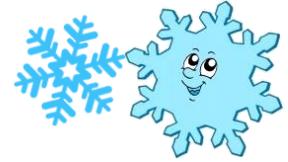


Greenbelt Children's Center

January 2019 Newsletter

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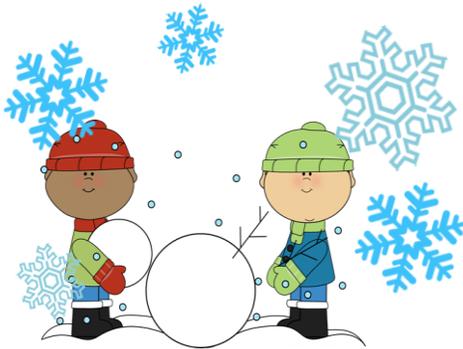


Dear Parents, Happy New Year!

Have you been checking out our GCC **website** and **Facebook** page? On the website you can view a **GCC Calendar, Breakfast & Afternoon Snack Menu**, current and archived **Newsletters** or links to past news articles. Go to <http://www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com>! The GCC Facebook page has announcements and even more photos! Check it out! **Friend us on Facebook!** We like to share resources and news with our families.

For other early childhood news and resources:

Early childhood news also appears on the website of the Maryland State Department of Education Maryland EXCELS website at www.marylandexcels.org. GCC has maintained the Level 5 EXCELS achievement since this quality initiative began. Our program is maintaining the highest level of quality for early childhood care and education.



JANUARY THEMES

All classrooms will be involved in units about the **season of winter**. Please remember to dress your child warmly so that they can be comfortable in exploration of the winter season and play outdoors. Classrooms will also incorporate units on **Feelings and Emotions**, while Rooms 1 & 3 will introduce the **Planets in Our Solar System, Space Exploration, and Dinosaurs**. Children will also be introduced to the important accomplishments of **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** whose birthday will be observed this month.

QUALITY TIME

Below are some suggestions from the **Complete Early Childhood Curriculum Resource Book** by Mary A. Sobut and Bonnie Neuman Bogen, p. 155.

Parent-Child Activities:

- Practice hopping and standing on one foot.
- Read some stories.
- Make hot chocolate, add marshmallows. Watch what happens.
- Match family gloves or mittens.
- Cut a holiday card into pieces to make a puzzle.
- Look through a magazine or catalog for winter clothing.
- Sing winter songs.



- Finger paint with white shaving cream - no paper needed - right on the table!
- Make angels in the snow.
- Play a game or put a puzzle together.
- Visit the library. Get a library card. (Sign up for *Beanstalk*!)
- Make a tiny snowman. Bring inside to watch what happens.
- Feed the birds. Count them in your yard.
- Fold napkins into rectangles and triangles.
- Pick up white cotton balls with tweezers or clothes pins to count them.
- Make snowman with marshmallows.
- Play in the tub. What sinks and what floats?
- Sort the silverware!



Tax TIME



Don't forget to claim child care expenses on your income tax! You will need to use the Center's **Federal Identification Number: 52-1689271**. Keep this number handy so you will have it to complete your federal and state tax forms. You will soon be receiving a summary of all charges & credits for the 2017 tax year in your child's Art Folder. For families with an adjusted gross income of about \$25,000.00 or less AND especially those with more than one child, be sure to look at the **EARNED INCOME CREDIT (EIC) form** to see if you qualify for this tax credit. It has been described as the best real tax break for working families and you may be due a refund of several thousand dollars - even if you paid little or no taxes this past year.

More information will be available about EIC this month, as the Maryland Family Network has asked that child care centers help spread the word to working families and assist them in taking advantage of this. Locally, there will be places such as the public libraries that will have VITA volunteers who can help you file taxes for free. As soon as we find information about this we will post it on the front door.



Thank You!

*MANY SINCERE THANKS TO **EVERYONE** FOR ALL THE GOODIES, GIFTS, AND SURPRISES LAST MONTH!*

Thank You
Gifts for Teachers

Special thanks to all the folks who helped to make last month very special for GCC children and teachers:

- **Thank you to all the moms and dads and grandparents who joined us for the December Book Club Event and Holiday Party, who read to the children and for all the goodies you sent in!** There was a great turn out by families! The children loved the books that they selected to take home and build their home library. We thank the PG County Public School System and the Maryland State Department of Education for the Judith P. Hoyer Grant that provides the funding for the books.
- **Thank you for being generous to the teachers at holiday time!** Teachers really appreciate your acknowledgements! We have a very special community of parents supporting the GCC program. Thank you for your kindness to the faculty. From letters and cards with kind words, coffee and breakfast treats, our staff's favorite pizza delivery, gift cards and presents, and cash bonuses, and so much more! We feel your love!



Important Reminders



- ❖ We have children with **severe nut allergies** and we are requesting that all families refrain from sending in peanut butter or other food items that contain nuts. You may want to try a substitute, Sunflower Seed Butter, as some families have discovered this to be enjoyed by their child. Please help us to keep our children safe! Thank you so much for your cooperation with this request.
- ❖ Everyone please **check your child's extra clothes box today!** Take out those shorts!!! It's COLD out!
- ❖ **Signing in and out of the classroom each day**, specifying who is due to pick up and what time, is a very important responsibility required of each family. Please parents, remind all your family and friends who pick up your child to sign them out at the time of pick up. Parents need this reminder too!



Child Assessments and Parent Teacher Conference

January marks the end of the first semester of our school year calendar. Teachers have been busy observing children at work and play, as they continue recording observations of indicators of learning and collecting samples of children's work to complete the midyear checklists and the first reports for 2.5 year olds. Our teachers have completed training for the **Maryland State Department of Education Early Learning Assessment (ELA)**, which was developed to reflect the Maryland College and Career Standards. The teachers are experienced at observing young children and recording skills, knowledge and behaviors, in 12 learning progressions, important indicators of success in later school years. They collect samples of children's work (actual artifacts), documentation of what children understand and are doing in their day-to-day activities in all domains of learning. This helps teachers to plan individually for each child and to be objective when completing the Early Learning Assessment. Research shows that all children **are born ready to learn** and that the years zero to three are most critical.



A *written summary report* of the child's assessment is shared with parents at conference time and the results of the developmental Ages & Stages Questionnaire-3. The primary purpose of having parents and teachers complete the checklists and summary reports is to share information about your child's development, based upon observations made by you and in our program and to have a conversation to provide opportunities for families to share what they know about their child with the teachers. Teachers want to know from you what your child is talking about at home so that those interests can be incorporated into planning lessons and activities for each child as an individual. Thank you for completing the ASQ-3 because it helps to meet these goals and will soon be a requirement in regulation!

Research in early childhood education has shown the importance of fostering the development of the "whole child" and that is our approach at Greenbelt Children's Center. Parent-Teacher Conferences provide an opportunity for an exchange of information and to develop a relationship, for the benefit of the child. We hope you took the opportunity to meet with the teachers of 3-5 year olds in November/December and/or will do so this month for 2's, as well as in the spring for all parents. **GCC recognizes that you are your child's first and lifelong teacher!**

Ultimately, this information will be shared with your child's next teacher and eventually with the elementary school that your child transitions to, in a format that will allow the next teacher to individualize their program to fit your child's learning style and approach to learning. The process helps prepare you and your child for success in school. Parents are prepared because you will be accustomed to attending conferences as a skilled partner and active participant in your child's education. Teachers may have your child for one or several years, but **you are the major and consistent influence for your child's entire life.** *It is very important for all parents to see themselves as their child's first and most important, lifelong teacher.*

Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee Meeting

Parent and staff volunteers are needed! A meeting is scheduled for [Thursday, January 24, 2019 at 5:30 pm](#). There are three Advisory Committee Meetings per year. The meetings are held on a Thursday in the months of January, April and October. **The meetings are held from 5:30-6 pm in Rm 1 at GCC.** Our program offers staff & parents opportunities to assist in making decisions to improve the GCC program. Collaborative and shared decision making is used by all participants to build trust and enthusiasm for making program changes. **Agenda for this meeting:** continue work needed to apply for the Culturally Competent Child Care Designation to improve practices at GCC as a Culturally Competent friendly program in the MD EXCELS initiative of high quality programs, the importance of good attendance at early childhood programs, work towards the annual NAEYC Family Survey and the public pre-k grant family survey, grant applications and benefits to GCC and steps required for maintaining licensing and Level 5 in MD EXCELS. Hope you will join us for this meeting in January!



We thank you in advance because we MUST have a high rate of return on each survey and are aiming to have 100% of families complete the forms. We are counting on your participation. We would like parent volunteers to administer and collect the surveys at drop off or pick up times. Please contact Mrs. Gee if you would like to help with the surveys.

Sleep Factoids

From Exchange Everyday (12/31/13)

Here are some interesting factoids from a Time article (3/26/13) on the need for sleep, ***"Please, Please, Go to Sleep"***:

- Studies show that 60% of a child's growth hormone is secreted during sleep.
- Getting too little sleep appears to have a role in obesity. One Israeli study found the effect in babies as young as 6 months.
- Australian children sleep almost a full hour per day more than American kids, who sleep less than kids in nearly all other countries.
- The National Sleep Foundation recommends 14 to 15 hours of sleep for babies, 12 to 14 for toddlers, 11 to 13 for preschoolers, and 10 to 11 for elementary schoolers.



Parent Involvement is Important!

Parents, you are the first teachers of your children and you have talents to share and we invite you to do so here at GCC! We provide opportunities for you to grow as the first teacher for your child. Opportunities include: **Parent Café, Parent-Teacher trainings, Family Learning Parties, Parent Tips sent home to read, Monthly Newsletters, Parent-Teacher Conferences, Family Night Potlucks and Parent-Teacher Advisory Committee.** Additionally, we provide community service activities such as collecting food for the local food pantry and annual coat & toy drives.

Please don't hesitate to volunteer in our Center. Whenever you have the time, we have the place! Our staff will welcome you with open arms! We are asking that each family send in a family picture for their child's extra clothes classroom cubby box, if you have not done so. It makes for a cohesive classroom community and helps each child feel like they belong by having their picture or family picture in their classroom.

MUSIC FOR LIFE CONTINUES WEEKLY SESSIONS ON Thursdays and Piano Lessons on Tuesdays with Mr. Miguel and Thursdays with Ms. Tiffany

We really love this program. The program also offers small group piano lessons for a small fee on Tuesday afternoons or Thursday mornings. The first class is free. Try it out!



Wolf Trap Artist in Residency Program



Very soon the children will have the opportunity to participate in a program with **Wolf Trap Early Learning for the Performing Arts.** The program involves carefully chosen multi-cultural books that are age appropriate with the focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math (STEAM). Greenbelt Children's Center uses the Judith P. Hoyer grant funds to support and participate in this program and our teachers attended a full day training to support them in maintaining the Wolf Trap Program after the artist completes all visits. All GCC students participate in activities such as **acting out songs, dances or the story of the books**

presented during each session as the professional teaching artist leads students in exploring and dramatizing the book. The program encourages reading, language, problem solving and thinking skills, creativity, teamwork and perspective taking, in addition to STEAM. **We have participated in the Wolf Trap program for 18 years and have been quite impressed with the way the children have responded to the activities.** We are planning two Family Involvement Workshops to offer as Parent-Child activities at GCC this semester.

Please look for and sign up in your child's classroom for these very fun 45 minutes of joy that you and your child can participate in together! It is play that has education embedded in it and you will leave feeling better than you did when you arrive, no matter what your day was like at work! Please bring your child to this joyful **parent and child event! Dates and times are being planned now and will be available soon.**

Advocates Needed

We are grateful for the grant that subsidizes the Pre-k tuition for some income eligible families. We continue to be concerned about the state's budget woes as well as funding at the federal level. Parents, we may be calling on you to take an active role in advocating for the future of early childhood funding at the federal and local levels with your legislators as we enter the new legislative year in Annapolis and on Capitol Hill. Be prepared to make phone calls and take other actions! Children's Legislative Evening in Annapolis will be on **Monday, January 28** and parents and staff are encouraged to participate with Mrs. Gee and many others. Look for flyers about the event coming soon. In February, Director, Flora Gee, who serves as Public Policy Chair for Maryland members of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, will assist in leading the Maryland advocates at the NAEYC's Annual Public Policy Forum and visits to Capitol Hill. We would love to see the parents who participated in the Family Learning Parties on Advocacy and Leadership, take some steps to show the skills learned in the training!



Parents, your referral is the best testimonial to the quality of the GCC program and we thank you in advance for your continued support of the program as we begin to enroll for the 2019 Summer Program and next school year. **Pre-k parents, please remember that we have an excellent alternative kindergarten experience for children who turn five years old by September 1, 2019, here at Greenbelt Children's Center.** A small class size, competent, caring teachers, and an excellent curriculum. We hope that our pre-k children will continue with GCC for the summer & alternative kindergarten year.

