

PRESCHOOL PRIMER

Good Shepherd Preschool Newsletter

Volume 10

Issue 1 - September



Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to Preschool! This is the first of our monthly newsletters. The first page generally contains information pertinent to everyone. The next pages are divided up into sections by class. A new feature this year is the Article of the Month. (This month's article, "What Kids Really Learn in Preschool" begins on page 5.) Please read the newsletter carefully each month so you'll know what's happening.

Carpool: Now that you have a full week of the Preschool carpool experience under your belt, there are a couple of things that will help things run more smoothly:

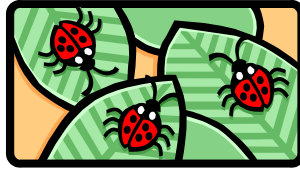
- Please put your carpool numbers in the middle or right of your front window where they can be seen. Don't put them on your dashboard or in the shaded part of your windshield. Holding them up doesn't work well, either – it makes it hard for you to drive when you're trying to hold up a number. Each teacher double checks the numbers to be sure they're putting children in the correct cars, so we need to be able to see your number the whole time we're loading.
- If you have to walk up please use the crosswalk on the right side as you face the building or go through the grass on the left side until you reach the sidewalk. We ask parents who walk up for pickup to stay on the right (crosswalk) side until we can call their child's number. We do try to load cars first, especially when there are cars "hanging out" onto Hobbs Road.
- Some of you are already helping us avoid having cars backed onto Hobbs by coming in a different entrance and feeding into the carpool line. This is one way we can keep cars out of the street. Please continue to be courteous and let cars in as you can. Most days we get all the kids out and loaded in 10 minutes! You will never be charged a late fee if there are still cars in line.
- Please try not to be on your cell phone as you pick up your child. It can be hard for us to get your attention if we need to, and it makes it hard for you to pay attention, too. As parents you know that young children can be unpredictable, so we have to be constantly aware.
- If you need replacement carpool numbers we can make them for you. *There will be a \$1 charge per replacement number.* This covers our cost and time, plus we hope it will encourage everyone to keep up with their numbers.

Stayday: Stayday begins this week on Tuesday and Wednesday for 4s – just send \$3.00 and a lunch. Please include everything they need for lunch (drink in a leak-proof container, spoon, napkin, etc.). Put the lunch itself in lunchbox or bag (with your child's name on it) that your child can open. If the child has uneaten food we will send it home so you can tell how much he/she is eating. Stayday begins September 15th (Tuesday) and 16th (Wednesday) for the 3s

Thanks for entrusting your kids to us – we're looking forward to a wonderful year!
Blessings!

NO SCHOOL MONDAY, SEPT. 7th – LABOR DAY

September tuition is due by Thursday, Sept. 10th.



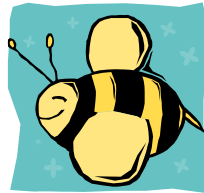
Dots from the Ladybugs

Ms. Meridith

Welcome to the Ladybug Room! What a wonderful few days we have had getting to know each other and our classroom. Our little ladybugs are quickly becoming familiar with our classroom procedures and activities. We are continuing to work on sitting still during circle time and cleaning up toys after playing with them. They have made a smooth transition to preschool.

Please remember to empty your child's tote bag each day. They bring home lots of projects and treasures, as well as calendars and notes from Ms. Meridith.

In September, we will be talking about our friends, families, "All About Me," our five senses, and apples. This year is sure to be full of great adventures, and I look forward to experiencing them with your child.



Buzz from the Bees

Ms. Chris

Welcome to preschool! The children seem to be enjoying themselves and have settled in quite well. Look forward to a year of discovery, independence and fun! This is a great group and we will learn a lot!

During the month of September our themes will include: Friendship, Family, All About Me, the 5 Senses and Community Helpers. Please continue to work with your children on proper hand washing, how to use a tissue to blow/wipe noses, covering coughs and catching sneezes and how to put on and take off jackets without adult help.



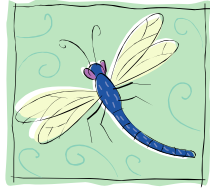
Hoppin' with the Frogs

Ms. Patty

Welcome to the Frog room! The school year is off to a great start, and the children have made the transition to preschool smoothly. The Frog class is certainly filled

with lots of excitement. We have spent most of our time learning classroom routines and making new "frog" friends. We are continuing to work on listening, sharing, following directions, sitting still during circle time, and cleaning up the toys we enjoyed playing with during center time. In the coming weeks, we will be turning our attention to themes focusing on "Friendship," "All About Me," and "Our 5 Senses."

Thank you to all of you who attended the Parent Orientation and Open House. It was a pleasure meeting and talking with each of you. Thank you also for sharing your children with me. I am thrilled with the opportunity to watch them grow and develop this year.



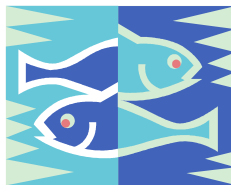
Dragonfly Doings

Ms. Tsuya

Welcome to the Dragonfly room! We have had a great start to the new school year. We have been busy learning how to listen, share, and follow directions. We are also learning how to sit still during circle time and how to clean up after center time. Our dandy dragonflies are making the transition into the new school year fabulously!

We are beginning our letter of the week program, shape, color and number recognition, and show and share this month. So, remember to keep your monthly calendar handy and refer to it often. It will help you stay "on track" because with so many commitments we call seem to have in our lives it can be easy to "derail" at times.

Thank you to all the parents who were able to make it to orientation and open house. I enjoyed meeting you and I look forward to working together with each or you to make this an exciting and rewarding preschool year for you child.



Fishy Facts

Ms. Brenda

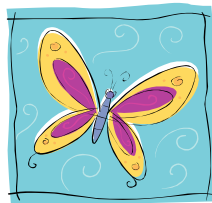
The Fish Class is off to a great start! We are all learning the new routines and making new friends. The Fish are "diving" right in each day, and our days have been rather smooth. Thank you so much for remembering folders and tote-bags each day. Please remember to check your child's folder every day when you get home. This is a great way to talk about what happened at school by looking at the things in the folder. The children are getting better at putting away their folders and packing their folders. The Fish are all

working very hard each day remembering their good manners and good behavior. Thank you for helping to remind your child to work on earning eight stickers on the "Rainbow fish".

Please remember to check your monthly calendars weekly to know what letter we are having each week. I hope you had fun finding the letter "A" pictures. The letter "B" will be the week of Sept. 7-10. Remember there is no preschool on Mon., Sept. 7-Labor Day. Please send your "B" pictures on Tuesday, Sept. 8.

I appreciate all of the parents who signed up to help with parties during the year. I will contact the Parent Coordinator for each party with more information later.

Again, thank you for sharing your children with me. Each day they have been enthusiastic and helpful. I look forward to a great preschool year in the Fish Classroom.



The Butterfly Beat

Ms. Karen

The Butterflies are having a great start to an exciting year of preschool! The boys and girls are playing very well together and have had fun exploring our room. We've been working on several different projects that will stay in the classroom until the end of the school year. Some of the Butterflies are already showing artistic talent and creativity in our various centers.

For the next few weeks we will continue to learn the routine of the class and practice a variety of skills. You can help at home by watching your child when they draw or color, and help them to hold their pencil correctly. Thank you for keeping your children on a stable routine and being attentive parents - it shows! I look forward to spending my mornings with your children.



Music Memo

Ms. Susan

We hope to have a lot of fun in our first Music classes this week. Our goals are to learn songs, experience basic rhythm and music concepts, and, above all, to enjoy music. We hope to develop a life-long appreciation of music in many forms. This week we will begin with "The Name Song" - the kids really enjoyed putting their names into the song lyrics! In the next few weeks we will introduce basic rhythm instruments as we move to the beat!



Movement Message

Ms. Melissa

Movement classes will begin this week. The movement program consists of various developmentally appropriate activities for physical fitness as well as an introduction to popular sports that the children may become involved in as they grow. By moving their bodies, children develop social, emotional and cognitive (intelligence) skills. Movement benefits the whole child. Our movement class promotes fitness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and learning. In September, we will have fun activities that involve body awareness and manipulation of an object (i.e. a ball). Thank you for the opportunity to work with your children.

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: What Kids Really Learn in Preschool

By Barbara Solomon (Copyright © 2004. Reprinted with permission from the September 2000 issue of Parents magazine.)

Early-childhood experts insist that play is the ideal way for 3- and 4-year-olds to develop crucial academic and social skills. Here are the ten most important things your child will learn in preschool -- whether she goes for five full days or only two or three mornings a week.

1. How to be a student. To a visitor, a preschool can seem chaotic, because children are free to choose from a roomful of activities, toys, and playmates. Yet underlying this easygoing atmosphere are many rules and routines designed to teach children how to conduct themselves in a classroom and be part of a group. Kids as young as 2 know where to put their finished art projects, how to line up to go outside, and where to sit when it's time for a snack, notes Beth Graue, Ph.D., a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison. They also learn that they must control their impulses. At storytime, for example, they can't wander away from the group or interrupt the teacher the way they might do when reading at home with Mommy.

2. How to make friends. Of course, many 3- and 4-year-olds have already had experience interacting with others in day care, on the playground, or via other activities. Yet preschool offers additional opportunities for learning how to forge friendships and settle differences without the help of a parent or caregiver.

"Preschoolers learn how to approach other children and be comfortable around them," says Lilian G. Katz, Ph.D., director of the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. "They figure out how to start up a conversation by focusing on the other person -- by saying, 'What are you doing?' instead of 'I can build a bigger tower than that.'" This social savvy benefits kids as they get older and need to work on school projects in pairs and groups.

3. How to be independent. Parents automatically tend to help their 3- or 4-year-olds with the small tasks of everyday life, such as fastening buttons, brushing their hair, or carrying their show-and-tell treasure from the car to the classroom. But preschool teachers, who may need to get 12 or more kids quickly into their coats and out onto the playground, encourage students to take more responsibility. "Children learn how to put on their shoes, open their own juice boxes, and remember to wash their hands after going to the bathroom," Dr. Katz says. This early practice in self-care skills will help give your child confidence in other settings, such as at day camp or at a friend's house, where you're not around to intervene.

4. How to tell a story. Although experts believe that pre-schoolers should not be pushed to learn to read, these young students can still develop a love of books. "Three- and 4-year-olds should feel that books open up the whole world to them," says Betty Farber, M.Ed., a former preschool teacher and editor of *The Parents' & Teachers' Guide to Helping*

Young Children Learn (Preschool Publications, 1997).

Children in preschool have plenty of opportunities to hear stories as well as to tell them and act them out with their friends, she adds. Listening to stories helps them grasp the concept that a plot has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and it also motivates them to want to read on their own. "Children begin to realize that print is something very meaningful," Farber says.

5. How to ask for help. You can't have fun on the playground if your tummy hurts or there's sand in your sneakers but you're too timid to tell the teacher. Though it's not easy to elbow your way past other kids who are also clamoring for attention, preschoolers develop the confidence and inner strength to speak up. Research has shown that having caring, responsive relationships with their first teachers helps children form productive relationships with subsequent teachers and other adults. "Young children will approach new relationships with confidence if they've already had some positive experience in accepting authority from adults outside their family," Dr. Katz says.

6. How to cut and paste. Those scribbled drawings and goeey collages your preschooler brings home each week are more than expressions of his creativity. When children work with scissors, glue sticks, and crayons, they're developing the fine motor control that will help them form legible *b*'s and *d*'s in kindergarten and even take class notes in high school.

"This small-muscle development is critical during the preschool years," explains Sylvia Rimm, Ph.D., director of the Family Achievement Clinic at the Cleveland Clinic and author of *Raising Preschoolers* (Three Rivers Press, 1997). "Young girls tend to be more interested in arts and crafts than boys, but it's very important that all children spend time doing these activities," she says. "Otherwise, writing may always be a struggle for them."

7. How to build a block tower. Research has found that preschool block builders hone their spatial skills and gain hands-on math experience. Unfortunately, though preschool boys may not spend enough time at the art table, girls often neglect the block corner. "When children play with blocks and other 'manipulatives,' they learn to sort and classify," explains Diane Trister Dodge, a former preschool teacher and founder and president of Teaching Strategies Inc., a Washington, D.C. -- based training and publishing company that specializes in early-childhood education. "If they're building a tower and run out of long blocks, for example, they'll discover that they can use two short blocks instead." This experience gives kids a solid foundation for understanding division, fractions, and geometry.

8. How to recognize symbols, concepts, and rhymes. Though they may not be ready to read, preschoolers are usually able to identify numbers and letters. Kids practice saying and writing the letters in their name, reciting simple number sentences, and even learning the letters in their classmates' and teachers' names. They generally develop a useful understanding of colors and shapes -- knowing, for example, that mixing two colors will create a third or recognizing that someone's hat is shaped like a triangle.

Learning nursery rhymes and songs also helps children academically. Kids who know how to rhyme will learn to read more easily, Dr. Rimm points out, and evidence suggests that music instruction at an early age can help children in math. Researchers at the University of California at Irvine found that preschoolers who participated in group singing and piano instruction outperformed their peers in tasks involving spatial reasoning, such as piecing together a puzzle.

9. How to hop, skip, and jump. Preschoolers usually play outside nearly every day, strengthening their muscles and developing their coordination. "Running, sliding, climbing, and playing with balls are all important ways in which children learn how to control their bodies, refine their large motor skills, and develop self-confidence," says Dodge.

Time spent on the playground also gives preschoolers opportunities for independent problem solving ("How do I wrap my legs around the fire pole to slide down?") and social interaction ("Want to build a castle with me in the sandbox?"). This free play is a very different experience from going to the park with a parent or caregiver, who will watch a child more closely, offer suggestions for navigating the equipment, and applaud every achievement.

10. How to investigate and explore. Preschoolers are natural scientists, and they benefit from having plenty of opportunities for hands-on, self-directed experimentation. In a study of various teaching methods, Rebecca Marcon, Ph.D., a professor of developmental psychology at the University of North Florida, in Jacksonville, compared play-centered classrooms, in which children were encouraged to choose activities and classroom materials on their own, with more academic preschool classrooms, in which the teachers tended to choose and lead all the class activities. "By fourth grade, the children who had been more autonomous had zoomed ahead of the others," Dr. Marcon says. "The students who had the teacher-directed preschool experience were used to being told what to do, and they were less prepared to do the kinds of independent projects that higher grades require."

The findings underscore much of what we know about the benefits of preschool, Dr. Marcon points out: "It may be hard for parents to understand how their children can be learning in an environment that seems unstructured, but the fact is that children learn best when teachers order the environment to provide kids with interesting materials and new ideas to explore."