
April 2016



Hinsdale Community Preschool

A Parent CO-OP School Since 1942



THE CIRCLE TIMES

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."*

Important Dates

April 4th –Back to School

April 7th – Board Meeting and Advisory Board meeting 7pm Blue Room

April 11-15th – Week of the Young Child

April 11th – HCP Spirit Day for Just for Me Two – Wear your HCP t-shirt or school colors

April 14th – HCP Spirit Day for Junior's, Senior's and Jr/Sr PM – Wear your HCP t-shirt or school colors

April 15th –HCP Spirit Day for Just For Me Two – Wear your HCP t-shirt or school colors

April 19th – Vision and Hearing Screening

April 28th – Vision & Hearing Rescreening

Continued on Page 2

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.

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

We at HCP are building muscle!!!

As spring begins to bring us warmer weather, find safe environments so your children can frolic outdoors in the sunshine, ride a bike or scooter, play in the woods...(remember that? when we were able to run freely in the woods without a care in the world?) ... find a place for them to lay in the grass and just wonder. I still love to do that!!

-Ms. Ann Marie Berlino, HCP Director

Save the Date!

End of the Year Picnic:

Our End of the Year picnic will be **Sunday, May 22nd** from **4:00pm to 6:00pm at Robbins Park**. Pack a picnic dinner, grab blanket and bring your family to enjoy a Spring afternoon with friends on the playground. You will receive more information regarding this fun event from the Hospitality Committee when we get closer to the date. We look forward to seeing you there!



Memorial Day Parade:

Join HCP families for a walk in the Memorial Day Parade on May 30th and show your school spirit! Look for more information in the coming weeks!

Board News:

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. 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 5th 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 4th.

Please save the date for our End of the Year Picnic, on Sunday, May 22nd, from 4-6pm at Robbins Park. Watch for more information as we get closer to the date.

Eric Makstenieks
HCP Parent Board President

Hello HCP families!

I hope you all had a fun spring break and are enjoying the back to school fun as well!

I know a lot of you, but I also wanted to introduce myself for those of you I don't know. My name is Megan Mikhail. I am Meredith, JFM2 class, and Aaron, Bookworms and Discovery Kids Kindergarten enrichment, Mikhail's mom and volunteer HCP parent board Vice President.

Our family joined HCP just last January 2015. We have lived in Hinsdale since 2009, but made a big change by taking our children out of the Bright Horizons child care center at Argonne National Laboratory, where I worked full-time as an attorney for the U.S. Department of Energy, to start Aaron mid-year in the Seniors AM class. I had decided to stay home with our children, and as a family we could not be happier with now both Meredith's and Aaron's experience at HCP. (Although, for any of you that know Meredith, she also thought she started at HCP last year and tried every day at drop off to join the Seniors class).

A funny thing happened as I was walking out of the Seniors classroom after dropping Aaron off for his first day. The then President and Registrar asked me if I'd ever thought of joining the Executive board. I had not thought of it at all and really didn't know anything about the board, but I did want to get involved so after talking with Ann Marie a few times, I decided to do just that - get involved!

Cont'd on page 4

Board News cont'd:

I began volunteering with the Buildings & Grounds committee and worked with Eric Makstenieks to learn how to be the chairperson. This year as Vice President has been a great learning experience as well as a fun time getting to know more parents on the Executive Board and Parent Board.

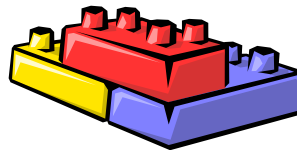
I can't encourage you enough to join the HCP parent board. It has been such a wonderful and enriching experience for me and our family. I have had such a great time with all of our HCP friends whether it's at HCP events, meet ups, drop off, or board meetings!

We have a great group of parents joining for next year. If you haven't already talked with me or Ann Marie or Eric about joining the 2016-2017 parent board, you really should!

We are looking forward to another great year for HCP.

Megan Mikhail
HCP Parent Board Vice President

Legos and Playdough- A Dynamic Duo



Children are not born with fine motor control. The process does begin early, when infants and toddlers reach for and grasp objects. But development and coordination of wrist and finger muscles-necessary for handwriting later-come slowly and require a good deal of practice.

Parents can help their child develop fine motor control by providing appropriate materials. Playdough and Legos are two of the best materials. One of the many skills learned through playing with playdough and Legos is the development of strength and dexterity in hands. Simply through pinching, rolling, and shaping playdough, children develop strength in finger and wrist muscles.

Connecting Legos together develops hand muscles and the pincer grasp, the touching of the thumb and fingers that is important for holding pens, pencils, silverware, brushes, and other tools.

Playdough and Legos are both open, ended materials. Children can experiment with these however they choose. These materials not only help develop fine motor skills but also provide opportunities for practice and discovery of many math, related skills. Both of these materials can help build on your child's interest. For example if your child is interested in dinosaurs, playdough offers hours of modeling activity. For a child interested in construction, trains, spacecraft etc. Legos, will provide hours of constructing adventures!

Playdough can be made at home or purchased. Both materials provide enjoyment, many ways to enhance fine motor skills, and great opportunities for intellectual development.

Cont'd on page 5

Legos and Playdough Cont'd

Best of all you can play too!

Play Dough Recipe

1 cup salt	1 teaspoon cream of tartar
2 cups flour	2 tablespoons oil
2 cups water	A few drops of your favorite color food coloring

Combine all ingredients in a pan and cook over low heat, stirring continuously, until all ingredients are well mixed and the dough begins to pull away from the side of the pan. The dough will look very lumpy but will mix smoothly after about 10 minutes of cooking. Remove from pan and knead (may be a bit warm) for 2 minutes. The playdough can be reused for 3-4 weeks if kept in an air tight container.

Adapted from: *Family-Friendly Communication for Early Childhood Programs* by Deborah Diffily and Kathy Morrison p. 40

Hello HCP Families!

NAEYC's Week of the Young Child

Every year April brings us The Week of the Young Child, held April 11-15, 2016. 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 "Celebrating Our Youngest Learners."

To work within this theme, our staff came up with some wonderful activities for our children and their families! All of our classes will read the book Flower Garden by Eve Bunting and center many engaging learning activities around it.

Announcing HCP's Cooperative Garden!

Also to celebrate NAEYC's Week of the Young Child we will begin to create an HCP Cooperative garden! We have received approval from The Community House to use a small area of land outside of the blue room. Our garden was tilled over spring break!

Our teachers will be working with the children during the Week of the Young Child and in the following weeks to plant, dig and explore our garden.

Our goal is to create a garden bed for the students to plant flowers, bulbs and seeds in April and May! We also have plans to have meet ups during the summer at our garden!

If you are a garden enthusiast and would like to assist in this project, please let your child's teacher or myself know! We would love the help!

Ms. Ann Marie

Announcing:

Updated Schedule of PRESCHOOL ENRICHMENT Classes for 2016-2017

Extended Day

Open to all Senior AM students

Mondays, 11:15am-1:40pm

HCP Senior Students are invited to join their friends for some additional time together after preschool. **Extended Day** is a time for Senior students to enjoy a hearty snack with their friends, followed by opportunities for math games, reading, writing/drawing, literacy activities and free play.

Discovery Kids Preschool

Open to children age 4 by January 1st, 2017:

Fridays, 8:45am-11:15am

Discovery Kids Preschool offers 4-year-old preschoolers (by Jan. 1, 2017) a valuable learning experience through hands-on exploration of literacy, science, social studies, music, drama and art. Students "travel" to different areas of the United States with lesson plans that include geography, science, literacy, and art based on the location the students are "visiting." Each week teachers send home a lesson plan detailing your child's adventure and how their activities meet the Illinois Department of Education Early Learning Standards.

Children will be challenged and energized by this project-based class, learning by what they do best – play! Each week the class rotates topics: Geography, Science, Music, Drama & Art with literacy activities woven into each lesson. The classes flow from one to another, such that a geography lesson on Florida's peninsula leads into a science lesson focusing on oceans and creating waves in a bottle.

We are pleased to announce three NEW classes for children age 4 by January 1st, 2017:

Discovery STEM Preschool

Open to children age 4 by January 1st, 2017

Tuesdays, 11:15am-1:40pm

Discovery STEM Preschool offers 4-year-old preschoolers the opportunity to explore, observe and investigate by participating in hands-on, multisensory experiences and experiments that build on children's discoveries and assist them in developing the habits of mind and skills associated with scientific thinking! Children will be challenged and energized when they share their observations, collect and record data, and explore technologies and engineering methods! Each week teachers send home a lesson plan detailing the experiments and activities that will be explored and how these activities meet the Illinois Department of Education Early Learning Standards for Science. Children will enjoy a hearty snack with their teachers and peers prior to the start of class.

Preschool Enrichment Classes Cont'd

BookWorms Buddies

Open to children age 4 by January 1st, 2017
Wednesdays, 11:15am-1:40pm

Our most popular kindergarten enrichment class is now offered for preschoolers! **BookWorms Buddies** is designed to increase children's love for literature and authors while enriching their language arts skills and other subject areas. This class focuses on identifying and comprehending the important building blocks of literacy and language including rhymes and phonemic awareness through popular authors and illustrators. An increased understanding as well as an appreciation for the timeless arts of poetry, drama and rhyming in literature will be developed and explored. Children will enjoy a hearty snack with their teachers and peers prior to the start of class.

LaPetite Masters Art Enrichment

Open to children age 4 by January 1st, 2017
Thursdays, 11:15am-1:40pm

Let's get messy! **La Petite Masters** enrichment program is designed to develop and increase children's love for art and artistic expression through painting, sculpting and various other mediums. Children will develop a love of art through a variety of mediums as well as an appreciation and awareness of great artists from past and present. Through their classroom experiences children will meet the fine arts and visual arts standards of the Illinois Early Learning and Development Standards. Children will take what is useful to them and apply it to their everyday lives. Children will enjoy a hearty snack with their teachers and peers prior to the start of class.

To register, please email Lynn Mayer at registrar@hinsdalepreschool.com

Fun at Extended Day!

