



Photos by JEFF COOPER / Salina Journal  
Oscar Dix (left) presses his finger on the cover of a book. Oscar smiles as he looks at a book given to him by Dr. Ginger Senseman during his standard wellness checkup. The reading program encourages parents to read to their children.

## Here's what children need for school

Children need more than supplies for the school year

A friend e-mailed me a story she couldn't wait to tell me. She'd gone out to fetch the newspaper when she saw two little girls — ages 5 and 7, she guessed — all dressed up for the first day of school. And their dad was snapping their picture.

"It caused me to reflect on when my kids started school," she wrote. "That first day was a mixed bag, because if you were a mom with the kids in the house all summer, you were looking forward to some peace and quiet. But in the same vein, it was another year gone. ..."

Reading her note, I suddenly realized I never made pictures of my kids on their first day of school. What was I thinking?

Wait. I remember. I was thinking, "Please, God, help me get them in the car because my oldest can't find his shoes, and my youngest threw up and my daughter hates how I braided her hair. And if we don't leave now, we're going to be late because I might kill them. And, God? Please let the car start."

Motherhood is indeed a "mixed bag," not just on the first day of school. From the day they are born, we start pushing them out of the nest with one hand and pulling them back with the other.

I don't have pictures of my children on their first days of school, but I have memories. I wish you could see them.

### Life Stories



SHARON RANDALL

Scripps Howard News Service

# Joy of reading

TURN A PAGE, TOUCH A MIND



JEFF COOPER / Salina Journal

Dr. Ginger Senseman and Jerry Dix present a book to Jerry's son Oscar at Salina Pediatric Care, 520 S. Santa Fe. Senseman participates in the "Turn a Page, Touch a Mind" program, where she gives books to her patients at their standard wellness checks.

## Children and their parents benefit from reading program administered during wellness checkups

By GARY DEMUTH  
Salina Journal

Oscar had just gotten a new book, and he couldn't have been more excited.

He even managed to turn a couple of pages before starting to chew on it.

This is the third book 1-year-old Oscar has received from his pediatrician, Dr. Ginger Senseman of Salina Pediatric Care, 520 S. Santa Fe.

Senseman had given Oscar two books already during his standard wellness check-ups at 6 and 9 months.

His parents, Salinans Rachel and Jerry Dix, have read the books to Oscar several times. "Whenever he cuddles up to us, we show him the pictures in the book," said Jerry Dix, who balanced Oscar on his lap while Oscar examined his newest book, "Big and Little."



Rosales

The Dixes also read to their 4-year-old twin daughters, Quincey and Olivia, who have gotten books from Senseman at every wellness checkup for the past three years.

"This reading program has been good for my kids," Jerry Dix said. "My daughters can read and write now."

The reading program Dix was referring to was "Turn a Page, Touch a Mind," initiated by the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2003.

Based on a nationwide program called "Reach Out and Read," the Kansas program encourages parents to consistently read to their children during the most crucial developmental years — 6 months to 5 years.

### Some parents never read

To promote this program, participating pediatricians give each child under their care a new developmentally appropriate book at each wellness checkup, which begins at 6 months and continues until the child is 5 and preparing to enter kindergarten.

Pediatricians also discuss with



TOM DORSEY / Salina Journal

Brookelyn Barnett (left), 4, and her mother, Jennifer Barnett, look at a book given to them by Nurse Practitioner Monica Woolsoncroft at Mowrey Clinic, 737 E. Crawford.



Shelves of books in Senseman's office are for the "Turn a Page, Touch a Mind" reading program.

parents the value of reading daily to their children.

Some parents, like the Dixes, already are aware of the value of reading. Other parents may never have thought of reading to their children, Senseman said.

"Some are teachers, they have a lot of books at home, and you can tell that the child knows what a book is and how to hold it," Senseman said.



TOM DORSEY / Salina Journal

Aimee Smith and her son Braden, 18 months, look at a book given to him as part of the "Turn a Page, Touch a Mind" program during an appointment at Mowrey Clinic.

### The essentials

Last year in a column, I listed what I think children need for school. Many of you requested a reprint of that list. So here again, thank you, are "20 things children truly need for school."

1. A No. 2 pencil and a willingness to erase.
2. A respect for themselves and others, especially their teachers.
3. An awareness that the world does not revolve around them and that they alone are responsible for their actions.
4. Parents (or grandparents) who teach by example a love for reading, learning and life.
5. An assurance that school is a good, safe place; their teachers will like them; and their parents won't leave town without them.
6. An understanding that school is their "job" and no one else can or will do it for them.
7. A system for exchanging communication between school and home; a backpack for notes; an emergency phone number that always answers; a quiet place and time to do homework; a daily chance to read aloud and to be read to.
8. A plan for getting to and from school on time.
9. A pet to care for.
10. A public library card.
11. Someone to welcome them home; laugh at their jokes; answer their questions; listen to what they say and don't say.
12. The power of knowing how it feels to give anonymously and sacrificially to help someone less fortunate.
13. The encouragement to try new things; the freedom to fail; and the chance to try again.

See SCHOOL, Page B4

See BOOKS, Page B4