

October 2017 Newsletter

Dear Parents,



The month of October is a very exciting one for everyone at Greenbelt Children's Center! The units for this month include **The Five Senses, Parts of the Body, The Season of Fall, and Fire Safety**. You can find the daily activities scheduled for YOUR child on the Parent Information Bulletin Board in your child's classroom! Our teachers post them up just for YOU! Remember, YOU are the first and lifelong teacher in your child's life and

we want to make sure that we include you in our program.

Back to School Night

We were pleased with our "Back to School Night" high family attendance! We hope that parents could get all the information about the program and goals for the children, activities and routines, ideas for doing learning activities at home and more! There was an opportunity to meet with teachers while the children participated in an educational music activity by Leroy Hyson. We thank everyone for making a dish and sharing it with other families at the Potluck Meet & Greet. The idea for the Potluck Meet & Greet came from GCC families and we are happy for the family engagement at GCC. The food and company was delightful!



It was nice to hear parents express their appreciation of the teachers that evening and we encourage parents to do this often! Tell the teachers thank you when you notice their hard work and efforts, write a letter for their file, bring them flowers or breakfast! There will be a Teacher Appreciation Week in the Spring but don't wait until then to tell them that you appreciate them. They really have a demanding job! Come spend a day here observing or volunteering to see just how much they do each day. Teachers are happy to have such an enthusiastic community of parents to partner with this year!



Picture Day!

Friday, October 6!

By Life Touch! We need parent to complete and return the sheet!



Judith P. Hoyer Grant from Maryland State Department of Education



The Hoyer grant award for this year provides funds for the Prince Georges County Pre-k program in Room 1. Grant funds subsidize the cost of Pre-k supporting income eligible families who pay 10% less than the cost of Before & After tuition and keeps their tuition the same for up to 52 weeks to include supporting the child in an enriching summer program before kindergarten! This MSDE grant also partially funds the Spanish Language Program, Club Espanol, for almost half the year with GCC paying the remainder, Computer

Technical Support, Wolf Trap Artist in Residency program, the Lending Library, the Book Club Events and admission for field trips.

It will also fund **free Hearing and Vision screenings for all Room 1 children. Hearing & vision screenings** are scheduled for December 5th this year. This is also offered to *children in Room 2 & 3, at a nominal fee & forms will be sent home with details.* On October 3, our grant partner, Dr. Denise Revel Moore from Moore Communications will conduct free **speech screenings** for all children with speech and language concerns who do not already have an IEP or IFSP, *if parents complete release forms.* **Free Physical Development screenings**, by Occupational Therapist, Stacy Wasserman, were held last month for any child who was not screened last year and she will return on 10/10/17 for one last time for new enrollees or for children who missed last month's dates. Parent release forms will be required for these screenings. Take advantage of the free information about your child and please follow up when reports say that further evaluation is needed for your child because the earlier the intervention, the better the outcome for a child.

GCC has arranged for InterAct Story Theatre drama and literacy program to do a residency in each classroom. GCC has received a matching grant from the MD State Arts Council to pay 50% of the cost for the program. This fine arts program is scheduled for October & November.

The GCC is funding additional enrichment activities for all children: Funfitastic Fitness Physical Education takes place monthly on Monday afternoons and Music 4 Life takes place every Friday in each classroom. All our GCC children and families benefit from these "extras".

There are two optional programs that parents may sign up and pay for if interested- Soccer Shots on Monday mornings for 7 sessions that are scheduled throughout the year and Piano Lessons from the Music 4 Life Program that takes place on Tuesday afternoons. A Meet & Greet was held last month.

Kudos to the staff of GCC for all the extra work that must be done to document the outcomes of all these grant activities that are beneficial to the children. The paperwork is unbelievable and our staff goes way above & beyond the call of duty.

Project Security Blanket

Our “Project Security Blanket” Disaster/Risk Management Plans that our community of staff & parents have completed are posted in each classroom. There was legislation making this a requirement in all early childhood programs licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education. Become familiar with the plan to know what would occur in different emergency situations and feel free to comment or suggest improvements.

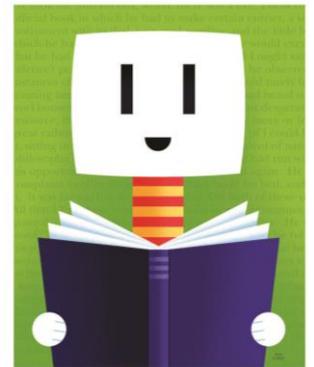


Screen Time in the Early Years

(Exchange Everyday, September 25, 2012)

“Many kids use and understand media devices and platforms better than we do. But their technological abilities are often ahead of their emotional maturity and judgment,” advises James Steyer, founder of Common Sense Media, in *Work & Family Life* (September 2012; workandfamilylife.com). Steyer shares research results on the impact of screen time on preschool children:

- ❖ A landmark study at the University of Washington showed that for every hour per day that preschool boys spent watching violent TV shows, they had three times the risk of developing behavioral problems by age 7.
- ❖ This was true even when they were watching cartoons on commercial channels, which often have more violence than adult shows. For each hour of TV young kids watch, they have a 10% higher chance of attention problems at age 7, including restlessness, trouble concentrating and impulsive behavior.
- ❖ Visual images may over stimulate and rewire preschoolers developing brains. Learning to read and write takes time and patience. Kids who are used to the fast pace and instant gratification of screen media may get easily bored.
- ❖ More than two hours daily screen time also increases the odds that kids will be overweight. They are exposed to a barrage of ads for high-caloric, sugary foods-and when they are sitting in front of a screen, they are not running, jumping, and moving around.



Healthy Futures Program Returns! University of Maryland School of Public Health Interns will come on Friday afternoons to teach children about healthy foods, exercising their bodies and mindfulness and meditation!



Fire Safety Education Program

This is National Fire Prevention Month and the children will participate in the Stop, Drop, Roll, and Cool Program and learn about fire safety and calling 911, in case of emergency. **We will have a visit by Prince Georges County Fire Fighters on Thursday October 5th from 9-11 am. We have been told that NBC 4 will be here recording the visit!** How exciting! Look for GCC children on Channel 4 News that day! Practice at home with your child to learn their name, address and phone number, how to exit if there is a fire and where to meet. We hope you have the

occasion to visit your local firehouse with your child as they have been scheduling open houses for this month!

Congratulations to Greenbelt Children's Center!

Greenbelt Children's Center is a very good place for young children! Our center has maintained national accreditation with the **National Association for the Education of Young Children** since 1999. We had our re-accreditation validation visit on September 18, on the **1st day** of the 15-day window with only a 24 hour notice. Our faculty has been working so hard behind the scenes to prepare for that visit, many evenings and weekends were spent here at GCC that were not viewed by parents, in addition to all the daily duties as well as preparing classrooms for the new school year. What an amazing team we have here! We think that our visit was very successful but there is a 30-90 day wait to hear the official results. We will keep you posted! Meanwhile, **NAEYC will send a professional videographer to GCC to interview 2-3 parents and 1-2 faculty on the benefits of an NAEYC program for the child on 10/10/17 at 3 pm. Let Mrs. Gee know if you would like to volunteer for this!**



Additionally, the center administration underwent a comprehensive evaluation called the Program Administrator Scale (PAS). The purpose of the PAS is to measure Early Childhood Leadership and Management in our early childhood program. Research has shown that overall administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high quality outcomes for children and families. GCC was assessed on 25 items by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The national average rating is a 4.0 out of 7.0 and we are happy to report that our baseline rating was 5.8, and our most current rating was 6.0, well above the national average. The process is very complex and documentation of actual practices were reviewed by MSDE. Greenbelt Children's Center was assessed on the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales, which assesses the quality of the environment and teacher interactions. Teachers were also rated on the CLASS Assessment instrument for Social Emotional

Climate, Teacher Interactions and Instruction. We are very proud that our teachers scored well above the national averages on these rigorous voluntary assessments. Due to those high ratings, the high teacher and director qualifications, the nutritious breakfast and snack program and other accomplishments, we are proud to report that we were re-certified as a **level 5 (highest) program in the new MD EXCELS Quality Rating and Improvement System**. Our certificate is hanging outside the office and more information is available at the MD EXCELS website: www.marylandexcels.org. We have earned additional achievements for being an Asthma Friendly Child Care Center, Health and Wellness, Quality Business Practices and Accredited Program designations. We are hoping to add Cultural Competency and will need parent/teachers to complete the process for that achievement. Let Mrs. Gee know if you would like to help.



Parent Engagement

Parents are invited to take an active role at GCC, which includes responding to Family Survey forms asking you if you have been informed about all the above information in this newsletter (!), as well as information from the Parent Handbook that was reviewed with each of you when you first visited GCC. We count on you to be able to answer all the questions favorably when the time comes to conduct the **annual surveys** again! If you need a new Parent Handbook, please just ask!

Also, GCC has standing **Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee meetings** and the next one is scheduled for **Thursday, October 26th at 5:30 pm in Rm 1**. The purpose for the October Meeting is to review our Back to School Night evaluations, update our Goals and Strategic Plan for 2017-2020, discuss the Cultural Competency designation with MD EXCELS. **Please look for a sign-up sheet and join us in this endeavor. Refreshments will be served. (Child**

care is available in your child's classroom until 6 pm).

Field Trip News

We are in the process of planning a field trip to Cox Farm to pick pumpkins, go for a tractor pulled hay ride, tour the farm, view farm animals, and possibly enjoy a maze for children in Room 1 and 3. The trip is planned for Friday, **October 27th**. We are waiting for PGCPs approval of the plan. *The cost for the children will be paid by the MSDE Hoyer Grant for admission and GCC will pay for the transportation by PGCPs approved bus.* We will need parent chaperones, so please volunteer to attend, if possible. Please remember that parents of public school pre-k children must show proof of **PG County Background Check**. You may

Field Trip

obtain the Commercial Background check at the PGCPS website or call 301-952-6775 for more information. (**Parent chaperones must pay for admission to the farm.**) Besides, we like your company and want you to have some October FUN!

Details and a class permission slip will be posted in Classrooms 1 and 3 soon! The children will carry and eat lunch at the Farm in a pavilion area, weather permitting. Boots are recommended in case of muddy fields and the trip will occur even if it's misty that day. **Parents must sign the classroom permission slip in order for your child to attend.**

Policy for Delayed Openings & Emergency Closings

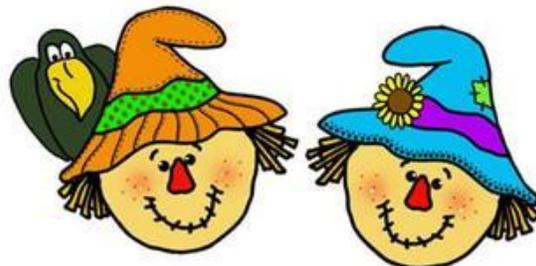


Remember that we follow the closing announcements for Prince Georges County Public Schools for emergency closings due to snow, etc. If PG County Schools are closed, GCC will be closed. If the public schools have a delayed opening due to bad weather conditions or other emergencies, then Greenbelt Children's Center will have a delayed opening also and will start at the time designated by PG County Public Schools. For example, if they open one hour late, GCC will open at 8 am, if they open 2 hours late, GCC opens at 9 am. If they close early, we may do the same. We do not want to endanger our children, staff or families and we follow this to keep everyone safe. Please sign up for remind.com/gccpar to receive emergency alerts or reminders from our center at www.remind.com! You must sign yourself up and sign off when you leave the GCC program.

Fall Harvest Celebration and Book Club Event!

On Tuesday, October 31st, at 11 am, we would be happy to have volunteers come in to read to the children and help with a book distribution. Please sign up if you will be available to volunteer. The classrooms traditionally celebrate the Season of Fall and the End of the Harvest with fun and games! Look for a classroom sign-up sheet to contribute healthy goodies or your time to come in and read to the children in your child's classroom. And , come to join us for a good time!

(Please, no costumes).



IMPORTANT REMINDERS!

- ❖ **Check your child's extra clothes box before leaving today.** We have already had some cool weather and had only shorts and a tank top to dress a soiled child in. Winter is coming! See if your child has seasonally appropriate extra clothes on hand in her cubby box! Your child depends on you for this!
- ❖ **Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, November 5th.** Set your clocks back one hour and please change the batteries in your smoke detectors!!
- ❖ **Please make sure that all forms are now complete and in your child's file in the office.** Remember to update your child's emergency information form if any phone numbers have changed. Be sure to also update the office with any booster immunizations your child may have received.



Childcare Subsidy Programs

We have an agreement with **Child Care Aware**, that makes it possible for active duty military parents to participate in the United States Armed Forces program to subsidize the child care expense for any child with a parent serving in certain capacities. You may **contact Child Care Aware at 1-800-793-0324 x 163 for more information.**

There is also a Maryland Child Care Subsidy called Purchase of Care (POC). This program is available to income eligible parents, through Maryland Child Care Subsidy (CCS Central). The number to call to find out if you are eligible is **1-866-243-8796**. We also help families that participate in the **Federal Education & Employment Act (FEEA)** child care subsidy and a subsidy that HUD employees can access. You should check with your **Federal Human Resources Department** at work to see if your employer offers childcare assistance or has a **Flexible Spending Account program for dependent care**. Take advantage of these great programs if available at your place of employment.

Fall Fundraiser

A special thank you to everyone who is helping to raise money for GCC! **Please mark your calendar to remember to turn in orders & money by 6 pm on Monday, October 2, 2016** and to **pick up your order on Wednesday, October 18th between 3 and 6 pm, as we do not have refrigerator storage space at GCC.**

The drawing for the Cash winner will be announced on October 31st. We really appreciate families collecting payments and turning in only one payment of cash or check payable to GCC for your fundraiser, making it easier on Ms. Jill, who volunteers to do the fundraiser each year. We are also happy for cash donations in lieu of fundraiser sales.

Claire's
GOURMET

Social Skills that Children Need

In Karen Stephen's article, "Social Skills Children Need to Make and Keep Friends" in the Parenting Exchange Collection #10, Exchange Magazine (ChildCareExchange.com), she observes that children must be able to:

- Recognize shared interests
- Gracefully join into play
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication cues
- Listen to and respect feelings
- Empathize with another person's perspective
- Cooperate
- Accept others
- Extend a trustworthy helping hand



Reading Aloud

Research shows that reading aloud is the BEST way to give children the tools they'll need to become good readers, listeners and students. Reading together is also a special time for you to bond with your child. Let them snuggle next to you as you share stories, laugh at silly characters and root for heroes.

Here's how:

- 
- Read slowly with expression, use different voices for different characters,
 - follow words with your fingers as you read,
 - point to pictures and say the names of objects & colors,
 - have your child repeat the names
 - make bath time reading time with waterproof books or telling a story to them while they bathe,
 - take books everywhere you go (the car, doctor and dentist appointments, etc.)!
 - point out that we read from left to right
- please remember to have fun!

**Remember to read at least 10 books per month
from the Greenbelt Children's Center Lending Library!!!**