

Ready for Winter Break?



Dates to Remember

Winter Break

December 22 – students return January 9

No School – MLK Day
January 15

Pick-Another-Parent Night
January 16
AM Primary Classes 5:30 – 6:30
PM Primary Class 6:00 – 7:00
XP either time

Understanding Frustrating Behaviors

The frantic pace and unrelenting pressure of the holiday season is enough to make us all lose our minds! It does at times seem that as we are rushing about to make the season meaningful and memory-filled, that our children behave the worst, melting down into puddles of incomprehension or channeling wild monkeys and swinging from the rafters. Sometimes we find ourselves asking

what is all of this for? Isn't it supposed to be fun?

Yes, of course these life experiences are supposed to be fun! And, I would say that they can be, if we all take a second to think about why children misbehave. Of course, there are a plethora of reasons and every child is different. At the end of the day, it comes down to minimizing our children's stress and adjusting our own expectations. Intuitively, we all know this. It's figuring out how to do that that is the problem! In that light, here are a few tips that hopefully can help!

Tips for minimizing Stress in Children:

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Set them up for success – we all do better when we are fed, rested, and comfortable.

Avoid overscheduling – less is always more. Try to keep the number of activities to a minimum.

Inform them in advance where they will be going and what is expected from them.

Develop alternative behavior strategies to help them deal with problem situations that may arise--what are some ways they can get their wiggles out without being disruptive? How might they be able to express frustration in public in an appropriate way? What is your exit strategy?

Practice the task ahead of time exploring different scenarios and trying out different techniques. Children love to act things out, and it helps them to get a clearer idea of what is coming next.

Develop a plan to remind them of strategies in the moment – a special code word or signal that you both know about so that you can gently correct without shaming publicly. For example, “When I feel that you are getting too silly, I’m going to make this signal so that you can remember to quiet down.” Remember to tell them when you are pleased with their positive behavior choices

Adjusting Your Expectations:

Think about the setting – where are you going? What will you be doing? What behavior is appropriate? A lot of situations that we find exciting and fun can be overstimulating, loud, bewildering, or scary for young children. Try to imagine what the world looks like from their perspective. Be very clear in advance of what they can expect and how people behave in these situations. Encourage them to ask questions and alleviate their anxiety as best you can.

Think about your child – what are her triggers? What are his limitations? What does she enjoy and what does she find difficult? All young children crave routine, lack patience, and struggle keeping their impulses in check. Set them up for success by having options for them. For example, maybe a stuffed animal will help them to sit for a long time, as they will have something to squeeze and snuggle. Coloring supplies or magnetic board might occupy a child during an

overlong flight or even an adult-centered meal. Wireless headphones and soothing music may help a child who is overwhelmed by loud crowds.

We would like to thank Daniel Louis for getting coffee for the staff and Maren Hayes for making her yummy fudge for us. Thanks to Ricki Brockman and Suzette Gasser for sharing Hanukkah games, favors and Latkes with the school and to Caity Barton, Britt Bass, and Alexis Hart for the snowman ornament making with the 440 PM class. Thank you Katie Wickliff for arranging for Dr. Mom to talk with the parents this fall. The children enjoy having parents read to them in their class – thanks to all of you who have come in this fall.

Kirsten Maternity Coverage

Most of you are probably aware that Toddler Co-Lead Kirsten Goode will be going on maternity leave in mid to late March when her baby arrives. She will be taking the rest of the year off in order to stay home and enjoy the first months with her child. While she is on leave, current Parent Infant Teacher and former Toddler Co-Lead Rose Jordan will be joining Kelly in the Toddler class. Before launching her own business of Parent Infant Programs, Rose taught at CGMS first as a Primary assistant and later as a Toddler Co-Lead for over six years. She has AMS certification in Montessori Infant Toddler and works as a trainer for the Montessori Education Center of the Rockies. We look forward to having Rose around more regularly in Kirsten's absence and are confident in a smooth transition for our youngest students!

Wishing for peaceful holidays?

With school out for the winter holidays, it could be a good time for some parenting tips and refreshers from Dr. Mom. Dr. Marianne Neifert shared tons of ideas and parenting food for thought during her talk earlier this fall at Children's Garden. Fortunately, she also left us with written notes for use into the long winter months ahead and beyond. Read them in order for building a foundation.

Happy reading, and happy, peaceful holidays!

#1 Promoting Healthy Self-Esteem in Your Child

#2 Positive Parenting

#3 Effective Responses to Misbehavior

It's that time again!

Re-enrollment and Sibling Application season for the next school year is

coming up soon. Keep an eye on your inbox **February 1st**. Forms and information for enrolling your child in the next steps at Children's Garden will be included. Current family materials will be due back to school by February 15.

