



Toddler Times

January 2024!

Happy New Year 2024!

We are excited to start another calendar year at West Hill Educare with you.

This month Ansel and his family join us right away! Ansel turned 2 in December, right after Austin and fills out our youngest age-cohort perfectly. Next month, everyone will be 2! Please join us in welcoming Ansel, Sabrina and Josh.

*We hope you enjoyed your winter break as much as we have and **THANK YOU** for the generous holiday gift! We greatly appreciate the thought and effort that goes into a group gift and love the community that builds here over time. (Did you know our sign was a gift from the first graduating class at WHE back in 2009?)*

2024 Parent Handbook

Be sure to review our [2024 Parent Handbook](#)
This year we

- added a few sections per recommendation of [QUALITYstarsNY](#) i.e. how parents participate in our program, how to enroll
- made a few revisions to try to clarify our health policy/practices and had our consulting Pediatrician, Carolyn Koppel review it

Please let us know your thoughts, if you have questions and anything that would be useful for our next version, thanks!



Calendar

1/1 & 1/2 Mon/Tues
Happy New Year!

1/15, Monday
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Holiday/Birthday

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

Will There be Inclement Weather?

- For everyone's safety, we follow ICS's lead re: inclement weather; if they are closed, we close; if they are delayed, we're on delay
- Check <https://www.ithacacityschools.org/> for up to date information

Please Label Clothes

Please label your child's clothing, mittens, jackets, shoes and other items with their name or initials whenever possible. It's amazing and true, we can get things mixed up!
Thank you!!

Drawing Development in Children

Children are focused on the process...

For preschool children, the end result is not important. Young children are consumed with making a mark, mixing colors, figuring out how their hands, fingers and assorted tools like brushes work. The progression of children's art development is somewhat predictable, though the timeline varies from child to child.

Stages of Drawing

Scribbling Stage (18 mo.-4 years)

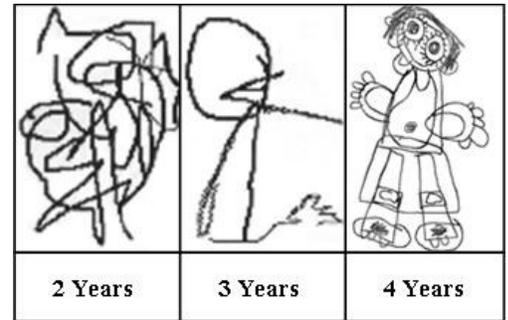
- random, accidental marks
- kinesthetic movement that represents drawing and writing for children
- developing to controlled/ purposeful, then naming scribbling—so fun!

Pre-Schematic Stage (3.5 -7 years)

- beginning representational drawing such as radii and tadpole figures
- floating objects begin to land on baseline, have depth

Schematic Stage (5-9 years)

- use symbols for people, art as tool to communicate



Art...

- Builds fine motor skills
- Develops hand-eye coordination
- Develops creative expression
- Lays the foundation for writing
- Increases attention span
- Helps improve focus & concentration
- Builds time management skills

Learn More! (information on this page is from the following sources)

LOVE THIS SITE! (Plastic English)

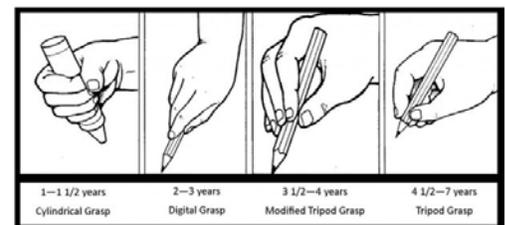
[Drawing Development in Children](#) ❤️

this site also has a page called *describing a picture!*

OT Toolbox too!

[Drawing Milestones—OT Toolbox](#)

[LittleBigArtists.com](#)



What's Your Limit?

Helping Children Develop a Sense of Wonder with Art

Bev Bos was an advocate for play-based learning. She operated a home-based child care program for preschool children in Sacramento, CA for decades and also facilitated creative workshops for adults.

She let kids do some pretty crazy things...

Watch this video to learn more about her and consider what you think of her ideas!

Bev Bos

[Starting at Square One](#)

(link to 37 minute video)

Discipline

What is Discipline?

The word discipline as based in Latin means *disciple*, meaning *student*. When there is a student, there is also a guide—that’s our role. The source of discipline is internal, it is not something others do to us, it’s a choice, mine, yours, your child’s choice.

Discipline is learning to apply standards to achieve meaningful objectives, a.k.a. getting along, getting something we want.

As adults we continue to rely on self-discipline to achieve personal goals, get what we want, and to get by in society.

How do we support the development of our child’s self-discipline?

In her article, [Discipline is Learning and Nurturing Combined](#), Magda Gerber comments that “parents often think of (discipline) as punishments and rewards.” She continues, “I see **discipline as being a social contract** in which family (or community) members agree to accept and obey a particular set of rules.”

The Rules

Rules are easiest to both abide by and reinforce when they are *stated positively, they are understandable, generalizable and consistently reinforced*.

Our classroom rules are 1) be kind, 2) be gentle, 3) be safe

We like these rules because they are simple, generalizable and definitive of what it means to be respectful.

Some things to keep in mind when considering household rules:

- When guiding a child’s behavior **strive to make a positive request** i.e. “Keep your feet on the floor!” Maybe inform with rule: “It’s not safe to climb on the table.”
- [Consider the impulse behind the behavior](#) —what is driving the child’s behavior and how can you support the child getting that need met?

- Make rules you can reinforce.
Children are observing all the time, and testing to be sure if we are consistent, if we have the same rules as others, the same rules day to day — OH, and they’re checking if we follow those rules too. Sigh.

Consistency is so important:

you want your child to believe you and that you mean what you say.

Knowing your bottom line is a key skill for guiding children, as is recognizing their needs. “I know you need to move. We need to finish shopping and I can’t even think when you scream. Would you like to help drive the cart or have an apply while we shop? When we’re done we can go to the children’s garden or the playground.” Be careful not to say you’ll leave the store if they don’t stop screaming unless you’ll really leave.

Otherwise, next time they may not think you mean it either. *And you don’t want that.*

- This article about [Maria Montessori’s thoughts on discipline](#) highlights the power of choice in gaining participation and how experiencing logical consequences helps to develop inner discipline



January Curriculum

Toddler Times

January 2024

p. 4



Primary Themes

- **New year, winter**
- **Shadows/light**
- **Civil rights, racial equity, Martin Luther King**
- **Sequencing** (visual daily schedule)
- **Tracks, tracking, forest animals**
- **Geometric shapes and solids**

(including searching and sorting activities)

circle, square, rectangle, sphere, cube, rectangular prism

Books

- 13 Moons on Turtle's Back
- A Day at School
- Making Tracks—Park, Tree, Thank You Tree
- The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Peter's Big Snow
- My Senses
- Family pics new location

and more!



Activities

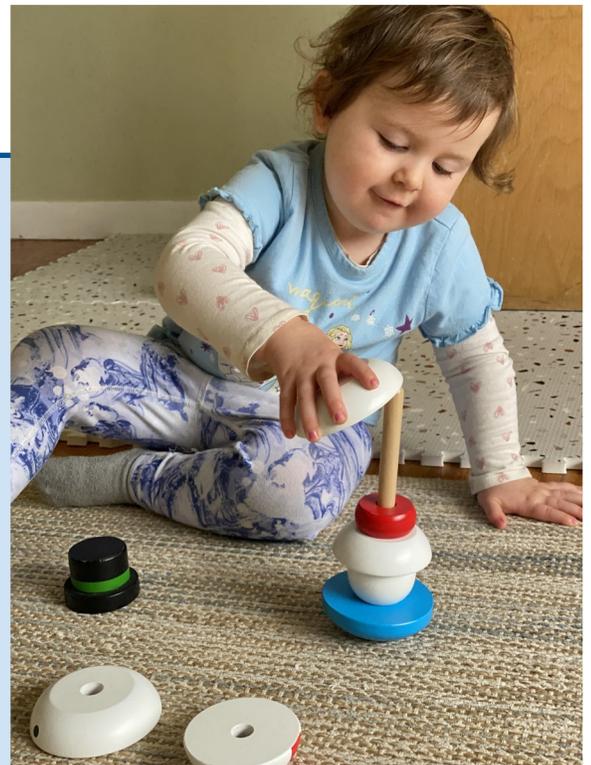
- Playdough with forest animals, footprint stampers
- Colored pencils on white or black paper; painting over white pencil on white paper
- Tabletop Painting with tempera
- More ripping tissue paper, starch as glue
- Pouring, sweeping
- Continue tonging
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Greeting new family/people—grace and courtesy

Songs

Remember, there's a spot on our website, just for parents, with a secret entrance where you can find some recorded songs from WHE1, maybe there will be more over time!

- Earth, Air, Fire, Water
- This Little Light of Mine
- Chicken Dance
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Baby Beluga
- Grey Squirrel

plus good oldies and more!



TODDLER HIDE AND SEEKI is.the.best.

Here's a [great clip](#) of some of the best of what we get to enjoy.

Warning: The link will automatically download the video. (Do you think we could win America's Funniest Home Videos with this one?)



Toddler Times

February 2024!

Let's call it cabin fever—or is it just being 2?

Terrific, tumultuous, tenacious 2.

That cold snap, so cold we couldn't go outside for days, brought it on! We did enjoy a couple days of sledding between days of so much warmth.

This week it's been about slippery, dripping muddy, puddly mud.

While we still see predominantly solitary, parallel and associative play, we are definitely seeing some very social play. Theoretically cooperative play isn't until 4+ years of age, but in a rudimentary form, it definitely sneaks in earlier!

This past month Kata and Ansel built a tower together, Griffin and Ellie made a pizza store using the hay bale as their service window; many kids helped to make a snowman together and many worked together to collect muddy water, pour it into tubes and onto themselves.

Each month, I wonder how will this newsletter come together. It evolves as I try to shed light on challenges I hear families are having.

This month, we dive into the importance of loving responsiveness—even when your tank is empty, and your child's is full.

Warning

—it may be a little heavy.

Support Time for Parents? ...

Want to get together? Talk parent stuff? Ask questions and gain support and/or ideas from each other?

Jude is willing to support a bi-monthly group. Send her a text to let her know your best evenings/days and times.



Calendar

2/19-2/23/2024

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		

Enrollment Plans for Fall 2024

Hard to believe—it's that time of year when families in this area begin planning for the next school year, but are not sure we will have any spots. We anticipate caring for this group as long as you are interested—to school-age—which doesn't make for many openings!

Although we agree to a 30 day's notice for contract changes, and we'd like to hold onto your child as long as possible, please let us know if you are planning to make a change in your child's care.

The Importance of Loving Responsiveness



Children watch what we do and listen to what we say. Relentlessly. They imitate what we do and say, we want them to, it's of developmental importance. Sometimes this is fun or funny, sometimes it's alarming or annoying. Our little mirrors challenge us both knowingly and unknowingly, pushing our "buttons," and shining a light on the things that are hardest for us, testing to see if we are consistent in our rules or limits and if both parents (and other caregivers) have the same rules. They're learning about power, negotiation, and what they can control.

Parenting is not all joy. Parenting is hard. Children get to our core. When we are pushed, modeling what we want can be tough! AND—If we are willing to reflect and perhaps operate differently, our children help us to be better people. Maybe we realize we're holding on too tight and need to loosen up. If we want quiet, we must be quiet.

In our [November 2023 issue](#), we reviewed some ways to support and guide your toddler. We included a link to a short video about [how early experiences shape brain chemistry](#). Attachment develops in relationship and over time. Children are born ready to interact, and NEED interaction and engagement to develop. Optimal development is supported by nurturing, responsive care from committed, stable caregivers. Through interactions with their caregivers, the child's efforts are validated and reinforced or discouraged based on (family) culture and expectations; they learn to trust, gain a sense of self worth, build skills to regulate their emotions and learn about their ability to impact their world. Attachment provides a foundation from which children draw security, strength and the confidence to explore. The most important factor in creating healthy attachment is positive physical contact, its greatest impediment is fear.



Here is an example of how fear could influence a child's attachment with their caregiver. Once a child is mobile, they relate to their adults as a safe base— the child wanders off to explore, then returns to "touch base" when things are hard or scary.

Hard or scary *to them*.

This is when they need our support. We may not think the dog is scary, but it is scary to them—*they are not OK*.

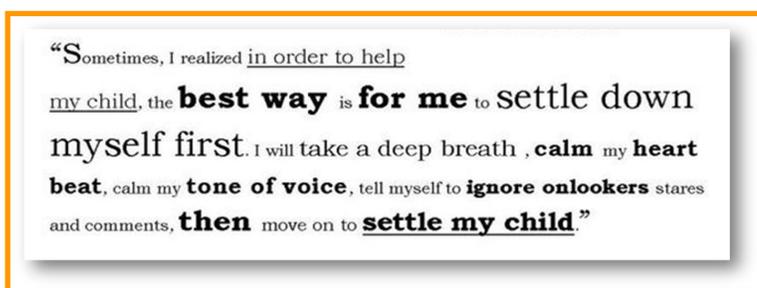
With support, children learn how to navigate big, scary feelings, build resilience and learn to regulate their own emotions—over time. (This can be a long time... how many of you still call your person?)

If their fears are negated, their body retains a sense of fear that may build with another scary encounter: they are alone with this fear and may be scared to explore more, impacting their learning. *Experiences build brains.*

One safe, stable, nurturing person—at least one. This person is often, but not always, a parent.

It is not always easy to be there for your child.

Many things affect our behaviors too: our own experiences, how we were parented, our own experiences of trauma, interpersonal violence or drug use may get in the way. We may not always be able to mitigate the triggers or behaviors that push our buttons. We've lived the years to be able to say "because I say so, *just because*," but this does little to help children understand.

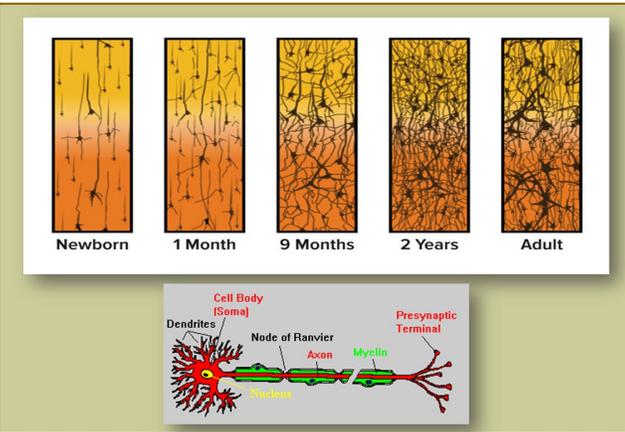


Imagine how your child feels—when they are having sensory overload or fear—they can't think. They have "lost their mind," **they have no words, even if they have them when they are calm.** Emotions drive cognition. We can relate, when we are stressed, we *lose our mind, can't think, feel sick to our stomach.* Too much of anything is just too much.

Brain Development

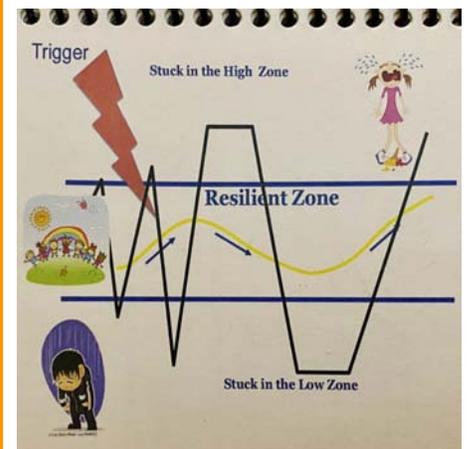
Brain Development from birth to two foundational and unparalleled. We are born with all the neurons we are going to have, and during the first two years, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed per second. The brain appears much like the adult brain by 2 years of age.

Early childhood experiences can enrich or negatively impact this development. Learning new things when we're older (like a second language) seems harder because it is—what we don't use we lose from two years on!



The brain develops from the bottom up, favoring survival then gaining emotional connections. Executive functions don't fully come into play until 7 years of age. While toddlers brains are growing, they literally think slower.

The Resilient Zone



Good times can go bad in the blink of an eye. Sensory overload seems to come on all of a sudden, as an observer you wonder what happened—you were just having fun, then all of a sudden, it was too much. Maybe the sensory overload leads to a tantrum.

Some stress is good, we learn from stress and challenge. But *too much of anything is too much.* Chronic stress negatively impacts us.

Staying regulated doesn't mean being flat. There is a range of arousal that is optimal, it is when we are hyper- or hypo- aroused that we are "dysregulated."

When periods of dysregulation are frequent or last over periods of time, we may experience physical challenges as exhibited by the long-term effects seen with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).

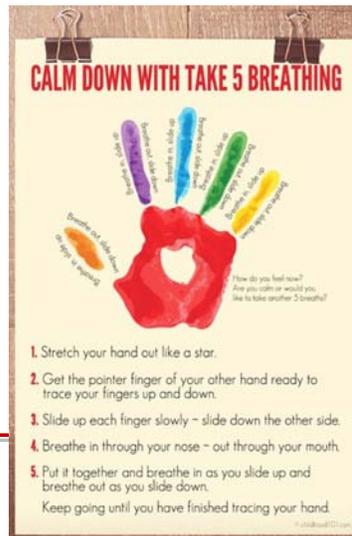
Aggressive Behavior in Toddlers

Aggressive behavior in children is hard to experience.

[This article](#), full of examples, highlights that the "period between 18 months and 3 years [as] an exciting time. **Toddlers are becoming aware that they are separate individuals from their parents and the other important people in their world.** This means that they are eager to assert themselves, communicate their likes and dislikes, and act independently (as much as they can!). At the same time, it's common to experience aggressive behavior in toddlers because they still have limited self-control and are just beginning to learn important skills like waiting, sharing and turn-taking."

In addition to many of the strategies mentioned, we also help children to

- Focus on breathing
 - Identify emotions, efforts, help find words
- [Putting words to feelings](#) has been shown to help with emotional regulation*



Make Sure Their Cup is Full

Wants something time, Wants nothing time

—a Magda Gerber gem that deserves a full article, but for now, [this tidbit](#).

You child wants to see you. *They want your full attention.*

Rather than giving distracted attention, consider trying to give focused time doing whatever your child wants. Let them know after you play awhile, you need to do some other things for a bit while they play on their own. Hopefully you will find that being fully present for 15 minutes will give you a little much needed space.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Do you know about the ACES study?

From 1995-1997, the CDC and Kaiser Permanent conducted one of the largest studies of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and their impact on later-life health and well-being. Over 1,700 participants were all asked if they'd experienced any one of ten adverse experiences prior to their 18th birthday.

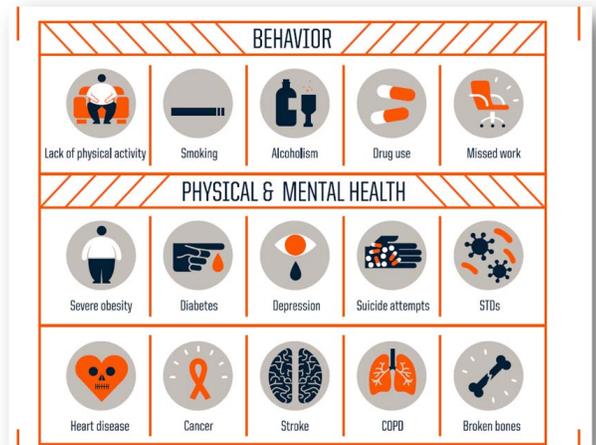
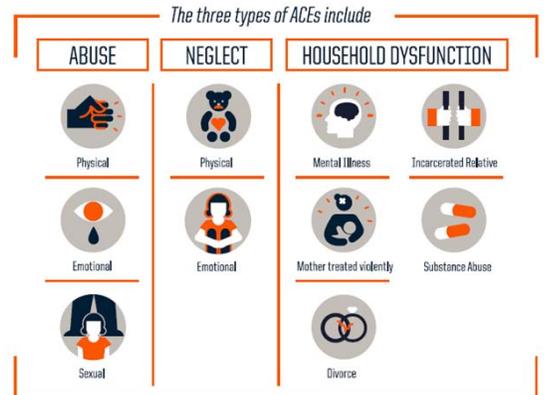
What they found is astonishing. They found that 64% of adults in the United States had experienced at least one ACE before the age of 18 and approx. 17% had experienced four or more.

The impact of ACES lasts a lifetime and are tied to at least 40 illnesses. Preventing ACES could potentially reduce many health conditions.

There is always variability in response to traumatic experiences. Developmental stage, prior experiences, coping skills, modes of attachment and individual temperament all play a role.

Young children are greatly affected by experiences and events that happen around them.

Supportive relationships, active skill building and positive childhood experiences build resilience.



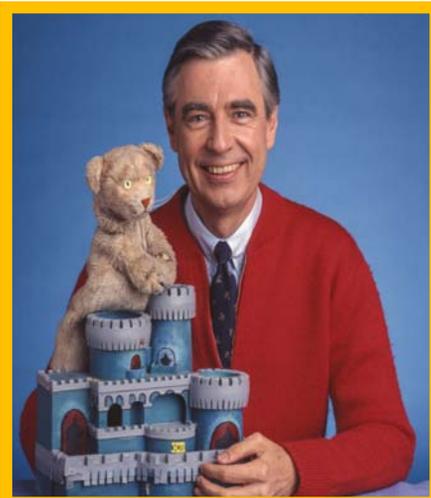
A Big Impact on Little Kids (what you may see): [Learn more](#)

If you are not familiar with ACES, here is a [must watch video with Nadine Burke-Harris](#)

What happens in childhood, doesn't stay in childhood.

Further reading: [The Body Keeps the Score](#) by Bessel Van der Kolk, MD

Junlei Li: Appreciating the Deep and Simple in Early Childhood Education—my new hero...



The research and practice of Junlei Li, Harvard School of Education, focuses on understanding and supporting the work of helpers—those who serve on the frontlines of education and social services.

Mr. Rogers often said that "deep and simple is far more essential than shallow and complex." What is deep and simple in the work of early childhood? From orphanages to impoverished neighborhoods, we can discover caregivers' intuitive yet powerful human interactions. By capturing and learning from what ordinary people do extraordinarily well in simple, everyday moments, we can grow communities of practice, nurture intuition into intention and plant the seeds for sustainable systems change.

(Quoted and adapted from [link to YouTube video](#))



Inside





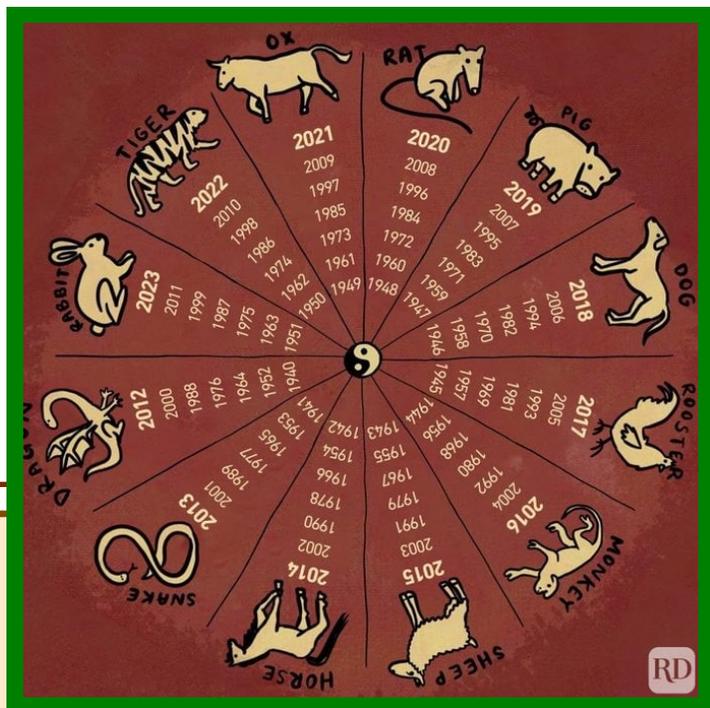
Outside

February Curriculum



Primary Themes

- Chinese New Year, 2/10
 - wood dragon, emerald green
- Wood: what it is, what we do w it
- Lanterns, sushi, stir fry
- Snowflake match?
- Pic series: A Day at WHE



Activities

- Playdough with heart cutters
- Colored pencils/crayons on white or black paper; liquid watercolors; gluing, sponge-print making
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Grace and courtesy

Songs

- Earth, Air, Fire, Water
- The Earth is Our Mother
- This Pretty Planet
- Little Blue Ball
- This Little Light of Mine
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Magic Penny
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Down by the Bay

Books

- The Emperor's Great Race
- Long is a Dragon
- The Squiggle
- Chinese NY Colors
- Tree
- Thank You Tree
- Baby Beluga
- Owl Moon
- Peter's Big Snow
- Panda Opposites



Lucky Noodles

This is one of the best recipes, everyone will eat their vegetables.

Enjoy!

Dressing:

- 4 T sesame oil, toasted
- 8 T soy sauce
- 1 T rice vinegar
- 1 T brown sugar
- 2t salt
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- 1" piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 T sesame seeds, any type
- 1/2 block firm tofu, cubed

1 pound fresh noodles

Garnishes:

- Snow peas, slivered
- Mung bean sprouts
- Grated carrot
- Cucumber, thinly sliced and cut small
- Cilantro

Combine dressing ingredients in a large bowl. Cook noodles in boiling water until just barely done, drain and rinse with cold water. Put the noodles into the bowl with the dressing and toss gently to coat.



Calendar

No holidays this month.

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	



Toddler Times

March 2024

At least we can say it's March with all these crocus blooming. I've told many, but not all of you that we've been watching the bees, thanking the bees for helping us to have, as one child remembers it, apples.

We had a lot of fun in February. We got into all kinds of art, gluing, printing and of course painting. The images in this newsletter really capture a variety of our (inside) activities from this past month.

It has been fun to hear more and more language, especially as it comes out socially, playing with friends. Today, when one child was considering whether the play people figures were family, she declared, "they're friends" and later ran off to play after touching base with me joyfully calling out, "Hi friends!" There is definitely more themed dramatic play coming out. Although the panda village is always a hit (at the beginning of the month), the doctor's kit is even moreso and they have been very engaged caring for the dolls, each other and us! The dashiki, party shirt, flip flop and road protection gear dress ups were also a real hit.



Gosh these kids are getting older!



Why is Social-Emotional Development So Important?

We are born ready to connect. In her compelling presentation, Mary Helen Immodoro Yang begins by illuminating a little talked about a birth reflex: at birth, infants look for two black dots, close together (eyes).*

More recently referred to as early childhood mental health, social-emotional development refers to children's emerging capacity to experience, regulate and express a range of emotions. Through play, children express their own ideas and when playing with others, have to learn to adjust to another person's ideas and wants. Of course language and communication skills are integral to emotional learning and together they have been found to be more important than academic skills (knowledge of letters, numbers, colors and shapes) when entering Kindergarten.

Healthy social and emotional development is rooted in nurturing and responsive relationships and it enables children to develop close, satisfying relationships over their lifetime. As infants, the security of primary relationships literally give the



child the confidence to explore their environment and to learn.

There is even a social emotional ages & stages questionnaire. The authors of the **ASQ®:SE-2** state:

“Managing emotions is one of the most crucial social-emotional skills a child will learn, and one that may require the most support from parents, families, and caregivers. Trouble falling asleep, extended tantrums, and difficulty moving between activities are all



signs that a young child might need more focused support to strengthen their self-regulation skills.”

Psychology Today offers more information about *how we control our emotions* and what they call the **3 R's of emotional learning**: regulation, reconstruction and resilience.



* I need to listen again, the presentation blew me away years ago—you can listen to this compelling 1.5 hour presentation [here](#).

March Curriculum



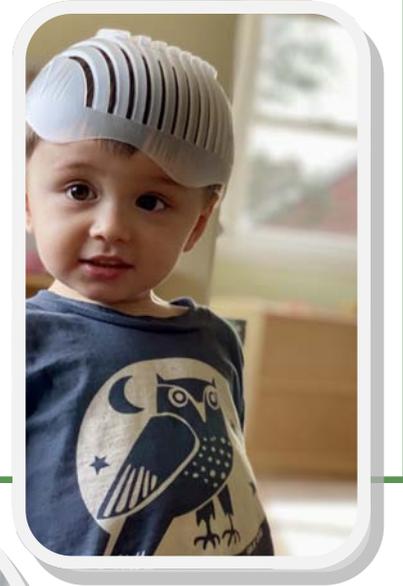
Primary Themes

- Spring: signs of Spring outside
- Emotions
- Secondary Colors
- Birds
- Sponge printing, painting, gluing



Activities

- Playdough with flower and egg shaped cutters
- Colored pencils on white or black paper; sponge painting, liquid watercolors
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Grace and courtesy



Books

- A Day
- Lots of Feelings
- Caps for Sale
- Moon
- Thank You Earth
- Monkeys Jumping on Bed
- Moon
- Thank You Earth
- What's the Weather?
- Saltarin y la primavera
- Tingalayo

and more!



Songs

- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Rain songs:
 - Ants Go Marching
 - Puddle Boots
- Long Tail Feathers
- Robin Red Breast

and more!





April 2024



Toddler Times



March was tumultuous weather-wise but we greatly enjoyed breaking out! We have been having lots of fun both inside and out, with new materials, blooming minds and budding friendships. We thank you all for being so tolerant of our *mucky* yard. We all know how important and great mud play is for preschool kids, but still— **thank you for tolerating all the mud.** We are working on solutions and to start with have mud pants that we will provide and wash for anyone who would like.

A new family will be joining us April 22! Welcome Zeffie McCCasey and their parents, Laretta Dolch and Indi McCCasey. Do the parents' names sound familiar? Laretta grew up here and Indi is the ED @ Ithaca Public Education Initiative.

2023-2024 Tuition and Enrollment Policies Changes

Calendar

Spring Recess

Closed April 1-5 & 8th

OPEN 4/10 ICSD Holiday



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

Although this only affects a few, everyone should know...

Effective immediately, new enrollment is limited to 5 days/week.

Current 4 day/week children can continue part-time until September, adding days as needed. Effective September 2024, all spots will be for 5 day/week enrollment.

Parent Support & Social Time

We had a great time at our March meeting! The group would like to gather monthly alternating parent-coordinated social gatherings with a bi-monthly time for parent support.

Anyone up for coordinating a social in April ?

Our next Parent Support Group will be Wed. 5/8, 5-6:30 @ Boatyard Grill
* hopefully the white chairs will be out!



Tuition is due early this month! **If possible, please bring your payment by 3/29.** Please let Jude know if you need to make a different plan. Thanks!

Practical Life

Practical Life is the name Maria Montessori used to refer to the area of the curriculum dedicated to *Care of the Self*, *Care of the Environment*, *Grace and Courtesy*, and helping the child to refine *Elementary Movements* and aimed at developing *concentration, coordination, independence and order*.

Care of the Self is the ability to dress oneself, including mastery of clothes fasteners; the development of personal hygiene habits, inspiring artistic creativity and refining the manipulation of eye-hand coordination and fine motor control. Practical Life activities involve *pouring, spooning, twisting, squeezing, stringing and lacing* and *food preparation*

Care of the Environment includes dusting, cleaning, washing, flower arranging, taking care of plants and the natural world, gardening

Grace and Courtesy involves greeting, offering, accepting, apologizing, table manners, and general kindness towards others

Elementary Movements consists of navigating the room, activities like walking, sitting at the table, getting up and tucking in your chair, holding/carrying/putting down/picking up/returning materials to the shelf



Purposeful Work inspires engagement. It includes activities that give children a sense of purpose and allow them to more deeply pursue their interests. Activities that may be considered purposeful by the child change as their developmental needs and interests change. It may be learning to clean the table today, and how to cook in the future.

Control of Error fosters success and independent learning. Controlling error when learning to pour means not filling the cup—filling it just a little; having just enough water in the pitcher to be soaked up by that thirsty sponge or just enough in cup to be drawn into the baster.

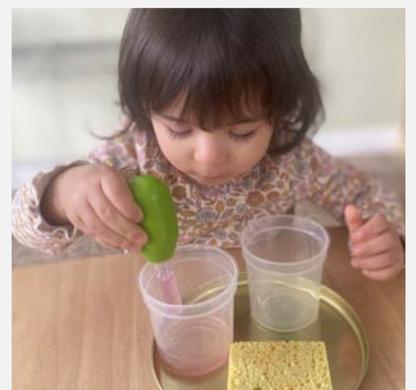


Self-Correcting Materials

A puzzle is an example of a self-correcting material. The box contains just the needed pieces. It is clear when it is done correctly.

Open-Ended Materials

There is no one way to explore or use open-ended materials. The pounding work Ellie is doing here is open-ended. So is sand play, art, building a tower with blocks, playing with a doll.



Ball = Sphere & Diamond = Rhombus?

Maria Montessori used the idea of a **spiral curriculum**, although the term was coined in 1960, by Jerome Bruner. A spiral curriculum is designed to connect a child's prior learning with new learning. Major topics and skill areas are revisited with increasing complexity throughout a child's education.

There are many examples of how this is applied throughout the curriculum:

- starting with concrete experiences and moving to the abstract and symbolic
- going from 3D to 2D, using objects, then photos of real objects and building vocabulary by using accurate nomenclature i.e. learning the names of geometric solids and plane figures
a ball = sphere and a diamond = rhombus?



Bead Stair

The *Bead Stair* gives a sensorial and visual sense of number.

Children first sort the bead bars from smallest to largest. As they pinch and count the beads, children learn to pinch each bead once and to say one number for each bead, gaining *a sense of number and learn 1-1 correspondence*.

Vocabulary Enrichment



One of the things I love about Montessori is its integrated emphasis on concrete learning.

In regards to language development, research shows that children's vocabulary skills are related to their self-regulation skills (Vallotton & Ayoub, 2011). The seemingly simple task of learning words has broad implications for overall development and well-being.

When it comes to learning to read, children progress from matching object:object, to matching object:picture, then picture:picture, picture:word, learn letter phonetics, word building, then decoding and ultimately reading.

The 3-part cards shown use picture:word matching to help children begin to distinguish letter and word shapes.



April Curriculum

Toddler Times

April 2024

p. 4



Primary Themes

- Continue with Spring: signs of Spring outside
- Natural world, prepare to plant seeds from CACFP
- What plants need, sequencing their growth
- Worms, Bees
- Animals and Their Young

Activities

- Playdough:
flower cutters/tortilla press
 - Gluing, painting, printing
 - Color mixing
 - Care of environment:
pouring, sweeping
 - Initial sounds, sand tray, rhyming
 - Counting and number games
 - Grace and courtesy
- Flower VEC
 - Seeds
 - Birds:
identifying calls
 - Emotions
 - Recording selves
 - 1-10 Felt peas!
short bead stair



Books

- A Day
 - Lots of Feelings
 - Caps for Sale
 - Bees
 - Birds
 - Thank You Earth
 - Monkeys Jumping on Bed
 - What's the Weather?
 - Saltarin y la primavera
 - Tingalayo
- and more!



Songs

- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Rain songs:
Ants Go Marching
Puddle Boots
- Long Tail Feathers
- Robin Red Breast
- Maria Isabel: beach, scarves

and more!

Animals & Their Young

The interactive Enchanted Learning site will get you up to speed on animal nomenclature! This month we will focus on the accurate names for animals and their young. We will continue to refer to this table over time!

Names of Animals, Babies and Groups

Image	Name	Male	Female	Baby	Group of Animals (congregation, pod (of young))
	Alligator	bull	cow	hatchling	congregation, pod (of young)
	Alpaca	male	female	one	herd
	Antelope	buck	doe	calf	herd
	Ape	male	female	baby	shrewdness



Toddler Times



Calendar

May 8

Parent Support w Jude
@Boatyard Grill, outside,
weather permitting

June Social tbd

(Seeking parent coordinator)

May 27 Memorial Day

Calendar Changes

OPEN

June 19 Juneteenth

CLOSED

July 3 Midsummer Break

August 30 Labor Day, per ICSD Draft 24/25 calendar

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

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

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		

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

May 2024

Incredibly, this week marks the midpoint between Spring and Summer. The hedges are filling in before our eyes. We definitely see the difference daily and when you look across the lake, the hills have a green quality to them.

At WHE, we're hearing and seeing so many birds and learning their calls. We hope to continue our luck as hosting birds around our yard. Just this week we saw a downy looking pileated woodpecker hatchling pecking its way along a tree! Griffin, Sybil and I also had the amazing experience of seeing a worm disappearing into the ground and ultimately squeezing out worm poop! We laughed and laughed and laughed. And I have told this story more than once already!

This newsletter plays with color themes based on common, local birds, and their eggs. The image of the bird on each of this month's newsletter pages is a screen capture from an online video, and the image is linked to the video so you can learn more about each bird. Meanwhile, it's time to get planting! In May our garden will grow... In addition to a few other things, we will plant seeds and plants from the CACFP program. Let us know if you would like to grab a snippet of chives or thyme already, *anytime*.

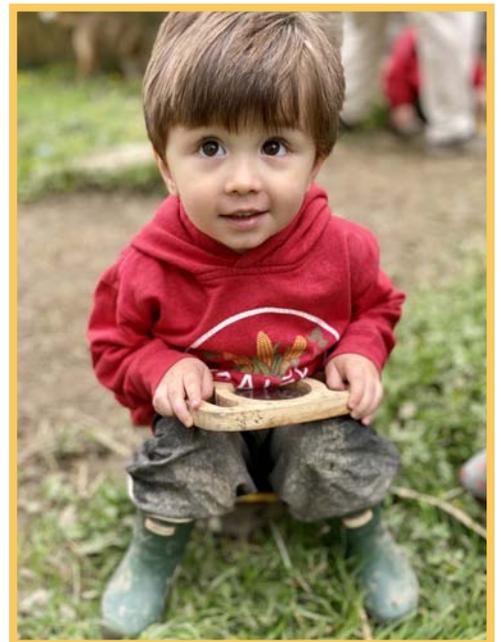
Current Updates

This month we welcome the first substitute that we've hired since we re-opened! Ros Stone is a neighbor of ours who can help out with our current needs for a sub and hopefully in the longer term as well. Ros is the mom of almost 9-year-old twins. She lives down the street and has most recently been working as a nanny. We caught her at a good time! Ros will be here training a couple days this week and will cover for KC May 6-10. Please check in daily with Jude.

2024-2025

When ICSD publishes their draft calendar for next year, we begin ours as well. This newsletter contains documents for the 2024-2025 year including:

- WHE Calendar
- WHE 2024-25 Tuition & Enrollment Policies





**Pileated
Woodpecker**

MiND in the Making
The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime

Making the Link Between Positive Parenting and the Seven Essential Life Skills for Children. How does parenting and child development intersect? The way we parent can nurture the very skills that children need—not just for success in the short-term—but across their entire lives.

Positive Parenting and the Seven Essential Life Skills for Children!

When Parents...

Children Develop Essential Life Skills...

Provide age-appropriate guidelines and limits for child behavior.

Recognize and regulate their own feelings and behaviors before they respond to their children.

Work to understand or imagine the child's point of view.

Respond with sensitivity to their children's cues.

Delight in moments of connection with their children.

Act as a role model by seeking help, support or additional information about parenting when needed.

Balance both parental needs and child needs. Recognize and celebrate their child's strengths, abilities and capacity to learn and develop.

Recognize that parenting is process of learning, and, at times, it can be stressful. Missteps are a natural part of child-rearing.

Focus and Self Control

Perspective Taking

Effective Communication

Making Connections

Critical Thinking

Taking on Challenges

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning

Toddler Creed

If I want it,
it's mine.

If I give it to you and
change my mind later,
it's mine.

If I can take it away
from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago,
it's mine.

If it's mine
it will never belong
to anyone else
no matter what.

If we are building
something together,
all the pieces are mine.

If it looks like mine,
IT'S MINE!

Author: Unknown

Positive parenting is about making child-rearing choices that reflect your beliefs and values as a parent, considering your child's age, stage of development, and temperament. It means being sensitive to children's individual needs and supporting them with empathy and respect.

[Learn more here](#)

The Iron Triangle of Early Childhood Finance



Child care finance. It sounds simple—in some ways it is.

When we re-opened West Hill Educare in November of 2022, we were fortunate to be 1 of 3 programs in Tompkins County to receive a child care desert grant from the state of New York. We have had to do a number of additional things to meet the terms of the grant—notably child assessments and working with New York’s quality assurance program for early childhood, [Quality Stars](#). This month marks our final payment from the grant. Another deliverable for the grant, was creating a sustainability plan, which showed that we could survive without it.

In order for income and expenses to balance, child care programs must establish rates that cover the **true cost of care**, which itself can be challenging to figure out—especially for home-based providers, who have costs that are related to both the program and their home (utilities, mortgage, trash). There is time spent running the business in addition to time spent with children—all of this must be accounted for to determine the true cost of care. Parents in the United States pay the bulk of the cost of child care, and grants and subsidies are especially rare for home-based programs. Hopefully there will be more this year—the state is thinking about some retention grant funding...

The other two components that make up sound early childhood policy include **full fee collection** and **full enrollment**. Thank you for all being so consistent and timely with your payments—and for that we are grateful. The latter, full enrollment, is where we’ve been taking it easy! We have *all* benefited from this, and when the kiddos were younger, we really wanted fewer children. The grant helped to cover some costs while we were first enrolling children, subsidizing the cost of both enrolled and yet unknown children to come.



As children in our group are getting older, we are comfortable having a couple more children join us, just when we need them, to help balance our equation. This past year, we have all seen an increase in costs—inflation and tax increases that are crazy. We recognize that child care takes a big chunk out of your budget, but do have to raise fees each year in order to survive. We want to be here for you! We are glad to be able to set fees for next year at our 2023-2024 under 2 year old rate.

(See 2024-2025 tuition and enrollment policies on the next page)

Requirements for Working in Child Care in NY State

As we are about to welcome our first substitute caregiver, we thought you might be interested to know what is required of substitute caregivers. All employees (and even volunteers) that work regularly with preschool children in licensed programs in NYS are held to the same requirements!

Before working in a child care program, all potential employees must go through a background check and fingerprint clearance—there are five different sources that are checked! In addition, each person must have a medical statement and complete more common paperwork documenting their experience and references. A person can work in the program, under supervision while waiting for their prints to clear.

Child care quality has been shown to improve with caregiver training. Over their first 6 months, all employees/volunteers must complete 15 hours of training, and a total of 30 hours must be completed every two years as long as the person is employed in child care. Training topics include: child development, nutrition, program development, safety and security, business records, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, shaken baby, statutes and regulations related to child care and child abuse, and adverse childhood experiences.





Tuition & Enrollment Policies 2024-2025



Monthly Tuition

(Enrollment limited to full-time 8:30am-4:30pm, M-F) **\$1,555**

Annual Materials fee \$ 250

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*
 \$15/day; \$275/month - 5 days/week

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing, responsive care • Prepared environment • Healthy vegetarian meals/snacks • Parent support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest mat or blanket • Indoor shoes • Diapers, diaper cream • Families provide diapering wipes, sunscreen and general lotion if child needs specific different items than we offer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunscreen, lotion, insect spray • First aid supplies 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water-based disposable wipes 	

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
- ♦ 10/3/2024 ICSD Recess
- ♦ 1/29/2025 Lunar New Year

ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS CLOSED

- ♦ 6/20/2025 Juneteenth Extension
- ♦ 7/3 & 7/4/2025 Independence Day holidays
- ♦ 8/4-8/8/2025 – Summer break

Additional enrollment policies including payment deadlines, late fees, absences for personal illness and other reasons are included in enrollment contract.
 4.30.24



West Hill Educare
Calendar
2024-2025



September					
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				

Labor Day Recess 9/2

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

10/3 ICSD Recess (open)
10/2-4 Rosh Hashanah
10/11-12 Yom Kippur
10/14 Indigenous People's Day
10/16-23 Sukkot
10/31 Diwali Festival

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

11/5 Guy Fawkes Day
11/11 Veterans Day
11/27-29 Thanksgiving

December					
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			

12/25 Christmas
12/25-1/2 Hanukkah
12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa
12/23-12/31 Winter Recess

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

1/1 New Years Day
1/20 Martin Luther King, Jr.
1/29 Lunar New Year (open)

February					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1
	3	4	5	6	7
	10	11	12	13	14
	17	18	19	20	21
	26	27	28	29	

Shrove Night (1/25)
2/17-2/21 Mid-Winter Recess

March					
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				

3/1-30 Ramadan

3/31 Recess Day/Eid al-Fitr

April					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30			

4/12-20 Passover
4/14-4/18 Spring Recess
4/18 Good Friday
4/20 Easter/Orthodox Easter

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

5/26 Memorial Day

June					
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				

6/1-3 Shavuot
6/6-7 Eid al-Adha
6/19 & 6/20 Juneteen Recess
6/26 last day ICSD for student

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

7/3 & 7/4 Holidays

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

8/5-8/9 Summer Break

8/29 & 9/1 Labor Day Holiday

PLEASE NOTE : WHE remains open on parent/teacher conference days, superintendent and professional learning community days.
We will remain open 10/3 & 1/29 and will be closed 6/20 & 7/3.

rev 4/30/2024



For an electronic version of our calendar, visit our [parent resources](http://www.westhilleducare.com) page online at <http://www.westhilleducare.com>

May Curriculum

Toddler Times

May 2024

p. 6



Activities

- Playdough
- Mortar & Pestle w different seeds: cumin, fennel, cardamom
- Seed Planting; in garden and take home pots
- Gluing, painting, printing
- Color mixing
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, sand tray, rhyming
- Counting and number games
- Physical agility: balancing, jumping

Books

- Don't Squash that Bug!
- Here to There, Nat Geo Kids
- Meet a Bus Driver
- A Spring Stroll in the City
- Does a Bear Poo in the Woods?
- I'll Take Care of You—a big book about a bird and a seed
- Seeds—Tom Robbins
- More, by IC Springman —gives *a sense* of quantity
- If you were a Dog
- The Me I choose to Be

Primary Themes

- Birds
- Seeds
- Gardening
- What Plants Need
- Bugs
- Worms
- Measuring
- Self Identity
- What is work?
- Grace and courtesy
- Peace
- Gratitude

Songs

- Inch by Inch
- The Bean Song
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley
- Robin, Red Breast
- Kookaburra
- Five Green and Speckled Frogs



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

310 Richard Place, Ithaca, NY 14850

In case of emergency, KC can be reached at
831.331.6929



Class List (04/22/2024)

Child's Name	D.O.B.	Parents	Address	Phone	E-mail
Ansel Karim-Smith	12/19/2021	Sabrina Karim-Smith & Josh Smith	Ithaca, NY 14850	970-310-4793 470-585-5818	smk349@cornell.edu jes546@cornell.edu
Austin Gaige	12/7/2021	Maria & Brandon Gaige	3726 County Rte 6 Alpine, NY 14805	917-331-2240 607-483-9815	mvf629@gmail.com
Evangeline (Evvie) Miller-Back	8/30/2021	Christine Miller & Eli Back	Ithaca, NY 14850	202-657-9847 607-793-0226	christinelinmil@gmail.com elibraffback@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 (Kata) Peisahovitch	02/05/2022	Herianna Valenzuela & Jason Peisahovitch	Ithaca, NY 14850	Herianna 520-440-0043	heriannavalenzuela@gmail.com
Eleanora (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
Sybil Lynch	06/16/2021	Rachael & Jimmy Lynch	37 Whig St. Trumansburg, NY 14886	607-339-8837 845-270-1175	Rkoppel5@gmail.com James.lynch.23@gmail.com
Zephyr (Zeffie) McCCasey	01/15/2022	Lauretta Dolch & Indi McCCasey	500 Elm St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-342-1213 510-770-4237	ljd62@cornell.edu indifyer@gmail.com

Our World at Play



June 2024

Doesn't that look like summer? More so than any day since!

Yet, what a busy May we had! We played hard with water, sand, oobleck, paint... we planted seeds, enjoyed our first pops, made pickles, egg salad, tangerine juice, tasted lemon from our tree and strawberries from our garden.

And, we are again blessed with robins! There are 4 eggs in the nest. This year they've chosen a spot in the hedge along the left side of the garden where you enter.

We have been exploring collage; gluing seeds, pictures and other odds and ends. We always start with drawing and embellish from there. (Quite honestly, it gives me time to get the glue together, but also it's logical— you can't write on wet glue, so that's what I say...) Today the oldest children tried cutting with scissors, a skill that will be built upon more and more and others will be included when they're older and can be successful. The kids showed me again today, that children closer to 3, or older are most successful with scissors, since good hand size and dexterity are needed.

Calendar

No holidays in June this year

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		

In June we welcome Caspian "Cas" Carvallo-Ray. Cas is only 3 days older than Kata and is also bilingual, so he fits right in to our cohort! Cas' parents are Sefora and JP—please give them a warm welcome to WHE and our area—they moved to EcoVillage from the west coast over this past winter.

Next Parent Support Gathering

July—7/9, 7/10 or 7/11

5:30-7p.m. @The Boatyard Grill

[Complete this calendar doodle poll](#)

to help identify the date that works best for most

Hands at Play—Fine Motor Development

“Young children are naturally curious. They learn about the world by interacting with their peers and by exploring materials with their hands. During their early years, children develop hand skills (fine motor skills) that they will need to be successful for the rest of their lives. They also learn to use their hands for important self-care skills, such as feeding and dressing themselves.”

Some motor skills are foundational to others: manipulating playdough helps build coordination and make hands strong. Manipulating the dough builds eye-hand coordination and the ability to utilize a pencil with intention.

If you'd like to read a brief, good article about fine motor development continue reading the article which begins with the quote above, [*Hands at Play, Developing Fine Motor Skills for Life*](#) by Christy Isbell.





Looking for Book Ideas?

As children's interests develop and their attention to stories builds, we find we are shifting to more paper books—perhaps you are too?

I have many favorite books, you've all heard tales from *What Pete Ate* or *Caps for Sale*. However, when I was asked recently for recommendations, I found myself saying I didn't have a specific book recommendation—you have to spend time at the library or in the bookstore and decide if the book is right for you at this particular time... I suggested the idea of visiting *Odyssey Bookstore* which is known to have a nice children's area, as does *Buffalo St. Books* and *Barnes and Noble*.

There are so many new books out there for children all the time and I don't know many of them! There are always some new books that are fantastic! I mostly learn about them from the library, and from you!

Remotely, I look to [A Mighty Girl](#) for ideas. Sometimes I look at suggestions from things I search and just take a chance. I get their newsletter and it draws me in...

I also belong to (and one of my first early childhood projects in the '80s was to help develop) the [Margo Trombetta Peace Education & Anti-bias Library](#). Continued dedication and ongoing updates mean you can narrow down searches by age, language, type of book, peace library strand and more!

And there are summaries of each book, maybe I even wrote some of these older descriptions a million years ago!
It's possible...



June Curriculum

Toddler Times

May 2024

p. 4



Primary Themes

- Birds
- Gardening
- Edible/inedible
- Ramps, balls
- Water/sand
- Geometric solids
- Dinosaurs
- The Earth Goes Around the Sun



Activities

- Playdough
- Garden tending
- Scissors; cutting skills
- Gluing, painting, printing
- Initial sounds and rhyming
- Counting and number games
- Geometric solids
- Physical agility: balancing, jumping, swinging
- Pat bells; high and low tones

Songs

- Continue plant and garden songs...
 - Bean Song
 - Oats, Peas, Beans & Barley
- Muffin Man with own addresses
- Dinosaurs Lived Long Ago
- Do-Re-Mi
- Mockingbird Hill
- More ideas?

Books

- Come Out & Play
- Boys Dance
- Fire Chief Fran
- Bear Has a Belly
- Friends/Amis
- Bugs for Lunch
- Roadwork
- Gathering
- Blueberries for Sal
- A Flower Grows
- Quiet in the Garden





August 2024

A New Mascot?

The cecropian moth must be our new mascot!

“With immense wings measuring up to 7 inches across, the Cecropia moth (Hyalophora cecropia) bests any other species in North America. (T. Gingrich photo)”

KC and Norie saw this caterpillar in the back yard!!! (KC photo!!)

It was apparently larger than a finger thick, about 4+ inches!

It will grow into a moth pictured at left and will be as big as 7”!

—
it is the largest moth in North America!

Certainly unique (unreal!) and very beautiful!

Have you ever seen one? Just wow!

August brings about another change in our group—

The Miller-Back family is moving to Brooklyn.

Evy’s last day at WHE will be August 18th.

Evy has been a good friend to many here and will be missed by all.

We thank you all for the upcoming break and hope that you have a great week.

Topics touched upon in our newsletter this month:

- Good Things About Setting Limits
- Distracted Parenting: More Impactful than Screen Time!
- The Protective Factors Framework
- Recommended Screen Time by Age
- Parent Resources and Supports

Calendar

8/5-8/9 Summer Break

8/29 Hours 8:00-3:30

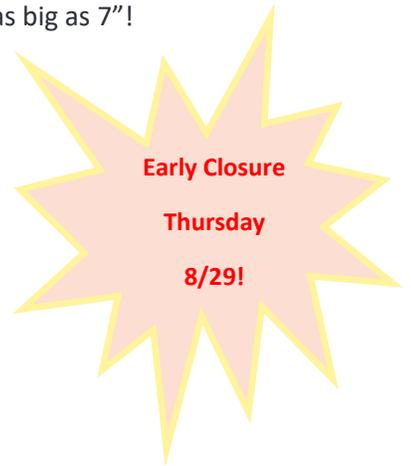
KC & Jude to London!

8/30 & 9/2 Labor Day Holidays

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



It was really fun whacking and eating the coconut!



Good Things About Setting Limits



One of the harder things we must do as parents is set limits. Sometimes setting a limit means saying no—with compassion, but without apology.

Toddlers in particular seek to understand social expectations and limits to their behavior and they “test the limits.” aka they’re 2. Testing may look like trying the same thing a different day, in different contexts, with different people. Is the limit the same at home/school? Is the response the same? Is the limit the same every day? Ayayay! For as challenging as this is— it feels like they’re not listening or don’t remember, or care. But they’re just checking... and it’s important we’re consistent about limits that are important to us.

Setting limits is calming to children. Limits help children feel safe and secure. Limits provide information about acceptable and unacceptable behaviors and can help children learn to control their impulses and emotions. Important stuff!

You already know about

stating things positively, stating what you want, rather than stops and don’ts. This very much comes into play with stating limits. Consider reading more about the value of limit setting this article, [Limits for Little Ones](#) by Sarah S. MacLaughlin.



in

“Good Enough” Parents

Good enough parents are not perfect parents. We do our best. Good enough parents understand we are learning along alongside our children, often *because of our children*. Good enough parents are able to forgive ourselves when we don’t live up to our own parenting aspirations. - *awareness is the first step* to making any change.

“Good enough” parenting means doing your best at **being responsive and adapting to your child as they grow.**

Good enough parents **forgive ourselves** when we feel like our own timeline or adult pressures takeover. It’s hard to be responsive all the time, impossible really. Sometimes we need to work or we just need space. Each of us has felt like all we can offer is distracted attention or offer “showtime!”

Good enough parents are grown up little humans, learning all the time too, doing the best we can.



Recommended Screen Time for Children by Age

TV and children? An old conversation...
and now there is MEDIA everywhere.

Media can be great, some of it's educational...
but how much TV and other media is good,
bad, or ok for kids?



Children learn about behaviors and expectations from experiences
and from screen-time. It is a foundation of learning to be able to
“mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others.”¹

Inasmuch, it is critical that we are aware of the messages being
given to our children—both directly and indirectly through storyline
and commercials. I watched an episode of *Bluey* recently to know
what the show is about as it's popular with a couple of our kids.
The commercials were shockingly horrible. I don't even remember
the show's message.

But I have long been terrified by the deregulation of children's television. Prior to the 1980's, you could not
advertise products to children on children's television. During the Reagan administration, the deregulation of
children's television, meant ads could now be aimed directly at children. This meant for-profit companies could begin
marketing sugary cereal, junk food and toys directly to children.

Cartoons featuring licensed characters increased along and educational programming decreased. Children's creative
imagination can be negatively impacted, sometimes restricting children's play to be just like the show or movie.

The American Academy of Pediatrics Current Recommendations for Children's Use of “Screen Media”

- **Birth through 18 months**

Avoid all screen media—phones, tablets, TVs and computers.
(It's OK to video chat with grandparents and far-away friends.)

- **18 months to 2 years**

It is OK to introduce young children to high-quality children's
media if you watch it with them and help them understand
what they're seeing.

- **2 to 5 years**

Limit screen use to one hour a day of high-quality programs
designed for children. Watch with your children; explain what
they're seeing and how it applies to the world around them.

Bullets quoted directly from *Zero to Three*—[read more](#)



On Site Parent Resources

Parenting is a life-changing experience—how can anyone be prepared for the depth and myriad of emotions we experience supporting the development of our little humans?

Parenting in partnership with other caregivers requires collaboration. To best support children, all caregivers must be basically informed about how the child is currently doing and know about important experiences that have taken place in the other caregiver’s absence. It is important for all caregivers to know about what occurred during the time they were not with the child. Sharing information provides greater support, as each caregiver can help the child tie their worlds together, integrate and expand their experiences. At WHE, we want to know about what happened during the night that was memorable; new interests, skills, rough spots and challenges that surfaced.

This page covers some of the ways we hope to support you with parenting. Please let us know if you have another idea that you think would be beneficial for your family and/or others!

Daily Check-ins

Morning check-ins

Morning check-ins can be tricky. At this time it is important for us to learn about how your child has been doing since we last saw them. How has their rest, hydration and eating been? How’s their mood?

Any upsets before coming? Since children may internalize information they hear, we try to keep conversations about them informative and not too emotional during daily times to check-in, if things are particularly challenging, sensitive or there are a lot of important details to relay, it may be advisable to plan a separate time to talk.

Afternoons—Pick Up Time

If you arrive a little early to pick your child up, we always want to check in about their day! This can be a great time to share current goals and challenges that you’d like us to know about or help you to strategize about.



Counting gems!



Individual Meetings

We are happy to meet with you outside of school hours if you’d like to talk more specifics about your child’s development or other concerns. Please sign up on our online calendar [here!](#)

Parent Library and Parent Binder

The books in the cubby room are all available to borrow. Please let us know if you decide to take one! Our parent binder is among the books and contains our Parent Handbook and information about child development, local resources and other supports.

Bi-Monthly Parent Support Meetings

Bi-monthly parent-only support groups facilitated by Jude. Generally Wednesday evenings, every other month from 5:30-7:00 p.m.

Bi-Monthly Parent Gatherings

Bi-monthly gatherings coordinated by parents. Time to just play together as a group! Place and time vary, generally on the weekend.

(more next page)

Child Care Payment Assistance

Child care subsidies are available to working families who earn up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for their household size. A family of 3 can earn up to \$107,353.68 and be eligible! The Department of Social Services pays the bulk of your child’s tuition and there is a minimal family fee that varies depending on your family income that is paid to WHE directly. At WHE parents are also responsible for any difference in our fees and the maximum reimbursement from DSS, which is currently approximately \$1,200/month.

Learn more: <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/dss/childcare>

Answer a short series of questions to see if you may be able to get child care at low or no cost - in 10 minutes or less! Learn more about this [here](#).



Protective Factors

[The Strengthening Families Five Protective Factor Framework](#) is an international initiative that aims to develop and enhance five specific characteristics (called protective factors) that help keep families strong and children safe from abuse and neglect. The protective factors serve as buffers, and when they are increased for families research shows there are lower incidences of child abuse and neglect.



Distracted Parenting More Impactful Than Screen Time!

Media also distracts adults—gives us a little break, some connection, some enjoyment. Maybe it’s work that pulls us away, or just the endless tasks of caring for each other and managing a household. Whatever it is, screens take us away from being present and responsive.

Distracted parenting has certainly increased with the freedoms and meshing of technology, remote work as well as the endless busy-ness we experience just balancing the demands of our daily juggle.

Ten years ago we saw children pretending to take pictures with our toy phones, today there isn’t a toy phone in our environment, and creatively, the flower rocks have become phones (*please check your children’s pockets at night!*).

We see ourselves reflected in children’s play. Cell phones are definitely a part of our life! The challenge is ignoring the dinging and buzzing in our pocket and finding a time when children are occupied to take a peek. And it’s really hard to not grab it as a camera... so much easier than a separate camera, but adding to the challenge.

In her article, *The Dangers of Distracted Parenting*, Erika Christakis warns that “parents should worry less about kids’ screen time—and more about their own.” She acknowledges that although parents may be with their children more than in the past, they are less emotionally attuned and parent:child engagement is low-quality, in part due to distracted attention. <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2018/07/the-dangers-of-distracted-parenting/561752/>



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The Earth Goes Around the Sun

Toddler Times
September 2024
p. 3



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How We Can Help Kids Build Readiness Skills?

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Peace education is foundational in our classroom and we begin with relationship building and helping the child to be self-aware and a kind member of our classroom community. Learning to communicate through conflict and developing self-control are important components of maintaining peace everywhere (*truly, the goal is for a peaceful society as a whole*). *Conflict resolution IS peace education* and at WHE we expect children's



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We choose to make silence.

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“Practical Life” ... The Details of Everyday Living

In a classroom of 3-6 year-olds, the 3 year-olds spend a much of their time with the activities in the *Practical Life* area. In part because of their familiarity, but also because the activities reinforce basic skills. With a goal to mirror the home environment, many of the materials look like household tasks. **Skills learned in *Practical Life* are precursors to success in all other areas of the classroom.** Children learn grace and agility, strengthen their hands and refine their grasps. Children learn about mathematical and physical properties of materials through grasping, pouring and squeezing. They subconsciously learn principles of language through the presentation of materials in order of difficulty from left to right and top to bottom of the shelf. They experience the movements of letter formation when we demonstrate stirring in a counter-clockwise direction. In *Practical Life*, children build concentration, coordination, independence, a sense of order and self-esteem.

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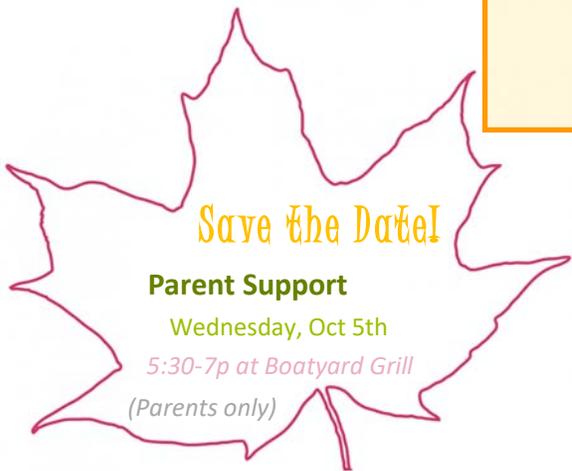


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Save the Date!

Parent Support

Wednesday, Oct 5th

5:30-7p at Boatyard Grill

(Parents only)

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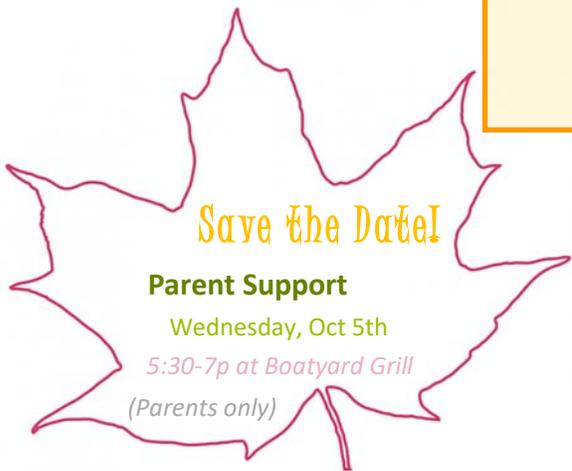


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Toddler Times

September 2024
p. 3



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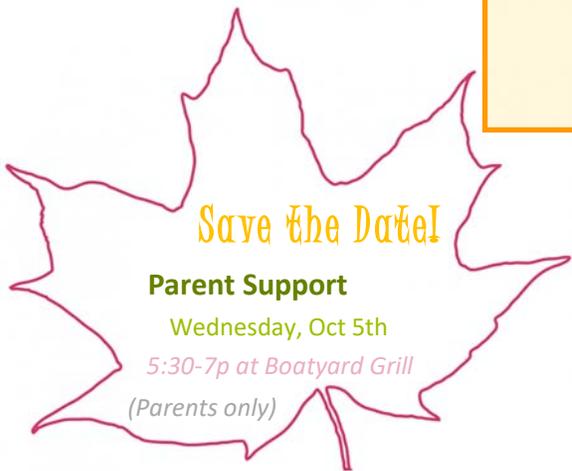


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- Pushpinning!
- Directions—NWES
- I Spy and Initial sounds
- Opposites
- Counting and number games

Books

- Mirette on the High Wire
- My Place in Space
- Me on the Map
- Not Just the Driver
- National Geographic:
City and Country
- Up to My Knees!
- (always more)

Songs

- This is My School
- Little Blue Ball
- This Pretty Planet
- The Ants Go Marching
- Un elefante/One Elephant
- Here are My Hands
- Hokey Pokey
- This Little Light of Mine

October 2024



Happy Fall!

"Where did the yellow go?"

So many discoveries over the last month—color mixing was only one...

In September friendships continued to grow and there was just so much good belly laughing and silliness. Our days have been filled inside with sandwich making, tower building, magnet fun, push pinning, gluing and painting. Outside there has been lots of full group building and balancing, making paths (and jumping onto the blue mat swimming pool).

Both inside and out we're seeing dramatic play blossom. And we're seeing more sex/gender-segregated play. Notably outside, where some children are "doing" more cooking, going on trips and to the doctor kids while others are doing more digging and becoming dust balls rolling down the hill with their trucks.

The kids have been pretty diligent participants with our Friday classroom cleaning and we want to thank everyone for helping to get things cleaned up at the end of the day.

In October, excitement begins that builds until the new year... In order to support families with a diversity of practices, rather than celebrate the holidays, we support learning about many holidays and try to remain calm and steady here at school. Please keep costumes at home... We will have trick-or-treating on the 31st and hope to see your littles in their costumes for your first stop in the evening, if you celebrate!



Calendar

10/14 Indigenous People's Day

October					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4
7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31		



Parent Support

Wednesday, Oct 2nd

5:30-7p at Boatyard Grill

(Parents only)



Family Apple Fest at Gaige Farms!

Saturday, October 5

After nap, 3-6?

Look for a text from Maria!

Governor Hochul Announces \$50M To Expand Access To Affordable Child Care

Toddler Times

October 2024
p. 2



In an effort to expand access to affordable child care, on September 18th, Governor Hochul announced there will be an additional \$50M in funding to support the cost of care for 5,500 children statewide.

Child care subsidies are available to working families who earn up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for their household size. A family of 3 can earn up to \$107,353.68 and be eligible! The Department of Social Services pays the bulk of your child's tuition and there is a minimal family fee that varies depending on your family income that is paid to WHE directly. At WHE parents are also responsible for any difference in our fees and the maximum reimbursement from DSS, which is currently approximately \$1,200/month.

Learn more:

<https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/dss/childcare>

Answer a short series of questions to see if you may be able to get child care at low or no cost - in 10 minutes or less! Learn more about this [here](#).



"I made scissors. They're very sharp."



Warm Clothing and Inclement Weather Wear

Sadly, we are (close to!) beyond shorts weather...

The turn of the season is a good time to check your child's extra clothing bin. As it gets colder, you know we all still like to get outside as much as possible, and having appropriate clothing *really* helps. With snowsuits/pants and jackets we will go out in weather that is above 20°, *including wind chill*. When we dip below 60° we'll need coats, a hat, mittens and closed-toe shoes.

Boots and snow clothing can be very restrictive—especially after the shorts and sandals of summer! If you're still shopping for winter wear, consider the following to increase your child's enjoyment of the brisk and snowy weather ahead.

Boots: double check closures boots are working well. Velcro wears out most quickly.

Mittens: Consider getting a pair of [Snowstoppers](#) or another brand that can be put on easily and has a long cuff.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Toddler Times

October 2024

p. 3



Have you ever wondered how much your child should be eating at different ages?

The Child and Adult Care Food Program that reimburses us for meals served uses the following guidelines. These are minimum recommended portions...

Is it ok to limit what your child eats? Check out this [great article](#) about controlling your child's food intake by blogger, *My Little Eater*. There are many topics covered, including our perspective, the child's perspective, reasons we think they should not eat as much of this and should eat something else instead and more!



BREAKFAST

Serve Milk, Vegetable or Fruit, Grain*

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Vegetable, Fruit or Both	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Grain*	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq

* Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week. oz eq = ounce equivalents

LUNCH / SUPPER

Serve All Five Components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5
Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
Vegetable	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
Fruit	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
Meat/Meat Alternate	1 oz	1 1/2 oz
Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq

* A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults. oz eq = ounce equivalents

SNACK

Select Two of the Five Components

COMPONENT	AGES 1-2	AGES 3-5
Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Vegetable	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Fruit	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
Meat/Meat Alternate	1/2 oz	1/2 oz
Grain	1/2 oz eq	1/2 oz eq

oz eq = ounce equivalents

Refer to USDA FNS Exhibit A for further guidance on grain serving sizes.



Visit cacfp.org for more nutrition education resources. CACFP is an indicator of quality care. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Recycle your extra old food containers at CCE food program

I am a member of the Family & Community Development Program Committee —

I'll bring them for you!

Problem Solving

Problem solving occurs all day around here, but when the floppy disk got stuck in the tree, the kids really got creative. The clever tool pictured here never did end up working.



Ultimately they threw our biggest ball at it to knock it out of the tree.

In case you don't see it, the amount of deep belly laughter these kids enjoy with each other is frequent (and infectious!).

Parent Library

Thank you to the Balog-Way family, we have a new recommended book for loan in our Parent Library!

After finding the book thought provoking and helpful herself, Simone gifted WHE a copy of [the highly sensitive child](#) by Elaine N. Aron, PhD.

The author describes sensitivity as a *wonderful* trait, noting that high sensitivity is not an illness, or a syndrome, but states that many people in our culture, see the only the challenges being highly sensitive can bring.

Before the highly sensitive child, Dr. Aron wrote an acclaimed book called the highly sensitive person.

Is your child highly sensitive?
Consider completing a [brief online questionnaire](#) and taking a look at this new (to us) book!



“You put this in front of your eyes so the dirt doesn't get in there!”





Mommy Witch and Baby Witch
- by Jude, age 4

Primary Themes

- Fall—season turning
- Secondary Colors
- Counting
- 1:1 Correspondence
- Initial sounds, I Spy
- Practicing gloves and mittens!
- Halloween
- Dia de los muertos



Activities

- Metal inset curvilinear shapes
- Sewing: beads and buttons
- Pushpinning!
- Directions—NWES
- I Spy and Initial sounds
- Opposites
- Counting and number games
- Learning to blow the nose!

Songs

- Las hojitas/Leaves are Falling
- Stirring the Brew
- Five Little Pumpkins
- De Colores
- Golden Garden Spider
- Little Blue Ball

Books

- Pumpkin Circle
- Five Little Pumpkins
- The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything
- Let it Grow
- A Tree Grows
- Pumpkin Soup
- Gruff the Grump
- Carlos and the Squash Plant
- 500 Palabras Nuevas Para Ti
- Pablo Recuerda



November 2024



It's Our Second Anniversary at 310!

This month marks two years since we re-opened West Hill Educare! (Re)opening WHE (is again) the best thing I've ever done, and working with children continues to inspire, amaze and challenge every part of me... some of my own deepest learning comes when being with young children and families. We are so glad you are all here and appreciate the light in each of your little ones. A perfect month for reflecting on gratitude and family.

We have been having so much fun with the leaves: raking, jumping into piles, hauling them off in a 'barrow, matching crayons to leaves and other things in the environment.

As a group we're learning more and more about each other when children share at circle, meal conversations and throughout the day. It can be very interesting hearing each child's thoughts and experiences from the weekend etc., as I'm sure you can imagine!

I will be making our newsletters briefer.

Please let me know what you find most important/helpful and there are any topics you'd like addressed as a focus for potential use in future issues.

Thank you!



Calendar

11/11 Veteran's Day

11/27, 28, 29 Thanksgiving Break

November				
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

HELP! We need squirter tops!

We use bleach on eating and food prep surfaces and the diaper table... and the bleach just eats them up.

When you're done with that window or bathroom cleaner, please bring us the squirter top!

There could never be too many...





Songs and Activities

November & December 2024



Songs We've Been Singing

Songs with an asterisk are included on following pages...

NOVEMBER

- I Celebrate My Family*
- From You I Receive
- Grey Squirrel (or Brown, or any color!)
- Little Blue Ball*
- Continent Song
- This Little Light of Mine
- I am a Pizza*
- Driving in the Car*

DECEMBER

- 'Tis a Gift to Be Simple
- Apple Tree Wassail
- Black Socks
- Frosty the Snowman
- Jingle Bells
- Dona Nobis Pacem
- Dreidl

Stuff We've Been Doing and Talking About

- More leaf play: rubbings, seriating by color, leaf collage, raking and JUMPING in!
- Seed harvest—beans and peas to plant again
- Digging in the empty garden beds, munching any and all remaining herbs
- Space, planets (and planet song!)
- Continent Song
- Gratitude
- Seasons: Fall, now Winter!
- Solstice, Winter Holidays

Awesome Books!

- The Spacesuit, by Alison Donald & Ariel Landy
- Hello Autumn, by Shelley Rotner
- Feeling Thankful, by Shelley Rotner & Sheila Kelly
- Giving Thanks, by Chief Jake Swamp
- Feast for 10, Cathryn Falwell
- Families Can, Dan Saks
- The Doorbell Rang, by Pat Hutchins
- Leaves on the Trees, Thom Wiley
- Wilfred Gordon MacDonald Partridge
- Winter, by Shalini Vallepar
- The Circle of Days, Reeve Lindbergh
- The Shortest Day, Wendy Pfeffer
- The Rabbit Listened, Cori Doerrfeld
- Earth Alphabet, Mrs. Peanuckle
- Our World, Sue Lowell Gallion
- Peter's Painting, Sally Moss
- Too Many Pears!/Demasiadas Peras!



Calendar

12/23-1/1 Winter Break

Re-open Thursday 1/2/2025

December					
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				

Please let us know if your child will be absent any additional days surrounding our upcoming winter break. Amongst their challenges, we hope that your holidays have many moments of deep joy.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 2025!





I am a pizza
with extra cheese
from tomatoes
sauce is squeezed
onions & mushrooms
oregano

I am a pizza
ready to go - oh

I am a pizza
with peperoni
no anchovey
or phony bologna

I am a pizza
order by phone

I am a pizza
please take me home - oh

I am a pizza
with peppers on top
out of the oven
and into the box
into the car and
upside down

I am a pizza
dropped on the ground - oh

I was a pizza

I was the best

I was a pizza

Now I'm a mess



My Family

I ce-le-brate my fa-mi-ly, peo-ple close to me.

There are ma-ny branch-es in my fami-ly tree.

lov-ing, car-ing, lov-ing, car-ing, help-ing, shar-ing, help-ing, shar-ing.

I ce-le-brate my fa-mi-ly, peo-ple close to me.

