

SOCIAL WORK NEWS

FIFTH EDITION February 2025



PARENT CORNER

FROM SANDY WALKER

Happy New Year! Welcome to 2025

This month we are going to talk about **Gratitude**.

As we begin a new year, let's think about all the things we are grateful for.

What is GRATITUDE? Gratitude" means feeling thankful or appreciative for the good things in your life, like a kind act from a friend, a nice day outside, having a place to live, food, clean water, or having a family to support you; it's about recognizing the positive things around you and expressing thanks for them, reflecting on how lucky you are when something good happens, even if they seem small.

You can use lots of words to describe feelings of gratitude: thankful, fortunate, humbled, appreciative, and blessed.





Why Does Gratitude Matter?

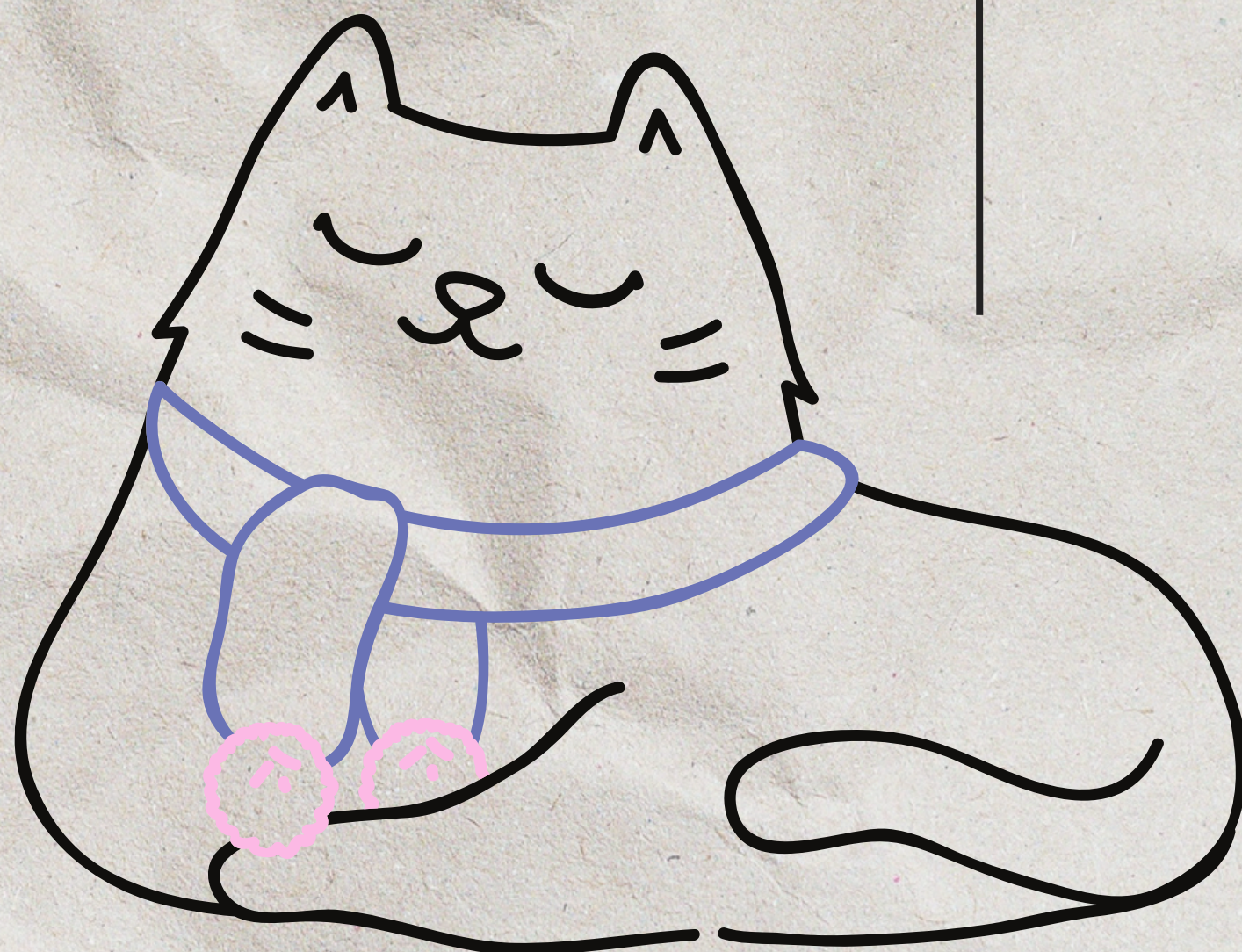
Being grateful feels nice, and making a habit of it is good for you. Like other positive emotions, feeling grateful on a regular basis can have a big effect on your life.

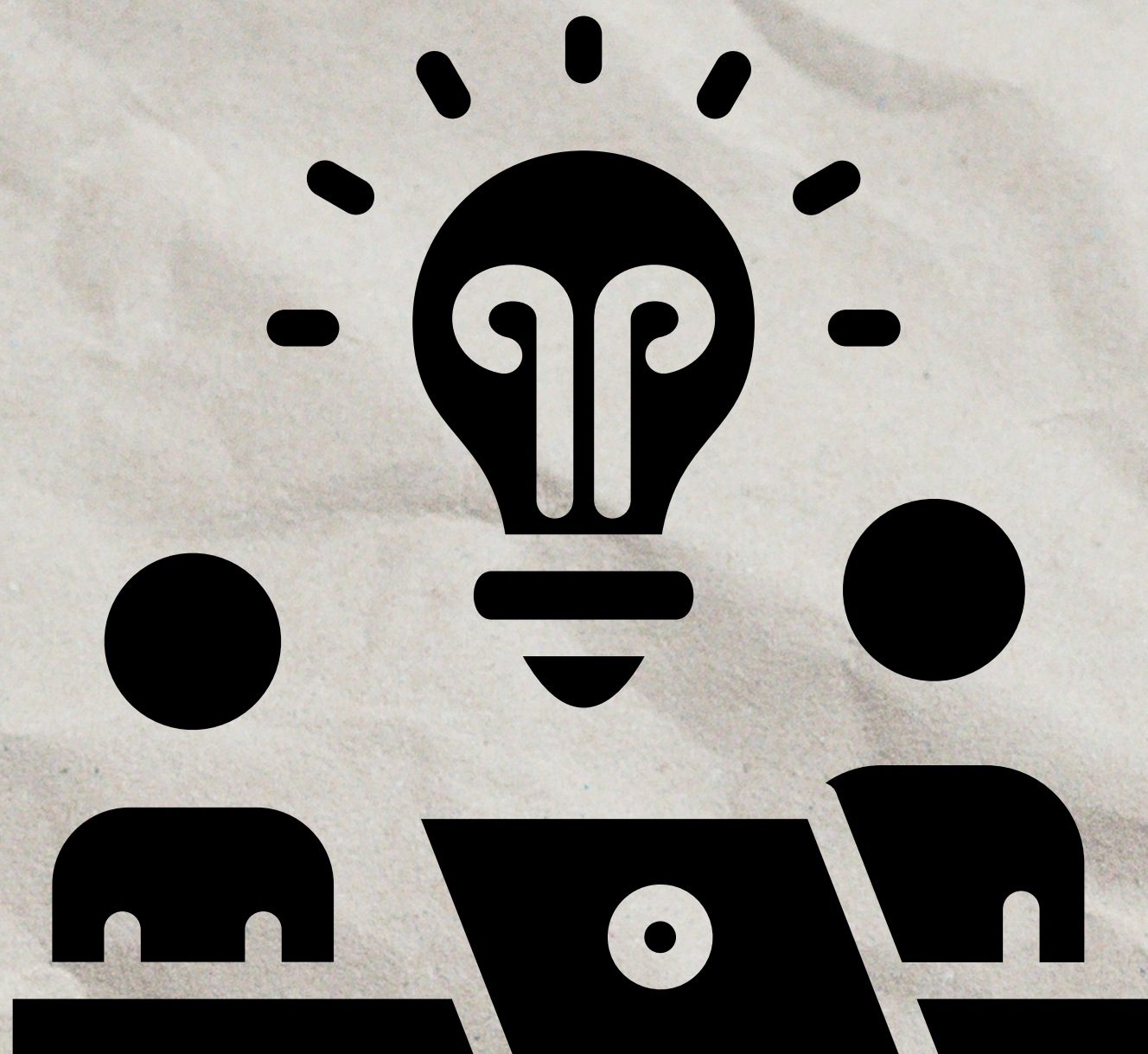
Gratitude can:

- **Boosts your ability to learn** and make smart decisions.
- **Balance out negative emotions.** People who often feel grateful are happier, less stressed, and less depressed. Rather than focusing on what you don't have, notice what you do have.
- **Lead to caring actions.** When you're grateful for someone's kindness, you may be more likely to be nice in return. Your gratitude can also have a positive effect on someone else's actions. Thanking people can make it more likely they'll do something thoughtful again.
- **Help you build better relationships.** When you feel and express heartfelt gratitude and respect to people in your life, it creates loving bonds. It also builds trust and helps you feel closer.

When you make gratitude a habit, you become more aware of good things as they happen.

Let's take a brief moment and breathe. What are you grateful for?





TEACHER CORNER

FROM ALISON ONOFRIO

A simple but effective gratitude activity for high school classrooms is a “**Gratitude Wall.**”

Here’s how it works:

1. Set Up: Designate a section of the classroom wall or a bulletin board for this purpose. Provide sticky notes or index cards, along with markers.
2. Daily or Weekly Practice: At the beginning or end of a class, ask students to write one thing they are grateful for—big or small—on a sticky note. It can be related to school, home, or life in general (make sure the teacher does one)
3. Share (Optional): Students can either post their notes directly on the wall anonymously or share their gratitude aloud before posting it.
4. Celebrate Over Time: Watch the wall grow as a visual reminder of positive moments in their lives. At the end of the term, you can even take time to read through some as a group.



- This activity fosters positivity, encourages mindfulness, and strengthens the classroom and school community. ○



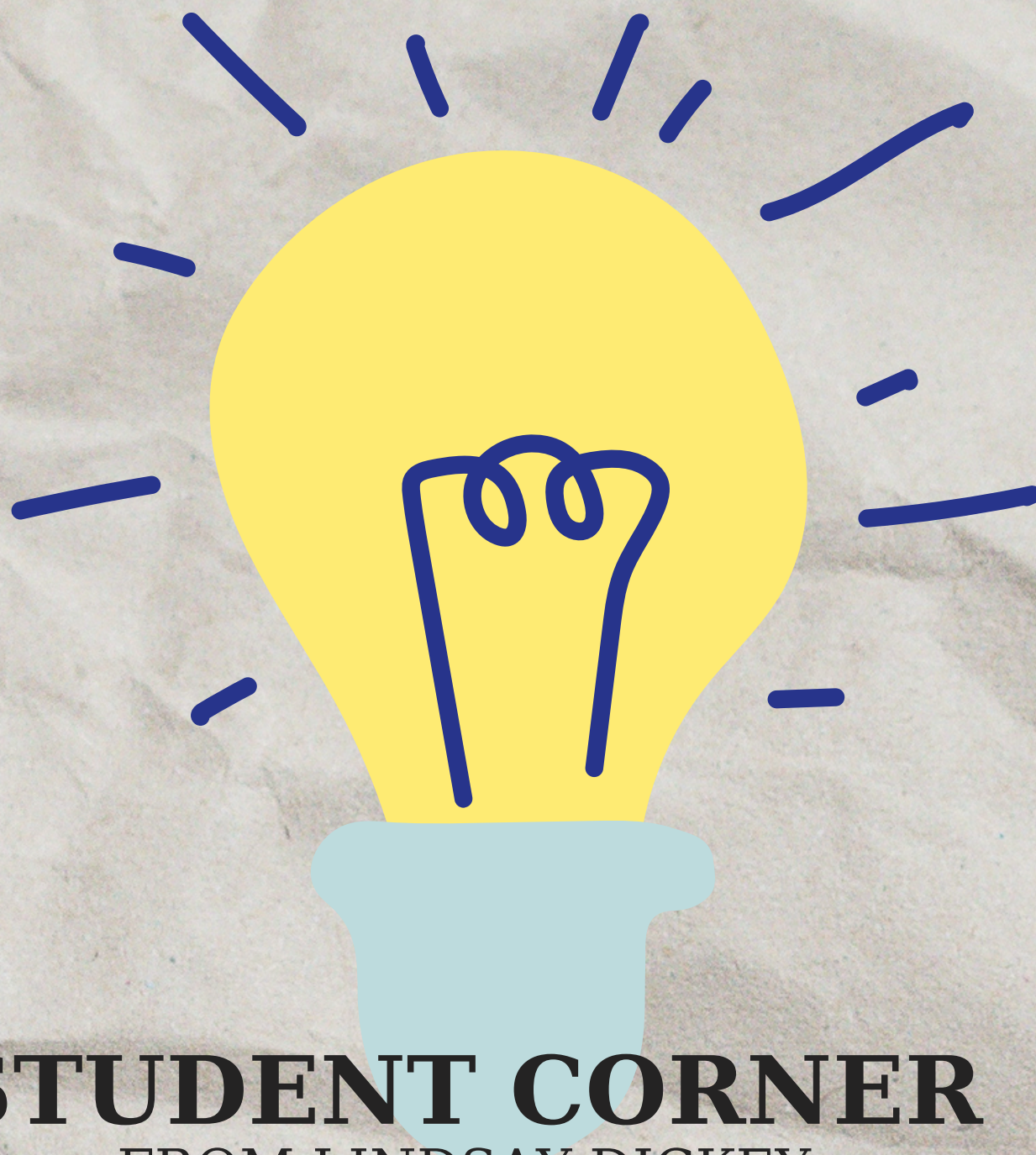
COMMUNITY CORNER

FROM ARIANA DEIGNAN-KOSMIDES

2025 Annual “Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s Legacy of Social & Environmental Justice” event to take place January 20

Free family friendly performances and activities take place at the Yale Peabody museum from 10 am to 4pm





STUDENT CORNER

FROM LINDSAY DICKEY

New Year-New You!!!

We are only a few weeks into this new year, use this time to set yourself some realistic goals that will help make you a better version of yourself.

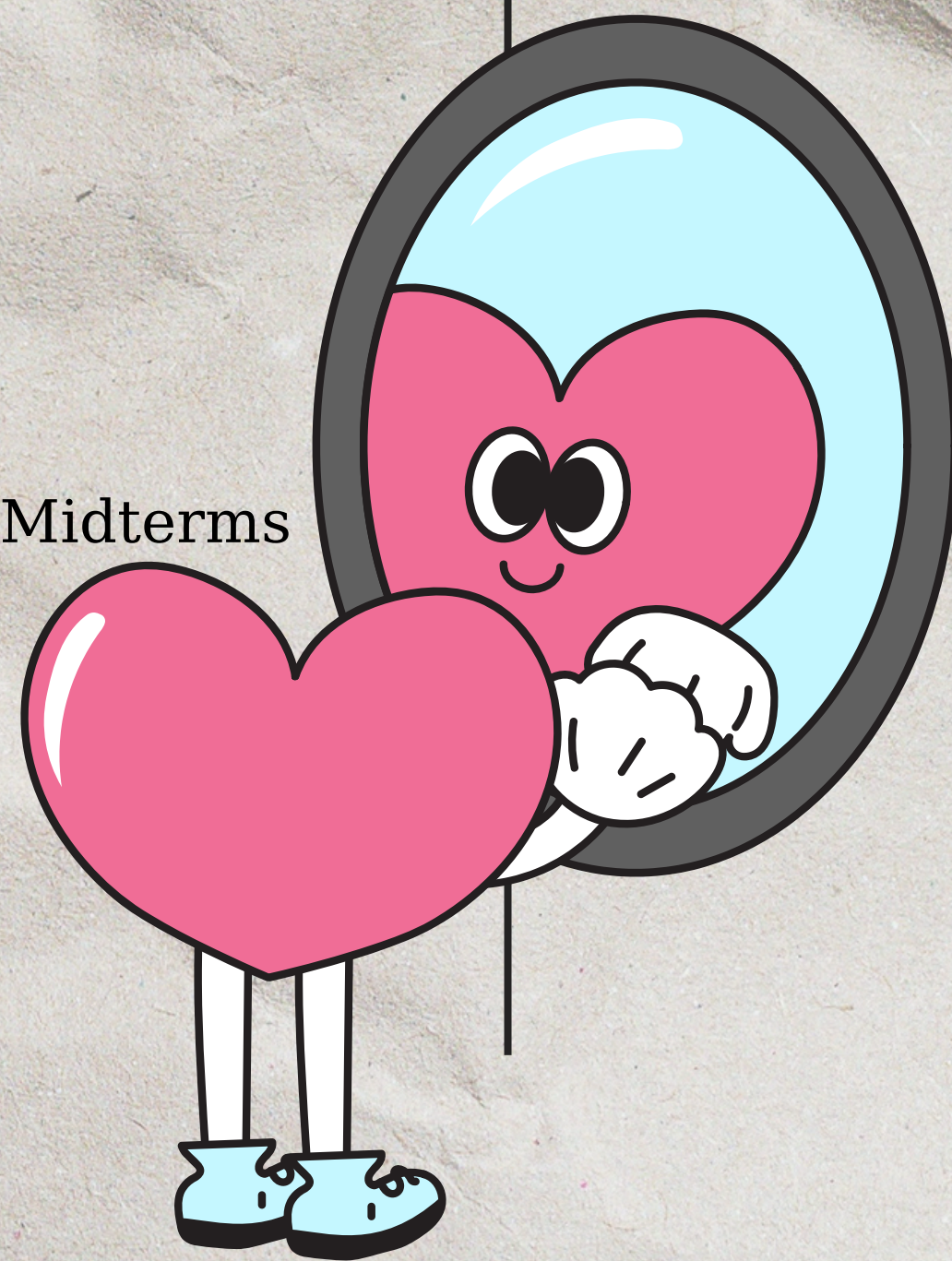
Here are some good ideas you should think about:

1. Save money
2. Read more books
3. Exercise more
4. Learn a new skill
5. Get more organized
6. Reach out to an old friend or family member
7. Talk to someone new

Before you start saving your money consider these 2025 Amazon Deals...

- Ugg Classic Mini Platforms \$119
- Apple AirPods Pro \$180
- Apple Watch SE 2nd Gen \$199
- Electric Heated Blanket \$31
- Apple AirTag 4 pack \$70

also don't forget to practice healthy self care habits during Midterms week!!!!





GRATEFUL FOR EACH OTHER

FROM CRISTINA MARTIN

Numerous studies have shown that social connection has many health benefits, including life-lengthening ones such as lowering blood pressure and improvement of cognition. Unfortunately, one of the negative dynamics that end up occurring within families that are struggling with children who have behavioral challenges is that there can be times of chronic stress that take away from positive time spent together. As a social worker who has worked with children and families in these challenging positions, I have noticed families focus solely on the problem and trying to solve the issues. At times, a child's behavioral issues often manifest at home, and it can feel like a chore to spend time with a child who is uncooperative or in a negative mood.

Oftentimes, as parents, we are desperate to make things right and make things better. We focus on how we can get our children help, what is wrong with them, and who can help them. All of this is good parenting! Many of us did not grow up getting the help that we needed and we want something different for our child. One of the most effective ways to improve child behaviors at home and at school is improving the parent-child relationship. During times of crisis, and challenging adolescent years, it can feel like the child needs you less and less, but it has actually been studied and shown that adolescent development benefits from structured, and regular adult mentorship.

Here are some ways things to try to improve your relationship with your child/teenager:

1. If they are in a bad mood, try saying “I am here if you want to talk” and let them come to you when they are ready. You may have to try this over and over. Be patient.
2. Show interest in something they like. Ask them to show them how to play that video game that makes no sense to you.
3. Spend a very short amount of time with them daily, try 15 minutes, then tell them where you have to go and where you will be if they need you.
4. Focus on something they do positively, and compliment their good choices.
5. Teenagers don’t make sense all the time. They are rapidly developing. Listen, don’t judge.
6. Don’t intervene and fix it, unless it is a safety issue and you feel that they are at risk of harm.

Some good resources: <https://childmind.org/> , <https://www.healthychildren.org/> ,<https://www.smartkidswithld.org>

