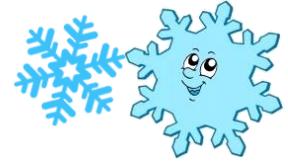


January 2021 Newsletter



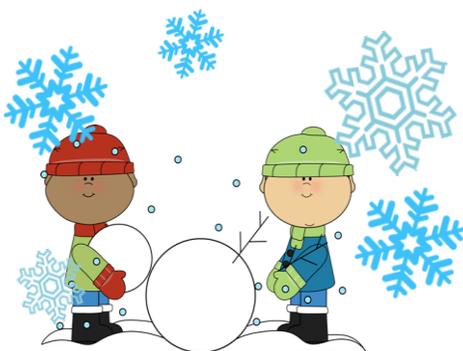
Dear Parents,
Happy New Year!

Have you been checking out our GCC **website** and **Facebook** page? On the website you can view a **GCC Breakfast & Afternoon Snack Menu for the month**, 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 and follow us on Facebook! We like to share resources and news with our families. Be sure to sign up on the remind.com app! Our group is “@gccpar”. We share information there and use it for alerts.**

Thank you for your patience and physical distancing at drop off and pick up as we continue to follow the safety requirements during the pandemic. We recognize it is cold outside and sometimes the weather is miserable. We thank Greenbriar for installing a new light at our front door. It has become obvious that not allowing parents to enter the center has been something that has protected our program from repeated closings. While some of our parents have tested positive but children have not, if those parents had entered GCC we would have had to close. Please remember to keep physically distant from other families at drop off and pick up. Thank you for all that you are doing to keep your family and your GCC family safe!

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.



Jr. whose birthday will be observed this month.

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 work on studies of: **How Things are Built and All Aboard! Buses, Boats, Planes and Trains!** Room 2 is doing a Project of Study on **Balls** in the Creative Curriculum. Children will also be introduced to the important accomplishments of **Dr. Martin Luther King,**

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 (it may not be open during the pandemic). 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 2020 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, in non-pandemic years, 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 share it.

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 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 and cash bonuses, coffee, donuts and breakfast treats, our staff's favorite pizza delivery, gift cards and presents, 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 **remember your child's extra clothes box today!** Time to take out those shorts!!! It's COLD out! Ask your child's teacher to swap out clothes that are seasonally appropriate!
- ❖ We are asking that each family send in a **family picture** for their child's extra clothes classroom cubby box if you have not yet 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.
- ❖ **Signing in and out of the classroom each day:** specifying who is due to pick up and what time, is an especially 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. Our teachers are required to complete 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 and the early childhood years until the age of eight is important for hands on experiential learning through play and discovery.

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!

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 on Zoom or by phone, in November/December and know that conferences will occur again this spring for all parents of preschool children. **GCC recognizes that you are your child's first and lifelong teacher!**

Ultimately, this information will be helpful for transition plans for your child's next teacher and eventually with the elementary school that your child transitions to, in a format that will help individualize the program to fit your child's learning style and approach to learning. The process also helps prepare you and your child for success in school. Parents are more prepared when they are accustomed to attending conferences as a skilled partner and active participant in the 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.*



Sleep Factoids
From Exchange Everyday

Here are some interesting factoids from a Time article 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 community service activities such as collecting food for the local food pantry, doing a Zoom presentation about your occupation or the field you work in, or a Zoom presentation about the project of study in your child's classroom. **Please don't hesitate to volunteer!** Whenever you have the time, we have the "place"! Our staff will welcome you with open arms!

**We wish you and your family a
healthy and happy New Year in 2021!**

