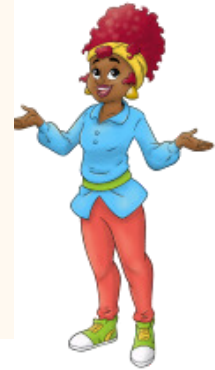


October 2025 Newsletter

Active Playful Learning offers professional development to educators based on the latest evidence in the science of learning. APL is a program built from a three-part equation that embraces:
cultural and community beliefs
 + the **how** of learning + the **what** of learning



APL Schools

Henrietta Lacks

Henrietta Lacks Elementary is so excited for Year 2! This year, the school remains focused on cultivating a deep love for learning by making it fun.

The team embraces Active Playful Learning (APL) as one of multiple approaches to engage its youngest learners, ensuring that every day is filled with joy, discovery, and critical thinking. "We don't just teach—we create hands-on, playful opportunities that spark curiosity and involve every child in actively making discoveries about their world.

We are committed to nurturing a supportive and inclusive environment where every student feels seen, valued, and empowered to explore, question, and learn. Together, we are building a foundation for a lifetime of intellectual curiosity." Busy bees supporting the hive!



Horizon



Horizon Elementary is the home of the Comets. Horizon is proud of having a strong sense of community and sense of belonging - in a recent survey 100% of Horizon students reported feeling welcomed at school and treated with respect by staff. The Horizon teams work hard to have strong inclusion practices with the support of 6 self contained programs. Go Comets!



Arcola

Arcola is working to empower all students to make meaningful contributions to the world. At Arcola, there is a focus to provide caring and supportive learning community, and their sense of community is strong! On September 25th the Arcola school celebrated Coach Craig Day with the entire school wearing jerseys to honor his memory. This special day is a way to celebrate the life and legacy of Coach Craig, a beloved P.E. teacher whom Arcola lost in 2020. Go Dragons!



APL in the Classroom



Stepping into an APL classroom, you might see kindergarteners working together to count items for their Fall Stew recipes. You may hear third graders discussing different strategies to pack thousands of Pokemon cards into boxes. In a fourth-grade classroom, students might be creating fraction number lines based on their own experiences and interests. In each of these scenarios, teachers have pulled together the foundational APL elements- the practices, pillars, 6Cs and the Who of learning- to create classroom environments that invite students to be active participants in their own learning. During the 2024-25 school year, teachers reported that APL lessons increased student engagement, helped learners understand the targeted math concepts, and made learning fun. To see examples of grade level APL lessons and learning experiences that connect to Virginia's math standards and LCPS math pacing, please visit the "For Teachers" section of our website.

Coach Spotlights



After a wonderful year working with the kindergarten team at Henrietta Lacks, **Jen Rofman** is excited to return to support the 1st and 2nd grade teachers. She especially enjoys working with diverse groups of learners and collaborating with teachers to implement active, engaging practices that promote fun and successful learning for all students. Prior to joining the UVA team, Jen was an elementary teacher and mentor for over 20 years across the country and the UK.



APL Coach **Kat Hegedus** works with Horizon ES and brings over a decade of experience teaching, mentoring, and coaching in Northern Virginia elementary schools. She believes in a strengths-based approach to foster joy for learning in the students and teachers she supports. Kat is excited to bring this outlook along with the pillars and practices of Active Playful Learning to Horizon's teachers and students!



Laura Fodge is an APL Coach with over 20 years of experience in elementary education. She is excited to collaborate with teachers at Arcola to create joyful learning opportunities where every student has a voice and is encouraged to grow as a confident, capable learner. Aligned with Arcola's mission, Laura looks forward to partnering with teachers to bring the pillars and practices of APL to life, fostering a supportive, inclusive environment that inspires a love of learning while connecting math lessons to students' interests and real-world experiences.

Upcoming Events for Families in the Loudoun Community

**Oct. 22nd
(Wednesday)**

Math Puzzler 4-4:45pm
BCascades Library - Meeting Room B
[Learn More](#)

**Oct. 18
(Friday)**

Spooky Mad Science Expo. 3-7:00pm
Patrick Henry Recreation Center
[Learn More](#)

**Oct. 31
(Friday)**

Builders Free Play 1:00-4:00pm
Lovettsville Library - Meeting Room
[Learn More](#)

**Nov. 15
(Saturday)**

Builders Free Play 1:00-4:00pm
Lovettsville Library - Meeting Room
[Learn More](#)

The APL Summit

The APL Summit in Portland, Maine was a BLAST! What an amazing way to celebrate the end of the 2024-2025 year!



New APL Resources

We're excited to highlight a number of new APL resources available on the APL Website! They are designed to deepen understanding of the WHO, HOW, and WHAT of APL, and give tools to further explore how these elements support and amplify each other.

- APL Connections Cards & Ideas to Play: These cards are designed to deepen understanding of APL and to help generate ideas for bringing "Joyful Teaching, Deeper Learning" to classrooms.
- Path to APL Through SMART Goals: This resource is another tool to explore how the components of the APL framework connect to each other in SMART goals.
- APL Playmat: a Visual Map of APL: This is a four page resource, with the first page being an overview of the WHO, HOW, and WHAT of APL, the second listing the definitions of the APL elements from the APL Definitions resource above, and the third and fourth giving space for brainstorming and planning.

The Brookings Webinar



Cedar Lane teacher joined the Brookings Seminar on Ed...- The Active Playful Learning Model on September 10, with senior Fellow Kathy Hirsh-Pasek along with co-authors of the study, educators, school administrators, and state representatives discussed solution-based models to reimagining education, including Active Playful Learning.

Recent Publications

In Brookings:

Teaching in the Way Human Brains Learn

This working paper describes how the theory of APL evolved, along with preliminary results from the implementation of APL in schools in Virginia, Texas, Illinois, and California.

An Ode to Joy: Advances in Playful Learning

In the wake of the International Day of Play on June 11, this piece highlights the latest playful learning efforts in classrooms, communities, and on screens.

Recent News

This year we will be officially welcoming Teach Preschool Partners (TPP), a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving early childhood education, into the APL Project!

TPP will begin planning what APL will look like in Oregon schools!



This project is funded by:

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