

# St. Peter's Preschool Newsletter

January 2024



## Dates to Remember

- 1/3 School resumes
- 1/5 Pajama Day!
- 1/5 Yoga/Fitness class resumes
- 1/8 Registration for 2024-2025 school year opens for current families
- 1/8 Jump Bunch -3's/4's (in school field trip)
- 1/9 Jump Bunch -2's (in school field trip)
- 1/10 Christmas Singalong - 3's/4's 12:40 (rescheduled)
- 1/15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no school
- 1/18 Olenka Music field trip – 2's
- 1/19 Olenka Music field trip – 3's/4's
- 1/22 3's Parent Conferences –regular school day for 3's and 4's
- 1/23 2's Parent Conferences – no school for 2's, regular school day for 4's
- 1/26 International Night (more details soon)

## From the Director's Chair – by Rita Dai Wang

Welcome back! I hope you and your family had a wonderful Christmas Break.

**Registration:** Before Christmas break, I sent home Registration information the 2024-2025 school year. If you would like a set and did not receive one, please let me know, and I will get one to you immediately. Here are the dates registration opens:

- 1/3 St. Peter's Church parishioners
- 1/8 Current families
- 1/15 Former families
- 1/22 General public

Our classes tend to fill up quickly, so if you are sure of your intent to return next year, I would encourage you to turn in your registration information before registration opens to the general public.

**Referral bonus:** The highest compliment our parents can pay us is the referral of family or friends. The trust that you place in us means a great deal. In appreciation, you will receive a \$50 credit off one month's tuition for every new enrollment as a result of your referral.

**Developmental Assessments and Parent Conferences:** The teachers will be sending home assessments for the 2's/3's classes in the next few weeks. The 3's will hold Parent Conferences on 1/22, and the 2's will hold Parent Conferences on 1/23. Keep an eye out for a Signup Genius coming soon. The 3's will still have class on 1/22, but there will be no school on 1/23 for the 2's. The 4's will have class both days.

**Road to Kindergarten:** If your child is going off to kindergarten next year, check out these resources from HCPSS and Howard County Library. HCPSS also offers a Road to Kindergarten workshop that may be useful. They will be held on the following dates:

- Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024, Centennial High School
- Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2024, Hammond High School
- Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, Wilde Lake High School
- SNOW DATE: Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024, Hammond High School

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/2023-road-to-kindergarten-slideshow.pdf>

<https://www.hcpss.org/enroll/kindergarten/>

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/off-to-kindergarten-guide-kids-families.pdf>

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/off-to-kindergarten-booklet.pdf>

## Screen Time – the Perfect Babysitter?



As busy parents, we have all put our kids in front of the TV or iPad because we needed to get something done - make dinner, household chores, the list goes on and on! I know I have definitely done that! But the latest research suggests that over-using screen time as a babysitter can impact our kids' ability to learn to self-soothe. See the article below for more details.

## Memory Jar



A New Year Family Tradition  
[www.giftideas.com](http://www.giftideas.com)

**Try this at home...** The New Year is a perfect time to make new traditions and memories. Remember, it's the little things that mean the most to kids and the ones they will remember. **Make a Memory Jar:** Obtain a jar and set it in a prominent place in your home. As the year goes by, fill the jar with things you have done together (movie tickets, napkin from a wedding, brochures from places you went, etc.), and write down special events that took place (Johnny took his first steps, Susie made everyone breakfast on her own, the time milk came out of Peter's nose when he laughed so hard, etc.). Fill the jar through the year without peeking. When the year ends, sit down as a family and review these fun events.

# Digital Pacifiers for Cranky Kids Only Make Matters Worse in the Long Run

Psychiatrist.com FEBRUARY 21, 2023



## **Clinical Relevance: Regular use of screens to mollify a temperamental child leads to overall bad behavior**

- Mobile devices used to calm young children may lead to long-term emotional dysregulation, a new study suggests.
- Consistently relying on technology to soothe children may increase impulsivity and moodiness, especially if they are already prone to such behavior.
- Parents can use strategies such as sensory techniques, emotion labeling, and replacement behaviors to help children understand and manage their emotions.

Sticking a “digital pacifier” under the nose of a toddler who is in the midst of a meltdown sets the stage for even worse behavior down the road, new ***JAMA Pediatrics* findings suggest.**

“Using mobile devices to settle down a young child may seem like a harmless, temporary tool to reduce stress in the household, but there may be long term consequences if it’s a regular go-to soothing strategy,” said lead author Jenny Radesky, MD, a developmental behavioral pediatrician at University of Michigan Health C.S. Mott Children’s Hospital.

The study of 422 children between the ages of 3 and 5 over a period of six months found that the regular use of technology to placate a young child increased their overall emotional dysregulation. The short term peace you gain comes at the price of long term moodiness and heightened impulsivity, according to Radesky.

Constant screen soothing deprives a child of the chance to learn other ways of coping. It's a strategy most likely to backfire in kids already grappling with emotional control. This is particularly true of boys who already exhibit signs of hyperactivity, impulsiveness, and a strong temperament. Managing their emotions with tech only made them more likely to react intensely to feelings like anger, frustration, and sadness, the researchers found.

"Our findings suggest that using devices as a way to appease agitated children may especially be problematic to those who already struggle with emotional coping skills," Radesky said.

The researchers acknowledged that the years between preschool and kindergarten, when a lot of kids are going through a challenging **developmental phase**, can be exhausting for parents. While it's tempting to use a tablet or phone to appease a temperamental toddler, Radesky, who is the mom of two herself, suggested there are better ways for helping them get it together. Among them:

- **Channeling negative energy** with sensory techniques such as swinging, hugging or pressure, jumping on a trampoline, squishing putty, listening to music, or looking at a book or sparkle jar.
- **Labeling emotions** to help a child make the connection between language and their feelings. This helps make the emotion "mentionable and manageable," as Mister Rogers used to say.
- **Assigning colors to emotions** helps children paint a mental picture of their state of mind. For example, blue equals bored, yellow equals anxious, red equals explosive. Keep a visual guide handy for difficult moments.
- **Offering replacement behaviors** that get better results such as hitting a pillow instead of a person, or tapping someone on the arm and politely asking for attention instead of tugging on their clothing and screaming.
- **Preventing tech-related tantrums** by using timers and setting clear boundaries. Find apps or video services that have clear stopping points and don't just auto-play or let the child keep scrolling.
- **Talking to a child** when they are in a more reasonable frame of mind about the best way to control themselves in a tough moment.

"All of these solutions help children understand themselves better, and feel more competent at managing their feelings," Radesky said. "In contrast, using a distractor like a mobile device doesn't teach a skill—it just distracts the child away from how they are feeling. Kids who don't build these skills in early childhood are more likely to struggle when stressed out in school or with peers as they get older."

Are you looking for a fun outdoor activity to do with your kids this winter?  
Try this Winter Scavenger Hunt that uses all almost 5 senses!

# Winter Scavenger Hunt

---

## To Find



Twig



Pine Needle



Pine Cone



Moss

## To Look For



Animal Tracks



A Bird Flying



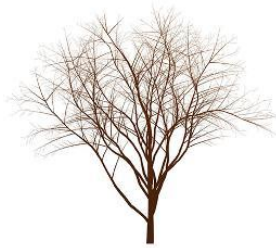
Clouds



Berries



A Frozen Puddle



A Tree That Has  
Lost Its Leaves



An Evergreen  
Tree



An Icicle

# Winter Scavenger Hunt

---

## To Listen For



Birds Chirping



The Wind



A Frozen Tree  
Crackling



Water Dripping  
From A Branch

## To Smell



Bark



Cedar



Snow



Pine

## To Feel



Chilly Cheeks



Tree Bark



Ice



Snowflakes On  
Your Face