
April 2014



Director's News

Play...not an opposite to work, but a compliment. (David Elkind, Tufts University child development expert)

"Free, imaginative play is crucial for normal social, emotional, and cognitive development. It makes us better adjusted, smarter, and less stressed." This statement from the Scientific American Mind magazine (February 2009) discusses the scientific reasoning behind play in the article The Serious Need for Play by Melinda Wenner. It explains that there is scientific "evidence that indicates that play is evolutionarily quite ancient."

In the article psychiatrist Stuart Brown interviewed some 6,000 people regarding their childhood and his data suggests "a lack of opportunities for unstructured, imaginative play can keep children from growing into happy, well-adjusted adults." The article states "free play", as scientists call it, is critical for becoming socially adept, coping with stress and building cognitive skills such as problem solving."

Marc Bekoff of the University of Colorado at Boulder states "Play is like a kaleidoscope in that it is random and creative. This play allows our children to develop social skills, cognitive skills and stress coping mechanisms."

In today's world where Wii, DVD movies, i-pad games and television are around every corner, it is difficult for parents to provide ample time for children to just play. It is very scary these days for parents to let their children go outside in the yard, down the block, ride a bike to the neighbor's house just to explore, socialize independently and develop independence. However, we as parents need to find safe ways for our children to have unstructured play time just to be children.

The article also states that "it is never too late to start" (playing) Even as adults we need to get on the floor and play; with our children, with our dog or cat, play together! "Play also promotes the continued mental and physical well-being of adults."

Our HCP school philosophy is "play based". What really does that mean? Do the children play all class time? Do they have unstructured safe play time? Do they experience time to discover, gain independence, problem solve?

The answers to these questions are most definitely yes. Yes the children play during class time...some of it is structured, some unstructured. We balance our exploratory play with hands on structured play. We create opportunities for discovery be it guided play or independent play. We play with words, letters, numbers, songs, rhyme. We provide quality cognitive stimulation, rich language environments and facilitate social, emotional and motor development. Sometimes we play with a purpose, sometimes we play without a care in the world. We discover, wonder, and explore the curious.

Before a child can hold a pencil firmly and use it for long periods of time, he/she needs lots of opportunities to strengthen those pencil-holding muscles. Playdough, legos, beads, buttons and snaps on dress up clothes all facilitate these skills.

Before a child can understand that a combination of letters stands for a familiar object, he/she needs lots of experience in making one thing stand for another. In play, a block can be a cup, or a slide can represent an icy mountain. Using objects as symbols in play is wonderful preparation for later use of symbols in reading and math.

Before a child can see any reason for studying hard, he/she needs to know that the world is filled with important and interesting ideas. Hands-on exploration and discovery makes children want to learn more. Problem-solving through play builds habits of thoughts that children will use throughout life.

Before a child can relax and learn in a classroom filled with other children, he or she needs lots of experience in the give and take of getting along with others. Feeling at ease in a group and knowing how to ask a teacher for help is an important skill to learn before moving on to kindergarten.

As David Elkind, so beautifully states in his article "Curiosity, imagination and creativity are like muscles: if you don't use them, you lose them."

We at HCP are building muscle!!!

~Ms. Ann Marie

Important Dates

April 7 – Back to School

April 7-11 – NAEYC's Week of the Young Child

April 10th- Board Meeting and Advisory Board meeting
7pm Blue Room

April 18th- No School

April 21st – HCP Spirit Day Week –

Wear your HCP t-shirt or school colors

April 21 – Parent & Me

April 24 – Senior Class,
Junior Class, Jr/Sr PM class

April 25 – Just for Me

HCP Board News

HCP Families,

As we enter the final stretch of this school year, I would like to extend my thanks to Ann Marie Berlino and all of the HCP staff for another fantastic year. As Director, Ann Marie is the heart of the school. She keeps the Parent Board connected with the teachers by serving on the Executive Board and acting as a liaison between both groups. She works with all of the teachers and creates a family atmosphere and team culture among the HCP staff. She works tirelessly, and without the privacy of an office, on countless tasks to make HCP run smoothly. Ann Marie is the face of HCP, as she attends every function the school sponsors, with a smile. Ann Marie, along with the fantastic HCP staff and involved parents make HCP a wonderful place to begin the educational experiences of our children. I am proud to say that I am a member of this community. Thank you all for a wonderful year!

Our annual Mandatory Parent Meeting is May 1st at 7pm at HCP. Our Cooperative requires that one parent from each family be present to vote in the new slate of Board members. The first tuition payment for the 2014-15 school year is also due on May 1st.

Please save the date for our End of the Year Picnic, on Thursday, May 22nd, from 11:30-1:00pm at Robbins Park. Watch for more information as we get closer to the date.

Eric Makstenieks
HCP President
C# 630-484-6517

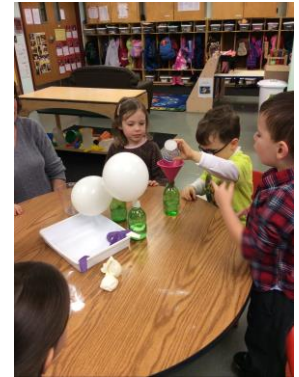


A quick note from your HCP Registrar:

I'm happy to share with everyone that our enrollment numbers for the Fall 2014 are awesome! Some classes are totally filled with wait lists and others are off to a great start! We do still have openings in our Parent and Me and Just For Me programs. It is important that we work together as a school to promote these classes as they are feeder classes and can be determining factors in our enrollment numbers for the future. With this said, if you have little ones that will be 2 years old by September 1st, please consider our Parent and Me program. Also, if your child will be 2 ½ by September 1st they are also eligible to enroll in Just For Me. They are a both a great "gentle" transition into our core preschool classes and they are rolling enrollment throughout the school year. If you do not have little ones but have friends, family, neighbors, etc. that might be interested please forward this information on. Parent and Me meets Mondays 9-10:30am and Just For Me meets Fridays 8:45-11:15am. My daughter Ashley was in the Just For Me class last year and she loved it! I really felt that it was a perfect introduction to the school environment and she looked forward to it every week.

I hope everyone enjoyed their Spring Break and I look forward to seeing everyone at the next Parent Board meeting!

~ Annamarie Pionke, HCP Registrar





Health and Safety: Sun Safety

Yay! It's almost time for summer vacation – a very exciting time for kids and families! As we approach this season of “fun in the sun,” remember to keep in mind some Sun Safety Tips.

Did you know skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States, affecting 1 in 5 Americans? About 85-90% of skin cancers are associated with exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun. As lovely as the warmth of the sun feels and as helpful as it is for Vitamin D metabolism for bone health, we must remember that UV radiation is actually a proven human carcinogen. Surprisingly, just one blistering sunburn in childhood more than doubles a person's chances of developing melanoma later in life. And also important to know - is that approximately 80% of a person's lifetime sun exposure occurs before they are 21 years old. Thus, becoming educated about childhood sun exposure is critical.

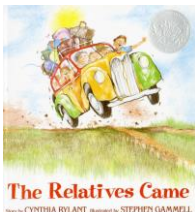
As parents, we want our children to have an active and healthy lifestyle involving outdoor activities and exercise – but without risking their health! The key is to be educated about Sun Safety Strategies including:

1. Keep newborns (0-6 months) out of the sun. Their skin is too sensitive for sunscreen and they possess very little melanin (the pigment which provides some sun protection).
2. Children older than 6 months should use a broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day. Apply sunscreen generously on the body approximately 30 minutes before going outside. Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours OR immediately after swimming or excessive sweating. Remember, you may also need sunscreen on cloudy days because UV rays remain strong. Don't forget to apply sunscreen to the often missed spots including the nose, ears, hands, tops of the feet and behind the neck. You may even want to use a special lip balm on the lips.
3. Cover up with lightweight clothing – even consider long sleeves, pants or swim shirts/rash guards while at the pool or beach. Consider using a hat (wide-brim offers more protection) and sunglasses.
4. Seek shade or limit sun exposure between 10am and 4pm when the UV rays are most intense.
5. Avoid sunburn.

You can help reduce your children's risk of skin cancer by following some of these Sun Safety Strategies. The good news is that regular use of sunscreen can lower their risk of cancer by almost 78%! If you also incorporate these sun safety practices into your own lifestyle, it will set a good example for your kids, reduce your own risk of skin cancer and will also help you maintain your youthful looks (more than 90% of visible changes commonly attributed to skin aging are caused by the sun). Enjoy the warm weather, but stay safe in the sun!! Have a great summer!

-Jeanette Hoenig, MD
Board Certified Pediatrician and Neonatologist
HCP Health and Safety Chair

Great Books! Book Review!



The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant and illustrated by Stephen Gammell is a delightful book about a family and the relatives who came to visit them. It describes how the relatives packed up their “ice chest full of soda pop” and came up-from Virginia! Once they arrived there was hugging and eating and lots and lots of hugging. During their stay they fixed all that they could, ate, danced and enjoyed each other. Then when it was time to go. They were all sad, but not for long as they knew they would see each other again next summer.

The Relatives Came helps children understand the importance of family near or far. They realize that while the family may not be together; they are missed by the relatives. The illustrations are so strong and delightfully expressive. A wonderful book to read when planning a road trip!

~Ann Marie Berlino, Director



Ask the Director: NAEYC's Week of the Young Child

Every year April brings us The Week of the Young Child, held April 7-11, 2014. This is an annual celebration of children sponsored by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children). The purpose of this week is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

The theme of the Week of the Young Child is "Early Years are Learning Years." To work within this theme, our staff came up with the some wonderful activities for our children and their families. It has become a tradition at HCP to celebrate the Week of the Young Child by holding our own "Big Read" to connect to the community and to coincide with Hinsdale Library's Big Read (The Longest Road by Philip Caputo). This year all classes will read The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant. Please see our book review on this book in this newsletter. Our teachers plan many fun and engaging activities in the classroom around the theme of this book! One activity that all of our HCP families can participate in will be on the bulletin board in the hallway. We would like to know where your family likes go to visit relatives! Please take a minute to write on a car or a plane your favorite destination and post it on the board! This book is available at your local library. Take some time to sit as a family and read this book together! You will surely love it! Also, as an outreach activity we will be collecting new children's T-shirts, Underwear, flip flops, light blankets, small teddy bears to be sent to the Philippines.

Ms. Sharleen has family, relatives and friends in the Philippines who have been devastated by the Typhoon that hit last fall. Clean up is still preventing the children from attending school and having any new clothing. She has arranged for our donations to be sent to her cousin in the Philippines so that the clothing/items can be distributed through their church. It is our hope that the relatives and friends of Ms. Sharleen will feel that this small gesture will give them comfort, hope and send a message of love. Donations can be placed in the basket in front of my desk. Thank you in advance for your generous donation! This week will be inspiring and filled with engaging activities for all!!

~Ann Marie Berlino, Director

Hinsdale Community Preschool Parent Education Series Presents:

Speech and Language for the Young Child

Presenters: Rosemarie Giannini, MS-SLP and Sharyn Gray,

District 181 Speech and Language Pathologist

Thursday, April 24, 2014

7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Hinsdale Public Library

Presenters will cover common questions, such as:

- "What is a district speech and language screening?"
- "How do I have my child's speech and language checked to see if their speech and language is "typical"?"
- "How many words do children typically understand and how many do they use at this age?"
- "I can understand my child, but other people seem to have a hard time, what should I do?"
- "My child can't seem to say all the sounds in a word. [ie, "dat" for "that" or "top" for "stop"] Is that typical?"
- "I notice my older child talked a lot more. Is that "typical"?"
- "When does a child receive a speech and language screening?"

Rosemarie Giannini is a licensed Speech and Language Pathologist and HCP Parent. Sharyn Gray is a licensed Speech and Language Pathologist working in District 181.

Everyone from the community is invited to attend! There is no fee for this program, however, registration is required. This event is in partnership with The Hinsdale Public Library. Please register online at www.hinsdalelibrary.info.

Register today! Invite your friends to join you for this informative program!