



February 2022 Newsletter

Celebrate Black History!

A Year of Healing and Kindness

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 becoming longer now, as the season change is coming! Let 2022 be a Year of Healing and Kindness. Let's hope that Covid cases continue to decrease! Our country and community have been through so much in the last 24 months. Let's practice random acts of kindness and model this for our children!



There are so many good books to read to young children to celebrate Black History. Teachers will include these in lesson plans for February. We will be sharing some wonderful early learning activity books from the Museum of African American History & Culture for early learners for all the letters of the alphabet. Here is one called "[J is for Just!](#)" and some great activities for families to enjoy.

High Quality Early Childhood Education

We are 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 exhausting two years of pandemic.

Our NAEYC Accreditation Annual Report required to maintain accreditation, was submitted this month. Accreditation by NAEYC is considered the "Gold Standard" in early childhood education and very few programs in our area volunteer to meet those standards. The staff is commended for all that they do because their efforts and dedication are significant. We begin the work of documentation for Classroom and Program Portfolios. We do this in preparation for the NAEYC Validation visit in the Fall.

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 as well. These inspections help to ensure that regulations are met for health and safety. We are 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 long 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, at the same time.

GCC participates in the Quality Rating and Improvement System, MD EXCELS, and our program was just republished at Level 5, the highest mark of quality. We strive 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 include units on Black History, President's Day, Valentine's Day, and more!

Love is in the Air! We will be planning a **Valentine's Day Book Club Event** on Monday, 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 of our Year of Kindness. Children can also decorate a box or bag to collect their cards in.

Winter Weather

GCC HAS FOLLOWSTHE PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR SNOW OR EMERGENCY CLOSINGS. GCC uses the Remind phone app for our announcements. Use the Remind phone app or go to www.remind.com to join 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.

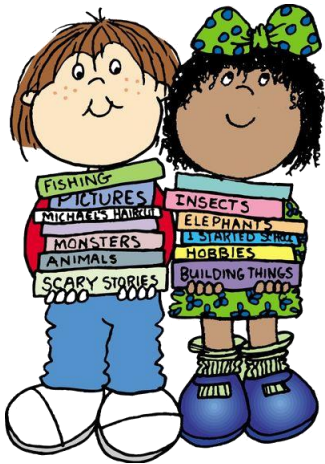


And "friend" us on Facebook/Meta to get our Facebook postings.



REMEMBER - Every child needs an extra complete change of clothes at all times! Please check with teachers, 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

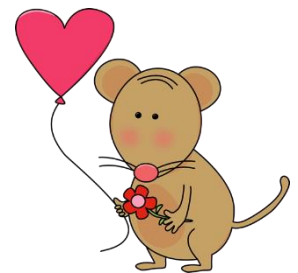
Have you been faithful about reading 10 books per month to your child? Thank you!! We need everyone's help in fulfilling goals for the grant partnership with the local school system in preparing children for kindergarten.

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 - **return books and backpack today, for new ones!** 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!

The steps needed all families: **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 reading level year ahead as they learn to read!*

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-year-olds.)**
- 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, 2022 will move to pre-kindergarten and may be eligible to move to PGCPs public 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 or above income eligibility, your child may join the Pre-k program in **Room 3**. Children turning five by 9/1/2022 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 beginning in April. PGCPs registrations for pre-k, here at GCC or for kindergarten are done online at <https://pgcpsmdc.scriborder.com>.
- Look for Summer & Fall Intention Forms in April when we will need information from each family about your decision for the 2022-2023 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. These legal documents have been audited by the state of Maryland several times this school year.
- 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.



Birthdays are special

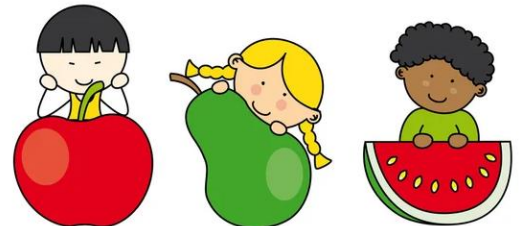
We are happy to share in your child's birthday celebration at GCC, but please keep best practices in mind. Treats and goody-bags must only include safe, age appropriate and healthy items. Remember Maryland regulation prohibits any program from serving a beverage that has added sugar or caffeine, even 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 <https://www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals/earned-income-tax-credit-eitc>

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 recognize anger in oneself + others
- Learning how to calm down
- 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!

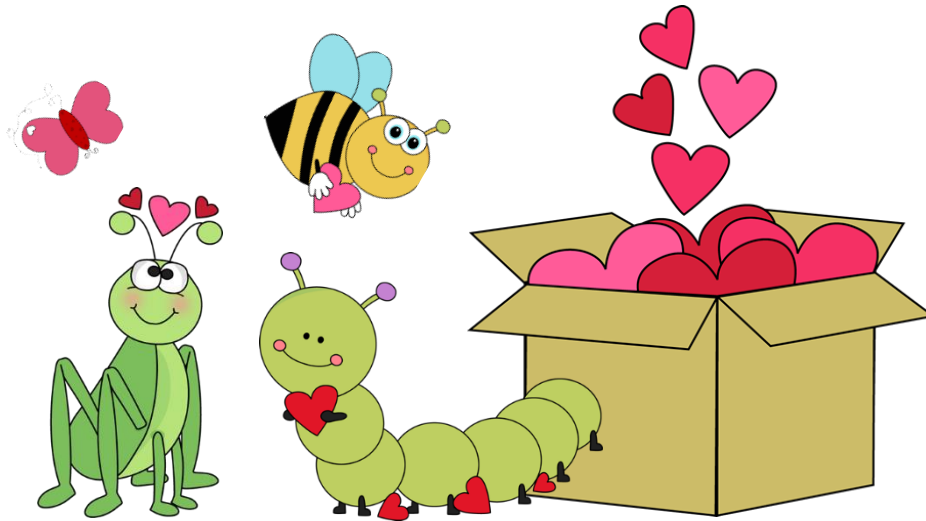
Thank you to the following families for their random acts of kindness:

- ♥ Taylor & family, Room1 - donation of disinfecting wipes,
- ♥ Adaline & family, Room1 – donation of N95 masks,
- ♥ Madisyn & family, Room 2 – donation of disposable pull-ups, and
- ♥ Adrian & family, Room 2 – donation of books for the Lending Library!

Thank
you



Happy Valentine's Day from your teachers at GCC!



My Valentine Heart

When I say I love you (point to lips)
It comes from my heart (hand on heart)
You hear it in your ear (point to ear)
And it sounds very smart (point to head)
I love it when you're proud of me (stand very tall)
You say it all day long (stretch arms wide)
And when I hear you say it (point to ear)
My heart sings a merry song (hand on heart)

Be Mine

