



Belle Chasse Academy

Volume 12, Issue 1

September 2019

# PARENT POWER

Published Monthly by the Belle Chasse Academy Family Involvement Committee

A Letter From Our Principals, Mary Swazey & Rene Thompson

September 2019

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! This year marks our 18<sup>th</sup> year of the privilege of providing the formal educational experience for children in the greater New Orleans area. Thank you for giving us that opportunity.

The BCA staff continues to strive to grow and evolve in order to provide the best tools and knowledge to your students to ensure they excel and succeed academically. As in all previous years, we continue to be an "A" school.

We continue to strive to shape a well-rounded student. We believe our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center has no equal. Our numerous and varied offerings to all age groups ensure that students can continue their learning experiences via extracurricular activities. In addition to national clubs and locally-formed groups of students with similar interests, Belle Chasse Academy will continue to have an outstanding sports program for 6-8<sup>th</sup> grade where students learn skills taught in the classroom but delivered in a different manner. We hope you will encourage your child to find his/her niche and participate in these extracurricular opportunities.

Additionally, Belle Chasse Academy is completely committed to the social and moral development of your well-rounded student. We are a CHARACTER COUNTS™ learning community; our Guidance Department provides individual, small-group, and whole group classes on various age-appropriate social issues; and our students are offered numerous opportunities for community service. For the past four years we have implemented the highly acclaimed and evidence-based Olweus® Bullying Prevention Program. While still a school and nationwide concern, BCA bullying incidents are down, and our statistics support that Olweus® is working here.

With the advent of Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), our school has adopted several new initiatives to more closely align the partnership between home and school as outlined in our School-Parent Compact. One of these initiatives is a whole-school effort to not only develop grade-level goals in literacy and mathematics, but to communicate these academic goals to parents and students on teacher websites.

### Inside this issue:

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### Points of Interest & Important Dates

- Sept. 4th—Lights On After School 5-7 pm
- Sept. 18th—Open House 5:30-7 pm
- Sept. 23rd—Progress Reports
- Sept. 24th—Coffee with the Principals
- Prioritize Daily Attendance
- How Parents Stay Informed
- Books and the Great Outdoors

Additionally, we want parents to understand whether their own student's academic performance is on track to meet grade-level goals. Grade-level teachers convened in the first weeks of August to set grade-level goals in literacy and mathematics AND to identify students not on track to meet those goals. You will be receiving a letter communicating if your child is on track to meet grade-level goals.

We also are proud to spotlight that we received a grant from the Emeril Lagasse Foundation that will allow BCA to inspire, mentor and enable our students to reach their full potential through culinary, nutrition and arts education. We have hired a full time chef who will work with all grade levels in fulfilling the grant's mission.

While the school has a dedicated instructional staff committed to the educational needs (both academic and social) of its students, and a first rate support staff with the same goal foremost in their actions; the vital role of you, the parent—the home educator and our partner—cannot be overemphasized. **We know that it takes everyone working together.**

Please get involved. Our SOAR is organized and energized. In addition to a series of fundraisers, SOAR will offer a full year of educational and fun family activities. We encourage you to participate in SOAR, and to also participate in all the family learning activities that will be coordinated by your child's teacher (s). Please offer your assistance with our CHARACTER COUNTS™ and Olweus® Programs and attend our monthly coffees. In short, **your support and activism is crucial, and very much needed and appreciated. Everyone is welcome—all the time!**

We pledge to you that we will use every opportunity to communicate effectively with you.

Please avail yourself of the wealth of information available at our website: [www.bellechasseacademy.org](http://www.bellechasseacademy.org). This resource will answer 99.9% of your questions about our school...even questions you didn't know you had!

We invite you to join your child, the students, faculty and staff at Belle Chasse Academy to embark on a successful 2019-2020 school year. We are an open door school and encourage your presence here. Please do not hesitate to contact us, or any member of the Leadership Team, if you have questions or suggestions for our school. Working together, this can be the best school year ever!

Sincerely,

*Rene Thompson*  
*Principal K-4*

*Mary Swazey*  
*Principal 5-8*

# Helping Students Learn<sup>®</sup>

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School

Belle Chasse Academy



September 2019

## For a successful year of learning, review essential study skills

Study skills have a big impact on student learning. Helping your middle schooler strengthen her skills at the beginning of the school year will ensure that she has the tools she needs to do her best in school all year long.

To lay the groundwork for academic success:

- **Promote organization.**

Help your child create systems to keep track of schoolwork: using a planner to record assignments; color coding folders and binders for each class; and filing papers frequently.

- **Bolster time management.** Have your child estimate how long assignments will take. Then have her use a timer to see if her estimates are correct. This will help her schedule her future study time more effectively.

- **Encourage self-awareness.** Ask your child to figure out when she's most alert. Right after school? After blowing off some steam outdoors? Have her do most of her homework and studying during those times.

- **Teach effective management** of large long-term projects. Show her how to divide them into smaller, more manageable parts.

- **Urge prompt action.** Let your child know that being a responsible student involves asking for help when it's needed. If she is confused or has trouble with a concept, she should talk to the teacher immediately.



## Show your child you care

The middle school years aren't always easy for kids. To support your child through the ups and downs:

- **Tell** her that you love her, no matter what.
- **Plan** together for her exciting future.
- **Express** confidence in her ability to succeed.



## Prioritize daily attendance

School absences affect students in more ways than many families realize. For example:

- **Classroom performance suffers.** Absent students miss demonstrations, discussions and chances for hands-on learning. Most have trouble keeping up if they miss more than a few days.
- **Friendships suffer.** These often begin at school. Kids who miss school frequently may have fewer friends. Without them, they can lose interest in school altogether.

School attendance is the law. Enforcing it is one of the most critical ways you can help your child get the education he deserves.

## Encourage learning at home

To reinforce your child's learning, help her find ways to apply it at home. Here are a few easy ones:

- **Have your child explain** something she is studying to you. Retelling it helps cement it in her mind.
- **Ask your child** to do household math—doubling recipes, budgeting, measuring, etc.



- **Have a movie night.** Choose a thought-provoking film. Afterward, ask your child questions about it. Encourage her to think critically before answering.



## Don't let devices become distractions

Middle schoolers sometimes seem to be superglued to their phones. They text, share videos and selfies, and scroll through social media constantly.

Students often think their digital devices can help with homework. And sometimes they can. But there's one problem: Kids rarely stay focused on the homework. Soon they are checking out the latest viral meme.

Studies show that the more time students text, read online or use social media while doing schoolwork, the lower their grades are.

To help your child focus on schoolwork instead of his phone:

- **Discuss multitasking** and how research proves it doesn't work.
- **Limit use of devices** during homework time.
- **Be a role model.** Don't check your phone when you should be concentrating on something else—such as during family meals or (especially) while driving.

Source: K. Kowalski, "When Smartphones Go to School," Science News for Students, niswc.com/mid\_smartphone.

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MIDDLE SCHOOL

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## Q&A How can parents of middle schoolers stay informed?

**Q:** I know that I am supposed to let my middle schooler take more responsibility for his schoolwork. But I'm afraid that I won't be aware of things like assignments and upcoming tests. How can I stay in the loop without seeming nosy?

**A:** Staying involved and knowing how your son is doing in school are important parts of being a parent. It's not being nosy!

To encourage responsibility and still stay informed:

- **Keep asking about school.** Have your child tell you about each of his classes. The more you know about them, the more comfortable you'll feel asking about them. At least once a week, set aside time for a chat about how things are going.
- **Read everything that comes home** from school. Have your child go through his backpack and give you any handouts. Read emails from the school. Visit the school website or parent portal.
- **Touch base with your child's teachers.** Exchange contact information. Ask them if there is a website for their class you can view.
- **Attend school events** when you can. Connecting with school staff and other parents is a great way to find out what's going on at school!



## Parent Quiz

### Are you making reading a pleasure?

Many middle schoolers say they don't read for pleasure. But reading for fun helps kids develop fluency and comprehension skills. Are you encouraging your child to make time for reading? Answer *yes* or *no* below:

- \_\_\_ **1. Do you have** a weekly time for family reading?
- \_\_\_ **2. Do you link** reading to your child's interests by suggesting titles on topics she cares about?
- \_\_\_ **3. Do you make** it easy to find something to read by keeping a variety of reading material around your home?
- \_\_\_ **4. Do you talk** with your child about interesting or entertaining things you read?
- \_\_\_ **5. Do you engage** her in activities that involve reading, such

as building things by following instructions?

#### How well are you doing?

*More yes answers mean you are showing your child what a pleasure reading can be. For each no, try that idea.*

*"Reading takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere."*

*—Hazel Rochman*

## Find time to talk together

Spending time with your middle schooler is the best way to keep communication—about school and everything else—flowing. If your schedule is busy, make the most of:

- **Kitchen time.** Ask for your child's help in preparing meals. As you cook, have him describe his dream meal.
- **Library time.** Browse the shelves with your child. Take an interest in the things that he likes. It shows that you value him.
- **Travel time.** Sitting side by side in the car or on the bus (rather than eye to eye) can make it easier for kids to open up.

## Give your child a chance to solve the problem

You want the best for your child. But if you rush in to solve every small problem she has at school, she won't learn how to solve bigger problems in the future for herself.

If your child receives a grade she feels is unfair, encourage her to talk to the teacher about it. If she forgets her homework, let her manage the consequences. Experience can be a great teacher.

## Sleep is critical for learning

Six out of 10 middle schoolers don't get enough sleep. This increases their risk for physical and mental health issues, as well as attention and behavior problems in school.



So how much sleep is enough? Students:

- **Aged 12 and under** need nine to 12 hours of sleep every 24 hours.
- **Aged 13 and up** should get eight to 10 hours of sleep per night.

Set and stick to a regular bedtime that helps your child wake up rested and ready to learn.

Source: "Sleep in Middle and High School Students," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [niscw.com/rest](http://niscw.com/rest).

## Helping Students Learn®

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# Daily Learning Planner

*Ideas parents can use to help students  
do well in school*

Belle Chasse Academy



THE  
**PARENT**  
INSTITUTE®

September • October • November 2019

## September 2019

## Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Parents Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 1. Have your child color code class materials. Give him a different color folder for each class. He can cover his textbooks in matching colors.
- 2. Help your child set goals for the school year and plan how to reach them.
- 3. With your child, decide on a daily homework and study time.
- 4. Tell your child that her education is important to you and that you expect her to give her best effort.
- 5. Allow your child plenty of free time for reading.
- 6. Eliminate technology distractions during homework time. Turn off all devices that aren't being used for learning.
- 7. Offer your middle schooler a choice of chores to do. Let him pick one of three options.
- 8. Tell your child why you appreciate her today.
- 9. Encourage your child to write a letter to a faraway friend or relative.
- 10. Ask your child questions about school each day to get an idea about what he is learning.
- 11. Discuss the summer. Ask your child to name three things she learned.
- 12. Encourage your child to keep a notebook handy when reading. He can jot down unknown words and look them up later.
- 13. Think of synonyms with your child, such as *walk/stroll* and *stop/halt*.
- 14. Have a "stay-up-late" night. Let your child stay up as late as she wants, as long as she's reading.
- 15. Practice estimating with your child. How many popcorn kernels will fit in your hand? How many grains of rice fit in a tablespoon?
- 16. Set a technology curfew. Pick a time when all TVs, computers, tablets and phones must be turned off for the night.
- 17. Solve a crossword puzzle with your child.
- 18. Review the rules you have for your child. Are they still appropriate for his age?
- 19. Teach your child a useful new skill, such as how to do laundry.
- 20. Ask your child to tell you about the similarities and the differences between her classes.
- 21. Choose a recipe with your child. Shop for ingredients, cook and enjoy the results together.
- 22. Let your child see you reading often. This teaches him that reading is important and fun.
- 23. Help your child make a budget.
- 24. Have your child teach you something she needs to learn for homework. It's a great way to reinforce learning.
- 25. Do some research on drug abuse. Make sure you and your child have the latest facts.
- 26. Is your child turning assignments in on time? Praise his responsibility.
- 27. Ask your child to tell you about one of her teachers.
- 28. Make library trips a regular part of your family schedule. Check out a book about careers with your child.
- 29. Make an album or slideshow of family photos with your child.
- 30. Have you met your child's teachers? If not, set up appointments soon.

**Helping Students Learn**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL  
Tips Families Can Use to Help Students Do Better in School



# October 2019

## Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Parents Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 1. Learn a magic trick with your child.
- 2. Kids who read regularly earn the highest grades. Set a daily reading time for the entire family.
- 3. Offer to take your child and his friends somewhere.
- 4. When your child tells you something important, restate it in your own words to confirm your understanding.
- 5. Provide some personal space for your child.
- 6. Invent a recipe together. If it doesn't work, brainstorm ways to fix it.
- 7. Challenge your child to use the dictionary to find as many five-syllable words as she can.
- 8. Remind your child that there are no stupid questions. Encourage him to ask questions in class.
- 9. Designate a place in your home for library books. Your child will always be able to find something to read.
- 10. Suggest that your child set a timer while doing homework to remind her not to waste time.
- 11. Thank your child for something he did today.
- 12. Help your child create a study schedule before a test. She's more likely to remember material studied over several days.
- 13. Have each member of your family create a collage from magazine pictures. See if family members can guess who made which one.
- 14. Admit and apologize to your child when you're wrong.
- 15. Help your child make a savings plan for a special purchase.
- 16. Read a textbook assignment with your child. Then ask him to tell you about it in his own words.

- 17. Ask your child to tell you what the word *success* means to her.
- 18. "Because I said so!" is frustrating for middle schoolers to hear. Explain your reasoning.
- 19. Ask your child what he most enjoys doing as a family. Plan to do it.
- 20. Play math *Jeopardy*. Give a number. Who can come up with a problem for which your number is the answer?
- 21. It's School Bus Safety Week. Review safety rules with your child.
- 22. Talk with your child about mistakes. What are some ways people can learn from their mistakes?
- 23. Let your child take over a new responsibility. Tell her why she's ready.
- 24. Have family members write activities and commitments on a family calendar. This teaches organization and helps manage conflicts.
- 25. Ask your child a thought-provoking question, such as "What do you think the future will be like?"
- 26. It's Make a Difference Day. Discuss ways your family could improve your community.
- 27. Take a walk with your child today.
- 28. Help your child manage homework without actually doing it for him.
- 29. Ask your child, "Who is your favorite author and why?"
- 30. Require adult supervision when your child visits a friend's home.
- 31. Challenge your child to tell you how washing hands prevents the spread of disease.

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# November 2019

## Daily Learning Planner: Ideas Parents Can Use to Help Students Do Well in School—Try a New Idea Every Day!

- 1. Ask your child to explain a homework assignment to you.
- 2. Have your child play a favorite song. Listen to the lyrics and discuss what you hear.
- 3. Challenge your child to run a 30-yard dash. Time her. Encourage her to keep practicing to improve her time.
- 4. Talk about stereotypes with your child. Discuss why they're unfair.
- 5. Ask your child to tell you about the historical figures he is studying in school.
- 6. Discuss an international news event with your child. How could it affect this country?
- 7. Talk about one of your values. Parents' opinions *do* matter to kids.
- 8. Tell a story about yourself when you were your child's age.
- 9. Go to the library with your child. Each of you check out a book.
- 10. At the grocery store, have your child estimate how many apples are in two pounds. Use the scales to check.
- 11. Let your child help you research a major family purchase. List important features and ask your child to find the best deal.
- 12. Talk to your child about bullying. Has she ever been bullied at school? Online? Has she ever bullied someone?
- 13. Ask your child to think of several places where he would like to volunteer. Have him call to ask for information from each.
- 14. Help your child use small chunks of time to study or review.
- 15. Ask your child how she decides who her friends will be.
- 16. Make today a device-free day. Put your child in charge of thinking of alternate activities.

- 17. Give your child some graph paper to use in math class. It helps students keep columns of numbers neat.
- 18. Learn a tongue twister. At dinner, challenge everyone to repeat it three times fast.
- 19. Does your child use Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram? Discuss appropriate social media use. Monitor your child's posts often.
- 20. Review what your child should do in case of a fire in your home.
- 21. Together, list ideas for a delicious new flavor of ice cream.
- 22. Talk with your child about how each of you could improve your listening skills.
- 23. Play a memory game with your child. Try to remember the things you each did the day before yesterday.
- 24. Have your child spend 10 minutes at night preparing for the next day.
- 25. Choose a movie based on a book. Read the book as a family, then watch the film.
- 26. Establish times when texting is not allowed, such as during meals.
- 27. Ask your child what he thinks high school will be like.
- 28. Give your child a newspaper article. Have her circle all the adjectives.
- 29. Encourage your child to make daily to-do lists. When he completes each item, he should check it off.
- 30. Avoid power struggles with your middle schooler. Too much parental control can cause rebellion.

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# Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2019

Belle Chasse Academy  
Rene Thompson, Principal K-4

## Book Picks



Read-aloud favorites

### ■ *The Day You Begin*

(Jacqueline Woodson)

The students in this story feel alone for different reasons, whether it's because of what they look like, how they talk, or what they eat. But the children discover that when they share their differences, they begin to see just how well they *do* fit in. (Also available in Spanish.)

### ■ *Night Night, Groot*

(Brendan Deneen)

In this bedtime comic book, Baby Groot is ready for bed after a long day. But his friend Rocket Raccoon has other ideas. He snatches Groot out of bed, and the two zoom across the universe with their superhero friends. Will Groot ever get to sleep?



### ■ *Tigers & Tea with Tippy* (Barbara Kerley and Rhoda Knight Kalt)

To Rhoda, her grandfather is "Tippy."



To everyone else, he's the famous wildlife artist Charles R. Knight.

This biography tells the story of a weekend adventure Rhoda and Tippy enjoy together. Tag along to the museum and the zoo to see many of the artist's drawings and paintings.

### ■ *The Cloud Book* (Tomie dePaola)

Can your youngster predict the weather by looking at the clouds?

Has she ever thought that a



cloud was shaped like an animal? This nonfiction book teaches readers about common cloud types and the weather they typically bring.

## Fill your home with words

Your child learned to talk by hearing many words every day. Now that she's learning to read, *seeing* lots of words will make them familiar to her when she comes across them in books. Use these ideas to surround your youngster with words.

### Label

On sticky notes, help your child label furniture, toys, and appliances with their names. She could put each note on the correct item, then walk around the house and see how many words she can read. *Idea:* Let her create a nameplate for each person's door—and even put one on the dog's food bowl or the fish tank.

### Post

Use colorful tape to mark off a "bulletin board" on the refrigerator. Your youngster can post all kinds of things to read. *Examples:* The school cafeteria menu, notes from you, a joke. Then, make time daily to read the board. For instance, before



school, help her check the menu to find out what's for lunch.

### Collect

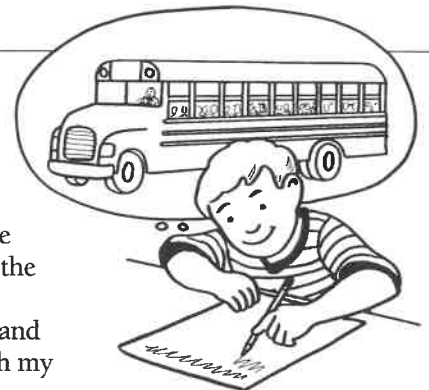
Cut construction paper into fourths and staple the pieces together to create word books. Your child might title one "Food Words," then cut words like *cereal* and *rice* from food packages and glue them all over the pages. She could put her books on a shelf or on the coffee table to pull out and read whenever she likes.♥

## My school story

"What did you do in school today?" Instead of having your child *tell* you, encourage him to write it down. He'll work on putting events in order, and you'll learn all about his day.

Ask your youngster to write a sentence about what he did first. *Example:* "I rode the school bus." Then ask, "What happened next?" He might write: "We had reading and writing time. I went to lunch and ate with my friends. We did math."

*Tip:* If your child isn't writing yet, let him dictate his story to you.♥



# Books and the great outdoors

Reading can be a quiet indoor pastime for your youngster—or a playful outdoor adventure! In your backyard or at the park, read stories that take place outside. Then, try these suggestions for helping your child make connections between books and his world.

**Recreate a picture.** Let your youngster choose an illustration from a book and use props to make his own real-life version of it. If the picture shows a pond with



the sidewalk after a rainstorm to see how they wriggle. Or after reading about a windy day, he may want to make a colorful wind sock to see which way the wind is blowing.♥

lily pads, he could float leaves on a puddle. Or if there's an illustration of a bear in a cave, maybe he'll use sticks and rocks to build a miniature hideaway for his teddy bear.

**Explore science.** Do a science activity related to a book. Say the main character in a story is an earthworm. Your child might observe worms on

## Fun with Words



## A back-to-school recipe

Your youngster can practice writing instructions as she whips up a recipe for a great school year!

Together, read recipes for favorite dishes so she sees how they include an ingredients list and step-by-step instructions. Then, suggest that your child write her own list of ingredients for a great school year. *Example:* "1 friendly teacher, ½ cup reading, a dash of recess."

1. Combine 1 friendly teacher with ½ cup reading.
2. Sprinkle in a dash of recess.
3. Add ½ cup math games.



Next, she should write a step for each ingredient. Encourage her to use cooking words like those in the recipes she read (*stir, combine, blend*).

Finally, listen while your youngster reads her finished recipe to you.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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## Q&A Read-alouds for new readers

**Q** My son loves it when I read to him. Now that he's learning to read on his own, what should I do differently at story time?

**A** Simply continuing to read aloud to your son is one of the best ways to support his reading. Kids who have pleasant experiences with books tend to become better readers.

Try following your child's lead at story time. If he points out words he knows, offer encouragement. ("You're right, that word is *blue*.") Or if he asks what a word means, give a quick kid-friendly explanation. ("*Locomotive* is a big word for *train*.")

Also, share your reactions to the book, and let your son do the same. *Example:* "I was really hoping the train would make it up the hill. Did you think it would?" You'll find that talking about stories is a natural way to boost his comprehension.♥



## Parent to Parent Let's do research!

My daughter Kara asks a lot of questions. During a recent trip to the library, we read a non-fiction book that answered her most recent one: "Why do we get the hiccups?"

Now Kara keeps a list of questions she thinks of. When we visit the library, we look up the answers. Our research is turning out to be far more educational—and more fun—than asking

my phone to answer Kara's questions. For instance, I help her type her topic into the library database, and we look at the list of suggested books. Then the librarian points us toward the section where we can find what we need.

Kara is learning her way around the library, and she's even learning to use a book's index to locate the information she's looking for.♥





## **Belle Chasse Academy**

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## *Do you ~smile~ and support Belle Chasse Academy?*

### **What is AmazonSmile?**

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Belle Chasse Academy every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

### **How do I shop at AmazonSmile?**

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.

### **Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?**

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

### **How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on AmazonSmile?**

On your first visit to AmazonSmile ([smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)), select Belle Chasse Academy to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. We will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) will result in a donation.