percent of all Florida children, approximately 850,000, fit that description. The statistics helped open their eyes. It's why the vision of those sad faces they came in contact with during their volunteer efforts remain fresh. They're collecting food donations, calling on elected officials to come up with hunger solutions and encouraging the public to take action.

"I've been telling my friends I can't go to the movies because I'm working on this event," said Pelt, a 2010 winner of the Bank of America Student Leaders program. "But I've also said, 'Come meet me and help with the event.'" Some have donated a portion of their paychecks to help, she said, "and that's a lot."

See <http://www.tampabay.com/news/humaninterest/recent-high-school-grads-to-volunteer-at-ybor-city-event-to-raise/1185247>



Migoyo, Pelt and Ramirez
(St. Pete Times photo)

More Than Half of Bay Area Schoolchildren Are on Subsidized Lunch -

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/officially-at-least-more-than-half-of-area-schoolchildren-are-poor/1189761>

Children's Board HYC Radio is Coming to WMNF on Sept. 25

HYC Radio is modeled after Jim Bennett's experience with and dedication to the mission of Youth Media International in Oakland, California. The Hillsborough Youth Collaborative is a partnership between WMNF in Tampa, the **Children's Board of Hillsborough County** and Community Tampa Bay.

The first one hour radio show will take place on the last Sunday in September... on the 25th, tentatively scheduled at 5 p.m. It will be broadcast on WMNF HD3, "The Source." as well as a stream on the WMNF website [wmnf.org](http://www.wmnf.org). It can also be listened to on WMNF's iphone app. The first show will feature a live music session and interview with The James Lange Theory, a group of high school students at Hillsborough High School. It was done by a recent high school grad, Ashira Pelt, who is this year's winner of the Edward Bok Peace Youth Award at the 3rd Annual WMNF Peace Awards on August 27.

See http://www.wmnf.org/news_items/338.

Listen to This Week's Programs on CBHC Radio

Listen to this week's programming on CBHC Radio, the Internet radio station of the Children's Board. Click "Launch Player" at http://www.childrensboard.org/cbhc_radio.aspx3. For mobile media, go to: <http://icy2.abacast.com/childrensboard-radio-32.m3u>.

Children's Board Links to Jobs, Events, Facebook, Twitter

Go to www.facebook.com/MyCBHC and see the latest **Children's Board Facebook** postings.

Follow the **Children's Board** on **Twitter** at www.twitter.com/MyCBHC.

Jobs & Volunteer Opportunities - Go to http://www.childrensboard.org/jobs_volunteer_opportunities.aspx and click on the top link for updated postings in Hillsborough County.

Calendar - Go to <http://www.childrensboard.org/calendar.aspx> to access the upcoming community and provider calendar. Click on the top link for the latest events and trainings, in chronological order.



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Children's Board HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
Dreams Worth Growing

About 1 in 3 Hillsborough County Students Is Now Hispanic -

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/news/2011/aug/28/menewso1-number-of-hispanic-kids-growing-rapidly-i-ar-253551/>.

Pioneering Prosthesis Treatment at Moffitt Gives Kids Hope -

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/breaking-news/2011/aug/07/pioneering-prosthesis-gives-kids-hope-ar-248971/>.

Program Helps Children with Cancer Picture a Cure -

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/news/2011/aug/08/menewso3-program-helps-children-picture-a-cure-ar-249019/>.

Read the September Issue of the HKI Foster Parents Newsletter -

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/article1182686.ece>.

USF Study Gives Parents Therapy Role, in Concert with Crisis Center -

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/college/usf-clinical-trial-gives-parents-caregivers-role-in-post-traumatic-stress/1189405>.

Children's Home Cottages Get Renovation

Youngsters at The Children's Home returned from a three-day camp to a big surprise. The four cottages on the campus at 10909 Memorial Highway received a makeover. Hundreds of volunteers donated their time throughout the week of Aug. 8-11 to complete the project. The cottages were painted, trees were trimmed and new furniture was placed inside. The cottages are the home to 50 children, ages 6 to 17, who have suffered abuse or neglect. During the makeover, the children were away on their yearly summer camp in Floral City.

Merrill Stewart, interim director of development at the facility, said it had been three years since any sort of renovation projects were done to the cottages. Larissa Rydin, community giving and events manager, said she started to poke around about two months ago, making a list of what the cottages and campus needed. Stewart said about \$30,000 was raised to finish what is now considered the first phase of renovations. Other renovations, such as carpeting and plumbing, have not been funded. To find out what is needed for the renovations, visit The Children's Home website, www.childrenshome.org, and click on the 'How You Can Help' link.

Check Out the Latest Newsletter from the Children's Home, Inc. -

See <http://us1.campaign-archive1.com/?u=d66ed8fb9129191ebc929f4e0&id=2ecc266fb4&e=321d7154f3>.

Neighborhood News



Salon Donates Hair Cuts at Brandon FSRC Back-to-School Bash

A hair salon, All of Me, volunteered to do hair cuts at the **Children's Board**-funded Brandon Family Support & Resource Center Back-to-School bash on August 13. The salon, run by Robert Milton (*shown in the picture cutting a girl's hair*) served approximately 70 children during the Back to School event.

Foodbank, Church and Nonprofit Partnership Benefit North Tampa -

<http://tiny.cc/dd3ec>.

Read the Rural Social Services Partnership Newsletter -

<http://tiny.cc/br1i7>.

Advocacy



*Sergio Bendixen, affiliated with the Children's Movement of Florida, spoke at a Children's Movement "listening tour" at the **Children's Board** on Aug. 23.*

Children's Movement Has 'Listening Tour' at Children's Board

The Children's Movement of Florida, a statewide children's advocacy group, held a "listening tour" at the **Children's Board** on Aug. 23, attended by more than two dozen members of the children's services and general community.

Much of the discussion centered around the economic impact of taking care of the needs of Florida's children, including parents being able to work when their children have high quality, affordable child care. Leisa Stanley, associate executive director of the Healthy Start Coalition of Hillsborough County, emphasized that serving our children helps parents to become self-sufficient, contributing members of our communities in the short term, and also helps to raise children who are prepared to become productive adults in the long term.

See http://childrensmovementflorida.org/blog/hillsborough_county_roundtable_discussion/.

Editorial: 3,000 Children Adopted from Foster Care in Florida in 2010 -

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/officially-at-least-more-than-half-of-area-schoolchildren-are-poor/1189761>

State News

Lawmakers Clear Way for State to Apply for \$100 Million in Race to Top Funding -

See http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-09-07/news/os-race-to-the-top-20110907_1_top-application-top-grant-grant-program.

Study: Florida Ranks High in 'Food Hardship'

Nearly one out of three Florida families, and 27 percent of those in the Tampa-Bay area, are struggling to put enough food on their tables, according to a new study. Florida ranks fourth among the 50 states and Washington, D.C., for the rate at which families were unable to afford enough food in 2010, according to the Food Research and Action Center, a national nonprofit group that advocates for government policies to end hunger.

The group conducted its study based on a Gallup poll of more than 1 million households. Respondents were deemed to be suffering from "food hardship" if they answered "yes" when asked, "Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?"

Florida's food hardship rate for families with children is 30 percent, compared with a 23 percent nationwide average. Nationwide, 21 states had rates higher than 25 percent, though Florida was one of only four with a rate of 30 percent or higher. "The data in this report show that food hardship — running out of money to buy the food that households need — is a substantial challenge in every corner of this country," wrote Jim Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center. The Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area ranked 28th among the country's 100 largest metropolitan statistical areas for households not able to afford enough food.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/politics/2011/aug/12/menewso6-study-florida-ranks-high-in-food-hardship-ar-250044>.

Number of Florida Babies Born Addicted to Drugs Skyrockets -

In 2010, 1,374 babies were born addicted to drugs because their mothers were users - a 42 percent increase in one year. See http://www.orlandosentinel.com/health/os-addicted-newborns-prescription-dru20110731_0.5829483.story.

National News

Annie E. Casey National Survey Examines How Kids Have Fared in Recession

A national study on child well-being found that child poverty increased in 38 states from 2000 to 2009. As a result, 14.7 million children, 20 percent, were poor in 2009. That represents a 2.5 million increase from 2000, when 17 percent of the nation's youth lived in low-income homes.

In the foundation's first examination of the impact of the recession on the nation's children, the researchers concluded that low-income children will likely suffer academically, economically and socially long after their parents have recovered. The research by the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that Nevada had the highest rate of children whose parents are unemployed and underemployed. The state is also home to the most children affected by foreclosures — 13 percent of all Silver State babies, toddlers and teenagers have been kicked out of their homes because of an unpaid mortgage, the study found.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/breaking-news/2011/aug/17/national-survey-examines-how-children-have-fared-i-ar-251127/>.

New York Times Article: The Decade of Lost Children

One of the greatest casualties of the Great Recession may well be a decade of lost children. According to "The State of America's Children 2011," a report issued by the Children's Defense Fund, the impact of the recession on children's well-being has been catastrophic.

See <http://www.myfan.org/>.

Statistics Show More Grandparents Are Caring for Grandchildren -

<http://tiny.cc/5v4la>.

DNA Test of Mom's Blood Can Detect Fetal Sex at 7 Weeks

A simple blood test that can determine a baby's sex as early as seven weeks into pregnancy is highly accurate if used correctly, a finding that experts say is likely to lead to more widespread use by parents concerned about gender-linked diseases, those who are merely curious and people considering the more ethically controversial step of selecting the sex of their children.

See <http://www2.tbo.com/news/education-news/2011/jul/19/menewso1-bullying-reports-0-in-some-districts-4000-ar-244872/>.

Fish Oil Use by Pregnant Moms Helps Infant Health

For good or ill, everything mothers do during pregnancy affects the health of their babies. That includes taking daily supplements, according to a new study that found that children born to mothers who take fish-oil pills while pregnant may benefit from an early boost in immunity.

See <http://cxnphiladelphia.wordpress.com/2011/08/05/fish-oil-in-pregnancy-helps-infant-health/>.

DEA Develops 2 Resources to Help Parents Understand Teen Drug Abuse

Increasing numbers of teens are using prescription and over-the-counter medications to get high. Many parents don't know enough about this problem, and many teens don't understand the dangers. The U.S. Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration has developed two resources for parents. Along with its website, (<http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/>), it has published "Prescription for Disaster: How Teens Abuse Medicine." In addition, an invaluable resource for parents, "Prescription for Disaster," (http://www.getsmartaboutdrugs.com/Files/File/DEApillbook_1_5_08.pdf) presents prescription drug basics, includes information about commonly abused drugs, the internet, drugs and teens, and what you can do.

Verizon Fdn. Launches 'Monsters' Video on Domestic Violence Prevention -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=367JvtoTm34>.

Study: Autism Risk 1 in 5 for Kids with Autistic Older Sibling -

<http://www2.tbo.com/news/nation-world/2011/aug/15/t2obito1-study-autism-risk-high-for-siblings-ar-250557/>.