



A Year of Healing and Kindness February 2021 Newsletter

Dear Parents,

February marks the beginning of the Spring Semester. As we enter the second half of our school year, we welcome the new families that have recently joined us. We are very happy to have you here at GCC! We are also happy to see that daylight is longer now as the season change is coming! Let 2021 be a Year of Healing and Kindness! Our country and community have been through so much in the last 12 months. Let's practice random acts of kindness!



High Quality Early Childhood Education

Our school year is at the midpoint, I am so proud of the efforts of all the faculty for the hard work that is done to ensure that GCC is delivering a high-quality early childhood care and education program despite the raging pandemic.

Our third **Accreditation Annual Report** required by the National Association for the Education of Young Children was submitted last month. Accreditation by NAEYC is considered the "Gold Standard" in early childhood education and very few programs in our area volunteer to meet the standards. The staff is commended for all that they do, because their efforts and dedication are significant.

GCC is also licensed by the Office of Child Care and will have an unannounced virtual inspection by the Licensing Specialist sometime soon, We have passed with 100% compliance for almost three decades. We also anticipate the annual Fire Marshall Inspection will be virtual as well. These inspections help to ensure that regulations are met for health and safety. This year we will be required to show that we are following the guidelines for Covid 19 such as the Daily Health Checks outside and the cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces. Our staff work long and hard before our center opens every morning and after closing our doors each evening and all day long, too. The work is exhausting. Our goal is to keep everyone safe and meet education standards.



GCC participates in the **Quality Rating and Improvement System, MD EXCELS, and our program is rated at Level 5**, the highest mark of quality. We will always be working hard to keep up with best practices and continuous quality improvement. You can view information about MD EXCELS at www.marylandexcels.org.

Environmental Health





Initiatives

We implemented some new programs to both participate in and educate our families about some concrete things we can do to improve our environmental health quality. We ask that at drop-off and pick-up times that you shut off your car's engine. Please do not allow your car to idle more than 10 seconds. This helps to reduce emission of air toxins that are known or suspected to cause cancer or have other serious health effects. If idling is necessary for your car's temperature control, please restrict it to no more than 5 minutes. Thank you!

In pre-pandemic years, we asked our field trip buses to not idle in our parking lot. This is required in our accreditation standards.

February Activities:

Teachers have a full month of activities planned for your child, which may include units on Black History, President's Day, Valentine's Day, and more!

Family Learning Parties: Unfortunately, these are postponed due to COVID restrictions.



Love is in the Air! We will be planning a **Valentine's Day Book Club Event** on Thursday, February 14th. We encourage all children to make a "Kindness Card" or Valentine's card for the friends that are in class with them in support for our Year of Kindness. Children can also decorate a box or bag to collect their cards in.

February is also African American History Month. Teachers will be featuring books by black authors and illustrators during language and literacy activities.

Winter Weather GCC HAS FOLLOWED THE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SNOW OR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS. With the public schools closed for in-person learning, we expect no inclement weather announcement would be made by the school system. *This year, GCC will be making our own decision*, we are using the Remind.com app. You can text 81010 with the message @gccpar or go to www.remind.com to sign up for Mrs. Gee's Class: "@gccpar", Please sign up for text or email alerts and reminders from GCC! This is our best way to reach everyone quickly, especially if there is an emergency.



And "friend" us on Facebook to get our Facebook postings.





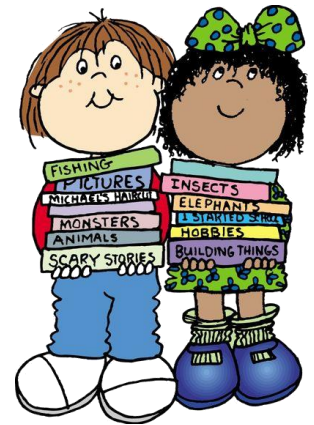
REMEMBER - Every child needs an extra complete change of clothes at all times! Please check, today if possible, to see if your child has underwear and socks as well as an extra shirt and pants. **Your child really counts on you for this! (At least two changes are requested for the younger children.)**

Please send boots and mittens so that we can comfortably enjoy the outdoors whenever the weather allows. Please label each item brought from home with your child's name.

Lending Library

Have you been faithful about reading 10 books per month to your child? Thank you!! We need everyone's help in fulfilling goals for the grant partnership with the local school system.

More and more research is showing that the children who love books are the children who succeed in school! We are offering an incentive to each classroom that has **100% family participation of ten books read to each child** by the end of each month! Every family must meet the goal or the class will not earn the incentive. Please make sure you are helping to meet this goal-**check out a book today!** Read 10 books each month to your child from our lending library! Help your child's class to meet the goal this and every month!



We need all families to **borrow, log and read 10 books every month to your child!!** We also need you to **return the books** after your child is finished so that other children can enjoy the books. We understand this may be several days, as children may want to hear a book again and again, AND it is Ok to ask for repeat books that your child loves! When you return the books, the staff will assist you in **getting new books** for your child. This is a three step process! Can we count on you? It's a very good thing for your child! *Children who are read to 6 days per week are a full year ahead when they learn to read!*



I Like Hearts

(Tune: *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*)

Red hearts, white hearts, pink hearts, too.
I like purple hearts. How about you?
Green hearts, yellow hearts, blue hearts, too.
I like rainbow hearts. How about you?



Did you know?

- We need you to make sure your child's shot record is up to date in the office! Remember to **update the office anytime your child receives immunization shots and boosters! (Especially for four or five-years).**
- It's time to plan for the children's transitions for next school year. Some children will change classrooms in the fall: children turning four by September 1, 2021 will move to pre-kindergarten and may be eligible to move to Pre-k in **Room 1**, if your family resides in Prince Georges' County and meets other eligibility requirements needed. If you are an out of county resident, your child may join the Pre-k program in **Room 3**. Children turning five by that date will be eligible for **Kindergarten**. **Please be sure to register your child for kindergarten in the spring-April is PGCPs Registration time!** Children entering the public-school system need to be registered by April. We expect PGCPs to do all registrations online at www.pgcps.org .
- GCC teachers will begin working on individualized transition plans which includes preparing information for each child and discussing upcoming changes with children so that they will be well prepared for school changes. We count on parents to share information, so we can do that. Look for Summer & Fall Intention Forms in April when we will need information from each family about your decision for the 2021-2022 school year.
- Everyone who comes to GCC to pick up a child is required to show a picture identification upon request. Please inform all family members and friends.
- Everyone dropping off a child or picking up a child must sign in and out as well as record the first and last name of who will pick up and approximately what time.
- Remember that you can view our Breakfast & Snack Menu and Newsletters for each month of the school year on our website at www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com P. In addition, check out and like us on the Greenbelt Children's Center Face Book page.



Birthdays are special

We are happy to share in your child's birthday celebration at GCC, but please keep best practices in mind. Treats and goody-bags must only include safe, age appropriate and healthy items. Remember Maryland regulation prohibits any program from serving a beverage that has added sugar or caffeine, even if a parent sends it in. We are only allowed to serve 100% fruit or vegetable juice, water or 1% milk.

Special occasion treats should be commercially prepared. **Foods brought to GCC may never contain any seafood or nut products, which may cause a severe allergic reaction in many young**



children. Parents are encouraged to donate a new book to the GCC lending library in their child's honor to mark the event!



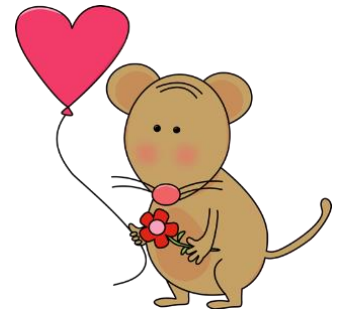
Portion Sizes

We would like to remind parents about appropriate portion sizes. Teachers sometimes see young children with enormous amounts being packed. When portion sizes are way too large, it overwhelms a young child. Appropriate serving sizes for pre-school children are $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or 1-2 ounces, for most foods. Look at your containers and measure what they hold. We are encouraging smaller portions to prevent childhood obesity. Another reminder is to pack servings of a fruit and vegetable in every lunch every day! Please remember to cut grapes in half if your child is in Room 2. Most

parents are doing an excellent job with packing good nutrition in daily lunches. It is recommended that "Lunchables" be avoided due to the high fat and sodium contents.

Important Tax Information

When claiming child care on your income tax form, you will need to use the Center's **FEDERAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER** which is: **52-1689271**. End of year tax summaries were sent home to you in January for use in filing your income taxes. Lost forms needing a reprint will cost \$5.00.



EARNED INCOME CREDIT

Also, for any family with an income of about \$33,692.00 or less, be sure to fill out "Schedule EIC" to see if you are eligible for **UP TO \$4900.00** of Earned Income Credit (this is a Federal Income Tax Form). This benefit is for both married and single parents. There is also a **Maryland EIC for your state taxes.**

For more information about the Earned Income Credit and where you can get your taxes done for free, call *First Call For Help* at 1-800-492-0618 or the *IRS* toll free at 1-800-829-1040 or go to www.irs.gov/individuals/topic.

Children's Advocacy Activities

Our director, Mrs. Gee participates as an advocate for early childhood care and education by joining many others from Maryland Family Network (MFN), MD State Child Care Association, Maryland Family Child Care Association, and the Maryland Association for the Education of Young Children (MDAEYC) to contact legislators in Upper Marlboro, Annapolis and on Capitol Hill. Children's Advocacy Evening in Annapolis, a yearly event attended by many providers who work in centers and family child care homes, is cancelled this year. However, there are bills being introduced and Mrs Gee has written and submitted testimony for the Time To Care Act in support of Family Medical Leave with shared costs. She serves Public Policy Chair for both the state and the local county chapter of MDAEYC.

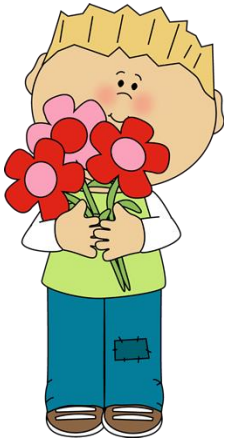


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Please let Mrs. Gee know if you'd like to virtually attend Public Policy Committee meetings, or the local early childhood council or committees and to be a part of important discussions about legislative issues or policies that affect children and families, this year.

Mrs. Gee is scheduled to virtually attend the annual Public Policy Forum of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), contacting federal legislators on the Hill on February 28th – March 2nd, with the Public Policy Committee for the MDAEYC and continues in her appointment by Governor Hogan, to serve on the state's Early Childhood Advisory Council, for a second term.



Social-Emotional Skills that Promote School Readiness:

- Being able to wait
 - Controlling anger & impulses
 - Expressing empathy with other's feelings
 - Following rules, routines & directions
 - Giving compliments
 - Helping adults & peers
 - Identifying feelings in oneself and others
 - Learning how to calm down
 - Learning how to recognize anger in oneself + others
 - Problem solving
 - Sharing toys and other materials
- Showing patience for others
 - Suggesting play themes + activities to peers
 - Taking turns
 - Understanding appropriate ways to express anger
 - Understanding how and when to apologize

By giving children the tools that they need to work well with others, and be flexible and responsive, we provide the foundations for healthy social-emotional development. Let's work together at home and at GCC, to teach, model and practice these important life skills for our children. Let's help our children have a high emotional IQ!



Practice Random Acts of Kindness!

*Happy Valentine's Day
from your teachers at GCC!*

