



# Toddler Times

January 2023



## Welcome to WHE!

This month we welcome two new families. Norrie Balog-Way and her parents Simone & Dominic join us on Jan 3 and Mateo Scheiber and his parents Patricia & David will be here starting Jan 20th.

With Katarina and Oliver starting in December and Ellie just the month before, we're all pretty new around here! Your family page is a source of comfort for your child—and we all enjoy learning more about you! We're now putting pages into individual plexi frames that children can carry around and visit.



## Educaring® Approach Tidbits

Respect is the basis of the Educaring® Approach, but what does this mean to children? Here are a few important concepts underlying how we support children at West Hill Educare.

- 1) Trust in and learn about your child's abilities and interests:  
Provide a safe environment for exploration and uninterrupted play, watch how they initiate their own learning. *"Wants nothing time"* gives everyone a little freedom to simply enjoy being together, to play independently, or for us to get something else done. Provide passive toys to encourage active children.
- 2) Involve children in their care: *"Wants something time"*  
Encouraging participation builds children's sense of value and helps them gain skills. By involving children in caregiving routines (eating, diapering, bathing, dressing) we are *doing with*, rather than *doing to*—it's way more your bottom line. Clearly define your limits: offer two choices that further your objective and that you can stand behind. Try to state what you want—what we say sticks in the mind... Give reminders about what you're working on together, be repetitive and matter of fact.
- 3) Develop a consistent routine and keep children informed. Predictability helps children know what to expect and helps them to feel secure to explore and learn. Talking with children about what is going on helps them build trust and make sense of the world.

# Thoughts About Praise

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The way we give feedback to children has an impact on their feelings. Recognition of effort is often what a child is seeking when they glance at you during what is otherwise independent play. They want to be sure you're still there, it's still safe to explore.

Sometimes a glance is enough—off they go.

When you have a chance, or when you have something to say, describing what you see can be the most effective form of recognition or praise.

Receiving and giving attention builds connection and praise is a form of attention that offers appreciation and gratitude to the other person. There are three types of praise; *evaluative*, *descriptive* and *appreciative*.

*Evaluative praise* makes a judgment. We all say things like "I love it!" when asked if we like the artwork, but it may be worth considering breaking the habit. What if, one day, you don't think your child's drawing is *pretty*? What do you say? How do you have an authentic response?

*Descriptive praise* gives information and *appreciative praise* recognizes effort and contribution.

Imagine how it feels to be recognized for your efforts, navigating a situation in an admirable way, or to hear that your actions are appreciated. *Valued and seen*.

## Evaluative Praise

- makes a judgment

"Good work."

"Pretty."

"I like your drawing."

## Descriptive Praise

- gives information

"You used a little of every color and covered the whole page!"

"That really worked. You asked for the shovel and she gave it to you."

## Appreciative Praise

- recognizes and appreciates effort and contribution

"That really helps me when you put your dishes away."

"You did it all by yourself!"

"You figured it out!"

# Cold Weather Wear

We have already had some pretty nippy days! Please bring an extra mid-layer as well as a warm jacket, a hat and mittens so that your child has what they need to stay warm. Here are some ideas if you didn't figure it all out over break...

As you know, boots and snow clothing can be very restrictive.

Think layers! Mittens that open on the back, so they can be put on easily & often!

Look for flexible boots to help increase your child's enjoyment of the brisk and snowy weather ahead.



Current, available mitten resource:

<https://www.backcountry.com/outdoor-research-adrenaline-mitten-kids>

***Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her.***

Urie Bronfenbrenner

January					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	
9	10	11	12	13	
16	17	18	19	20	
23	24	25	26	27	
30	31				



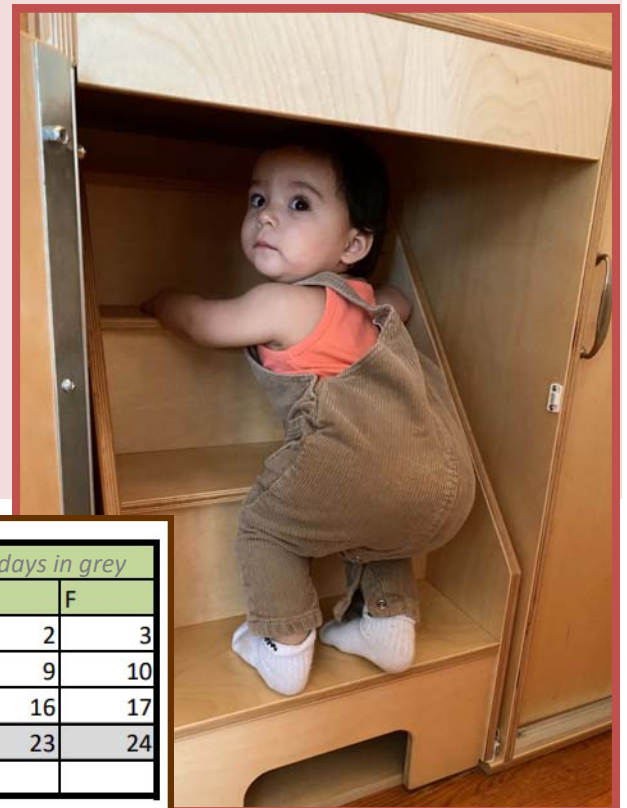
# Toddler Times

## February 2023

We are settling in and getting solid in routines around here. So many new skills, and well, hey! Katarina is walking! (*So last month!*). Children clearly have a sense of themselves as members a community; every day we witness compassionate child:child interactions and see children's interest in each other as they tend to move as an amoeba, ending up in the same corner often. We are starting to see more dramatic play and learning more and more about children's thoughts as more words come out—so fun! From those who are not yet speaking words, well, you know—nonverbal communication is worth (as you can see in pictures), a thousand words.

### Classroom Rules

- ♥ Be kind
- ♥ Be gentle
- ♥ Be safe



February Calendar <i>Closure days in grey</i>				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28			





# Supporting Children's Play

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Through play, children learn and develop important skills they will use throughout their lives. We often think of play as a social activity, but play is fundamentally personal, driven by one's own curiosity. At WHE we support play by providing **opportunity for uninterrupted play and freedom to explore\*** whenever possible. We offer play objects that are not just "toys" but other safe objects that support active engagement and extension of their interests. They may be objects children see in other places in their lives, providing an opportunity to play with the tools of purposeful work and helping to build children's focus and engagement. We choose passive play objects to encourage active children.

Play is a critical vehicle for fostering children's development. Play is children's work, and it's serious. Through play children build physical skills and self-confidence, gather information about the world and learn to negotiate with and be with others—but adults, we often interrupt children's play. Sometimes we interrupt to get something done, sometimes we interrupt with comments, meaning to engage, not realizing this detracts from the child's play. To help us remember it is beneficial to both children and adults to have separate play/work time, Magda Gerber offered the concepts of **wants nothing time** and **wants something time**.

*Wants nothing time* are times when we can be with a child, without expectation; observing what they like, what they're learning, what they can do. When they look at us, it is our opportunity to engage, recognize them, and state what we see.

*Wants something time* are times when we need the child's attention or cooperation to accomplish something together. Most commonly these include caregiving activities, but also include family activities.



\* **opportunity for uninterrupted play** is one of the 8 RIE® Principles

## A Toddler's Need for Boundaries - No Walk in the Park

Boundaries. Super important to learn about with parenting. If you don't know of Janet Lansbury yet, check out this post, rich with reminders and ideas for how to support children of all ages with their efforts towards independence and the value of boundaries. Covers navigating undesired behaviors like the child hitting, pushing, throwing objects—challenges with getting in the car... It's worth a read!

<https://www.janetlansbury.com/2009/10/securing-boundaries-no-walk-in-the-park/>





# Toddler Times

## March 2023

What a fun month February was and we're excited for March!

Already the children seem older than the pictures I have of them! We look forward to the full month ahead with good health and the coming of Spring!

### Happy Birthday Ellie!

- ♥ Ellie is our first to turn two at WHE2!
- ♥ Her birthday is March 19

### Welcome Mateo Full-Time

- ♥ Mateo will begin attending full-time March 20
- ♥ His parents are Pati and Dave: Be sure to say hi when you see them!



## Calendar

March					
M	T	W	Th	F	
			1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10	
13	14	15	16	17	
20	21	22	23	24	
27	28	29	30	31	

## What Is Typical? What Should We Expect?

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Learning about typical development helps us to understand what a child may be going through, and give us a sense of what to expect next. It provides information for setting reasonable expectations. Knowing what is typical can also help identify developmental concerns early on, when they're easiest to address.

One of the most accessible tools for parents and caregivers is the *Ages & Stages Questionnaire*. It is a primary tool used by Early Interventionists and Early Childhood Educators across the country. It is best practice for us to assess children to provide an appropriate learning environment.

For many years I have favored the Ages & Stages questionnaire because it's easy to use, is made for parents, and it has proven insightful and useful more than once.

One of the particularly useful elements of the way the questionnaire is designed is that it considers development that has typically already happened, mixed in with what is typically currently happening and what is coming up for children. All broken down in 2-6 month blocks from 2 months to 60 months of age.

In the next couple of weeks, I will place a copy of the survey for your child in their cubby. I hope that you will complete it at home and share your thoughts with us.



### SLIPPERS... In Case of Emergency?

We've been doing our drills and realized why it's helpful for children to have slippers even if they don't wear them. To keep them in our emergency bag, that we grab on the way out the door.

This bag contains those blue emergency cards and we'll need shoes once we've run out the door!

Please hunt down some slippers, and send'm on in. Thanks so much.





**Important  
program  
updates!**



# Toddler Times

**April 2023**

This month has been a breath of fresh air and *everyone* has enjoyed rich nature-provided sensory experiences! We truly appreciate and enjoy the daily delights we experience “living with” these five.

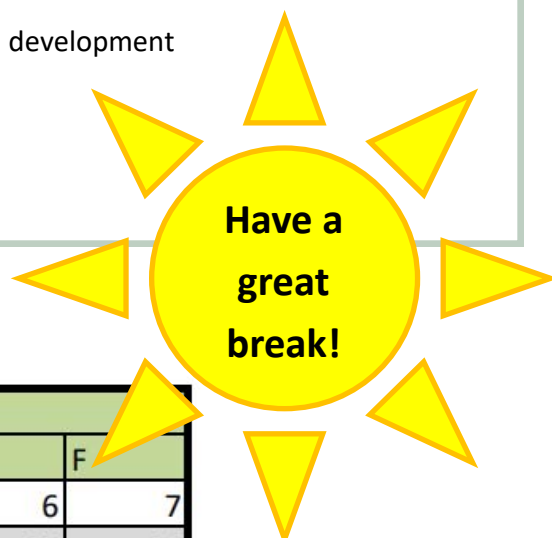
As you’d imagine, we are also juggling a lot before and after our days with the children to uphold and improve the quality of care your child experiences at WHE. This issue focuses on informing you about some of the work behind the scenes and other important updates for our program.

**Be sure to read through for information about:**

- ♥ Child screening and developmental assessment
- ♥ Plans for continued program development
- ♥ Enrollment updates
- ♥ Changes to our contract

**Calendar**

April					
M	T	W	Th	F	
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
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4/10-4/14 Spring Recess



## We're in a Child Care Desert?

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***Yes!! A child care desert is any census tract with more than 50 children under age 5 that contains either no child care providers or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. Fifty-one percent (51% of the US is considered a child care desert!)***

During the pandemic child care providers were finally recognized as critical. The dearth of child care and the low wages earned received national attention, for a minute. The important role that child care plays in the lives of children, their families and for the economy as a whole brought a slew of (mostly) temporary (pandemic) funding to boost the child care system.

As a long time advocate for child care workers and quality care for children, it is exciting to see decades of child care planning and sustainability efforts come together under these opportunities and changes. I have been surprised, pleased, *and sometimes bothered* by the additional requirements we face as home-based providers, *and* we are fortunate to have received some of this funding. By accepting this award, we agreed to working towards the highest early childhood program standards, including many components in our program that are more common in child care centers. In doing so, among other things, we have agreed to:

- ♥ Care for at least 4 children under the age of 3 through the grant period (ending July 2024)
- ♥ Participate in QUALITYstarsNY—more info: <https://qualitystarsny.org/>
- ♥ Conduct developmental screening: ASQs. These are the questionnaires we started last month. Our requirement is to complete an initial screening within 45 days of a child's start date in order to help define individual learning goals and identify any potential special needs
- ♥ Conduct developmental assessment: assessment also provides information for curriculum planning and meeting individual child needs. We complete daily assessment through observation and anecdotal notes. In the coming months we will also begin developmental assessment using a different, reliable tool
- ♥ Curriculum planning
- ♥ Sustainability planning and business training

***Talk with Jude if you'd like to know more...***

## Program & Contract Changes

I believe I have talked with everyone that we have decided to "age up" with this cohort and increase the age range of children we care for. We will maintain a small group of 8 children, aged 18 months through preschool. In addition, we have decided on a couple of minor changes to our contracts and services to increase the sustainability of WHE.

- ♥ **Cloth diapers will not be provided, effective 5/1.**  
Please be prepared to bring paper or cloth diapers for use during the day, come May
- ♥ **Contracts will now be open ended.** Current families will receive a new open-ended contract near their child's 3rd birthday. You still have the option of giving 30 days notice when you are ready to leave.

## There's Help Out There \$\$\$

- ♥ Another pandemic change: **DSS child care subsidies** finally reimburse child care providers at a reasonable rate and eligibility has been raised, meaning a family of three with earnings up to \$69,090 per year is eligible for payment assistance... learn more at: <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/dss/childcare>
- ♥ **Cornell employees**—be sure you've learned about the child care grants offered. You may have to wait til next year, but it's worth it!



# Toddler Times



## May 2023

At the end of this month we celebrate 6 months @310!

We are truly grateful for all of you, working with us to partner in the care of your child. A few reminders:

- ♥ As the weather shifts, ***please bring a few different types of clothing to meet changing temperature needs.*** Kids are getting muddy! If you have **rainboots**, bring them in as an option, the grass is wet. And we need **sun hats** back!
- ♥ Please be sure your child is wearing clothing is **ok to get dirty**. When possible, bring items that are looser—we can help them spend some **time learning to dress themselves** and it makes getting out faster!
- ♥ **Transitions** at drop-off and pick-up can be a little challenging. Once you arrive, you are responsible for your child—they look to you, but they also wonder what you'll do on this "turf." It can be awkward all around as your child looks to you, but you're not sure what to do. This is an important time for us to be in communication.

## Calendar

May					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	1	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31		

5/29 Memorial Day



## Types of Play

***One great benefit of the group being close in age is that as we see children get older, we witness changes in their play as a group.***

1. **Unoccupied play** watching, learning about one's body, seemingly disorganized play (birth-3 months)
2. **Solitary Play**—Although we have all seen every child at WHE enjoy the other children here, up to 2 years of age play is generally solitary. During the first two years children are gaining mastery of many basic skills
3. We see a lot of **Onlooker Play**, we all learn a lot by observing, important stuff for later engagement
4. Next is **Parallel play**; playing near or next to, but not *with* others
5. **Associative Play**—doing similar play with another child, beginning interest in other child as playmate
6. **Cooperative Play**—cooperative play between two or more children. Cooperative play can be challenging as children are learning to share, take turns and negotiate control over play. Feelings, self-regulation, language and communication are all challenged!



## Supporting Play

Supporting play involves a lot of the same skills you use parenting.

### ♥ **Dealing with our own emotions—**

In order to best support children, we have to be in touch with our own emotions. We have to be aware of what pushes our buttons

and what are our bottom lines. A great current example: Playing in the mud is a great sensorial experience for toddlers—a classic for this age—and they'll play for a long time!... How do you feel about mud play?

Are there some times playing in the mud is ok and other times when it's not? (of course there are...)

How can you help support the impulse behind this play, today, in a way that gains your child's cooperation, as well as meets your bottom line? This is important. Take a breath. Maybe three.

### ♥ **Ask Questions, Let Children Guide Play**

Play is a time when children experiment and learn. The child's ability to focus builds when we offer materials or suggestions that further their interests. Watch for opportunities when they seek support.

### ♥ **Give children time.**

**Be matter of fact—and repetitive.** Young children are literally growing grey matter and it takes them longer to process information.

### ♥ **Use Positive language—**say what you want *save NO for dangerous behavior*



June 2023

May was filled with conquering hills, eating snack outside, sand and water play, drawing, painting and getting outside! Oh, and the fawn, the robins, a few worms and *our* snake(!). There must be more.

I only get glimpses of our day to you, but you know—there's so much good stuff... Just today Oliver was joining in clearly about the wheels on the bus... all over "town," Mateo continues to lead us singing "I like" and we all got down with the Hokey Pokey! Everyone was here for the start of the day—all 6 of us! And everyone saw all four robin hatchlings, beaks up in the air, and watched the adults collect worms.

There will be a few changes this month. This Thursday and Friday our newest families will be visiting briefly. Next week Austin will begin coming Monday-Thursday. Our group will be solid until Kata goes for the summer (gone June 23-August 25). In July we'll have Sybil will begin coming Monday-Friday. Her sister Riley will join us for the summer. Our longer term crew will be complete when Remi joins us in July or August.



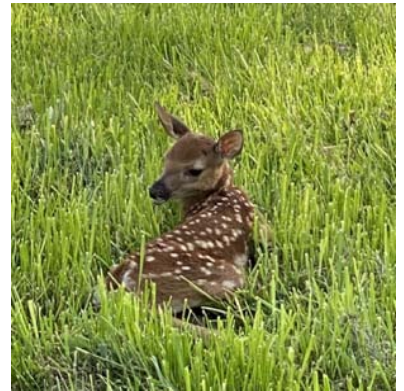
Calendar

Juneteenth Recess

Monday 6/19



# Toddler Times



**Family Potluck!**

Saturday, June 24

10-noon

Join us at the  
Children's Garden to have some casual fun together.

We'll plan to meet near Gaia, the turtle  
(south end of the park).  
There are tables, shade and a digging pit there.  
...It will be picnic style!

**Hope everyone can make it!**

Thank You to...

A belated thank you  
to *Oliver's family*—

*Thank you for the tree blocks!*



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Thank you to the

### Child and Adult Care Food Program



Plants for our garden: tomatoes,  
squash, sweet peppers, cilantro



Our recent designation as a  
**breastfeeding friendly**  
child care home (of course!)



Just a few  
of our **bright** moments!







# Toddler Times

July 2023

I guess we can truly say it's summer now, Tompkins County style—muggy and mixed, hotter and more humid the day summer hit.

The potluck was fun! Thanks to everyone for making it out to the park and juggling the, oh—weather! We really enjoyed getting together in the park with everyone.

This month we welcome Sybil & Riley and their parents, Rachael & Jimmy we'll be seeing them full time starting 7/10!

This newsletter a couple extra pages about our upcoming year. Please be sure to take note of small changes to the:

- 2023-2024 school calendar
- 2023-2024 tuition and enrollment policies



## Calendar

July

Closed 7/3 & 7/4

July					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
3	4	5	6	7	
10	11	12	13	14	
17	18	19	20	21	
24	25	26	27	28	
31					



What do you mean  
toddlers can't focus?!

*We just have to find  
and feed their "want to..."*





## Notes About 2023-2024 Calendar and Enrollment Policies

The **WHE calendar** is based on the Ithaca City School District calendar, with few, exceptions. In 2023-2024, the only change is that rather than taking the district's 4/10 recess day, we will be extending the spring break by one day, for an *Eclipse Recess Extension* holiday, to include 4/8/24. We hope you'll all venture to a spot near Rochester to join in the daytime event!

- September 1 is a holiday! So it's a long Labor Day weekend this year.
- Please note the one change in April that extends our break one day, but does not take the middle of the week holiday that same week upon return
- Our summer break will be 8/7-8/11/2024



### Tuition and enrollment policies

There are few changes to our tuition/enrollment policies for 2023-2024, notably:

- Slight increase in fees (see policies)  
It's hard to raise rates! We have kept it to a minimum: Full time rates will increase 2% and part-time 3%; additional day rates are now different for children under/over 2
- Early Care, slight increase
- Annual materials fees, slight increase



### HEALTH ALERT:

CHECK FOR TICKS, PREVENT LYME DISEASE & OTHER ILLNESSES

Friday, June 2, 2023 the Tompkins County Health Department issued a health alert and we have seen ticks in our yard.

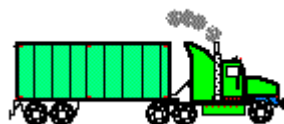
Remember to double CHECK YOUR KIDS at home for ticks. ICK!

Read more: <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/>

## Ever Heard of Trout Fishing in America?

Great kid band! Oliver wants you to know 18 Wheels on a Big Rig!

Check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvDgxPvX1tM>



Discover Your Own Pathway to Mindful Parenting

**RAISING  
GOOD  
HUMANS  
SUMMIT**

July 11-14, 2023



Hunter Clarke-Fields, MSAE



16 Experts Help You Cultivate Self-Compassion, Transform Reactivity, and Discover Your Own Pathway to Mindful Parenting Every Day

REGISTER

<https://www.newharbinger.com/pages/rgh-summit/#>

**West Hill Educare**  
Calendar  
2023-2024



9/1 & 9/4  
Labor Day Recess

September				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

March				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

10/9 Indigenous People's  
Day Recess

October				
M	T	W	Th	F
	2	3	4	5
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

April				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

4/1-4/5 Spring Recess  
4/8 Eclipse Recess Extension  
(not taking 4/10 per distr)

11/10 Veterans Day

11/22-24 Thanksgiving

November				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

May				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

5/27 Memorial Day

12/22-12/31  
Winter Recess

December				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

June				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

6/19 Juneteen Recess  
6/26 last day ICSD

1/1 & 1/2 New Year!

1/15 Closed, MLK

January				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

July				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				

7/4 & 7/5 Holidays

2/19-2/23  
School Recess

February				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
	1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11
14	15	16	17	18
21	22	23	24	25
28	29	30	31	

8/7-8/11 Summer Break

**PLEASE NOTE :** WHE remains open on parent/teacher conference days, superintendent and professional learning community days.

# Tuition & Enrollment Policies 2023-2024



## Monthly Tuition

Schedule	Full-time (M-F)	Part-time (4 days/wk)	Add day
Under 2 years	\$1,555	\$1,250	\$85
Over 2 years	\$1,440	\$1,160	\$75

**Annual Materials fee** \$ 225

*Due at time of enrollment, billed annually in September*

- Rates averaged over the year, for equal monthly payments, regardless of scheduled holidays
- 30 days' notice required to terminate contracts
- Limited early care (8-8:30am M-F) *by arrangement*  
\$250/month - 5 days/week, \$200/month - 4 days/week, \$12/day

The following is required to secure enrollment

- 1) Non-refundable Last month's deposit, applied to last month of care
- 2) Non-refundable annual materials fee

WHE Provides	Families Provide
• Nurturing, responsive care	• Rest mat or blanket
• Prepared environment	• Indoor shoes
• Healthy vegetarian meals/snacks	• Diapers, diaper cream
• Water-based disposable wipes	• Families only provide diapering wipes, sunscreen and general lotion if child needs specific different items than we offer.
• Sunscreen, lotion, insect spray	
• First aid supplies	
• Parent support	

**WHE follows the ICSD school calendar with the following adaptations:**

### ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS OPEN

- ♦ ICSD parent/teacher conference days, superintendent, and professional learning community days
- ♦ April 10, 2024 (ICSD Recess Day)

### ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS CLOSED

- ♦ April 8, 2024, *Eclipse Recess Extension* holiday
- ♦ July 4th & 5th Independence Day holiday
- ♦ August 8-11, 2024 – Summer break

*Additional enrollment policies including payment deadlines, late fees, absences for personal illness and other reasons are included in enrollment contract.*





# Toddler Times

## August 2023

In August, we welcome Remy, Asia & Perry!  
Kata will be back...and we're still solidifying our 8th child/family!

July was a busy month. You can see from the pics all the good outdoor activity we've had! Poking with sticks, hiking and running the trail, using trees as fire poles, hopscotch, oobleck, easel painting, parachute fun, gardening, finding a cicada!! And well... WATER PLAY!

Please note—there is an **updated class list** and a **revised calendar** included this month (*sigh*, can you believe I edited an international journal for 4 years?!)... Two errors were pointed out to me: missing Yom Kippur holiday (9/25) and August 2024 days/dates were off; a current calendar also on our website.

And remember the **secret link for parents on our site** - there's a transparent image to the right of the Parent Resources title... hover & click the hand...



## Calendar

### August

Closed 8/7-11

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31		

# Save the Date!



## Fall Picnic!

October 14  
10am-noon

Stewart Park,  
Small Pavilion

## DRDP Meetings

*Desired Results Developmental Profile*

The **DRDP** is an extensive formative assessment instrument we use to inform program development. Up to 36 months, we use the infant/toddler version.

**If your child has been with us for 3 months, we invite you to have a 30-45 minute check-in with us, including a review your child's DRDP.**

Evening online video appointments are available on our parent link page.





A B C S

## How to Make It—An Introduction to Phonics

More and more we are playing with language; singing, reading, rhyming... we also now have a classroom rules sign posted and at least one child points to the sign every time we review the rules. They already know the written word has meaning!

Children are looking at name cups and trying to identify their own. And what else begins with the sound “S” or “L?”

Are you familiar with phonics? It’s one tool that helps children to decode words when learning to read. It’s a standard for how to say what each letter says. Singing the ABCs is very different than being able to identify the symbol, the letter and the sound it makes. The name of the letter we sing is different than its sound, and it’s easy to add sounds.

Check out the included handout to learn *how to say it!*

Next time we’ll talk about counting and numbers—and how kids can learn while helping out at home!



## Reminders

- New rates are in effect 9/1/2023
- Annual materials fee of \$225 is billed with your September bill



**West Hill Educare**  
Calendar  
**2023-2024**



9/1 & 9/4  
Labor Day Recess

September				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

9/25 Yom Kippur

March				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

10/9 Indigenous People's  
Day Recess

October				
M	T	W	Th	F
	2	3	4	5
9	10	11	12	13
16	17	18	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31			

April				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

4/1-4/5 Spring Recess  
4/8 Eclipse Recess Extension  
(not taking 4/10 per distr)

11/10 Veterans Day

11/22-24 Thanksgiving

November				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

May				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

5/27 Memorial Day

12/22-12/31  
Winter Recess

December				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

June				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

6/19 Juneteen Recess  
6/26 last day ICSD

1/1 & 1/2 New Year!

1/15 Closed, MLK

January				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

July				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

7/4 & 7/5 Holidays

2/19-2/23  
School Recess

February				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

8/5-8/9 Summer Break Sumr

**PLEASE NOTE :** WHE remains open on parent/teacher conference days, superintendent and professional learning community days.

### HOW TO MAKE IT

- a for apple - Widen your jaws then lift your tongue and pull it back while using your voice.
- b for bird - Send your breath through your lips and sound it in your throat.
- c for cat - Tap back of tongue against soft palate, tip of tongue on floor of mouth. Send your breath quickly.
- d for doll - Press the tip of your tongue lightly behind your upper teeth and use your voice.
- e for elf - Let your tongue push against lower teeth, open mouth and use your voice.
- f for feather - Scratch your lower lip against your upper teeth and blow lightly at the same time.
- g for goose - Tap back of tongue against soft palate, tip of tongue on floor of mouth. Now use your voice.
- h for hat - Open your lips and send a quiet puff of breath through them.
- i for igloo - Open your mouth slightly, let tongue rest on sides of upper teeth and use your voice.
- j for jug - Press tip of tongue against gum ridge. Release air slowly.
- k for kite - Tap back of tongue against soft palate, tip of tongue on floor of mouth. Send your breath out quickly.
- l for lock - Lightly press the tip of your tongue against your gum ridge. Use your voice and your vocal cords will vibrate.
- m for mittens - Place lips together and use your breath. Make a humming sound. The sound comes through your nose.
- n for net - Press tip of tongue against your hard palate. Part your teeth and lips and let air pass through your nose.
- o for ostrich - Open mouth, let tongue lay on floor of mouth, and use your voice.
- p for pumpkin - Press lips together, then send little puffs of breath between your lips. Place hand in front of lips and feel the dry puffs.
- q for quarter - Two sounds. Sounds k and w close together. Always followed by a "u"
- r for ring - Raise the tip of your tongue a little and then curl it back and use your voice.
- s for seven - Hide your tongue behind your lower front teeth, let your lips smile and blow.
- t for teepee - Press the tip of your tongue lightly behind your upper teeth and use your breath.
- u for umpire - Let tongue lay on floor of mouth with tip against lower teeth, open mouth, and use your voice.
- v for violin - Scratch your lower lip against your upper teeth and use your voice.
- w for watermelon - Make your lips round and say "oo" like the wind.
- x for box - Two sounds. Just use your breath and sound k and s.
- y for yellow - Press tongue against sides of teeth. Part lips and draw them back slightly. Use your voice.
- z for zebra - Hide your tongue behind your lower front teeth, let your lips smile. Now blow and use your voice.





# Toddler Times

## September 2023

They're getting so big! In August we enjoyed the cooler summer with ramps and tubes, our new wagon, oobleck, easel and watercolor painting, singing and running! Now it's almost September and we're seeing friendships build and minds grow.

As the weather cools (more!) we'll look forward to the colors of fall, spending time with Kata again and getting to know our newest community members: Ev and her parents, Christine & Eli (Welcome!). In this newsletter you'll find:

- Counting and the Concept of Number
- 3 Period Lesson—what's that?
- Changes to daily schedule
- Class list w contact information for all families



## Numeracy: Counting & the Concept of Number

Many kids are into counting these days... but simple counting is just a start!

Numeracy is parallel to literacy. Just like there is a difference between singing the ABCs and knowing letter sounds, and then knowing how to read, there is a difference between rote counting and understanding what numbers mean.

How do we support children's learning about counting and the concept of number? From a young age children learn there are one, two, five, nine. Young children know math concepts like more, all gone or none. So learning happens in context. In fact, playing with number in context is the perfect way to build a concrete understanding of number.

Fundamentally, numeracy is based on 1:1 Correspondence: saying/counting one number as you touch one object. When looking at counting books, you probably model this naturally. Here are a few other ways we highlight number, and support contextual learning:

- How many plates do we need? Me, you, mama; 1, 2, 3 (finger counting)
- How many cucumbers do we have? Do we have enough for everyone?
- Help me pull out the wipes, 1... 2... 3...
- Two books before bed
- Three deep breaths, ahhhhhh, 1, ahhhhhh, 2, ahhhhhh, 3 (lol, maybe not 1:1)

## Calendar

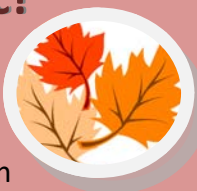
Closed 9/1 & 9/4  
9/25

September				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	20	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

## Fall Picnic!

October 14  
10am-noon

Stewart Park,  
Small Pavilion





## Saying Good-bye

Good-byes can be hard for children and parents.

While it is hard to see your child upset, we assure you that the more matter of fact and quicker you can be about saying good-bye, the easier it will be.

It is o.k. to acknowledge that it is hard for you too, but be careful not to over-dramatize the separation. Talk about the good things there are for your child to look forward to at WHE to connect your child to their choices. Tell them what they can look forward to later. Who will pick them up? What's happening tonight?

Remain your child's firm base of support. Separation anxiety happens for all children and is a sign of secure attachment. Be sure say good-bye, acknowledge any sadness, say when you will return. **Then go!**

Truly, they cry very briefly.

## A B C S

### Practice with Lower Case Letters!

Although this academic stuff is really early for "our" kids, I'm writing about this all to get you thinking a little about what is behind learning about numbers and letters. When children sing the ABCs or count 1-10, it's like a song to them. They do not know the power of the actual letters and numbers! In last month's focus on letters, I forgot to recommend something important. If/once you practice naming letters or letter sounds with your child, look at lower case letters—they're more varied and easier to identify than capital letters, which look more similar to each other.





# Maria Montessori's 3-Period Lesson

Toddler Times

September 2023

p. 3



*"Never ask a child something you know the answer to."* is something I've heard said many times. Both Maria Montessori and Magda Gerber disliked what they considered to be quizzing children. Maria Montessori believed it was the teacher's job to assess a child's knowledge and to never say, "no, that's an 'xyz,'" when the child misidentifies something, which may make a child feel bad.

Based on these principles, she created the fantastic 3-period lesson.

1. **First Period:**     **Name it.** Many children in our group are asking *"What's that?"* We name things for our kids for years!
2. **Second Period:**   **Play Games.** Even before a child is verbal We ask children to show us their understanding through conversation during games. We all play naming games naturally, matching pictures, reading, counting. There are many Montessori language and counting games. I Spy is one. Another example could be learning shapes. Three items are named/presented to the child—circle, triangle, square—we then ask *"Can you touch the square?"* (last item named), *"Triangle?"*, *"Circle?"* Take note of what the child says. If the child incorrectly identifies something, don't mention it and keep playing. Maybe represent, ask again. We'll do more of these games as kids get older. *Before asking them, be sure they know the name.*
3. **Third Period:**     **What is it?**  
*Only ask once the child knows the name and can be successful when put on the spot.*



## Daily Schedule

There have been a few small changes to our daily schedule, notably adding a "circle time" at 9:00 am or close to that and making lunch, naps and afternoon snack a little bit later.

8:00-8:30am	Early arrivals, <i>additional fee, by arrangement only</i>
8:30 – 9:00 a.m	Arrivals—Playdough, simple drawing, reading books, independent exploration (*Please be sure to arrive by 9:00 or after 9:45, so that we can help your child say good-bye, join circle and eat.)
9:00 - 9:15 a.m.	Circle Time
9:15 - 9:45 a.m.	Breakfast
9:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Indoor/Outdoor play, diapers/toileting, later arrivals Structured and unstructured indoor and outdoor physical activities and exploration
11:45 – 12:15 p.m.	Lunch
~12:45 – ~2:45 p.m.	Quiet rest/Staff planning time Indoor/outdoor play, diapers/toileting when awake
3:00-3:15 p.m.	Snack
3:15 – 4:30 p.m.	Indoor/outdoor play, diaper changes, pick-ups Structured and unstructured indoor and outdoor physical activities and exploration
4:30 p.m.	Close



## ***Contact Information***

### ***West Hill Educare***

Cell Phone: **831.465.4518**, texting ok

*Please use this number to contact us as soon as you know if your child will be absent, as child absences may affect staffing needs.*

[westhilleducare@gmail.com](mailto:westhilleducare@gmail.com)

310 Richard Place, Ithaca, NY 14850

*In case of emergency, KC can be reached at 831.331.6929*

## ***Class List***

(08/14/2023)

<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>D.O.B.</b>	<b>Parents</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Austin Gaige	12/7/2021	Maria & Brandon Gaige	3726 County Rte 6 Alpine, NY 14805	917-331-2240 607-483-9815	mvf629@gmail.com
Ellie Rubin	03/19/2021	Alisha & Louie Rubin	703 Mitchell St.? Ithaca, NY 14850	912-755-1462	alishacd994@gmail.com
Griffin Lewis	06/27/2021	Megan Vidler & Rob Lewis	132 Fayette St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-280-4420 423-838-3547	megan@homegreenhome.com robertaaronlewis@gmail.com
Katarina Peisahovitch	02/05/2022	Herianna Valenzuela & Jason Peisahovitch	34 Besemer Hill Rd. Ithaca, NY 14850	Herianna 520-440-0043	heriannavalenzuela@gmail.com
Norie Balog-Way	09/12/2021	Simone & Dominic Balog-Way	227 S. Albany St. Ithaca, NY 14850	303-579-3550 202-855-4202	s.balogway@gmail.com
Oliver Guidault	05/24/2021	Whitney Elrod & Edmond Guidault	4290 Sanctuary Lane Alpine, NY 14805	607-351-5434 607-223-4088	w.e.elrod@gmail.com edmond.guidault@gmail.com
Remy Zurn	5/18/2021	Asia Ferrin & Perry Zurn	514 N. Aurora St. Ithaca, NY 14850	435-862-9520 513-255-4842	asiaferrin@gmail.com perry.a.zurn@gmail.com
Sybil & Riley Lynch	06/16/2021 05/03/2019	Rachael & Jimmy Lynch	37 Whig St. Trumansburg, NY 14886	607-339-8837 845-270-1175	Rkoppel5@gmail.com James.lynch.23@gmail.com





# Toddler Times

## October 2023

Happy fall!

The season is turning and we're fully enjoying it: canopy gazing, waiting for the squirrel to come back, digging in the garden, discovering little wooly bear caterpillars and giant

worms, learning to roll down the hill, pulling each other or sitting in our little red wagon and blazing so many new trails inside and out.

So much work inside—building persistence, learning to put on socks, shoes and getting dressed, language bursting, hands strengthening, learning how to ask for help, saying *mine*, *stop* and how to self-calm.

This is our favorite body song —ask for the tune!

- Head, head (Cabeza)
- Ears, ears (Oreja)
- Shoulders, shoulders (Hombros, hombros)
- Nose, nose (Nariz)
- Waist, waist (Cintura)
- Knees, knees (Rodillas)
- Ankles, ankles (Tobillas)
- Toes (y Deditos)
- (2x)
- Fingers
- Wrists
- & two Elbows
- & Mouth
- & Eyes
- & Hair that grows
- (1x)
- (Repeat first verse 1x)



Mommy Witch and Baby Witch  
- by Jude, age 4

## Calendar

Closed Monday, 10/9

Indigenous People's Day

October					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6
9	10	11	12	13	14
16	17	18	19	20	21
23	24	25	26	27	28
30	31				



## Fall Picnic!

October 14  
10am-noon

Stewart Park,  
Small Pavilion



## Halloween Can be Scary

Toddler Times

October 2023  
p. 2



Fun dressing up may not turn out the way you imagine when you have a toddler. Some toddlers find Halloween and all its costumes scary—some enjoy dressing up themselves but are scared of others in costumes.

Toddlers think categorically and in the present moment. When scared, it may be hard to remember “it’s just a costume,” and there is a person underneath (even when it’s you).

If you’re planning on dressing up this year, consider costumes that keep faces visible—and roam the neighborhood before the big kids come out!

**Hope it’s Fun !**



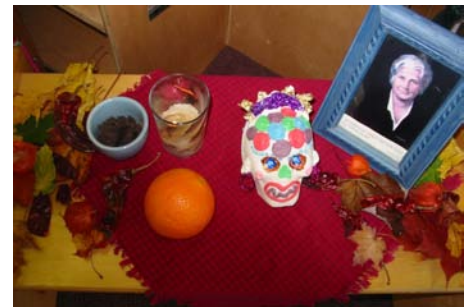
## Holidays

Here they come - with all their joys and challenges.

Children are surrounded by objects and practices for holidays of the dominant culture. Even in our small group, not all families celebrate these holidays—and all families have their own holiday traditions and *special ways*. Holiday traditions are special times with traditions and festivities that children remember forever. Creating your own unique family ways as you merge what you experienced with what you wish you had, with what you want for your child and what you can do this time around.

In order to support families with a diversity of practices, rather than *celebrate* the holidays, at WHE we support learning about many holidays. We do not include “Hallmark holidays” (Valentines or St. Patrick’s Day, nor Mother’s or Father’s Day).

We hope to learn what holidays and rituals are important to your family and how we can support you through this season of holidays.



## WHE Traditions/Rituals

Traditions/rituals at WHE include

- ☞ daily circle
  - includes opportunity for community building and group problem solving
- ☞ reading of *I Offer You Peace* on Fridays—in the future may add *making silence* or a *peace pass*
- ☞ birthdays are acknowledged with a song (and a walk around the sun when kids are a little older and we have a globe!)





## Warm Clothing

Turn of the season is a good time to check your child's extra clothing bin. Sadly, we are beyond shorts weather now... As it gets colder, you know we all like to get outside as much as possible, and having appropriate clothing really helps.

We find that children this age are most comfortable going out in weather over 40°. Between 40° and 60° we still need coats, a hat and closed-toe shoes. Boots and snow clothing can be very restrictive. If you're still shopping for your child's winter wear, try to find mittens that open well so that they can be put on easily and look for flexible boots to help foster your child's learning/independence in dressing and increase your their enjoyment of the brisk and snowy weather ahead.



## Jacket Trick - a.k.a. "Raffi 101"

We've been practicing the hands in the sleeves over your head method of getting jackets on. If you aren't familiar with it, It's really worth checking out this site for pictures of the process. It's just what I wanted when I googled it! I always add a comment, label at the toes...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F7x2ad5upI>



## Learning to Use the Toilet

Next to sleep and weaning, toileting must be the most talked about topic among parents of toddlers. We want it to happen before it does yet it eludes our control. As we continue to prepare children for toileting, please keep in mind the following:

### Signs of Readiness

- physical ability to pull pants up/down
- dry 2-3 hours, through nap or overnight
- Interested

### Appropriate Clothing

*You can help significantly by providing appropriate clothing that your child can largely put on/off independently. This means:*

- pants that are easy to get up and down— *elastic waists are great!* Tight pants, skinny jeans, button/snap closures are nearly impossible for young learners to have success consistently enough to build the muscle memory and gain persistence learning to use them. If they're hard for you to put on, they're too hard for your child.
- t-shirts—no more onesies
- cute overalls and dresses need to be put aside for a short time as they are just too hard to maneuver!

There is a wealth of the best information regarding toilet learning and other parenting topics on Janet Lansbury's blog. [janetlansbury.com/tag/toilet-learning](https://janetlansbury.com/tag/toilet-learning)

Please be sure to share with us what is working for you, and likewise! We're certainly in this together.



## Water Conservation & Handwashing



Water conservation is important to us at WHE. As you can imagine, a big portion of our daily routine includes learning about handwashing, turning the faucet on just enough, rather than blasting it (They've caused crying!) and discussions about water conservation.

We appreciate your help following these steps for handwashing:

1. **Wet hands briefly, turn off water**
2. **Rub hands with soap for at least 20 seconds**, we look for BUBBLES
3. **Rub and rinse** under gently flowing water: bye-bye bubbles!
4. **Turn off water**
5. **Dry hands**





# Toddler Times

## November 2023

On my morning walks I often think of great ways to start this newsletter—so many things to say that don't always come to mind to share at the end of the day. We see funny little things like kids using their chins to hold things, everything. We witness learning to jump with two feet, helping a friend get up after a fall, and full-bodied joy in singing. We support struggles, and we struggle with how to support. Sometimes it doesn't go well, sometimes it just flows...

Being a caregiver, being a parent, inherently comes with being a role model. We see or hear ourselves reflected in our children's behavior, their expressions, mannerisms, wants and their choice of words. Combined with our own personal reflection and humility, these powerful mirrors help us to be better people and have the potential to bring us the deepest joy. For this, we are thankful.

### Gratitude to the Earth

*a song we sing before meals*

Earth, that gives to us this food  
Sun, that makes it ripe and good  
Dearest earth and dearest sun  
We will not forget what you have done...  
Blessings on the meal!

## Calendar

**Closed**

**Friday, 11/10**

*Veteran's Day*

**Wed-Friday 11/22, 23, 24**

*Thanksgiving*

November				
M	T	W	Th	F
		1	2	3
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	

## Parent Survey

*Wow. November marks the anniversary of West Hill Educare's first year at 310 Richard Pl.!*

We hope that you will take a few minutes to share your thoughts about your experience here. Let us know what we do well, what you would like to see done differently, how we might be able to improve...

**Thank you.**

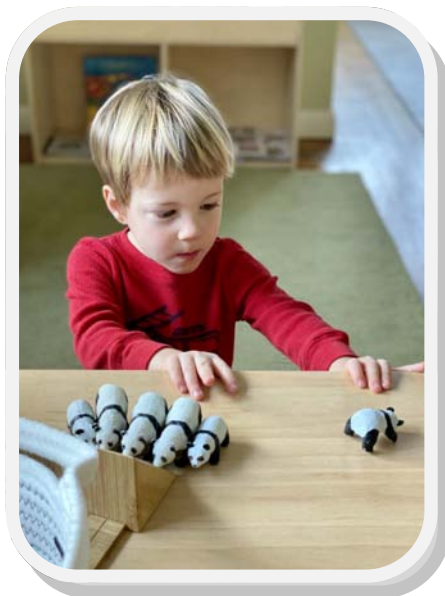
[Survey link here](#)

## Gifts for Kids

If gift giving is part of your holiday tradition, you might be slightly preoccupied with finding just the right thing...

Sometimes it seems that no matter what we buy, our children want to play with the pots and pans or the box or the broom we are using. While this can be dumfounding, it is developmentally typical—toy or tool, *things look more fun when someone else is using them.*

Similarly, the experience of toys that entertain, versus toys that spark and demand engagement is different. In our culture, there is a great emphasis on entertainment. Many toys are made to entertain: wind up toys, electrical and battery-operated toys that make sounds or flash or move... some night lights even have moving imagery to watch. When choosing between the electric or child-operated wooden train, consider engagement. Active toys are entertaining, children can watch the electric train move around the track. Passive toys, on the other hand, require the child's play to activate them. Out of this we see magical things like Austin here, creating and exclaiming, "Tongs!" Here are some things to consider when trying to figure out what makes a captivating toy that will hold your child's interest over time:



"Tongs!"

- Toddlers like real things. They want to learn about the real world and be like the adults they have in their lives. Look for child-sized furniture and tools to build success. What do they like watching you do? *Feed that interest.* Child-sized tools build success.
- Containers.  
(with things to dump and fill inside!) This could be boxes, bags, purses, an old lunch bag, maybe even a tent (a container for toddlers! They love to hide!)
- Instruments!  
Rhythm instruments can be the best choice for young children, but accurately tuned key-boards, bells or glockenspiel can support accurate key. (*Get something you'd like to hear!*)
- Flexible toys.  
& *flexibility with how toys are used...*  
Things that can be used in many ways; art materials, blocks, cooking implements, cars, dolls, balls. These days many things made for kids already have their own name or story. Consider generic dolls, cars, blocks that encourage children to create their own stories.
- Toys that encourage activity!  
Bikes, scoots and scooters
- and of course, keep the box!



# The Terrific Twos

Is your experience terrific or terrible? We are seeing more roughness, pushing with hands and body, biting and social exclusion of others. Not fun. But the kids are still terrific.

Part of the terrific-ness is due to their bursting language development and generally uninhibited self-expression. It can be confounding... sometimes the most challenging behaviors show a sense of will we want our children to have, just not with us... so how do we “handle” their will? Is it possible to take the madness out of some of the more challenging of toddler behaviors? Yes!

- **Try to identify the positive impulse behind the behavior and support that.**

*Some common challenges are rooted in wanting...*

- *that toy (it's mine!)*
- *engagement: with you, with another child, with that now active toy someone else has*

- **State what you want to happen, state it positively**

- *what you say sticks in the mind, especially the last thing you say*
- Try “grab a chair over there...” or “keep feet on the floor” instead of don't *climb on the table*
- “walk... slow...” rather than don't *run*

- Remember **logic and emotions don't mix**

- brain research informs us that when we're upset, our logical mind shuts off—**happens for kids too**
- *once a child feels heard and is able to be calm they can consider other ideas and begin to reason*

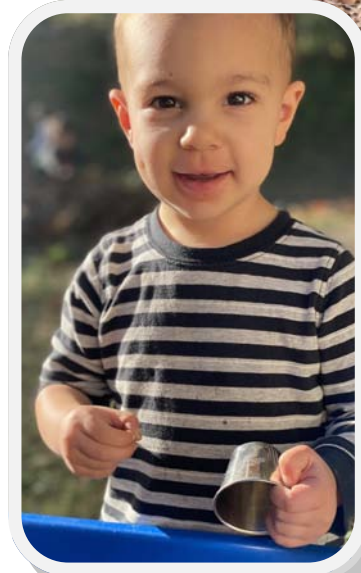
- Help **build emotional intelligence**

- Emotional intelligence **includes self-awareness and empathy**
- Being able to express feelings, needs and desires enables children to get their needs met. It reduces stress and builds self-confidence

- **Routine builds neural pathways**, a sense of order, and leads to the completion of task. Routine helps to form good habits and gives a sense of control by providing predictability.

- **Know your own bottom line.**

You can't negotiate without it.  
Your child is trying to find it. *They might even know it.*  
Or think they do—it may change, finding it might not be easy.  
Present that bottom line with clarity & kindness.  
Repeat as necessary



Experiences Build Brain Architecture



A favorite series from a favorite resource, short, informative, understandable.  
(Click on pic to view)

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# Enjoying the Fall!

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p.s. Thanks for providing us the cutest kids for our newsletter pics!





# Toddler Times

## December 2023

Who would have guessed a groovy metal table would become a climber, challenging the kids at all ages and bringing delightful bursts of glee to everyone.

This month we continue to explore concepts of big/little, hard/soft, rough/smooth. We've been getting our FILL of the out of doors. Most entertaining for KC and I has been watching toddlers play hide-and-seek, counting "1, 3, 11!" and claiming they're hiding in plain sight—quite a fun scene when there are 8 of them going in circles!

In response to feedback, this issue and the next will address a couple of topics that were highlighted as of interest to you, namely how parents can and do participate in our program and how you might get more involved. We will also be sharing more information with you about our curriculum planning, songs we sing and books we're reading.

*\* The last two pages of this newsletter a reprint of "Adventure December," a month's worth of activity ideas that Jude created in the past with Ithaca Children's Garden staff. Hope it brings you some new, fun ideas!*



## Calendar

### Winter Recess

12/22/2023-1/2/2024

December					
M	T	W	Th	F	
					1
4	5	6	7	8	
11	12	13	14	15	
18	19	20	21	22	
25	26	27	28	29	



## Making Gifts with Your Kids?

Are you considering making gifts for your friends and/or family?  
Here are a few simple gift ideas for you to make with your toddler.

- Frame one of their paintings or drawings
- Bath bombs!  
Try this easy recipe:  
<https://www.byrdie.com/basic-bath-bomb-recipe-346761>
- Potato printing
- Plaster of paris hand print—can be painted before giving away



## Curriculum Planning Outline

Our classroom materials and theme change monthly. For example, our November theme has been gratitude and family, which we will continue into December. We're shifting from fall colors, songs, activities to winter colors, songs and activities. Our monthly planning is tweaked weekly to incorporate new ideas and build on changing skills. While our emphasis is on play, children are learning and a focus on expanding their knowledge and skills is integrated throughout all activities.

### Child learning goals and areas of focus include:

#### Gross Motor

physical activity, agility, jumping, kicking, kicking while running, throwing, catching balls, marching, stretching, yoga

#### Fine Motor

self-help skills; handwashing, shoes, jackets, gloves, use of tools – pencils, spoons/forks

#### Speech/Language

articulation, repetition, reflection/extension of ideas, reading, singing, vocabulary

#### Cognitive

letter & number concepts; recognizing first letter of name “own letter”

#### Social/Emotional

self-calming, self-confidence, gentle hands, asking over taking, dramatic play, sleep

We plan daily for circle, adding new songs and repeating songs throughout the month so children learn them and come to love them. When songs don't include movement, we usually make something up!

We also plan daily for both structured and unstructured activities for both indoor and outdoor play and learning.

We will begin sharing our planning sheets with you, for those who are curious!



## Songs We've Been Singing

*Remember, there's a spot on our website, just for you—the secret entrance to the parent area...*

*There, you can find some recorded songs from WHE1, maybe we'll get some more added over time!*

The kids have been loving circle! Sometimes we see kids belt out songs as best they know them, adding wild dancing, sometimes they're a little more reserved, watching others or learning the new song... but Circle always starts with a name song—

- I Like/Me Gusta
- Get on Board
- Willaby/Wallaby
- Sing NAME, Celebrate NAME
- Shalom (ok, no name, but we sing it as an opening song on Fridays)

November songs have included

- I Celebrate My Family
- She'll be Coming Around the Mountain
- 'Tis a Gift to be Simple
- Building Bridges
- Lemon Tree, oh so pretty...
- Mockingbird Hill (inspired by the strong sunshine one morning)

Songs for throughout time...

- Slippery Fish
- Ida Red
- X, X is the Color I see
- Going to the Zoo
- Old MacDonald (sub my friend—one of our kiddos—had a farm)
- Magic Penny
- There are more—Jude is a bundle of songs!  
And songs are definitely not just for circle time!



# Parent Involvement and Volunteering at WHE

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Parent participation is an important part of our program. We do not have a formal parent contribution requirement, but parents contribute to our program and curriculum in many ways, depending on their time, skills and interests.

Over time parents have contributed the curriculum that their children experience through

- sharing information about their family via their child's application:  
*we learn about goals you have for your child, your child's unique needs*
- creating a family page for your child to visit while at WHE  
*we learn about your child's home life and can refer to these too for info regarding family members and pets*
- daily discussions  
*we glean information about your family practices, songs you sing, rituals and holidays you have*
- building community with us: sharing food and building memories together at our community gatherings  
*gatherings have been at WHE and at locations in the community, coordinated by WHE and by parents*
- our annual survey  
*thank you for answering our first annual parent survey, November 2023!*
- pop-up opportunities  
*helping haul the garden soil from the driveway to the beds*
- Take home work  
*if you are interested in book repair, wood projects, sewing projects, something else? let us know!*

**Please note:** *On-going volunteers, even parents that might like to work in the classroom, are held to licensing requirements and must go through criminal background checks and clearance before counting in ratio or being here on a regular basis in a volunteer role.*



## Health and Safety

*With the changing weather and winter approaching, we're seeing a lot of coughs, stuffy noses and mucus. Please take a few minutes to review our health and safety guidelines.*

***We also ask that parents who are sick do not enter WHE.***

Your child is able to participate at WHE if they are: alert and active; free of continuous discharge and respiratory illness for reasons other than teething and allergies; free of open sores, rashes; fever-free for a 24-hour period with no medication; normal bowel movements; able to keep down food for a 24-hours (+more, please see handbook)...

## Cold Weather Wear!

Please be sure to bring a mid-layer for both top and bottom (or a pair of snow pants), a warm jacket, a hat and mittens so that your child has what s/he needs to stay warm. Boots and snow clothing can be very restrictive. Layering is key for kids too.

*If you're still shopping look for mittens that can be put on easily and flexible boots to help increase your child's enjoyment of the snowy weather ahead.*

## Get free at-home COVID-19 tests this fall on COVIDTests.gov

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order an additional 4 free at-home tests beginning November 20. If you did not order tests this fall, you may place two orders for a total of 8 tests.

Your order of COVID tests is completely free – you won't even pay for shipping.

Order Free At-Home Tests

Need help placing an order for your at-home tests?  
Call 1-800-232-0233 (TTY 1-888-720-7489).

Click image to order!



# Adventure December!

Grab your mask and get outside! Thirty-one days of local, family-friendly outdoor adventure for all ages.

- 1 Make a journey stick or bracelet to collect a journey.
- 2 Collect rocks for sorting, painting & skipping.
- 3 Make ephemeral art with natural materials.
- 4 Go bird sighting or make a pine cone bird feeder.
- 5 Make a color wheel collection with hues of brown, orange, yellow.
- 6 Build a fairy house.
- 7 Build a fort or shelter.
- 8 Build a bonfire and roast food. (Make it miniature in a can.)
- 9 Make a nature mandala.
- 10 Go animal tracking.
- 11 Do a nature scavenger hunt.
- 12 Go dung hunting. Look for signs of animals by looking for their scat.
- 13 Count nests in trees.
- 14 Make wreaths using dried plants.
- 15 Do a neighborhood clean-up.
- 16 Take a pre-dawn walk around your block.
- 17 Make bark rubbings.
- 18 Make a nature loom for nature weaving.
- 19 Pretend cook with mud or snow.
- 20 Do a five senses hunt.
- 21 Arrange plants in a tray and add water. Freeze for beautiful ice art.
- 22 Go on a night lantern walk.
- 23 Make tracks in the dirt or snow for toy trucks and cars.
- 24 Help a neighbor. Shovel snow on a path or driveway.
- 25 Go sledding. You can use a piece of cardboard, laundry bin, or plastic lid.
- 26 Blow bubbles outside. See if they freeze.
- 27 Build a snow person.
- 28 Explore a local wetland.
- 29 Count the stars.
- 30 Play tic-tac-toe with sticks, rocks, and pine cones.
- 31 Make a snow shelter.



This adventure calendar is brought to you by Ithaca Children's Garden and the Child Development Council.



# Adventure December!

- 1** Sagan Planet Walk
- 2** Cornell Lab of Ornithology
- 3** Cayuga Nature Center or TreeTops
- 4** Sapsucker Woods
- 5** Taughannock State Park
- 6** Upper Treman State Park
- 7** Cornell Botanic Gardens
- 8** Ithaca Farmers Market
- 9** Bird Sanctuary at Stewart Park
- 10** Six Mile Creek Natural Area
- 11** Ithaca Falls
- 12** Cascadilla Creek
- 13** Cass Park
- 14** Indian Creek Farm playground
- 15** Cayuga Waterfront Trail
- 16** Tutelo Park and trail
- 17** Black Diamond Trail
- 18** Ithaca Children's Garden
- 19** Lime Hollow
- 20** Fillmore Glen State Park
- 21** Dryden Lake
- 22** East Shore Park
- 23** Myers Park
- 24** Mulholland Wildflower Preserve
- 25** Chimney Bluffs State Park
- 26** Ludlowville Park
- 27** Buttermilk Falls State Park
- 28** Lick Brook
- 29** Watkins Glen State Park
- 30** East Hill Recreation Way
- 31** Cass Park Ice Rink

