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# Our View: Children's Parade can't catch a break

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Written by Editorial Board The Town Talk

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Faithful readers opened their newspapers today to find our editorial request to chant along with us in hopes of somehow redirecting the rain that was in Saturday's forecast for Alexandria and Central Louisiana.

Mother Nature was having none of it.

Our plea for "No rain! No rain! No rain!" went unheeded, and the downpour canceled the Children's Parade planned for downtown Alexandria. The same thing happened last year to the dismay of hundreds who look forward to the event.

Maybe next year ...

## Our View: 'No rain'!

Lots of young eyes are peering out the window this morning as kids throughout the Alexandria area wonder if Mother Nature will be kind to them by bringing some parade-friendly weather. The annual Children's Parade -- their parade -- is supposed to roll at 10:45 a.m., weather permitting, and when they last checked, things didn't look promising.

Speaking through her forecasters at AccuWeather late Friday, Mother Nature said this morning will bring rain, thunderstorms and possible localized flooding. Not the forecast anyone wants to hear for parade day, but there it is. Parade and city officials will be watching

the sky and the radar closely this morning. With luck, the Children's



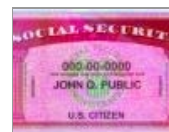
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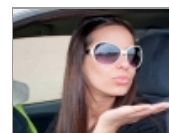
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Parade will roll as scheduled.

Rain or not, the King Cake Party will start at 2 p.m. at the Alexandria Zoo on Masonic Drive; and the forecast for Sunday looks good. The big Krewe Parade should roll at 2 p.m. under sunny skies.

Elsewhere in the news, the secretary of defense has encouraging words about Barksdale Air Force Base, and Gov. Bobby Jindal's plans for vouchers are under fire. Our views follow.

DEFENSE SECRETARY Leon Panetta was at Barksdale Air Force Base in northwest Louisiana on Friday for a briefing on the nation's nuclear deterrent capabilities and to present medals to airmen who served in Afghanistan. Panetta's visit came as the Defense Department is planning to reduce the growth in military spending by \$487 billion over 10 years. Those plans, outlined in the defense budget proposed for fiscal 2013, will mean that Barksdale will lose its A-10 combat planes and the historic 47th Fighter Squadron.

WE THINK: The cuts will be a hit for Barksdale AFB, which supports some 20,000 jobs in Shreveport-Bossier City area. Still, Panetta made it clear that the base retains its strategic position as the Pentagon refocuses and repositions the nation's military assets. "This is one of our premiere air bases," he told 300 airmen while flanked by three bombers. "The reason I wanted to stop here is to tell you how important this base is. It's a key priority for us and it's going to stay a key priority for us in the future."

THE LOUISIANA BUDGET Project, a watchdog group, says Gov. Bobby Jindal's plan to offer school vouchers statewide is problematic, in part because private schools don't administer the same tests the state uses to grade whether public schools are succeeding.

WE THINK: That is one of many key factors to be sorted out when the state Legislature considers this legislation. If private schools are allowed to take public money, accountability and equity will be essential.

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