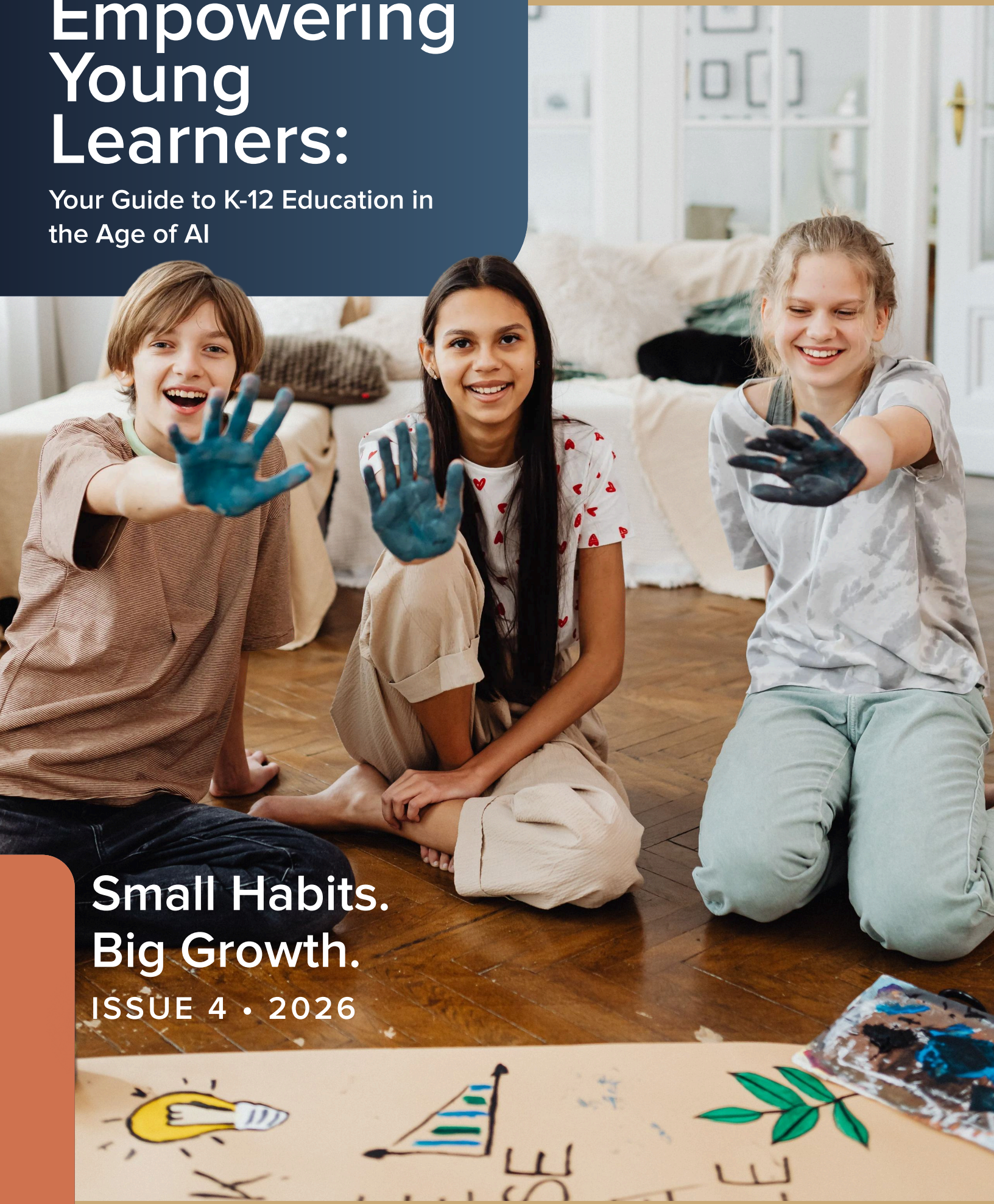
FUTURE
OF EDUCATION

Empowering Young Learners:

Your Guide to K-12 Education in the Age of AI



Small Habits. Big Growth.

ISSUE 4 • 2026



Hello Parents!

Every school year begins with hope. New backpacks. Fresh notebooks. Big goals.

But here's the truth: the biggest difference between a great school year and an average one isn't what's in your child's backpack. It's what happens at home.

You don't need to overhaul your family's routine or spend hours helping with homework. Small, consistent habits have an incredible impact. Reading together before bed. Asking thoughtful questions after school. Celebrating effort. Making time to create, explore, and stay curious.
This toolkit is full of simple ideas to help your family build those habits. You don't need to do everything. Pick one or two ideas, stay consistent, and let the small wins add up.

Here's to a school year filled with curiosity, confidence, and the joy of learning.



> **The magic is in the little steps. Start small, stay consistent, and watch the growth.**

MacKenzie's App Picks

Build confidence in just a few minutes a day. All apps are free to try!



Flow Free

Strengthen spatial reasoning and problem-solving as you connect paths through increasingly challenging puzzles.



GeoGuessr

Explore the world through clues and curiosity. Kids use observation and critical thinking to guess where they are on the map.



Forest

Stay focused by tracking, organizing, and limiting screen time while turning your screen-free time into a growing virtual forest.



MathTango

Build math confidence through fun, game-based learning. Just a few minutes a day helps strengthen foundational math skills.

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Read. Create. Grow.

The biggest breakthroughs come from doing the right things, consistently. Start with one book, one creative challenge, and one small habit to grow.



Grades K–2

Read

The Magical Yet by Angela DiTerlizzi
A lesson that curiosity, confidence, and persistence can unlock what kids are capable of, even when they don't know how to do something *yet*.

Create

Build a "Yes Zone". Set up a small space with books, crayons, tape, cardboard, blocks, and other open-ended materials that invite creativity and productive boredom.

Grow

Start a Family Reading Routine. Read together for 20 minutes before bed. It's one of the simplest habits that builds confidence, curiosity, and a lifelong love of reading.

Grades 3–5

Read

The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster
Milo grows through a series of small challenges, showing how curiosity and persistence build confidence and capability.

Create

Invent Something. Find an everyday problem and challenge your child to design a creative solution using LEGO, cardboard, or recycled materials.

Grow

Host a Book & Movie Night. Read a book before watching the movie adaptation, then compare what changed and which version you liked best. Invite a new friend!

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Grades 6–8

Read

Holes by Louis Sachar
A powerful story that shows how seemingly small actions eventually uncover something big. It's a reminder that transformation rarely happens all at once.

Create

Create Before You Consume.
Before reaching for a screen, have your child spend 20 minutes writing, building, drawing, coding, or creating something original.

Grow

Start a Study Squad. Encourage your child to invite two or three classmates to meet weekly to work independently, review classwork, and encourage one another.

Grades 9–12

Read

Project Hail Mary by Andy Weir
A great example of breaking an enormous challenge into smaller problems, learning from mistakes, and continuing to move forward.

Create

Build a Digital Portfolio. Challenge your teen to collect their best writing, artwork, coding projects, presentations, or videos. By year's end, they'll have a showcase of their growth.

Grow

Find a Mentor. Encourage your teen to connect with a teacher, coach, family friend, or professional whose work inspires them. One meaningful conversation can open unexpected doors.

Ignite a Love of Reading - For Free

A lifelong love of reading starts with simple, free daily habits. Spark excitement at home with these resources:

- **Join Dolly Parton's Imagination Library:** Turn storytime into a predictable, exciting routine. Get a monthly, high-quality book delivered straight to your home for kids from birth to age five.
- **Unlock digital libraries with Libby and Hoopla:** Use your free library card to access thousands of digital ebooks, audiobooks, comics, and streaming media right from your devices.

Pro tip: Make a weekly family library visit or nightly storytime part of your back-to-school tradition.



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Small Shifts Stack Up.



The start of a new school year doesn't require a complete family makeover. In fact, research suggests the opposite: small, consistent changes are often the ones that stick.

In *Atomic Habits,* James Clear popularized the idea that tiny habits compound into remarkable results. Every day, we send small signals to our kids about what matters. Those signals add up, shaping the way our children think about learning.

This school year, start with a few small shifts at home.

Leave a Book Within Reach

Kids are more likely to read when books are easy to grab.

Try this: Place a favorite book on the coffee table, in the car, or on your child's nightstand.

Replace One Screen with One Invitation to Create

Creativity doesn't need elaborate projects - it just needs an invitation.

Try this: Put out a sketchbook, markers, LEGOs, or a puzzle in a common area so creating becomes the easiest choice.

Make Progress Visible

The habits we see are the habits we stick with. Seeing progress keeps kids going.

Try this: Before school starts, help your child choose a few habits or milestones to work toward this semester. Write them down and celebrate every small win.

Fill this out with your child to kick off the school year with simple, confidence-building milestones.

> "The task of building a good habit is like cultivating a delicate flower one day at a time."
>
> —James Clear, *Atomic Habits*

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I've Got This.

Choose a few milestones that reflect who you want to become by winter break. Add your own and celebrate the small steps along the way.

Name: _____ I'm going into Grade: _____

Three words that describe last school year:

_____ _____ _____

One thing I'm proud of: _____

When I check off the items below, I want to celebrate by...

_____

BE A READER	Finish a book I chose myself	☐
	Find a book or series I can't wait to keep reading	☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
BE A CREATOR	Complete one project I'm proud of	☐
	Use AI to create something original	☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
BE A LEARNER	Try something that feels challenging	☐
	Learn a skill outside of school	☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
TAKE OWNERSHIP	Pack my own backpack the night before	☐
	Keep track of my own assignments	☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
BE A GOOD HUMAN	Make a new friend	☐
	Help someone without being asked	☐
		☐
		☐
		☐

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Want to explore big ideas about the future of education and stay connected with a growing community of changemakers? Follow MacKenzie for fresh insights, updates, and behind-the-scenes looks at how real change is happening in education.



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