



## Parent April News

### IN THE CLASSROOM: TEACHING ASSERTIVENESS

In the dramatic play area several children were “cooking dinner.” Another child approached and asked if he could play too. One of the children responded, “No, we’re just playing right now.” The child walked away, looking sad. Eventually he approached a teacher and told her what had happened. The teacher had observed the same group excluding this child in other situations. She reminded the boy that other children can’t decide where he plays. “Let’s ask them what they are playing, so you can decide if you want to join in too.” She walked with him to the “kitchen” and waited while he asked what they were playing. She suggested, “So how do you think you could help them?” He said, “I could be the dad.” Later, the teacher talked to the children who had sent him away. She said, “I felt bad for Eric when you told him that he couldn’t play. We want everyone to feel included.”

In any classroom children naturally experiment with power and aggression. To help children build confidence and assertiveness skills:

- Teach children that they can make their own play choices. When the boy asked *if* he could play, he was giving other children power over his choices. By asking *what* the group was playing and making suggestions, the boy seemed confident and in charge of his own decisions.
- Encourage children not to give up objects or territory to *aggressive* children. Teach them to say, "I'm using this now" or "I'm coming to play too."
- Demonstrate assertive behavior and show children how to address hurtful acts and to stand up for themselves when they are being treated unfairly. Help the child practice using a strong voice to say, "Please stop. I don't like that."
- Teach children to seek help when confronted by the abuse of power from other children or adults. While it's healthy to let children work out most problems on their own, patterns of hurtful behavior or exclusion need adult intervention.
- Remind children that they can always ignore routine teasing by turning their heads or walking away. Not all confrontational behavior must be acknowledged.
- Teach children to identify acts of aggression, bossiness or discrimination; cartoons are a great tool for this. Whether the aggressor, the target or a bystander, all children who witness aggression are affected and can have a voice in stopping the aggression.
- After a conflict, children may benefit from replaying the scene or sharing the incident with trusted adults. Adults can help children process unsettling memories and form a plan for future incidents.
- Show children the rewards of personal achievement through standing up for themselves.

Recent studies confirm that while many children experience “bullying” during their school years, confident children are rarely the targets. Developing assertiveness and healthy friendships help protect children against aggression now and throughout life.

### WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING UPSTAIRS? DINOSAUR STUDY!



### LEARNING CONTINUES AT HOME: THREE SIMPLE ACTIVITIES

**Encourage thinking and observation:**

Make short car rides tech-free: no radio or video. Quiet time inspires children to look out the window, wonder about what they see and share thoughts.

**Number and letter recognition:**

Buy a loaf of frozen bread dough, thaw according to package instructions and roll into ropes. Form it into letters and numbers, then bake for dinner. Yummy!

**Small-muscle coordination:**

Give children a pair of scissors to cut up a grocery ad to make their own “list.” Be sure to read the prices of items they want to buy.

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING DOWNSTAIRS? BODY STUDY

In the doctor and veterinarian offices that were set up, children explored a number of roles and worked on academic skills through purposeful play. Receptionists answered the phone while patients signed in. Doctors used the patient's chart to record the problem and make sure the patient's heartbeat, weight and temperature were checked.



### Photo Days

AddVision Photography will take group photos of RecSchool classes **Monday, April 8** and **Tuesday, April 9**, during class. Photos are taken inside for best photo quality. Please dress your child in casual, play-appropriate clothes since we will still play outside. Complete information is attached to this newsletter. Photos will be delivered to RecSchool in May.

### We're Going to Slate Run!

**Tuesday, April 30**, all RecSchool classes meet at Slate Run Historical Farm and Park for exploration, active play, a picnic and a farm tour. Parents need to provide transportation to this fun destination. Siblings and other family members are also welcome. The planned schedule for the day:

10:30 a.m. Buzzard Roost Picnic Area: pond exploration, "fishing" and play

11:30 a.m. Picnic lunch

12:30 p.m. Historical Farm: hands-on experiences with farm life, animals and chores. We hope to have the entire farm to ourselves!

Complete information will be sent home the week of April 15.

## IN THE CLASSROOM: "HE SAID A BAD WORD!"

A child ran to the teacher, shouting, "He said a bad word! He said a bad word!" The teacher responded calmly, "Really? Let's go find out what's happening." The teacher sat down with the children and explained that the girl was concerned about "bad words" being said. The boy calmly explained, "Well, I just said XXXX. That's what my mom says when she's mad."

At once this situation became more complicated. Words that were acceptable in the boy's home differed from the language that is appropriate in the classroom. The teacher responded, "Sometimes words that are used at home are not polite for school. Let's think of what you can say at school when you're upset."

To help your child understand what's considered appropriate at home and at school:

- Remember that children are watching parents and other adults to learn how to talk and respond to emotions. Children mimic the language they hear at home from parents, older siblings and extended family members.
- Give minimal attention to inappropriate language and address the larger issue: attention-getting, frustration, imitation or anger.
- Calmly, and firmly, explain which words are not acceptable in your home. Lead by example.
- Make a plan to respond to purposeful, inappropriate language: time spent with an adult or in the bathroom to say potty words or loss of turn at the activity.

By age 4 or 5, most children are able to adjust their behavior in diverse settings: home, school, library or playground. But even when the child is old enough to understand, family language may slip out; after all, it *is* the child's "first" language.

## IMPORTANT APRIL DATES

Thursday, April 5                      May tuition due, the last payment!

Monday, April 8  
Tuesday, April 9                      Class Photo Days, during class

Tuesday, April 30                      Slate Run Family Field Trip

