



Monthly Notes

January 2025!

This month we celebrate the new year and Zeffie's 3rd birthday.

By the beginning of next month, everyone will be three!

This month also marks Norie's 2nd, and Ansel's 1st anniversary as part of the WHE community. I hope to remember these anniversaries, but I forgot Kata's 2nd anniversary with us last month (12/1). Now, that's a long time in the life of a 3 year old!

*We hope you enjoyed your winter break as much as we have and **THANK YOU** for the generous holiday gift!* The weather station is all set up, let's see how it works with wind chill as we get down into the 20s again this coming week.

We had so much fun in December—there was snow!

Some of the pics included here seem funny in January, but that's what happens when they're from last month.

We look forward to seeing you tomorrow!



Then and Now...



Calendar

1/1/25 Wednesday

Happy New Year!

1/20, Monday

Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

January					
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	





January Curriculum

Monthly Notes

January 2025

p. 4



Primary Themes

- New year, winter
- Chinese New Year
- Shadows/light
- Civil rights, racial equity, Martin Luther King
- Sequencing (getting dressed in snowsuit, boots, hat & mittens)
- Tracks, tracking, forest animals
- Geometric shapes and solids

Books

- The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Peter's Big Snow
- My Senses
- Family pics new location



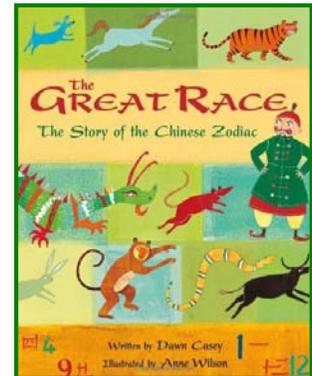
*The year of the green wood snake begins
Wednesday, January 29th.*

What's your sign?

ther King,

I was raised learning about the Chinese zodiac. KC and I are both water tigers.

Read [The Great Race](#) with us to learn more.



Activities

- Playdough with forest animals, footprint stampers
- Pouring, sweeping, care of the environment
- Continue tonging
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Making books
- Counting and number games
- Some "coloring" (!)
- Cutting—skill strips or maybe a green snake?
- Greeting new family/people—grace and courtesy

Songs

- This Little Light of Mine
- Back of the Bus
- Sing About Martin
- Earth, Air, Fire, Water
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Geometric Solids song

plus good oldies and more!



February 2025

Cabin fever is real!
The sunshine today. aHHHH.

We do love your kids!
It continues to be a pleasure feeding their joys and helping them work out their individual and social struggles.

Despite the cabin fever, January had some great fun. We sang about Martin and talked about freedom and justice. They told me today that they are all going to save the world.

Thank goodness, I told them—we're counting on you. Sigh.

When we did get out, play evolved from sledding to Jude pulling kids in sleds, to kids pulling kids in sleds, some kids pulling two kids in sleds! Great weight bearing (baric) workouts!

Speaking of workouts, we have been dancing the cabin fever away and playing instruments, we have even been doing calisthenics!

Inside skills are building too—we're beginning to see representational drawing and doing lots of scissor cutting practice. All children are showing some interest in sound play and counting and they are all becoming puzzle monster! This month we will add some more basic cooking to our fun!



Monthly Notes

Enrollment Plans for Fall 2025

Hard to believe—it's that time of year when families in this area begin planning for the next school year, but we are not sure we will have any spots. *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 if you are looking ahead to make a change in your child's care.*

February Holidays

♥ We will be closed Feb. 17-21
for Winter Break

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

Exclusionary Play

Through play, children learn and develop important skills they will use throughout their lives. 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.

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 toys and other safe objects that support active engagement and extend children's interests. They are given opportunity for uninterrupted play and freedom to explore, but when play becomes exclusionary, we intervene.

"Popular culture is filled with images of adolescent "mean girls" who control everyone around them through hurtful words, exclusion, and social pressure. Although more widely recognized in late elementary and middle school, attempts to dominate through relational aggression—sometimes called *social bullying*—begin much earlier. These experiences are now observed in kindergarten, with some young children excluding one another based on clothes, academic ability, and physical skills (Paul 2010). Many teachers of 4-year-olds have heard children say something like "You can't come to my birthday party" or "I won't be your friend if you don't give me that." Increasingly, researchers are recognizing that such statements represent the roots of *relational aggression*—"behaviors that are intended to significantly damage another child's friendships or feelings of inclusion by the peer group" (Crick & Grotpeter 1995, 711)—and that these behaviors begin in preschool. A large body of research points out the harm caused by social bullying in childhood and adolescence, suggesting a pressing need to prevent relational aggression or stop it as soon as it starts.

Helping children understand their social world and develop ways to meet their emotional and social needs is a critical part of early education. Children who successfully pursue these goals are rewarded with friends and socially enriching experiences; children who don't may resort to aggression. Relational aggression includes ignoring peers, telling peers they can't play or be part of the group, and setting limits on friendship (e.g., "I won't be your friend unless you let me be the train conductor"). This behavior not only damages the targets of the aggression but also jeopardizes the social and emotional development of the children who use relational aggression."

Tina M. Smith-Bonahue, Sondra Smith-Adcock, Jennifer Harman Ehrentraut

Learn more in their article ["I Won't Be Your Friend If You Don't"](#)



5 Ways to Support Social-Emotional Development

[\(link with more info and videos\)](#)

1. Help children to use power words (like stop and "I don't like that").
2. Help children understand the consequences of behavior.
3. Show while telling, staying focused on the "do" rather than the "don't."
4. Establish "little rules." (Like be kind, be gentle, be safe!)
5. Listen actively and empathetically and help children find words for their feelings.

February Curriculum

Toddler Times
February 2023
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Primary Themes and Activities

- ♥ **Continue Celebration of Lunar New Year**
([Ribbon Dancing](#) and Lantern Making)
- ♥ **Playing with Light** (Magnatiles and x-ray pictures)
- ♥ **Sequence Stories** (Getting dressed for snow)
- ♥ **Snowflakes** (matching pictures, cutting snowflakes)
- ♥ **Arctic and Ocean Animals**
- ♥ **Simple Cooking** (For ideas at home, check out [this article](#))

Songs

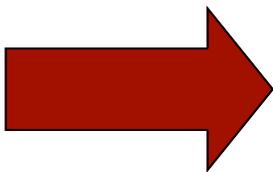
- ♥ **Bushel and a Peck**
- ♥ **Slippery Fish**
- ♥ **Down by the Bay**
- ♥ **The Earth is Our Mother**
- ♥ **Little Blue Ball**
- ♥ **This Pretty Planet**
- ♥ **This Little Light of Mine**

Books

- ♥ **Baby Beluga**
- ♥ **Slippery Fish**
- ♥ **Peter's Big Snow**
- ♥ **Moon**
- ♥ **Owl Moon**

There are always more songs and books!
Changeover and more planning this weekend!
We love when you bring books to share as well!



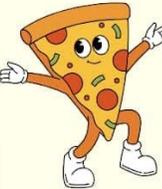


Can You Help?

Please check in with Herianna, she is one of the coordinators of this drive!

BOYNTON MIDDLE SCHOOL PERSONAL CARE DRIVE

STUDENTS WILL BRING TO THEIR HOMEBASE TEACHER



The homebase that collects the most, will get a pizza party!

CONTACT INFORMATION
 Mariah Pelzer
 mariah.pelzer@icsd.k12.ny.us
 Herianna Valenzuela-Silvain
 herianna.valenzuel@icsd.k12.ny.us

WHAT ARE PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS?

- Soap (bars and liquid)
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Hair Care Products
- Hair bonnets
- Razors
- Tampons
- Pads
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Floss
- Toilet paper
- Laundry Detergent Pods
- Lotion
- Moisturizer
- Face Soap
- Hair brushes
- Hair combs
- Hair picks
- Undergarments

CHECK OUR OUR AMAZON WISHLIST!



THANK YOU!
[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/BOYCOMMCL](https://tinyurl.com/boycommcl)



March 2025

This month we welcome Spring!
Maybe the ice will melt away...

This month we also welcome a new classmate—Shiloh Evans and her family! Shiloh will now be our youngest student, she will be 3 in July. Shiloh’s brother is in 2nd grade and their family lives down the street. Her mother, Caitlin, is a data scientist at the Lab of Ornithology and her father, Tom, works at Cornell as a fisheries researcher. A new family contact page is at the end of this newsletter.

Last month’s theme of compassion, friendship and love really blossomed. Despite the now more sophisticated *preschooler* challenges, the group is playing together beautifully and friendships continue to grow.

We have already been talking about Spring and this month we will begin plans for our garden.

I have been asked about having **parent support meetings** again. After our winter hiatus, I’m happy to do that. We will plan to continue meeting at the Boatyard Grill from 5:30-7:00pm. We could shift to 5-6:30 if that works better. **If you are interested, please let me know** what week of the month and day of the week works best for you.



Monthly Notes

Enrollment Plans for Fall 2025

Hard to believe—it’s that time of year when families in this area begin planning for the next school year. We only know of one anticipated change, as Sybil will move to preK in Trumansburg.

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, as much notice as possible helps. Please let us know if you are planning ahead to make a change in your child’s care.

March Holidays

We will be closed Monday,
March 31
“Recess Day”

March				
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
31				



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.

Social and Emotional Competence

Children's early experiences of being nurtured and developing a *positive relationship* with caring adult *affects all aspects* of behavior and development.



Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development

Children *thrive* when parents provide *not only affection, but also* respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and *safe opportunities* that promote independence.



Social Connections

Parents with a social network of *emotionally supportive friends, family, and neighbors* often find that it is *easier to care* for their children and themselves.



5 Protective Factors

Resilience

Parents who can cope with the *stresses of everyday life*, as well an occasional crisis, have *resilience*; they have the flexibility and inner strength necessary to *bounce back* when things are not going well.



Concrete Support

Families who can meet their *own basic needs* for food, clothing, housing, and transportation—and who know how to access essential services such as childcare, health care, and mental health services to address family-specific needs—are *better able to ensure the safety and well-being of their children*.



March Curriculum

Primary Themes

- Spring: signs of Spring outside
- What plants need
- More about planets: telescopes
- Our bodies and nutrition
- Birds

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



Monthly Notes

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Books

- A Day
- Lots of Feelings
- Caps for Sale
- Thank You Earth
- Kitchen Alphabet
- What's the Weather?
- Saltarin y la primavera
- Tingalayo
- Something about telescopes!
- A book about inside our bodies
- Three Little Pigs



Songs

- Planets & Little Blue Ball
- Rain songs:
 - Ants Go Marching
 - Puddle Boots
 - Que LLueva
- Robin Red Breast
- Body Songs: Head, Head, Ears, Ears.../Cabeza, Orejas
- Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Old Tofu



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

(03/01/2025)

Child's Name	D.O.B.	Parents	Address	Phone	E-mail
Ansel Karim-Smith	12/19/2021	Sabrina Karim-Smith & Josh Smith	213 Wood St. 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 (Macintyre Road) Alpine, NY 14805	917-331-2240 607-483-9815	mvf629@gmail.com
Cas Carvallo-Ray	02/02/2022	Sefora Ray & JP Carvallo	209 Rachel Carson Way Ithaca, NY 14850	831- 510-467-2954	seforaray@gmail.com jpcarbod@gmail.com
Kata Peisahovitch	02/05/2022	Herianna Valenzuela & Jason Peisahovitch	203 Madison St. Ithaca, NY 14850	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
Shiloh Evans	07/10/2022	Caitlin Eger & Tom Evans	Ithaca, NY 14850	303-550-1745	cait.eger@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
Zeffie McCCasey	01/15/2022	Lauretta Dolch & Indi McCCasey	500 Elm St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-342-1213 510-770-4237	ljd62@cornell.edu indiflyer@gmail.com



April 2025

Fresh off of celebrating Cesar Chavez—our not so new holiday! This year, ICSD began including Eid-el-Fitr as a recess day in their holiday schedule. Since putting this day on our calendar, we've learned President Barak Obama proclaimed "Cesar Chavez Day" to be celebrated March 31st as a U.S. federal commemorative holiday in 2014. The holiday celebrates the civil rights and labor movement activist, who stood up for farmworkers rights and co-founded the National Farmworkers Association with Dolores Huerta. These were my mama's heros. I am so glad that although it is not federally recognized yet, that ICSD has given us the opportunity to begin celebrating this important activist and peacekeeper at WHE.

*At the end of this month, **Veda** Ramanujan will be joining us. We are happy to welcome Veda and her dad, Krishna, as her family were among our first visitors, but the time to get to WHE just hasn't been right until now. Despite being happy to welcome them, this comes after only three short months of a terrible family trauma: (Veda's mom) Emma Greig passed away last December after a brief struggle with a very aggressive cancer. As we learn more about how to support Veda, we know you will all give a warm WHE welcome to her family. We are honored that Krishna feels this will be a good place for Veda.*



Monthly Notes

Parent Support Gathering

We will have our first parent support gathering of 2025 on **Wednesday, April 23rd** at 5pm at the Boatyard Grill.

*This is an time for **parents only** to gather and get support from each other regarding current topics, issues and concerns. Jude will be there to help with ideas, to collect topics for follow up and provide insights ...*

Hope to see you there!

April Holidays

April break covers it all this year, Passover, Good Friday and Easter. Happy real spring break! Please let us know if you will be gone any additional days around the break.

April				
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24	25	26	27	28
29	30			

“You Get What You Get and You Don’t Throw a Fit!”

Have any of your kids come home and said this to you?

KC and JUDE didn’t say that!
...but WHE might adopt it!

This is a Lynch family motto— and there is some history to it apparently (we’ll have to ask). Sometime not too long ago, when someone was upset that they didn’t get the plate color they wanted or their apple slice wasn’t round, or s o m e t h i n g WRONG and UPSETTING, Sybil chimed up with this saying.

Thank you to the Lynch family! This saying has brought lightness to what can sometimes be a stumbling block!



AGHI My Kid is LYING!

Just when you had all the toddler stuff down, you now have a 3-year-old who provides *new* challenges!

If I had to share only one or two of the articles I’ve looked at about this topic, I like the *Why do kids lie?* article on babycenter.com and *Why is My Child Lying?* from Psychology Today.

[Why do kids lie?](#) starts with a subheading that acknowledges that “all kids lie sometimes, for different reasons and at different Ages.” and offers “how to encourage your child to be honest.” The article notes that lying usually begins around 3 years of age and mentions many reasons 3 and 4 year olds lie, including

- Wishful thinking— or an active imagination
 - Exploration and curiosity
 - A need to test limits
 - A desire to avoid disapproval
 - Fear of punishment
 - A craving for attention
- Age-appropriate strategies include:
- Try to understand your child’s point of view
 - Offer an alternative
 - Talk about why lies are bad
 - Be consistent
 - Avoid labels
 - Minimize opportunities for lying
 - Be a good role model
 - Foster an environment of love and trust

The article [Why is My Child Lying?](#) highlights the role of the environment and social influences. Among the interesting findings noted are that parental attitudes have a large influence on how dishonest children are and that promoting honesty may be more effective than focusing on the costs of dishonesty. In addition, children with older siblings were noted as tending to learn the “art of deception” at a younger age and children who attended schools that were very punitive were more effective liars.

Defiance and the Need to Control

Just when everything seemed to be going so well, your cooperative kiddo hits a dead end. Maybe it's because there needs to be a transition from one activity to another—or from wants nothing time to wants something time? Maybe it's just that your child is plugging along through a routine, dragging. TOO SLOW for you! BUT, defiance is not new! Having control is behind the independent drive of those terrific "2s." Just when we may be feeling the limits of our patience, we find ourselves in a situation that is better supported by a calm response. Deep breaths.

What do we do when we are battling heads with our kids?

How do we get out of here still being the boss?

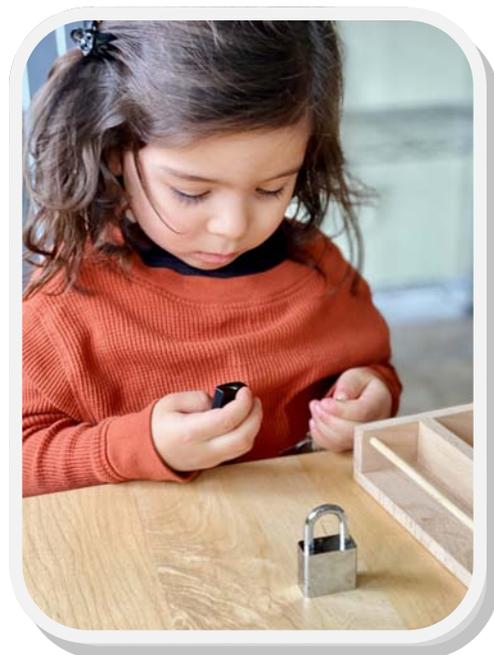
How can we get our way as adults, how can our limits stand and both us, and our child can still "save face?" We take that breath.

Those three breaths. We lean in. We remember that "someone has to be Gandhi" (my saying for someone has to stop the fighting).

For a long time it's us adults that have to scoop ourselves up—and it is hard to always be the ones, but it will come back around.

Just when you feel yourself pushing in an argument, *try to let go.*

- ◆ **Lean in:** focus on relationship. Recognize what is going on for your child. Avoid doing anything that will heighten their stress and invite more resistance, aka don't push their buttons, *be Gandhi.* Take time, slow down, give space.
- ◆ Keep your limits, preschoolers still seek your clear, consistent limits: don't feel bad about it or apologize—keep your body language neutral, avoid questions and state your expectations: briefly, calmly and matter-of-factly
Discipline should never include criticizing or controlling the child. At its core discipline means leading by example and teaching children how to control themselves.
- ◆ Sometimes you have time to let your child take half an hour dressing or finishing breakfast, sometimes you don't. Offer choices whenever possible to help facilitate cooperation.
- ◆ Help your child develop coping strategies for when things don't go their way. Create ways that they can take a break and return when ready to talk or cooperate. Be sure things are talked through later.
- ◆ Recognize the (positive) behaviors you want to promote.



Gardening with Children - Core Competencies

Observing Growth:

Children learn to observe the changes in seeds as they sprout and grow, fostering their observational skills.

Experimentation:

Planting seeds can be a starting point for simple experiments, such as testing the effects of sunlight or water on seed germination.

Asking Questions:

Encourage children to ask questions about the plants, such as "Why does this seed need water?" or "What happens if we don't give it enough sunlight?"

Life Cycle:

Growing seeds provides a tangible way to learn about the plant life cycle, from seed to seedling to mature plant.

Responsibility and Self-Sufficiency:

Taking Care:

Children learn to care for their plants by watering, weeding, and providing sunlight, fostering a sense of responsibility.

Patience:

Waiting for seeds to sprout and plants to grow teaches patience and the value of delayed gratification.

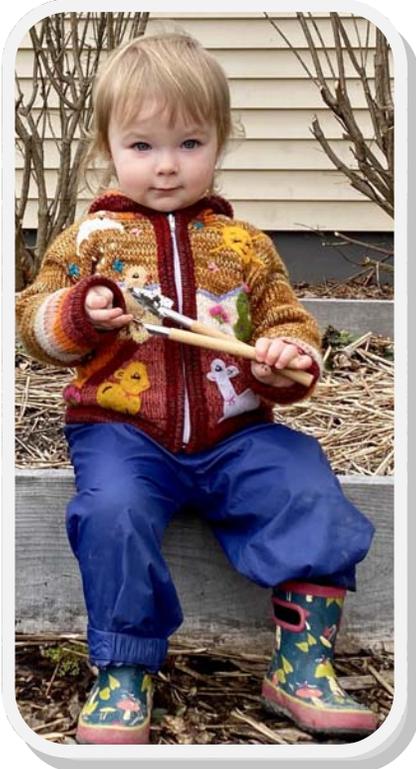
Accomplishment:

Seeing their seeds grow into plants can be a rewarding experience, boosting their sense of accomplishment.

Fine Motor Skills and Language Development:

Fine Motor Skills:

Handling seeds, planting them, and using small tools like trowels strengthens fine motor skills.



Language Skills:

Learning new vocabulary related to plants, gardening, and the growth process expands children's language skills.

Sensory Experience:

The tactile experience of soil, the smell of the earth, and the visual changes of the plants engage children's senses.

Social and Emotional Development:

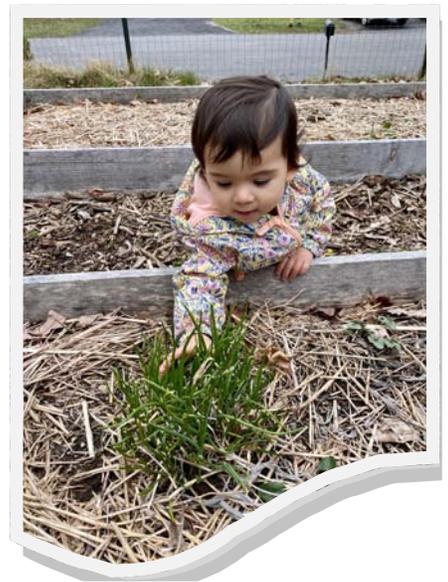
Collaboration: Gardening can be a group activity, fostering collaboration and teamwork.

Connection to Nature: Spending time in nature and caring for plants can help children develop a connection to the natural world.

Curiosity: Gardening can spark curiosity and a love for learning about plants and the environment.

Most important is to have fun with child led curiosity!

** from CACFP Training at the Child Development Council*



April Curriculum

Primary Themes

- Spring: signs of Spring outside
- What plants need
- Gardening, seed starting
- Revisit planets, continents
- Birds, Eggs, Nests
- Sorting:
colors,
edgers,
initial
sound
objects



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Activities

- Beading, sewing
- Butterfly painting
- Hungarian Egg Painting
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds: matching objects
- Rhyming
- Counting/number games
- Grace and courtesy



Books

- Exploring shapes and art: Matisse's Garden
- Appreciation: Who Put the Cookies in the Cookie Jar?
- Community: Night Market
- Rhyming: The Squirrels Who Squabbled
The Lions Roar
Bug on the Rug
- National Geographic Planets
- Between You and Me
- Spring
- Baby Animals: Here we Grow
- From Bulb to Daffodil
- The Vegetables we Grow

Songs

- Robin Red Breast
- Mockingbird Hill
- The Earth is Good to Me
- Bean Song
- Golden Garden Spider
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Grow
- Grey Squirrel
- Planets & Little Blue Ball, This Pretty Planet
- Continents





Monthly Notes

May 2025

We like the warm weather! And your little butterflies are having so much fun in the sun. Along with the arrival of butterfly wings for wearing outside, we got magic wands and matchbox cars! The cars have been really fun as they fit into the ramps and kids are loving running them down the slide.

Lunchtime today was full of thank yous for our meal—thank you earth, sun, trees and people at the tables! It is so fun to see and hear kids extending and applying our little rituals in caring ways.

2025-2026 School Year

When ICSD publishes their calendar for next year, we plan ahead too. The WHE calendar includes a couple of changes to the ICSD calendar that are highlighted at the bottom our policies page.

This newsletter contains documents for the 2025-2026 year including:

- WHE Calendar
- WHE 2025-26 Tuition & Enrollment Policies

...and a current class list!



Find the lyrics for the Golden Garden Spider song on page 31

May Holidays

5/26 Memorial Day

May				
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

Family Gathering

Who will be our planner this month?

For new families, we like to rotate the parent support months with a family gathering month.

We have been percolating an idea of going on the Teal boat together for July. Family friendly boat excursion? Yes, please!

Let us know if you have an idea for May or want to help with July!

Parenting Styles

The way we parent not only influences our child's sense of self, it influences our relationship with them and builds a foundation for how they relate to others and the world around them. If you have ever said something like, "I'm never going to be like my parents!" you may be reflecting on the way they interacted with you and how it made you feel.

In her article, [What is your parenting styles, and why does it matter?](#)

Lauren Pardee notes that parenting styles "can affect everything from your child's self-esteem to their academic success" and that "the way you interact with your child—and how you discipline them—will influence them for the rest of their life."

Parenting styles are typically referred to as authoritarian (brickwall), authoritative (backbone) or permissive (jellyfish), Lauren Pardee adds neglectful to her list.

An example of how parenting styles comes into play is when we set boundaries. Even though we know boundaries are important, when we consider the research on how our interactions impact our child's sense of self worth, we might find it a little more important find a *backbone*.

We must find our limits: in fact authoritarian (brickwall) parenting makes children feel more valued than permissive parenting—and certainly more valued than when in a family with uninvolved parent(s). Again, the role of attention is so important. Children who receive attention feel loved.



Joshua Seong.

	JELLYFISH	BACKBONE	BRICKWALL
What are the rules like?	-No recognizable structure, rules, or guidelines	-Clear -Simple	-Rigid -Strict -Unyielding
What types of discipline or punishments are used?	-Bribing -Doing nothing -Pleading -Threatening -Waiting -Yielding	-Asserting messages -Conflict Resolution -Consequences -Family meetings -Negotiation -Requesting	-Bribing -Ordering -Punishing -Rewarding -Threatening -Yelling
What are the effects on the child?	-Becomes self-centered -Develops little self-control -Easily led by peers	-Develops self-discipline -Is able to focus on the needs of the group	-Develops little self-control -Learns to obey out of fear -Often out of control in absence of parents
Does the parent demand a lot from the child?	-No. They are lenient and do not require mature behavior.	-Yes. They require their children to be responsible and self-regulated.	-Yes. They require and expect obedience.
Is the parent responsive to the child?	-Yes. They show parental warmth and interest in their children.	-Yes. They show parental warmth and interest in their children.	-No. They are not attuned to their children's special needs and interests.
What is the role of the parent?	-Bystander	-Leader, guide	-The "boss"
Food for Thought: What do you think the quality of the child-parent relationship is like?			
	JELLYFISH	BACKBONE	BRICKWALL

Source: Information in this grid comes from *Kids are Worth It*, Barbara Coloroso.

May Curriculum

Primary Themes

- More gardening, more planting!
- What Plants Need
- Parts of animals and plants
- Continents, flags and flag making
- "Tap Tap"
- Geoboard
- Geometric manipulative
- Introducing games

Activities

- Beading, sewing
- Butterfly painting
- Wings to wear!
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Elementary movements
- Sequencing
- Grace and courtesy
- Counting/number games

Monthly Notes

May 2025
p. 3



Books

- The Friend Ship (Kat Yeh)
- Bear's New Friend (Karma Wilson)
- The Boy Who Invented the Popsicle
- T is for Tugboat
- You are a Story (Bob Raczka)
- Firefighter's Handbook
- Curious George +++++

Songs

- Robin Red Breast
- Mockingbird Hill
- The Earth is Good to Me
- Bean Song
- Golden Garden Spider
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley Grow
- Grey Squirrel
- I Like the Flowers, I Like the Daffodils...
- Back of a Crocodile



Golden Garden Spider

She's a golden garden spider
One day I sat beside her
She looked at me,
and this is what she said:
I'm a golden garden spider
A spinner not a fighter
Come close to me
and watch me spin my web.



Tuition & Enrollment Policies 2025-2026



Monthly Tuition

(Enrollment limited to full-time 8:30am-4:30pm, M-F) **\$1,625**

Annual Materials fee **\$ 275**

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 • Sunscreen, lotion, insect spray • First aid supplies • Water-based disposable wipes 	<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.

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
- 9/23/2025 Rosh Hashanah
- 10/2/2025 Recess Day
- 3/20/2026 Eid al-Fitr

ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS CLOSED

- 12/22 & 12/23/2025 Winter Break
- 5/22 & 5/25/2026 Memorial Day
- 7/3/2026 Independence Day
- 8/3-8/7/2026 – Summer break

*Additional enrollment policies including payment deadlines, late fees, absences for personal illness and other reasons are included in enrollment contract.
Effective 09.01.2025-08.31.2026. Rev. 4.29.2025*





Labor Day Recess 8/28 & 9/1

September				
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			

9/22-9/24 Rosh Hashanah OPEN

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

10/2 Yom Kippur OPEN
10/6-13 Sukkot OPEN
10/13 Indigenous People's Day
10/20 Oweel Festival

November				
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

11/5 Guy Fawkes Day
11/11 Veterans Day
11/26-28 Thanksgiving

December				
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		

12/25-1/1 Hanukkah
12/25 Christmas
12/26-1/1 Winter
Winter Recess 12/22-1/2

January				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
12	13	14	15	16
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

Winter Recess 12/22-1/2
1/19 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Burns Night (18th)

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

1/17 Lunar New Year
Mid-Winter Recess 2/16-2/20
2/17-28 Purim/Adar

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

3/1-18 Ramadan start

3/30 Eid al-Fitr OPEN

3/30 & 3/31 Spring Recess

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

4/1-4/3 Spring Recess

4/5-9 Passover

4/30 Good Friday

4/7 Easter

4/12 Orthodox Easter

May				
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

5/22 &

5/25 Memorial Day Recess

5/21-23 Shavuot &

5/26-27 Eid al-Adha

June				
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			

6/19 Juneteen Recess

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

7/3 Holidays

August				
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
31				

8/3-8/7 Summer Break

(9/7/2026 Labor Day)

vacation when 2026-27 school year begins

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

4/29/2025





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

(05/01/2025)

Child's Name	D.O.B.	Parents	Address	Phone	E-mail
Ansel Karim-Smith	12/19/2021	Sabrina Karim & Josh Smith	213 Wood St. 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 (Macintyre Road) Alpine, NY 14805	917-331-2240 607-483-9815	mvf629@gmail.com
Cas Carvallo-Ray	02/02/2022	Sefora Ray & JP Carvallo	209 Rachel Carson Way Ithaca, NY 14850	831- 510-467-2954	seforaray@gmail.com jpcarbod@gmail.com
Kata Peisahovitch	02/05/2022	Herianna Valenzuela & Jason Peisahovitch	203 Madison St. Ithaca, NY 14850	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
Shiloh Evans	07/10/2022	Caitlin Eger & Tom Evans	Ithaca, NY 14850	303-550-1745	cait-eger@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
Veda Greig Ramanujan	12/18/2021	Krishna Ramanujan	138 Belle School Rd. Brooktondale, NY 14817	607-339-9229	krishnaramanujan@gmail.com
Zeffie McCassey	01/15/2022	Lauretta Dolch & Indi McCassey	500 Elm St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-342-1213 510-779-4237	ljd62@cornell.edu indiflyer@gmail.com



Monthly Notes

Get on Board!! A Boating Family Gathering

Save the Date!

We'd like to invite everyone to ride on the Teal boat together—kids are *our treat!*

Saturday, August 23

Time and details tbd

11am or 12:30pm

Adult fare is \$28 each

We hope everyone will be on board!

June 2025

This newsletter came upon me fast. No long preparations. I have just been being with the kids, and nap time is shorter! I have also been trying to make a little more space when school is closed for *whatever* time during the warmer-ish temps and “longer” days, which can be hard for me. (I used to do some work on this while kids were sleeping...)

SO—this issue is slim, especially considering so many things that we have been going through and talking about! Please be sure to bring your topics to our parent gathering this month (Date on calendar).

I'm passing along some info that KC and I received in a Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) training we attended last week about

- Gardening with Children, Core Competencies (aka, what kids learn)
- Allergies, food safety and teaching good eating habits

June Holidays n Dates

6/16 Sybil's 4th Birthday

6/19 & 6/20

Juneteenth Recess

6/11 Parent Support

@ The Boatyard Grill 5-6:30 pm

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



Sybil's

Pears 5.13.25

Solar System 5.21.25

Gardening with Children - Core Competencies

Observing Growth: Children learn to observe the changes in seeds as they sprout and grow, fostering their observational skills.

Experimentation: Planting seeds can be a starting point for simple experiments, such as testing the effects of sunlight or water on seed germination.

Asking Questions: Encourage children to ask questions about the plants, such as "Why does this seed need water?" or "What happens if we don't give it enough sunlight?"

Life Cycle: Growing seeds provides a tangible way to learn about the plant life cycle, from seed to seedling to mature plant.

Responsibility and Self-Sufficiency

Taking Care: Children learn to care for their plants by watering, weeding, and providing sunlight, fostering a sense of responsibility.

Patience: Waiting for seeds to sprout and plants to grow teaches patience and the value of delayed gratification.

Accomplishment: Seeing their seeds grow into plants can be a rewarding experience, boosting their sense of accomplishment.

Fine Motor Skills and Language Development

Fine Motor Skills: Handling seeds, planting them, and using small tools like trowels strengthens fine motor skills.

Language Skills: Learning new vocabulary related to plants, gardening, and the growth process expands children's language skills.

Sensory Experience: The tactile experience of soil, the smell of the earth, and the visual changes of the plants engage children's senses.

Social and Emotional Development

Collaboration: Gardening can be a group activity, fostering collaboration and teamwork.

Connection to Nature: Spending time in nature and caring for plants can help children develop a connection to the natural world.

Curiosity: Gardening can spark curiosity and a love for learning about plants and the environment.

Most important is to have fun with child led curiosity!







THE 14 FOOD ALLERGENS



MOLUSCS

Including land snails, whelks and squid.



EGGS

Can be found in cakes, sauces and pastries.



FISH

Found in pizza, dressings and Worcestershire sauce.



LUPIN

Lupin can be found in bread, pastries and pasta.



SOYA

Various beans including edamame and tofu.



MILK

Butter, cheese, cream and milk powders contain milk.



PEANUTS

Can be found in cakes, biscuits and sauces.



GLUTEN

In food made with flour such as pasta and bread.



CRUSTACEANS

Such as crab, lobster, prawns, shrimp and scampi.



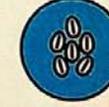
MUSTARD

Can be in liquid or powder form as well as seeds.



NUTS

Including cashews, almonds and hazelnuts.



SESAME

Found on burgers, bread sticks and salads.



CELERY

Including stalks, leaves, seeds and celeriac.



SULPHITES

Found in dried fruit like raisins and some drinks.

A **Food Allergy** is potentially life threatening. It is an *autoimmune* reaction to protein in specific food item.

Reactions could be vomiting, swelling, difficulty swallowing.

Anaphylaxis is an extreme allergic reaction requiring an epi-pen and emergency services.

Food sensitivity is a gastrointestinal reaction.

Symptoms may be bloating, gas, rash, nausea, diarrhea. Non-life threatening, but uncomfortable.

Oral allergies show up as redness, swelling, itching of the mouth, lips, tongue or throat.

Common oral allergies are apples, apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, cherries, grapes, honeydew melon, kiwi, mango, peach, pear, pineapple, plum, tomato and watermelon.

Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes

Children **under the age of 4** are at a high risk of choking while eating. Young children are still learning how to chew food properly, and they often swallow the food whole. Their small airways can become easily blocked.

You can help reduce children's risk of choking when eating by preparing food in certain ways, such as cutting food into small pieces and cooking hard food, like carrots, until it is soft enough to pierce with a fork. **Remember, always supervise children during meals and snacks.**



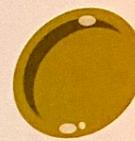
Prepare Foods So They Are Easy to Chew

You can make eating safer for young children by following the tips below:

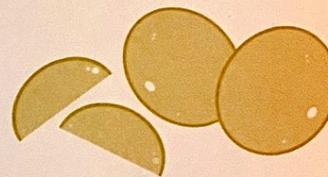
- Cook or steam hard food, like carrots, until it is soft enough to pierce with a fork.
- Remove seeds, pits, and tough skins/peels from fruits and vegetables.
- Finely chop foods into thin slices, strips, or small pieces (no larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch), or grate, mash, or puree foods. This is especially important when serving raw fruits and vegetables, as those items may be harder to chew.
- Remove all bones from fish, chicken, and meat before cooking or serving.
- Grind up tough meats and poultry.

Cut Round Foods Into Smaller Pieces

Small round foods such as grapes, cherries, cherry tomatoes, and melon balls are common causes of choking.



Slice these items in half lengthwise.



Then slice into smaller pieces (**no larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch**) when serving them to young children.



Avoid Choking Hazards

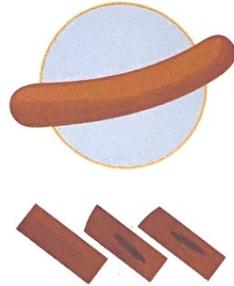
To help prevent choking, do not serve small (marble-sized), sticky, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole, including:

- Cheese cubes or blocks. Grate or thinly slice cheese before serving.
- Chewing gum*
- Dried fruit
- Gummy fruit snacks*
- Hard candy, including caramels, cough drops, jelly beans, lollipops, etc.*
- Hard pretzels and pretzel chips
- Ice cubes*
- Marshmallows*
- Nuts and seeds, including breads, crackers, and cereals that contain nuts and seeds
- Popcorn
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter or other nut butters. Spread nut butters thinly on other foods (e.g., toast, crackers, etc.). Serve only creamy, not chunky, nut butters.
- Whole round or tube-shaped foods such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, cherries, raw carrots, sausages, and hot dogs

*Not creditable in the Child Nutrition Programs, including the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, and Summer Food Service Program.

Cut Tube-shaped Foods Into Smaller Pieces

Cut tube-shaped foods, such as baby carrots, string cheese, hot dogs, etc., into short strips rather than round pieces.



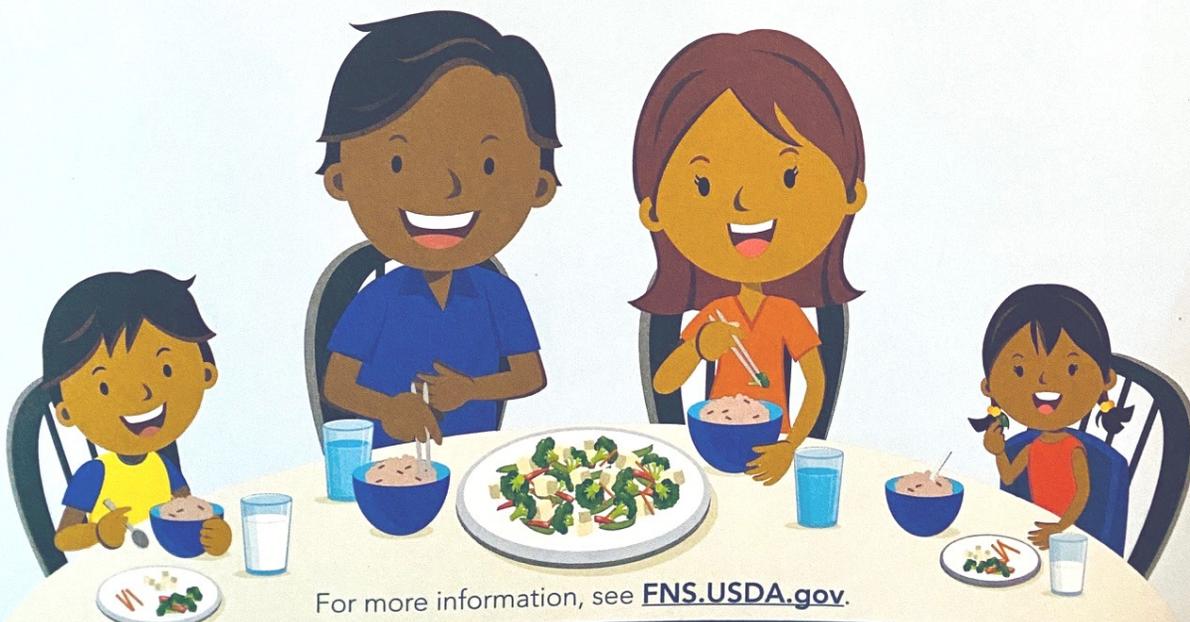
In addition to the foods listed, **avoid serving foods that are as wide around as a nickel**, which is about the size of a young child's throat.



Teach Good Eating Habits

Sit and eat with children at meals and snacks. Remind children to take small bites of food and swallow between bites. Eating together may help you quickly spot a child who might be choking. Other tips to help prevent choking while eating include:

- Only providing foods as part of meals and snacks served at a dining table or high chair. When serving infants, do not prop the bottle up on a pillow or other item for the baby to feed him or herself.
- Allowing plenty of time for meals and snacks.
- Making sure children are sitting upright while eating.
- Reminding children to swallow their food before talking or laughing.
- Modeling safe behavior for children to follow, including eating slowly, taking small bites, and chewing food completely before swallowing.
- Encouraging older children to serve as role models for younger children as well. All children should avoid playing games with food, as that may lead to an increased risk of choking.



For more information, see [FNS.USDA.gov](https://www.FNS.USDA.gov).

June Curriculum

Primary Themes

- SUMMER!
- Digging, planting, picking
- Gears
- Construction with screws
- Hammering
- Rhyming

Activities

- Beading, sewing
- Sand:
cups, strainers, funnels
- Water?
Baby washing, pipes n funnels
- Pollywogs n frogs on logs
- More cooking, hmmm
- Emerging with interests...

Monthly Notes

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Books

- Need a book about gears on bikes
- Hello Summer! (Rotner)
- A Frog in the Bog
- Frog Life Cycle Flip Book
- Blueberries for Sal
- Dragonos y Tacos
- Inch by Inch
- Fire Chief Fran
- All the Colors We Are

We also welcome you to bring books to share!



Songs

- Pitter Patter Rain is Falling Down
- Splishing and Splashing
- Inch by Inch
- Robin Red Breast
- The Earth is Good to Me
- Bean Song
- Golden Garden Spider
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley
- Going to the Zoo
- Teddy Bear's Picnic





Monthly Notes

July 2025

July seems like fire!

Summer's heat waited for the Solstice and after a month full of the year's seasons and tons of mud, there are no cool days in sight!

We made the best of the month of muck. June has been very peaceful, yet filled with many new activities. In June, we ...

- had 8 babies!
- we had pops!
- cooked marshmallows (at left)
- Plucked a million maple seedlings!
- we made stump paths and are all set with stumps for hammering!
- worked with nuts and bolts with a screwdriver and wrenches, inside
- played with water and pipes and funnels - and washed our babies, of course!
- started drawing with fine point sharpies
- continued learning about sewing, beading, weaving
- AND ate so much yummy summer fruit!

THANK YOU to the
Gaige Family
for the
stumps!

Read on to learn about website updates, **WHAT ELSE** and July curriculum...



July Holidays n Dates

7/3 & 7/4 July 4th Holidays

7/10 Shiloh's 3rd Birthday

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

Get on Board! A Boating Family Gathering

Come Ride the Teal on Cayuga Lake

Kids are *our treat!*

Saturday, August 23

Time and details tbd: 11am or 12:30pm

Adult fare is \$28 each

Website Updates

Monthly Notes

July 2025
p. 2



We have updated our website with current pictures and information! Take a look at our new banner! You will also find our 2025-26 calendar and newsletters are all uploaded now.

REMEMBER... our Parent Resources page has a hidden link for current families, which can be found just to the right of the Parent Handbook link. It is a clear gif, so it is not visible. If you hover just to the right of the text, you will see a hand appear:

Parent Resources Related to West Hill Educare

[Parent handbook \(01/12/2024\)](#) (PDF Document)

This link will take you to our confidential page, which contains the following resources:

- ◆ Some old stuff! Like a diapering video of me and a child who just turned 16!
- ◆ A video of me reading “Those Mean, Nasty, Dirty, but Downright Disgusting Germs”
- ◆ Audio recordings of some songs we sing —needs to be added to!
- ◆ Newsletters from 2023 to present
- ◆ A link to our parent meeting calendar. (If you do sign up for a time to chat, please also let us know in person or by sending a quick text—no one has used this system for a meeting yet and I don’t know if we’d be notified!)



Everyone has iPhones...



If you’d like to have copies of your child’s photos, we can do a quick AirDrop!



During the day, children often take a break from the demands of playing with others. Sometimes they just choose and do their own thing, sometimes it comes about after something happens with another child, they don't get their way and leave, exclaiming "I need space!" and revert to their foundational and first stage of play, independent or solitary play.

Independent time and solitary play provides time where children learn to manage their emotions and cope with their feelings, especially when sought after feeling overwhelmed during social play. Independent play also allows children to explore their own interests and develop independence, in addition to fostering creativity and uninfluenced imaginary play.

Maybe you also need a little space? It is not too early to have planned independent time. After you've had a chance to reconnect at the end of a school day and it's time to cook dinner is a common time that people carve out. Let your child know that you need some time to yourself and are asking that they play independently. At first it may be brief and next to you, but over time you'll be able to expand the time and have a little more space from your child's independent activity.

If you're short on ideas—let's chat!

Maybe check out the 50 easy independent Play Activities for Preschoolers by Tired Mom Supermom [here](#).

Superhero and Playing with Power

Since children use play to figure out the world around them, the topic of playing with power comes up again and again for parents and early childhood educators alike. Viewed from an adult perspective, we worry that kids will learn to be violent, but in fact there are many benefits to superhero play. In fact, embedding a zero-tolerance approach does not stop gun or superhero play and sometimes children will just disguise what they are doing.

The desire for superhero play is grounded in young children's need to have some control, aka power. This play may include roaring and chasing... At this point we "are not roaring," but the children have been doing superhero play, namely Batman or Spiderman, characters from movies get thrown in too.

I am still reading and thinking about how we can support superhero and power play, as I'm sure it will continue to evolve. Superhero and other forms of power play requires adult support, and child engagement in setting group rules. One challenge we have is that this group often "clumps" and they all want to join in the same activity, so when someone gets scared, they also have to leave the group. Consent is clearly important. So far steering off roaring and instead playing superheroes (their choice), seems to be working for this group.

Learn more about the debate in this factsheet about [Gun & Superhero Play](#) from the National Day Nursery Association in the UK. The concerns, benefits and strategies are outlined well in these articles for early educators from Michigan State University, [Super hero play in child care: Concerns and benefits](#) and Supporting [Super hero play in child care: Strategies](#).

And lets keep up the conversation...

Children's Book: What's the Matter, Marlo?

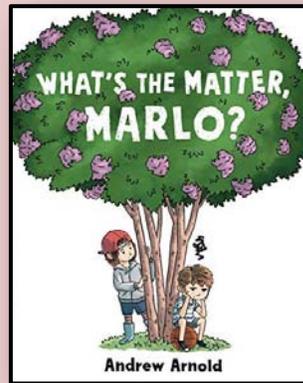
Sometimes a book takes on a life of its own.

What's the Matter Marlo is like that for us.

It was a quick grab at the library. It looked interesting—a squiggle for a thought bubble that grows as the Marlo gets more upset, a friend trying to help, getting lost in emotions.

As we lived together and struggled with social challenges over the past month, the book became an example for overwhelm, getting lost in feelings, not being able to talk with a friend.

Over the month we learned the name of the narrator and now have a hypothesis as to why Marlo is mad, and sad (his dog died). We learned about how sometimes you can be so lost in emotion that you can't find words—and that a friend can be great to have in times of joy, and sadness.



Book photo links to a Youtube recording of the book

Emotional Literacy

At times, preschoolers seem to move quickly from one emotional extreme to another in a surprising, nonsensical way. Learning to recognize, understand and manage emotions and develop empathy for others is a foundational task of the preschool years. By learning to identify their own feelings, children gain insights into how their feelings affect their behavior. Gaining an emotional vocabulary and developing coping, or self-regulation skills helps children learn to manage challenging emotions, including anger, disappointment and frustration, and in turn gain empathy, social skills, conflict resolution and positive peer interactions.

At birth, we begin learning how to manage our emotions. We adapt our coping skills and strategies throughout our lives. Learning how to process our experiences and their sometimes weighty emotions often requires support. When children don't have support with challenging emotions, their frustration tolerance can shorten to the point of exploding, or worse—self harm. Even if we, as adults, think what happened *shouldn't* be a big deal, we must honor the child's experience of it being a big deal to them, and support them in working through the situation to help them build these important skills. In fact, [stopping the meltdown is key to your child's emotional control](#). Leaning into your child's challenge, listening, being their to help keep them emotionally safe is at least as important as being their to keep them physically safe.

Help children build their emotional intelligence by creating opportunities to talk about emotions and feelings. Rather than assuming you know what your child is feeling, ask. Are your perceptions correct?—"You look mad, are you mad or frustrated?" (or both...?).

Learning to manage frustration is important: children who do not learn to manage their frustration may face several challenges in their social-emotional development, including increased anxiety and stress, difficulty regulating their emotions leading to outbursts or withdrawal, and a higher likelihood of developing behavioral issues. Social consequences include struggling to form and maintain friendships, difficulty with cooperative play and teamwork and are at an increased risk of bullying. The Children's Health Council offers a great resource article, "[How to Teach Frustration Tolerance to Kids](#)." In this linked article by the Children's Health Council, they note that it is not uncommon for children to struggle with how to deal with anger and frustration and offer ways that adults can help children to build their frustration tolerance, including body mapping, learning about triggers, creating a mad list and deep breathing. There are also a couple links in their article, notably a PBS article titled "[How to Help Your Child Manage Frustration](#)."

Help build your child's emotional literacy by using emotion words, reading books about emotions and modeling appropriate emotional responses—learn more in this article, [Building Emotional Intelligence in Preschoolers](#) from Open Doors Preschool, the renowned [NAEYC](#) or [PBS](#).



July Curriculum



Primary Themes

- **SUMMER!**
- Digging, planting, picking
- Farming, cows
- Community helpers
- Transportation, trains
- Magnetics



Activities

- Water:
 - washing babies, turtles
- Easel painting, oobleck
- Garden:
 - harvesting, + planting!
- Playdough:
 - pasta rollers and stampers
- Classmate vocabulary cards
- Initial sounds, rhyming, counting
- Sandwiches



We also welcome you to bring books to share!

Books

- Farmer John's Tractor
- Thank A Farmer
- From Calf to Cow
- Up in the Garden and Down in the Dirt
- Marsha is Magnetic
- A Rainy Dragon
- One is a Lot
- Meet a Firefighter
- Numbers Everywhere
- Hannah's Tall Order
- A to Z Sandwich

Songs

- Five Green and Speckled Frogs
- On the Back of a Crocodile
- Sunflower
- The Earth is Good to Me
- Bean Song
- Golden Garden Spider
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley





Monthly Notes

August 2025

We have been swamped in dramatic play here. Last month Batman, Paw Patrol, Cinderella and Rapunzel all played here a lot. There must have been other such characters—and there were dinosaurs and monsters. They are going to the castle, the store, the car wash, home. There are a couple of homes. On and off everyone gets involved—time for dramatic play! The group plays together in this nonsensical, delightful way. We overhear “call 911” and other tidbits in conversations called out during play as children seek to understand information we’ve talked about (so great!). We see and hear things that no one knows where they come from, like, after spilling the markers, Ansel called out with his punster wit, “it’s *pendemonium!*”

At the end of this month we will say *see you around town* to two children who have been a part of our community for 2+ years. We understand planned and unexpected changes happen, and share their excitement for changes ahead.

Sybil heads off to her neighborhood preK at Trumansburg Elementary School. Although we’ve always known this would happen, it brings mixed emotions for all—excitement and sadness... Sybil has become such a confident and caring leader with many interests.

We will miss Sybil’s friendliness, and her joyful, kind-hearted spirit!

Kata will be attending the Ithaca Waldorf School three days per week. Kata was our youngest child at WHE2. We have seen her grow from crawling to a fearless speedy runner! She is creative, persistent and inquisitive.

We will miss Kata’s passion for flowers and her playful, bright, energetic spirit.

August Holidays n Dates

8/4-8 Summer Break

8/23 Boating Family Gathering
Ith Farmer’s Mkt 11am



8/29 & 9/1 Labor Day Holiday

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	0	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Please help us find new families to join West Hill Educare

We hope to enroll three 2.5-4 year-old children by January 2026.

New Emergency Location

Effective immediately, our primary emergency location has changed to **307 Richard Place—Dorothy’s house!**

This revision will be included in our 9/1/2025 Parent Handbook.

"We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. It is a bold hypothesis and an essential one in thinking about the nature of the curriculum."

– Jerome Bruner (1960)



Plays and laughs at reflection, then—**"A flower in a cup!"**



Spiral Curriculum

I learned about the idea of a spiral curriculum when I studied Montessori education, but she is not the person associated with the term. "The term **spiral curriculum** was coined by Jerome Bruner in 1960 to describe a method of curriculum delivery in which major topics and skill areas are revisited with increasing complexity throughout a child's education, connecting prior learning with new learning." This concept is widely applied now. A spiral curriculum

1. Utilizes prior knowledge:
Students prior knowledge and experience are linked to fundamental ideas early—not for mastery, but to lay some familiarity, encouraging continuous progress and cognitive development. Children learn language this way when they learn the meaning of new vocabulary words; i.e. ball is a familiar toy, a familiar word. Learning the word *sphere* extends the child's concrete learning and can be applied to even further learning
2. Is cyclical: Revisit basic ideas repeatedly
Students build on prior knowledge at all ages and stages by revisiting basic ideas and concepts repeatedly over time, again linking prior knowledge with new knowledge. This repeated engagement tends to increase understanding and may increase access to learning for groups of diverse learners.
3. Increases in complexity:
Learning is a process of discovery and construction. Over time, the depth and complexity of information about a topic discussed or presented can be increased to reinforce previous learning deepen knowledge and understanding

Competitiveness in Preschoolers

According to Beth Stockton, three factors contribute to the preschool child's need to be first:

- 1) "They're trying to be doers" - they want to use and refine new skills
- 2) They're still egocentric, making it hard to put others before themselves
- 3) Children do not fully understand time until they are 6 or 7 years old, meaning even a short time can feel like forever for a preschooler

In her article, [*Why preschoolers are obsessed with being first \(and how to deal with it\)*](#), she notes that "for some preschoolers, wanting to be first is rooted in wanting to be better than others" and enjoy the recognition and good feelings that come with being first. Being competitive can make it hard to work as part of a team, making board games and sports challenging.

By providing them opportunity to practice negotiating in small groups, competitive children can develop social skills. With our support and guidance activities that require taking turns and group decision making, such as playing games, choosing a book for the group to read.

In her article, [*Helping Super-Competitive Children Relax*](#), Patty Wipfler notes that the strong need to win may have roots in an early hard time and advocates for leaning in, offering support and listening through the wins and losses that come. An emphasis on play and



individual growth is echoed by both RIE© and [Montessori](#) approaches, and in our program at West Hill Educare.

Play is foundational for development and learning—it is a primary instinct that drives exploration. According to the article, [*Why We Play*](#), by the National Institute for Play, we have play circuits in our brains and the more that very young children are able to act from their "play nature," the better they will develop and reinforce the neural circuits in other parts of their brain — circuits that become neural pathways for many life skills. A lack of play, like when recess is swapped for more classroom time, has been shown to increase rates of depression, inflexibility, depression, lack of empathy and more.

Lots of time in a play state helps children thrive. [Learn more about supporting your child's interests and their unique play nature](#) so that they can have maximum joy and meaning in their lives.

Play-created neural pathways bring lifelong benefits such as:

- Making perseverance fun, which helps with focus and leads to mastery
- Generating optimism
- Building confidence
- Increasing empathy

Support
Playfulness!



"I'm a silly kid.
These are my earpods."

August Curriculum

At WHE, our curriculum is adapted all the time. Although we offer materials and ideas from the Educaring and Montessori approaches, we are inherently a play-based program with an emergent curriculum.

An emergent curriculum changes and morphs according to the needs and interests of the children in care.

Each month we start with ideas that may extend from last month or may be new. As the days progress we add, take away, tweak.

So much of the summer is about outside play and exploration, much of our day is spent outside as the children are eager to get out asap!

Let's enjoy this last hot month before the fall crispness comes!



Primary Themes

- **SUMMER!**
- Cooperation
- The Body
- Simple food prep
- Picnic!
- Self help snack
- Continent globe and mapping



Books

- What Pete Ate
 - Mathew and Tilly
 - Me on the Map
 - The City by the Bay
 - The USA: A State by State Guide
 - The Ugly Vegetables
 - My Family Plays Music
 - Clouds
 - In the Fiddle is a Song
- And many "old" faves:
- Fire Chief Fran
 - Too Many Pears
 - Edible Colors
 - Hannah's Tall Order
 - A to Z Sandwich
 - Baller-Ina

Activities

- Water: boats, ocean animals, squirters
- Easel painting, oobleck mixed media: glue/paint/color
- Body tracing
- Self portraits
- Garden:—harvesting, cooking! and more digging!
- Robot magnets
- Body puzzles
- Bells

Songs

- Head, Head, Ears, Ears
- Hokey Pokey
- Wiggle wiggle
- Sunflower
- The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water
- I Love the Flowers
- Making rain...
- Splishing and Splashing
- Always more...





Monthly Notes

September 2025

It was really fun having a boat adventure with everyone!

We are seeing lots of ship building and pirate play—we heave and we ho and we swab and we knit (to quote Ned the Knitting Pirate book)!

Meanwhile, so far this week, “Grasshopper” and “Muriel” (Austin’s babies) are still out playing when the spaceship isn’t operating or when the pirates aren’t roaming. Family play is morphing into being at school and being teachers,, with children stating their teacher names... I did hear someone was *Jude*, but there are many interesting names being announced!

As the cold air blows in, kids are re-learning how to “raffi” and zip their coats—funny how we forget! A friend of mine was musing that last winter wasn’t bad—not really, but the ICE was crazy, I reminded her...

Even though West Hill Educare is open year-round, the beginning of the school year becomes such a part of the family rhythm that we get on board with September being the start of our school year as well. In such, we take a little time to review and revise our Parent Handbook each fall.

Our Parent Handbook is available online on the Parent Resources page of our website. There have been minimal changes this year: some wordsmithing, adding/changing wording about clothing and shoes, and a few other places; update to our emergency locations, parking lot and car seat policy. Please be sure to take a peek! Our tuition/enrollment policies and school year calendar are included again here for your convenience.

September Dates

8/29 & 9/1 Labor Day Holiday

9/12 Eleanora’s 4th Birthday!

9/17 Parent Support Meeting 5p

September					
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			



First Plain of Development: 0-6 years

Maria Montessori identified four planes of development: from 0-6 years of age, 6-12, 12-18, and 18-24. She believed that the first three years in each plane were years of acquiring information and skills, and the second three years were years when the child crystalized this knowledge. In a mixed age/ability classroom, we witness this as children share information and teach things they have mastered.

The first plain of development is a time of “the absorbant mind,” when children soak up not only knowledge, but attitudes. This is, logically, unconscious from apx 0-3 and more conscious from 3-6 years of age.

Children in the first plane of development (0-6 years) need:

- ◆ routines like they need air
they may not deal well with change, transitions
- ◆ real information; real words
- ◆ sensorial exploration
- ◆ environments that are safe—physically and psychologically
- ◆ external order, an uncluttered environment
- ◆ experiences
- ◆ purposeful work
- ◆ *love*
how we communicate love is different for each adult and child
touch or the way of looking, speaking with
- ◆ need to know they are accepted for who they are, that we're not always trying to change them; you ARE good enough



Taking a picture of a friend painting at easel.



Balance pod line!

What are Elementary Movements?

Elementary movements are actions that are fundamental to successful, respectful negotiation in the classroom and school environment.

They include concerns of grace and courtesy and ground rules, such as how to walk around the classroom (and line walking practice), but also things like how to roll a rug, fetching water, how to interrupt or gain attention, and how to carry or hold objects when carrying them.

Knowledge and practice of these basic modes of behavior allow children to work smoothly and independently – they are comprised of basic movements that underlay every aspect of daily work. While all programs have many elementary movements in common, each environment will also dictate unique actions that are essential to smooth maneuvering.



Checking the edge of the rug...

Tuition & Enrollment Policies 2025-2026



Monthly Tuition

(Enrollment limited to full-time 8:30am-4:30pm, M-F) **\$1,625**

Annual Materials fee \$ 275

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

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
- 9/23/2025 Rosh Hashanah
- 10/2/2025 Recess Day
- 3/20/2026 Eid al-Fitr

ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS CLOSED

- 12/22 & 12/23/2025 Winter Break
- 5/22 & 5/25/2026 Memorial Day
- 7/3/2026 Independence Day
- 8/3-8/7/2026 – Summer break

*Additional enrollment policies including payment deadlines, late fees, absences for personal illness and other reasons are included in enrollment contract.
 Rev. 4.29.2025*



Child Care
 Tuition Payment
 Assistance
 is Available...

Child care tuition payment assistance is 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 \$95,396.83, a family of 2—\$77,226. The Dept. of Social Services pays the bulk of your child's tuition and there is a family fee that varies depending on your income. The family fee is paid to WHE directly. WHE parents are also responsible for any difference in our fees and the maximum reimbursement from DSS, which is currently approximately \$1,200/mo. More info: <https://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/dss/childcare>



**West Hill Educare
Calendar
2025-2026**

Labor Day Recess 8/29 & 9/1

9/22-9/24 Rosh Hashanah OPEN

10/2 Yom Kippur OPEN

10/6-13 Sukkot OPEN

10/13 Indigenous People's Day

10/20 Diwali Festival

11/5 Guy Fawkes Day

11/11 Veterans Day

11/26-28 Thanksgiving

12/25-1/2 Hannukkah

12/25 Christmas

12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa

Winter Recess 12/22-1/2

Winter Recess 12/22-1/2

1/19 Martin Luther King, Jr.
Buna Night (105)

2/17 Lunar New Year

Mid-Winter Recess 2/16-2/20

2/17-23 Ramadan

September				
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			

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

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

December				
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		

January				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
12	13	14	15	16
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

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

March				
M	T	W	Th	F
2	3	4	5	6
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
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
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
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30			

July				
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

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

3/1-19 Ramadan cont.

3/20 Eid al-Fitr OPEN

3/30 & 3/31 Spring Recess

4/1-4/3 Spring Recess

4/1-9 Passover

4/3 Good Friday

4/3 Easter

4/12 Orthodox Easter

5/22 &

5/25 Memorial Day Recess

5/21-23 Shavuot &

5/26-27 Eid al-Adha

6/19 Juneteen Recess

7/3 Holidays

8/3-8/7 Summer Break

{9/7/2025 Labor Day}

unclear when 2026-27 school year begins

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

September Curriculum

Each fall we start again with the basics. As children grow and integrate information, the repetition enables them to build on their prior knowledge... *the spiral curriculum.* LINK

Books

- Squirrel on Hollow Tree Lane
- My Buddy
- Burro's Tortillas
- Compost Stew
- A Tree Grows Up
- In the Fiddle is a Song
- From Head to Toe
- Here are My Hands
- Hands Can
- Bug ABCs *Always more...*



Primary Themes

- FALL!
- Back to School—
School Bus
- Elementary
Movements
- Primary colors
- Basic plane
shapes and
geometric forms
- Bodies, health
(extension from August)

babies
babies
babies!



Activities

- Color mixing, red/blue/yellow
- Shape collage
- Self portraits
- Bells—focus on high/low and the musical scale
- Garden: harvesting, cooking! preparing for winter
- Continue simple cooking self-serve snack leaf rubbing body puzzles 1-10 babies



Songs

- This is My School
- This Little Light of Mine
- Ned the Knitting Pirate, of course!
- Fifteen Years on the Erie Canal (first verse)
- Head, Head, Ears, Ears
- Sunflower
- Golden Garden Spider
- Itsy Bitsy Spider, *extended version*

Always more...



We're pirates, we're pirates, sailing the sea!



2025 Monthly Notes & Chronicle

October...

Looking Back at September

September must be caterpillar season!

We saw a couple of Dagger Moth caterpillars that warn us not to touch them with their bright yellow hairs, a Hickory Tussock moth caterpillar... and wasn't it this time last year that the Cecropian Caterpillar came around?



And now we are in love with Monarchs!

A big thanks to Dominic and Simone for coordinating this wonderful activity.

We ALL loved it so much we want to be sure to help more Monarchs next fall!



October Dates

10/13 CLOSED

Indigenous People's Day

10/10 Parent Support Meeting

5-6:30p @ the Boatyard

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

[Learn more about](#)

[Rose Cochran](#)

She's
our butterfly
lady!

(and Dominic's hairdresser!)



What's the Wampum?

The ritual of making a class wampum began in my classroom at Elizabeth Ann Clune and since the children are old enough to do finer beading, we can now start it here!

Historically, wampum are white and purple beads that are made from the shells of clams and whelks. Wampum are considered sacred and powerful and when someone holds them, they are believed to be endowed with both authority and truth. Often woven into belts, strings, necklaces or other adornments, Northeastern First Nation people used them for ceremony and storytelling, and later for binding treaties and for trade.

At WHE, we each make one strand of wampum that is tied together with the strings made by everyone else in our class. We keep them in our peace corner and children can “visit” and hold them. At the end of the year, each child (blindly) chooses a string to take home, and remember (they may not get their own).



A traditional wampum of the Haudenosaunee Flag representing the peace agreement amongst the five nations;

The Seneca, The Cayuga, The Onondaga, The Oneida and The Mohawk.



This Two-row wampum represents a commitment to not interfere with each other's way of life:

“In one row is a ship with our White Brothers' ways; in the other a canoe with our ways. Each will travel down the river of life side by side. Neither will attempt to steer the other's vessel.” The Haudenosaunee and the Dutch agreed on three principles to make this treaty last. The first was friendship; the Haudenosaunee and their white brothers will live in friendship. The second principle is peace; there will be peace between their two people. The final principle is forever; that this agreement will last forever.” [\(citation\)](#)

There will be educational sessions locally about the Two-row and a recommitment to honor this agreement —watch for more info in October.





We painted corn...



and we painted with that corn...





We did leaf art
and pressed
flowers



Learning About Our Bodies...



Cooking is Always Fun!

Zeffie tried strawberries
on their pizza and
Eleanora has had
Sunbutter with
Honey and Cheddar
several times!



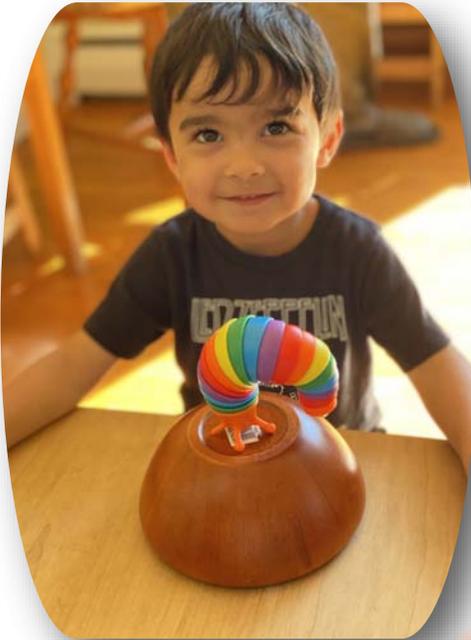
Ansel likes cheese and olive—
pepperoni if we have it.



And we're learning where it all goes...



OK! A Few More... This is Stuff We Do!



2025 Monthly Notes & Chronicle



November...

Looking Back at October

We had so much fun last month! If it has to get cold, you may as well get fall leaves and holidays galore!

This grinch loves all the great fall and seasonal holiday books, and they really got everyone into reading again—reciting whole books in fact! We have particularly enjoyed the 5 Little Pumpkins, Room on a Broom and the Gruffalo (thanks Zeffie)! But other books were frequently taken off the shelf and even

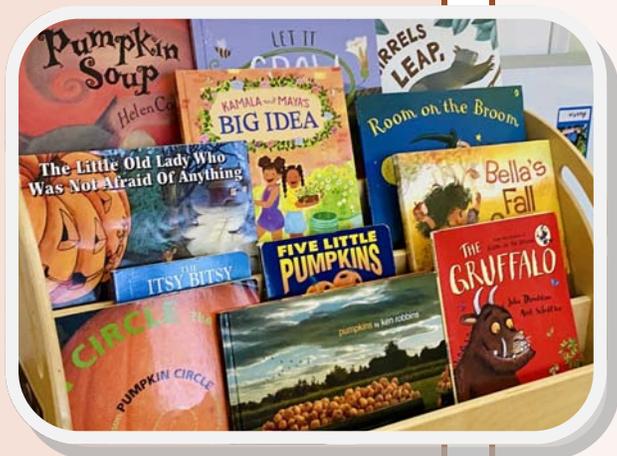
recited—notably Kamala and Maya’s BIG IDEA (thank you Ansel) - I especially love the line in the last one: “No one could do everything, but everyone could do something.” I find I repeat the line to myself often—thinking, thinking—what can I do? And really, wouldn’t you love to see a huge carved out pumpkin boat race?!

Last night it was a treat to learn about the work of Simon’s dad, Jim Balog. Jim is a self-proclaimed mountaineer and photographer. What started as enchantment with photographing the beauty of glaciers became a decade-and-a-half long project documenting glacial change: [The Extreme Ice Survey](#).

Over time, “more than 70 time-lapse cameras were placed in the field in Alaska, Glacier National Park in Montana, Iceland, Greenland, Nepal, Austria, Antarctica, Canada, and South Georgia Island. They were programmed to snap continuous shots of glaciers during every hour of daylight for months or years on end.” Millions of images were captured. Today, all the cameras are down. The project is over, but there are markers near glaciers where visitors can place their camera into a stand, make a picture and scan the QR code to send in their image and continue contributing to documenting glacial change. From the project images Jim made a film, *Chasing Ice*. Last night at Cornell Cinema his more recent film, *Chasing Time*, was shown—and he and Simone talked with us all after. Breathtaking images and filming. Stunning. Unforgettable. I must say it is filling the back of my mind and spirit since.

I hope that some of you might take the opportunity to watch the edited version that is coming out on PBS soon—I’ll let you know when it airs.

I know I digress—it’s not about children, but it is about what is happening in their, and our lives.



November Dates

11/11 CLOSED

Indigenous People’s Day

11/5 Guy Fawkes Day

11/26-11/28 CLOSED

Thanksgiving

November						
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		

Winter Clothing Reminders

Monthly Notes

November 2025
p. 2



It's that time again... the kids say it's their favorite season coming up—snow! We will go outside at least once per day as long as the wind chill temperature is 20 degrees or higher. All children will need appropriate clothing to be able to go outside. Please help them have the most fun possible by providing appropriate winter wear.

Preschool children 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 your child can put on—at least one mitten (we'll help with the other!). SnowStoppers are great—knit mittens and gloves get wet and don't hold up to the cold when touching the snow.



Elinor Wonders Why

"That is so interesting!" "Elinor Wonders Why" encourages preschoolers to follow their curiosity, ask questions when they don't understand and find answers using science inquiry skills. The main character Elinor, the most observant and curious bunny rabbit in Animal Town, will introduce kids ages 3 to 5 to science, nature and community through adventures with her friends.

Learn More About the Show ▶

[HERE!](#)



I don't often share commercial things, but PBS, why, yes! Also, this series is recommended by Simone and Norie and the timing to share seem right! I *wonder* if there is (or could be?) an episode about glaciers?! Perhaps we could write a letter?





Same/different?



Snap blocks are getting easier!



100!



Monster tongs!



AHHHH LEAVES!



Number writing practice!

Coming up in November...

Heard today: "Strangers are in the woods, you can't see them, but they can see you!"

After talking about what a stranger is:
"We're all strangers!"

- ◆ Family
- ◆ Manners
- ◆ Cooking
- ◆ Safety
- ◆ Strangers

- ◆ "Holidays" coming, We will create a chart of holidays we know and what we learn—
please remind us of what holidays your family celebrates over the next few months
- ◆ Time:
You can't hurry 20 secs!

- ◆ Animal groups

We will see how and where this all goes...

Many themes likely to carry on into December!





Making a twiggles for the handle!



Lantern love

December Dates

- 12/9 Austin's Birthday
- 12/18 Veda's Birthday
- 12/19 Ansel's Birthday
- 12/19 Solstice Celebration
4pm: Songs of Light
- 12/22
- 1/2 CLOSED for Winter Break

December					
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	31		



2025 Monthly Notes & Chronicle

December... with a look back at November...

I always like a good **festival of lights** tradition. In fact, that is really what we celebrate here during the month of December as we get ready to celebrate the Winter Solstice and welcome back the SUN! In December we talk about other winter festivals and sing songs of light.

In November, I learned of a new festival when I participated in the Lantern Walk downtown, a tradition shared by the Ithaca Waldorf School. "Rooted in the rhythms of nature and the human spirit, the Lantern Walk honors the seasonal turning point when we begin to move inward." Traditionally the Lantern Walk "often coincides with Martinmas (St. Martin's Day, November 11), a festival celebrating generosity, warmth, and inner light." "The story of St. Martin tells of a humble Roman soldier who, on a cold winter's night, shared his cloak with a beggar. His act of kindness and compassion became a symbol of light shining in darkness, a gesture that reminds us to care for others and nurture the flame within our own hearts."

The kids seemed to understand right away, that they carry the light.

In November we talked about families and kindness, gathering together and manners, we mailed a couple thank you cards, we made gratitude rings and taped them into a chain... We will read the rings in December and share them with you! In December we will also sneak in three birthday celebrations!

Thank You!

At this time we would like to extend our sincerest appreciation for all of you. Our lives are entwined because you trust us with your children. We know they mean the world to you, and your trust means the world to us. We truly thank you for enriching our lives.

Solstice Celebration—Songs of Light

The kids would love to share songs with you on the last day of school before our winter break—SAVE THE DATE: **Friday 12/19 @4pm!** (There may even be a 5 Little Pumpkins Sitting on the Gate reprise!)

Learn more about the Waldorf Lantern Walk

<https://www.waldorfdupage.org/blog/the-waldorf-lantern-walk>
<https://www.alabamawaldorf.org/post/a-reflection-on-martinmas>

Re: Holidays



Starting with Halloween we're in a holiday whirlwind. Families can feel pushed to the limit with excitement... and demands. The holidays can be wonderful and joyful, but they can also be challenging or difficult. As you know, we do minimal festivities at WHE and strive to be a place of calm and predictable routine. We hope it helps.

Holiday Gift Giving?

The last thing you need to worry about is the safety of the toys you get for your lil' one and yet, it is always of primary concern when considering toys for children.

Sometimes it seems that no matter what we buy, our children want to play with the pots and pans, the tissue box or the broom. Here are some things to consider about what makes an interesting toy for a preschooler.

Preschoolers want to learn about the real world, but play in a fantasy world. They want to be like the adults they have in their lives and try to do what you do. They want to explore physical properties of things: mix, match, build, balance. They want to explore basic science, physics, their own bodies and abilities. They want to create.

In our culture there is a great emphasis on entertainment, which in turn generally means the observer or the one being entertained, is passive. Many toys are made to entertain: wind up toys, electrical or battery-operated toys that make sounds or flash or move... there are even night lights that have moving imagery to watch. My mentor, Magda Gerber (founder of Resources for Infant Educators), believed that active toys teach children to expect to be entertained, rather than engaged. She recommended passive toys that the child helps to come alive when played with, hence her expression, "active child – passive toy."

When deciding between the electric or the wooden train, consider what the long term interest and engagement might be. *Passive toys support the development of intellect, competency and engagement by active children.*

Holiday Hosting?

Why not let your kiddo help? Purposeful work is so rewarding, and party planning has many fun parts... If you need a couple of helping hands, remember there are two little ones that can help with ideas and creation—and when it gets down to the meals, they can feel proud of helping to set the table, while subconsciously gaining an understanding of 1:1 correspondence at the same time!



Can Santa Be Black?

by B.J. Wrights

(an oldie)

*It happened in the kindergarten class,
Right at the table where there were having snack.
Joanie asked the question and they all sat back:
"Mr. Slater? Can Santa be Black?"*

*Poor Mr. Slater didn't know what to say,
Christmas vacation was twenty days away.
There were snowflakes to cut and
window wreaths to be hung,
Christmas cards to be painted,
And Christmas songs to be sung.*

*He hadn't time to think
What Christmas was about,
In twenty more days,
School would be out.*

*Why couldn't they wait
And ask their questions then,
When mommies and daddies
Were home to answer them?*

*"Mr. Slater? Can Santa be thin?"
"Is Santa Claus always a him?"*

*Mr. Slater looked at twenty pairs of eyes,
Twenty children of every shape and size.
He ate a bit of cracker and finished his drink.
"Children," he said,
"I'll need some time to think."*

As soon as class was over,

(next page)



*He ran down the hall,
Skidded 'round a corner,
Crashed into a wall.
Ran up the steps to the second floor,
Rapped on the window of the principals door.*

*Ms. Frazer, Ms. Frazer, what can I do?
The children asked these questions
That now I ask of you:
'Can Santa be black?'
'Can Santa be thin?'
'Does Santa always have to be a him?'*

*"Mr. Slater, it's a difficult task
To find answers to the questions you ask.
I think with these I'll need some assistance,
But I'll get you the answers with a little persistence."*

*Ms. Frazer turned in her swivel chair,
Picked up the phone and dialed Mr. Dare
Mr. Dare was the head of the PTA,
He called for a meeting the very next day.*

*"Thank you for coming,"
He began with a greeting.
"I'd like to get right to the point of this meeting.
Mr. Slater, in charge of the kindergarten class,
Needs some answers to some questions
And he needs them real fast."*

*"Can Santa be black?
Can Santa be thin?
Does Santa always have to be a him?"*

*The parents didn't know what to say,
Christmas vacation was nineteen days away.
There were cookies to bake and lights to string,
Gifts to wrap and carols to sing.*

*The hadn't time to think
What Christmas was about,
In nineteen more days
School would be out!
Why did children have to ask questions when
Parents had no time to answer them?*

*"Well Parents?
Are there any suggestions?
Do we have any answers
To these difficult questions?"*

*"Who know best
'What Christmas is about?
Let's ask Santa!"
Someone called out in a shout.*

*The secretary of the PTA
Sent a letter to Santa the very next day.
The reply came back very, very fast,
Addressed t Mr. Slater
And the kindergarten class.*

*Dear Mr. Slater, Dear Girls, Dear Boys,
Once a story writer caught me bringing you toys.
The year he spied me opening my sack,
my skin was white, my boots were black.
You probably know how that story goes...
I laid a finger aside my nose?
All these years, needlessly,
that story worries children who don't have a chimney.
All year long I listen to the news,
read people's thought, see people's views.
At the end of the year, when I see what's needed most,
I take that shape, like a Christmas ghost.
I can pass through keyholes, windows and locks,
apartment buildings, hospitals, tents, and trailer lots.*

*One year I used a wheelchair in place of my sleigh,
Once I was blind and had to feel my way.
It's hard to understand when I don't leave a toy:
you can't unwrap a gift like hope, or health or joy.
My skin has been black, white, yellow, red, brown;
my eyes have been slanted, crossed, and round.
Sometimes I have been a she;
all these things are a part of me.
You may not believe all this is true,
but that's okay, boys and girls, because....*

I believe in you.



My Lantern sung with lantern walk

I go for a walk with my lantern,
My lantern is going with me.
The stars up above are shining,
On earth, shines my lantern for me.

The light grows dim as we go in
La bimba, la bimba, la bim
The light grows dim as we go in
La bimba, la bimba, la bim



A roller coaster!



"Clap shoes!"

Identifiable flag!

