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NEWSLETTER

From the Director's chair...



Hello Stepping Stones families!

Happy New Year! We've had another fun-filled and exciting month here in the preschool building! **Issue 5.**

Our annual **Pajama Drive for Cradles to Crayons** starts in February. In honor of the drive, every Friday is Pajama Day! For every pair of pajamas donated, a raffle ticket is earned! Raffle prizes include a free Parents' Night Out, two free Pizza Days and \$10 to spend towards Scholastic!

We will host our annual **Valentine's Day Family Dance** on Friday, February 16. Tickets to attend will be sold in advance for \$10 a family! Please see Maggie or Tara in the office to purchase tickets! Your ticket purchase includes the use of our very popular Valentine's photobooth with silly props! Your ticket purchase will include a raffle ticket – an opportunity to win some GREAT prizes! We are looking for volunteers to help make this annual event really special! Sign-up sheets are hanging on the door outside of the office. We're also taking song requests! (All requests must be preschool appropriate, of course!)

February Conferences are just around the corner! These conferences are optional! Teachers will not write formal reports for these conferences; however, they are more than happy to meet with you to answer any questions about curriculum and discuss specific goals for your child. We will post sign-up sheets prior to conference week. Formal conference reports will be provided again at the end of May when a third opportunity to meet with your child's teacher will be offered. Please know that teachers are happy to schedule a phone or in-person conferences as needed at any point throughout the year.

- Elizabeth, Maggie and Tara

Important Reminders

- Encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands upon entering the building and before engaging in play. Adults and children are welcome to use the hand sanitizer at the main entrance or any classroom sink.
- Call or email Maggie if your child(ren) will arrive late or be out by 9:15 AM. You can call the preschool building directly: 617-744-5447. Planned student absences help us accommodate additional extra day requests from our families, as well as plan teacher vacation days.
- Medications that are not considered “Emergency Medication” are stored in the Preschool Office. See Maggie if your child(ren) require ANY medication(s) while attending our program.
- Flu shots are highly recommended by leading medical researches as well as our center. Let’s all try to stay healthy this Winter!
- Please check your child’s extra clothing bin to ensure they have weather appropriate clothing. Double check sizes in case your child has outgrown any clothing.
- Please send your child with snow pants, snow boots, a warm hat and gloves and/or mittens every day.
- If your child comes to school wearing snow boots, please encourage and help your child change into sneakers before engaging in play. We are trying to keep salt off the carpets where the preschoolers play and rest during nap time.
- Check your family mailbox regularly.

Upcoming Dates and Events

Pizza Day

Every Friday!

Pajama Day

Every Friday!

Valentine’s Day Dance –
Friday, February 16

President’s Day – Center
Closed

Monday, February 19

Parents’ Night Out

Saturday, February 10

February is **National
American Heart Month!**

Do something good for your heart! Eat healthy and exercise! You deserve it!

Preschool Classrooms Wish List

Your generous donations and willingness to contribute to the classroom are so appreciated! Thank you!

We are currently on the lookout for:

- Dance Party and Nap Time CDs!
- Books on CD!
- Felt Board Stories!
- Dress-Up Clothes for the Dramatic Play Area (Consider donating old Halloween costumes!)
- Recyclables! We'll take your toilet paper and paper towel rolls, egg cartons, shoe boxes, cardboard boxes, newspaper, etc.!
- Plastic Bags!
- Scrap Paper!
- Holiday Bows, Ribbons and Wrapping Paper

This month in the Woodchuck classroom...

Hi Woodchuck families!

Happy New Year!

Another month has gone by! We are officially halfway through the year! Can you believe it?

A lot of our Woodchuck friends missed school this month due to cold and flu related symptoms. We used this as an opportunity to review health and hygiene in the classroom. We talked about germs and practiced washing our hands with lots of soap and for at least ten seconds. The Woodchucks practiced how to catch a cough or sneeze by covering their mouth with their elbow. We also took a lot of water breaks throughout the day between meal times to make sure all of the Woodchucks were getting enough fluids!

This month, the Woodchucks learned all about the season of Winter, specifically arctic animals and igloos! They also learned about the five senses! The Woodchucks enjoyed lots of Winter themed activities and projects this month!

The Woodchucks helped their teachers make a batch of slime – a mix of liquid corn starch, blue and red paint, glue and glitter. The Woodchucks spent long periods of time exploring, squishing, stretching, and cutting the slime into little pieces.

The Woodchucks also worked collaboratively to paint a snowy scene collage using watercolors and finger paint.

They brought spray bottles outside filled with water and liquid water colors and used their fine motor skills to paint the snow!

After reading “Little Polar Bear” by Hans de Beer, the Woodchucks created an igloo using paper plates and a painted polar bear silhouette.

The Woodchucks also participated in a fun experiment that helped them conceptualize how animal fat (called blubber) keeps arctic animals, such as polar bears, stay warm. The Woodchucks put their hands in ice-cold water (some said it was very cold!). We then covered their hands with a layer of blubber (Crisco cooking fat) and placed their hands in the water once more. They couldn't feel the cold of the water at all!

On the playground, the Woodchucks built a snowman! We brought him into the classroom and all made predictions about what would happen to the snowman! Would he stay, or melt?

Considering the amount of snow we had this month, the Woodchucks continued to explore and experiment with snow and ice. This time they predicted which would melt faster: ice or snow? Each Woodchuck used eye droppers and warm water to melt the snow and ice. They all got it. Snow melts faster than ice!

The last two weeks of January, the Woodchucks learned about their five senses.

Sense of Sight: The Woodchucks used recyclables to create binoculars and went on a number of scavenger hunts to eye-spy objects (colors, shapes, etc) in the classroom. They even traveled out of the classroom and all about the preschool building to eye-spy specific objects! Back in the classroom, they used microscopes to look closer at smaller things, such as insects.

Sense of Touch: We filled a number of brown paper bags with a variety of objects with different textures (soft, hard, fluffy, flat, smooth, squishy, bumpy, etc.) Each Woodchuck had a turn reaching into the brown paper bag (without looking!) and tried to use descriptive language to tell their friends and teachers what they were feeling... They then guessed what the object was before taking it out of the bag to show their friends! This was also a great way to introduce the Woodchucks to opposites! The Woodchucks learned they can feel and explore different textures not only with their hands – but with their feet! The Woodchucks took turns walking bare foot across a number of trays filled with sand, rice, slime, play-doh and shaving cream! They used descriptive language to tell their friends and teachers what it felt like to stand in each tray, including sticky, squishy, slippery or ticklish!

Sense of Smell: The Woodchucks talked about how they can use their nose to smell! During Circle Time, they took turns smelling a number of Ziploc bags filled with cinnamon, coffee, and chopped onions. Surprisingly, most of the Woodchucks loved the smell of chopping onion! At first, they were not a fan of the smell of coffee... But once we revealed the scent was coffee, they

all began talking about how their parents LOVE coffee! With the help of their teachers, the Woodchucks filled a magnetic chart with other materials they can either see, hear, smell or taste. We filled the sensory table with a variety of Fall scented materials for the Woodchucks to explore, including pine cones, pumpkins and cinnamon sticks! The Woodchucks also explored with gingerbread scented play-doh!

Sense of Taste: The Woodchucks talked about how their tongue is for tasting, including crackers, fruits and ice cream! The Woodchucks all took turns squeezing lemons and oranges! They each took a turn tasting the juices and shared which juice they enjoyed best – orange juice, of course!

Sense of Hearing: The Woodchucks discussed what they can hear with their ears, including music, loud sounds, whispers, vibrations, etc. With help from their teachers, they made guitars using shoe boxes and rubber bands. They observed how the rubber band vibrates and makes sound. The Woodchucks also made some sound shakes and other musical instruments using recyclables to play in the classroom! SO much fun!

Next month, the Woodchucks will learn about Community Helpers! We will turn the classroom into a post office, fire station, doctor's office and bakery! There's so much to learn and fun to be had!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact us for any reason you can call the school or email us at woodchucks@stepcare.net.

Ms. Ama and Ms. Florenca

Parent Involvement

We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!

Here are some ways you can still participate:

- Come in and read a book or participate in an art project! If you are interested, please let us know and we can let you know what dates and times work best for our schedule.
- Stop by the Public Library or bring a book from home about kindness to share with the Woodchucks!
- The Woodchucks love books on CD. Record your voice as you read your child their favorite book from home. You can bring in the recording or email it to the Woodchuck email. (Don't forget to bring in the book, too! We like to read along!)
- Bring in a batch of play-doh, silly putty, goop or slime! (We'll email you recipes! We also have recipe cards!) There is a sign-up sheet just outside of the classroom door.

Classroom Announcements

Happy 3rd Birthday, Hannah!

Classroom Reminders

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with a warm winter coat, snow pants, a warm hat and either gloves or mittens every day.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*

Next Month

- *Acts of Kindness*
- *Abstract/Process Art*
- *Dramatic Play*
- *Fine and Gross Motor Development*
- *Social Emotional Development: Feelings and Emotions/ Modeling and Teaching Empathy*
- *Body Parts*
- *Music and Instruments*
- *Puzzles (We'll each create our own!)*
- *Community Helpers*

This month in the Squirrel classroom...

Hello Squirrel families!

We began the month of January learning about Architecture and Engineering! The Squirrels learned new vocabulary, including architects, blueprints, skyscrapers and other famous buildings, bridges, etc.

The Squirrels worked together to create a unique piece of art using a pendulum! Each Squirrel took a turn swinging the funnel filled with a paint color of their choice. The Squirrels observed if they swing the pendulum fast, they can create paint lines; but if the pendulum slows down, they create paint dots.

The Squirrels also created blueprints! They used Legos as paint stamps and used blue paint to create blueprints of skyscraper creations.

We provided the Squirrels with a variety of wood blocks and recyclables, including paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, pipe cleaners, straws, etc. and asked them to recreate their skyscrapers using their sketches, as well as their blue prints. The Squirrels also enjoy cutting, so we provided them with safe scissors and colored tape! We had the Squirrels build on trays, so we could easily relocate their creations, buildings or skyscrapers around the classroom! Once the Squirrels expressed their creations were finished, we provided them with both rulers and tape measures. We assisted them as they attempted to measure the heights of their creations! We documented how tall each creation stood!

The Squirrels were given a number of big blocks from our classroom as well as the gym. We encouraged them to work together as a team to build one, tall skyscraper – the largest they could build! This was not only an opportunity for team building – as the Squirrels were required to communicate their plans and vision – but a great opportunity to discuss how architects may have to redesign their models if they don't work! For example, when their creation fell over, we discussed how we need to add more blocks to the base for a stronger foundation.

The Squirrels enjoyed learning about Architecture and Engineering, so we took it a step further and worked on City Building! We encouraged the Squirrels to create a whole city and incorporate their model skyscrapers. We provided the Squirrels with a large sheet of paper and asked them what things a city may need besides skyscrapers. We discussed how cities need police stations, hospitals, grocery stores, apartments or houses, etc. We asked the Squirrels to draw sketches and create blue prints of these additional buildings. With their permission, we labeled them as they created.

We once again provided the Squirrels with a variety of wood blocks and recyclables, including paper towel rolls, toilet paper rolls, pipe cleaners, straws, etc. The Squirrels each worked on a different building for the city! Once they finished their creations, we put all the buildings together to create one big city! The Squirrels had a blast using little people to explore their new city creation!

We wrapped up the month of January learning about arctic animals!

We focused on big body play and science experiments!

During Art, the Squirrels had a blast using their hands and a variety of blue and white finger paint to create polar bear process art! We have their polar bears hanging up in the classroom! The Squirrels also used watercolors to color mix and paint blocks of ice on trays.

In the Dramatic Play area, the Squirrels took turns ice fishing! We created blocks of ice using large cardboard boxes. Each box had a small hole and inside were laminated construction paper fish with magnets attached! The Squirrels had a blast using magnet fishing poles to catch mystery fish inside the blocks of ice! They did a great job taking turns and sharing the fishing poles.

The Squirrels learned a number of songs about arctic animals, including I'm A Little Penguin and Arctic Animal Dance! Both of these songs encouraged the Squirrels to get up and move their bodies! We're big on promoting gross motor development!

In the classroom, the Squirrels all participated in a game called Iceberg Hop where they were instructed to hop from one iceberg to another without falling in the "cold water" while music played! When the music stopped, they had to "freeze" and balance on an iceberg! We challenged them and asked them to try and balance on one foot!

Downstairs in the gym, the Squirrels used flashcards to practice arctic animal themed yoga poses. They learned classic poses, including warrior, cobra, locust, bear, pigeon, cat, kneeling, hero, child's and resting post – but we relabeled these poses to mimic a variety of arctic animals, including moose, walrus, whale, polar bear, seal and snowy owl, to name a few!

The light table was a popular free play choice amongst the Squirrels during this unit! We provided them with small arctic animals, including small penguins and polar bears. We gave them small, round and opaque paint cups and had the Squirrels flip them over and pretend they were igloos for their arctic animals to live inside! The Squirrels had a blast creating, building, imagining and playing!

The Squirrels also enjoyed an arctic animal rescue activity in the sensory table! The Squirrels "rescued" arctic animals from frozen blocks of ice using small spray bottles and salt! The Squirrels observed how salt and warm water can melt water quickly.

The Squirrels participated in two science experiments during this unit!

Our first experiment we called "the blubber experiment." Arctic waters are so cold! So how do arctic animals stay so warm? We told the Squirrels that arctic animals have a layer of blubber under their skin that helps keep them warm – kind of like snow pants! We filled two small bowls with cold water and ice cubes. We put a layer of shortening (Crisco) on one pointer finger of each Squirrel and told them we're pretending it's a layer of blubber. We had the Squirrels put both pointer fingers in each of the bowls of icy, cold water! The Squirrels were amazed when they realized the layer of "blubber" did not feel as cold as the finger without!

The second experiment was about penguins! We told the Squirrels that penguins have feathers, but they LOVE to swim in the cold ocean water all day... But their feathers don't get wet! How is that possible? Penguins have an oil-producing gland that makes their feathers waxy. The wax on their feathers repel the cold water and help keep them dry! We provided the Squirrels with a laminated picture of a penguin and gave them crayons, spray bottles and water premixed with blue food coloring. The Squirrels colored the penguin with crayons and filled their spray

bottles with the blue “ocean water.” The Squirrels sprayed the water onto the colored penguins and we observed how the water repels – or rolls right off – the penguin! We explained to the Squirrels that the wax on the penguins feathers is just like the wax crayons – it’s the wax that keeps the penguins dry!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact us for any reason, please call the school or email us at squirrels@stepcare.net.

Ms. Aby and Ms. Marie

Parent Involvement

We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!

Here are some ways you can still participate:

- Come in and join our Circle Time or participate in an Art Project!
- Stop by the Public Library or bring a book from home about kindness to share with the Squirrels!
- The Squirrels are BIG on books on CD. Record your voice as you read your child their favorite book from home! You can bring in the recording or email it to the Squirrel email. Don't forget to bring in the book, too!
- Bring in a batch of play-doh, silly putty, gak, guk, goop or slime! (We'll email you the recipes! We also have recipe cards!)

Classroom

Announcements

In case you have not heard, Nemo has gone South for the Winter... We have a new classroom pet! Welcome to the Squirrel classroom, Dart, the male Beta fish! (He likes the colder weather.)

Happy 4th Birthday, Benjamin!

Classroom Reminders

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with a warm winter coat, snow pants, a warm hat and either gloves or mittens every day.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*

Next Month

- *Acts of Kindness*
- *Abstract/Process Art*
- *Dramatic Play*
- *Fine and Gross Motor Development*
- *Team Building Activities*
- *Social Emotional Development: Empathy*

This month in the Spotted Owl classroom...

Hello Spotted Owl families!

Happy New Year!

January was a wonderful month filled with fun and all sorts of learning!

We began the month learning about diversity! It is so important to me that the Spotted Owls learn to be aware and kind to those who many look or live differently than they do! It's also so important to learn about other cultures and proudly share some of their own cultures with their friends and teachers!

We began learning about diversity by discussing what type of friend each of the Spotted Owls would like to have. Many mentioned they could like to have a friend that would share with them, while others wanted a friend to play with. All very essential qualities when searching for a childhood friend!

On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, we discussed how it's so important to treat all of our friends the same regardless of how they may look on the outside. I reminded the Spotted Owls that is more than okay to be friends with someone even if they have a different skin or hair color than them. I reminded them that although we may all look different on the outside, we all have the same heart on the inside.

During Circle Time, the Spotted Owls now practice repeating, "I am smart. I am kind. I am beautiful/handsome. I am important. I am special."

The Spotted Owls were all able to participate during Show-and-Tell twice this month! Such a hit! Isla's father, Jeremy, was kind enough to join us and demonstrate for the Spotted Owls how dry ice works! With adult supervision, the Spotted Owls had so much fun dipping their cups of ice and blowing into the cold air!

Our second Show-and-Tell was a cultural one! It was a huge success! I love that the Spotted Owls brought in items that had special meaning to them! They have a proud look on their faces while describing their items to their friends. They were all so excited to share where their cultural item came from and how it is used. My hope is they continue to embrace and stay proud of who they are as individuals!

I have also shared my own culture with the Spotted Owls. I taught them a traditional Greek dance that we practiced and performed for the Snowy Owls. This was such a great activity for the Spotted Owls because it not only taught them about a new culture, but it encouraged them to work together as a team! I also taught the Spotted Owls how to make a traditional Greek yogurt dip called tzatziki. We tried it and even

shared some with the Snowy Owls. I am so proud of them for trying something new – a few of them even had seconds!

This month, the Spotted Owls are working to build a strong classroom community. Building relationships and understanding that everyone's ideas and opinions are important is something the Spotted Owls will continue to learn all year long.

We also learned a recipe for tzatziki, a traditional Greek yogurt dip! This project also had us working as a team. Building a strong classroom community is something the Owls are working hard on right now. Building relationships and understanding that everyone's ideas and opinions are important is something the Owls will continue to work on all year long. After making the dip we all gave it even a try and we even shared with the Snowy Owls. I was so proud of them for trying something new, a couple of the children even had seconds!

Other fun this week included dancing and watching music videos featuring new dance moves the Spotted Owls were encouraged to follow! We were big on gross motor development this month! The Spotted Owls also participated in some fun paint projects, recyclable challenges and even letter challenges to encourage and promote early letter recognition.

We had such a fun and busy month! Looking forward to what February holds!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact me for any reason you can call the school or email me at spottedowls@stepcare.net.

– Ms. Nikoleta

Parent Involvement

We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!

Here are some ways you can still participate:

- Come in and read a book or participate in an art project! If you are interested, please let me know and I can provide you with some dates and times that work best for our busy schedule.
- Stop by the Public Library or bring in a favorite book from home to share with the Spotted Owls! We are looking for books about healthy bodies. You can volunteer your time and read to the class!
- Bring in a book on CD to share or a batch of play-doh, silly putty, goop or slime! (We can provide you with some of our favorite recipes!)

Classroom Announcements

A big thank you to Isla's dad, Jeremy, for bringing in dry ice for a fun demonstration!

Classroom Reminders

- *Please remember to check your child's extra clothes bin!*
- *Please consider providing us with an updated family photo for the classroom family tree!*
- *Please send your child to school with a warm hat and either gloves and/or mittens.*
- *Please encourage your child to wash or sanitize their hands before engaging in play! Make hygiene part of your morning routine!*
- *Spotted Owls may only bring one soft toy from home to rest or nap with.*
- *Please check your child's art mailbox daily!*

Next Month

- *Acts of Kindness*
- *Diversity*

This month in the Snowy Owl classroom...

Hi Snowy Owl families!

Happy New Year!

We began the month of January learning about Space! We had a blast! I learned so much about Space just from the Snowy Owls alone! We filled out of KWL chart with the things we knew, wanted to know and learned about Space. Learning to identify and differentiate all the planets was the most fun – and “Moon Jump” in the Block Area was a big hit! I set up a jumping station with a variety of colored tapes to represent different lengths and points... The Snowy Owls stood in a rectangle shape made of tape and tried to jump as far as they could... They could just to different color-coded lengths and use a chart to see how many points that color represented. After each jump, they practiced recording that length on clipboards. They Snowy Owls loved this! We will definitely revisit more activities like this in the future!

We wrapped up our Space Unit and transitioned to Arctic Animals... This was a fun and exciting unit because it really challenged the Snowy Owls to categorize which animals were considered “arctic.” During this unit, we made “unique penguins.” I explained that word “unique” meant “special” and “different” and told them to create a penguin anyway they knew how! I loved their final products because no two penguins looked alike and all the Owls put a lot of effort into their creations. We also learned about the many different arctic animals that change color during the Winter season, went ice fishing in the classroom, explored with snow slime and attempted to make ice cream in a bag – which turned out to be like a milkshake (but we still had a blast!). We practiced creating simple words using word cards and letter blocks, practiced our Owl grid game to prepare for our take home game, and played lots of memory games!

With Ms. Beth, the Snowy Owls played a penguin toss game and discussed the “Snowy Owl.” They each created a Snowy Owl craft and discussed the average weight and wing span of a Snowy Owl. The Snowy Owls measured

just how long the wing span is to get a visualize, then went on a scavenger hunt to eye-spy objects around the school that weigh just as much or the same as a real Snowy Owl – super fun!

Coming up in February, we will begin a new unit all about diversity. Ms. Tara plans to spend a lot of time with us leading fun activities and projects. Lately, the Snowy Owls have been asking many questions in the classroom that lead us to believe this unit is not only going to be of interest to them, but quite informative! I am excited about this upcoming unit – especially to observe all the exploring and learning that will take place!

Thank you for helping us grow and learn! If you need to contact me for any reason you can call the school or email me at owls@stepcare.net.

– Ms. Tamara

Parent Involvement

We love when family members volunteer their time in the classroom, but we know that's not always possible!

Here are some ways you can still participate:

- Take a trip to the Public Library and bring in a book to share related to the unit we are learning about.
- Volunteer your time to read to the Snowy Owls or participate in an art project!

Special Thanks to...

- The Castelli family for letting us use their projector during our Space Unit! So much fun!
- All of the plastic bag donations from the Barber and Castelli family!

Classroom Reminders

- Please make sure you are dropping off your child in a classroom that has a teacher in it. We begin our day in the Spotted Owl classroom and transition to the Snowy Owl classroom at approximately 8:30. Even if the shared classroom doors are open, please walk your child into the Spotted Owl classroom where a teacher can see your child and mark them present for the day.
- The take-home game is finally in progress! Each family keeps the game from Friday to Friday of the next week. Remember to have fun!

Next Month

- Acts of Kindness
- Take-Home Heart Grid Game
- Number Recognition and Writing Practice
- Diversity Unit

Upcoming Events

Pizza Day

Every Friday!

Pajama Day!

Every Friday!

Valentine's Day Dance –

Friday, February 16

Center Closed – President's Day

Monday, February 19

Parents' Night Out

Saturday, February 10

Parent Opportunities

- Laundry Volunteers! Any families interested in helping us wash some of our classroom materials (sheets, towels, pillow cases, etc.) can touch base with Maggie or Tara!

- Play-Doh Volunteers! We love to make (and toss) play-doh frequently! Those interested in making a batch at home to share with their children's classroom can ask any teacher building for a recipe!

Good Reads

Teach Preschoolers Simple Rules About Safety with Adults

Source: HealthyChildren.org

Keeping children safe is an important job for parents. You want your child to respect and trust others, but you also need to teach your child to be careful. Following are some simple rules and ways that you can start a conversation with your child about different safety issues.

“If you're not sure, ask me.”

“If an adult asks you to do something that you're not sure is OK, always ask me first. I won't get mad at you for asking.”

“No secrets.”

“No one should ever tell you to keep a secret from me—one that might make me mad if I found out. Adults should never ask or expect you to do this.”

“Certain body parts are private.”

“No adults (except parents, doctors, and nurses) should touch you where you normally wear a bathing suit.”

“If we get separated, find a security guard or police officer.”

“This is a very busy place. If you can't find me, find a security guard or police officer, or ask someone to help you find one. That person will help you find me.”

When you take your child to a crowded place, look around and point out the person who is there to help if you do become separated.

Around Town

Dad's 'N' Donuts *Watertown Public Library*

Saturday, February 3 at 9:15 AM

Skip the coffee shop and make the Children's Department part of your morning routine! Come to the library for some coffee, a donut hole, and to browse the newspaper while children explore books and color during our low-key morning program. Let's be clear: this program is open to all caregivers, not just dads. For families with children of all ages. No registration.

3 and Up Story Time *Watertown Public Library*

Monday, February 5 at 10:15 AM

This program presents stories, songs, and other activities in a fun environment. For ages 3 to 5. No registration.

Matt Heaton Music *Watertown Public Library*

Tuesday, February 13 at 10:15 AM

Kid-friendly, original folk and surf-inspired songs with a few re-worked hits!

Ed Morgan Music *Watertown Public Library*

Saturday, February 17 at 10:15 AM

Ed plays classic children's songs on his acoustic guitar. For ages 5 and under. No registration required.

Launch Trampoline Park 625 Pleasant Street in Watertown, MA

Launch Trampoline Park is an indoor sports and family entertainment facility serving the Watertown area. With over 18,000 sq. feet of connected trampolines forming one GIANT jumping surface and angled trampoline walls to bounce off of, Launch will get your whole family off the couch and in the air in no time! No experience needed. Safety is their number one priority.

KidSpace at Payson Park *Church in Belmont, MA*

KidSpace is a non-profit, parent-run, cooperative, indoor play space open to families with babies, toddlers and preschoolers. Visit belmontkidspace.org for more information.

Inside Playground in *Watertown, MA*

Inside Playground creates its unique presence among other playgrounds by permitting the children to engage themselves in activities from morning to evening, seven days a week. This competence is provided for an affordable flat fee rather than subscribing a 1-hour weekly class that sometimes enforces restrictive regiment. All activities and equipment are kid-proof, and adhere to the strictest safety codes. The main aim of Inside Playground is to create a welcoming environment that will give each family the flexibility and comfort they need to learn and play within their own schedules at our four-season's indoor environment.

Celebrate your child's birthday or other special day, or just join us for a great day of playtime in the indoor comfort and safety of our Indoor Playground facility, open 7 days a week in Watertown, MA. Your children will enjoy both, Fine & Gross Motor activities such as: inflated bounce, play-cars, children's gym equipment, books, puzzles, Legos, miniature furniture, dolls, dress up, lights & magnets exploring, and games with friends and family, as well as weekly special activities led by professionally trained staff – we have a snack area for any foods brought in or purchased onsite from our snack, drink and ice cream vending machines. WIFI-accessible for parents' laptops, too! Shoes are not allowed on the premises, and parking is always FREE!

Good Reads (Cont.)

Feeding & Nutrition Tips: 3-to 5-Year-Olds

Source: HealthyChildren.org

Children feel better when they eat well. During the preschool and kindergarten years, your child should be eating the same foods as the rest of the family.

Your job as a parent is to offer foods with nutritional value in a calm environment and to have regular times for eating. Your child's job is to decide whether he or she is hungry and how much food to eat when it's offered.

8 Tips for Parents:

1. Offer a range of healthy foods. When children eat a variety of foods, they get a balance of the vitamins they need to grow. Healthy options include fresh vegetables and fruits, low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheeses) or dairy substitutes, lean proteins (beans, chicken, turkey, fish, lean hamburger, tofu, eggs), and whole-grain cereals and bread.
2. Don't expect children to "clean their plates." Serve appropriate portion sizes, but do not expect your child to always eat everything served. Even better, let your children choose their own portion sizes. It is okay if children do not eat everything on their plates. At this age, they should learn to know when they are full. Some four-year-olds may still be picky eaters. Parents can encourage their children to try new foods, but they should not pressure eating.
3. Offer regular meal times and sit together. Serve foods at regular meal and snack times. Try to be careful to not offer foods between these eating times. Children who are eating or "grazing" throughout the day may not be hungry at mealtimes, when healthier foods tend to be available. When it is meal or snack time, turn off the TV, and eat together at the table. This helps create a calm environment for eating.
4. Limit processed food and sugary drinks. Another parent role is to limit how much processed food is in the house and to limit fast food. Most important is to limit sugary drinks. Sugary drinks include soda, juice drinks, lemonade, sweet tea, and sports drinks. Sugary drinks can lead to cavities and unhealthy weight gain.
5. The best drinks are water and milk. The best drinks for children are water and milk (including non-dairy milk). Milk provides calcium and vitamin D to build strong bones. Ice cream is okay once in a while, but it should not be offered every day. Whole fruit is preferable to fruit juice—even if it is 100% juice—as juice is a concentrated source of sugar and low in fiber. If you offer juice, make it 100% fruit juice and limit it to 4 oz. or less per day. It is best to serve juice with a meal, as juice is more likely to cause cavities when served between meals.
6. Small portions for small children. It is important to pay attention to portion sizes. Four- and five-year-olds need smaller servings than adults. Encourage your children to choose their own serving size, but use smaller plates, bowls, and cups.
7. Turn off the TV—especially at mealtimes. Television advertising can be a big challenge to your child's good nutrition. Four- and five-year-olds are easily influenced by ads for unhealthy foods like sugary cereals, fast food, and sweets. The best way to avoid this is put in place a "media curfew" at mealtime and bedtime, putting all devices away or plugging them into a charging station for the night.
8. Teach table manners. At this age, your child should be ready to learn basic table manners. By age four, he or she will no longer grip the fork or spoon in his or her fist and be able to hold them like an adult. With your help, he or she can begin learning the proper use of a table knife. You can also teach other table manners, such as not talking with a full mouth, using a napkin, and not reaching across another person's plate. While it's necessary to explain these rules, it's much more important to model them. Your child will watch to see how the rest of the family is behaving and follow their lead. It's easier to develop table manners if you have a family custom of eating together. Make at least one meal a day a special and pleasant family time. Have your child set the table or help in some other way in preparing the meal.