



Substitutes Needed

The Preschool needs more substitute teachers. Parents who have completed the paperwork necessary to co-op only have to fill in a few more documents to be eligible to serve as a substitute teacher. Or perhaps you have a caregiver, neighbor, friend, or parent who has free time now and then who would be a great candidate. Let Lee know if you are interested in learning more.

Summer Camp

Summer camp enrollment opens in the [parent portal](#) on February 15. This year we will be offering 2 weeks of summer camp (June 12-16 and June 19-23) for all children currently enrolled (except our Hummingbirds). The camp will run each day from 9am-1pm with a cost of \$310/week. The preschool provides snack each day for camp and parents pack a lunch. This looks to be another fun year for camp so be ready to sign up as soon as it opens if you would like to secure a spot as they go quickly since we have a limited number of spaces.

Pizza/Movie Night

We are looking forward to Pizza/Movie Night on Friday, January 20 in Phillips Hall. Doors will open at 6pm to allow you time to get settled and eat your delicious pizza, provided by Potomac Pizza, before the movie, "Monsters Inc", begins at 6:30pm. Popcorn, drinks and glow rings/sticks will be available for purchase on the night of the event for \$1 each so come with some dollar bills on hand. RSVP/Pizza order forms went home last Friday in your child's Take Home Folder. Please return it by this Friday. The costs for your pizza and any preordered drinks will be billed to your parent portal or you may send in a check with the form.

This is always a popular event for our current students and alumni families as well. Everyone is invited to wear pajamas to the event and bring a sleeping bag/pillow to make yourself comfy on the floor in Phillip's Hall.

We ask that anyone who is experiencing COVID like symptoms take an antigen test prior to coming to the event so that we can keep this a healthy event.





Jump Bunch Pictures

January Book Corner

Click on the link to access the YouTube read aloud of each book or look for the books at your local library.

[Shades of People](#) by Sheila Rotner: Rather than talking about people being of different colors, this book refers to people as being of different shades and celebrates the beauty in different shades—peach, pink, copper, tan, cocoa, etc. This is a wonderful book for all ages of preschoolers.

[Fry Bread](#) by Kevin Noble Maillard: Looking for something to do with your kids? Why not make some fry bread, a traditional Native American food. This book celebrates the lives of modern indigenous peoples in the United States and invites the reader to celebrate the author's good memories of his people.

[We March](#) by Marley Dias: This book recollects the March on Washington, led by civil rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, with simple illustrations and words. May it be inspiring to this generation of children.

[Chinese New Year Wishes](#) by Jillian Lin: Enjoy learning about the Chinese New Year traditions in prose simple enough for our youngest child.



Regarding Parent/Teacher Conferences

The teaching staff strives to ensure that all children at CCUMCP meet the learning objectives attached to this email. It will take the entirety of their time at preschool for them to master those skills which encompass all domains of learning including the cognitive, physical and socio-emotional. The children will progress through a series of steps the mastery of which will lead them closer to the learning objectives. Much as a child learns to walk in steps—progressing from sitting alone to scooting to crawling to walking holding onto something prior to walking unaided--so do children master these skills. The teaching staff knows the steps that each child must make on the way to accomplishing the skills listed as learning objectives. It is the staff's job to find out where your child is on the way to meeting those learning objectives and to build activities into the curriculum to respond to your child wherever he/she is.

What we want to see over the course of the year is not that all children have mastered each skill, but that each child has made progress over the course of the year. By the end of his/her time at preschool, each child should show proficiency with all of the skills.

Both daily and during formal assessments, the teachers and assistants observe the children to see which areas are progressing naturally and which areas may need more intentional, focused refining. In response, teachers adapt their activities to meet the needs of the children in their class. Should your child not be progressing as we believe that he/she should be, then we will communicate our concerns with you. As always, we value your input about your child's progress and hope to hear from you regarding your concerns about your child's progress. You can expect that at a parent/teacher conference you will hear about your child's strengths and his/her challenges. Conferences for all classes except Hummingbirds will take place at the end of this month.

Parents who desire to have another conference later in the school year should let their child's teacher know. In like manner we will take the initiative to request a conference with you if we think that one is warranted.

Parent/Teacher Conference Schedule

All conferences are held via Zoom. The Zoom links will be provided by your child's teacher a day or two prior to the conference. Preschool classes on conference days occur as regularly scheduled.

Friday, January 20

Cardinals
Owls

Monday, January 23

Sparrows
Buntings

Tuesday, January 24

Doves

Wednesday, January 25

Chickadees
Orioles

Friday, January 27

Blue Jays
Eagles

Monday, January 30

Starlings
Robins

Tuesday, January 31

Wrens



Open House tours of the Preschool are offered each month for prospective parents. January's tours will be on the 6th & 10th at 9:30am. Please invite any friends to join us who are interested in the preschool.

Curriculum Corner

Cooking or Baking with Preschoolers

Why engage in cooking or baking with your preschooler? Cooking or baking with preschoolers is one of the best activities that you can do at home to encourage skill growth in all domains of development—physical, cognitive and socio-emotional plus it has the added benefits of being hands on, critical for engaging the concrete brain of the preschooler, and it is relevant to their daily lives. Here is a list of just some of the skills that are developed by cooking or baking with your child:

- Measuring promotes math skills
 - Following directions
 - Making predictions (e.g., How will this taste? What happens when I mix this with that?)
 - Cutting and stirring develop fine motor muscles
 - Planning and organizing (what do I need in order to make “x”?)
 - Communication skills when baking with someone else
 - Problem solving (Our bread didn't rise. I wonder why not.)
 - Literacy (when age appropriate)
 - Resiliency (My cookies burnt, but that's ok because I enjoyed the process even if the product wasn't perfect.)
 - Life skills (When I'm hungry, I know how to
- make myself something healthy to eat.)
 - Promotes generosity (Share some of what you make with a neighbor or friend.) and gratitude (Mom and Dad do this every day to feed me? Thanks so much!)
 - Sensory skills (Is this warm, hot, cold? What is this taste? What is that smell?)
 - Appreciation for a particular culture (Try cooking/baking something from a particular culture and explore how that food is culturally relevant.)
 - Storytelling (Begin with some recipe significant to your family and tell a story about why it is significant. Children who learn about their own history and ties to their family have happier long-term outcomes.)

Regardless of what you make or how it turns out, it can be a valuable activity. Here are some tips for making the experience positive for you both.

Make sure to involve your child in every step of the process.

It's no fun to sit and watch someone else cook or bake when you are child. Give your child the opportunity to help at each step of the recipe. This means providing him with tools appropriate for his age. For example, invest in a knife appropriate for a child. We use safety [knives like these](#) at the

preschool for teaching children how to prep fruits and vegetables.

Don't be afraid to get messy. Your child's fine motor skills are not as refined as yours, so she won't be able to break an egg neatly on the first try. Allow for this by having extra ingredients on hand and by having her do so in a separate bowl rather than into the mixing bowl directly. Don't be upset if, while stirring, some of the ingredients make their way out of the bowl. Show her how to do it correctly, but, again, be ok with the mistakes. **Let her know when a skill like this may require practice so that she won't become discouraged.**

Teach safety. Give your child simple, direct instructions about how to behave in the kitchen. For example, “The oven is hot. Only an adult can open the door. I can turn on the light if you want to look inside through the window.”

Make sure to include clean up in the process. Cooking and baking always result in some level of mess that needs to be cleaned. Assign him a task. Try giving him a sponge to wipe down the counter or allow him to help you load the dishwasher. It's important that children learn the follow through as much as the “fun” part.

Celebrate the outcome. Showcase your child's baking or cooking as part of the next meal. Everyone appreciates trying the fruits of the process. What happens if your cooking or baking results don't turn out as you expected? Make it into a funny story and, instead, celebrate the time you were able to spend together.

Holding Successful Playdates

Parents of children who attend preschool may not consider having playdates because they figure that their child may be getting enough socialization at school. It is true that children have many opportunities to socialize here and get opportunities to play with others. Likewise, children in preschool also have ample opportunities to practice fine motor and alphabet acquisition skills, but most parents help to hone those skills outside of schools by allowing their child to color, practice letter writing, and play fun word games with them. Similarly, playdates offer crucial opportunities to practice social skills. This is especially important for children whose socio-emotional development may lag or whose progress isn't at the same pace as his peers. The following are tips for ensuring that playdates go well.

- 1. Your child's initial playdates, until both you and your child are comfortable with his/her level of play skills, should be with only one other child at a time.** It is always easier to navigate play with only one other child. With more than two children in a group there is always the possibility of one of the children feeling left out. Three is a very hard number to negotiate for children.
 - 2. When your child first begins to have playdates make sure to limit the amount of time for the playdate to something manageable like an hour.** Once your child has had success with those first several playdates, then you can lengthen the amount of time for the playdate.
 - 3. Choose your child's playmate wisely.** Ask your child's teacher who would make a good match for your child. She can tell you which children your child is most interested in playing with and whose social skills may be a good match for your child. If you are having playdates to hone certain social skills, then it is important to pick out a child who can most help to hone these skills in your child. For example, a child who is learning how to be more self-assertive may not want to have a first playdate with the child who is the natural leader of the class. Instead, start with another child who is similarly assertive. Are you looking to help develop your child's language skills? If so, choose the child who has good verbal skills and can model those for your child.
 - 4. Prep your child before the playdate.** Practice things with your child that he may find to be difficult. Is your child having a hard time sharing toys? If so, allow your child to choose two toys that will be put out of sight and don't have to be shared. Explain to your child that all of the other toys will need to be shared. Does your child have difficulty talking to other children? Give your child some prepared lines to start the playdate (e.g., I'm glad you are here. What would you like to play first?) Does your child not know how to begin? Have a few activities lined up—a watercolor paint station at the kitchen table, an appropriate puzzle on the coffee table, a stack of building blocks and trucks set out on the floor that look appealing and provide a visual reminder about some things that can be done if the children aren't sure what to do.
 - 5. Offer opportunities for co-operative play that require imagination and some level of conversation.** For example, provide materials for building (e.g., sheets and pillows for a fort) so that the kids can work together in coming up with and executing a plan.
 - 6. Be available to help facilitate the playdate, but do not intervene unless warranted.** If your child is not yet adept with playdates, be in proximity to what is going on so that you can assist, if needed. This is especially true in cases where your child has a difficult time sharing with others or when the possibility of physical aggression arises. If there is conflict, try to let the children work it out themselves, but, of course, intervene if tension indicates that it will become physical. Often young children require help knowing what to say in cases of conflict. For example, "Ask him when you may have a turn with the truck" may prevent grabbing or hitting when one of the children wants a turn with a truck. You can also help children manage turn taking with the use of a timer especially something visual like a sand timer.
 - 7. Help children to prepare for the end of the playdate.** It is often hard for children to transition from one activity to the next especially if they are having a good time so let them know that "in 20 minutes our playdate will be over and you will be going home with your dad." This allows both children the mental space to prepare for the transition. Let the kids know how the remainder of the playdate will be spent. For example, "You are really enjoying those trucks. Why don't you play with the trucks for 5 more minutes and then we will finish by cleaning up." Cleaning up is an important part of a playdate because it signals the end of the playdate. It is much harder to leave a household when all of the fun toys are still sitting out. When everything is put away this provides a natural transition to a new activity. Plus, cleaning up after themselves is something both a good host and a good guest do.
 - 8. Once your child's guest is gone, have a quick debrief with your child.** Ask your child what she enjoyed about the playdate. If, from your perspective, the playdate didn't go well, talk to your child about the parts of the playdate that didn't go smoothly. For example, "I noticed that you had a hard time when Charlotte knocked over your tower. What could you do differently?" Depending on the age of your child, he/she may not remember much about the playdate, but you will. Praise your child when she shows signs of growth. "I was really proud of you for sharing your toys with Xavier. I know that isn't always easy to do."
- Hopefully these tips will help you to have playdates that are fun learning experiences for everyone.