



Offering Exceptional  
Educational Childcare  
for Infants and Young  
Children

## FEBRUARY 2017

### Upcoming dates

- **Feb. 8:** Panera Night Fundraiser (4-8)
- **Feb. 14:** Valentine's Day & 100 DAYS OF SCHOOL!
- **Feb. 15:** Kindergarten Parent Roundtable beginning at 7:00 p.m.
- **Feb. 20: CLOSED** Presidents' Day
- **Feb 21: CLOSED** Staff development
- **March 6:** Summer camp applications available
- **April 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>:** School photos (raindates April 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>)

### Director's Note:

It never ceases to amaze us how much our little ones grow over the holiday break! January kicked off with our 2017-18 registration and it was certainly a busy time! As registration continues, we are so excited to have so many families returning next year! We are currently not accepting applications for Ladybugs and Grasshoppers, but there are a few remaining spaces left in our other programs if you or someone you know is interested. You can contact Missy or me for details.

We were thrilled to use our Ah Pizz Fall fundraising dollars towards special programs presented by "The Lizard Guys" for our 3's and 4's and the interactive music performance by "Peas and Carrots" for our Infants and Toddlers. Our Parent Association is planning a **Kindergarten Roundtable** on **February 15<sup>th</sup>** at 7:00 pm, offering the parent-perspective of each Montclair elementary school for families with children entering the Montclair Public Schools this fall. The evening is open to the public so please be sure to join the event if you are interested.

February's cold winds are sure to inspire a lot of STEM-focused discussions about snow and ice. Teachers will capitalize on Valentine's Day as an opportunity to discuss the importance of kindness and friendship. Just a reminder, if your child brings in Valentine candy or other treats for his or her classmates, it will be sent home with students and not consumed in school.

Nicole Dougherty, our Parent Association president has organized an MMO fundraising event at Panera on February 8<sup>th</sup> from 4-8 PM and 10% of the proceeds will go to MMO (with accompanying flyer.) A Valentine's Day fundraiser will feature chocolate and flowers! Chocolate Works on Park Street in Montclair and Metropolitan Plant Exchange in West Orange are participating. The fliers and details for these fundraisers can be found on the bulletin board outside of MMO Offices and in your child's classroom file folder. Remember these fundraisers directly enhance the programming we can provide, so thank you!

Corrine Harney, M. Ed.

# PRE-KINDERGARTEN

## Fireflies – Miss Tara



Throughout the month of February the Pre-k children will continue their alphabet study with the letters E, F, G, and H. They will learn about Evaporation, read some of their Favorite Fairy tales, make a Giant Graph to record their favorite Goldfish snack, and go for an imaginary ride on a Hot air balloon! Other topics will include Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day.

The children have been practicing their counting every day since the first day of school. Our goal was to learn to count to 100 and to achieve this, we have been counting the days of school. To celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, we will have a small in-class celebration. Depending on snow days, this will take place sometime this month. We will do fun activities such as 100 exercises, make 100 handprints and find 100 numbers around our classroom. We will even take a walk to see how far 100 footsteps will take us! There will be a special homework assignment this week as well.

The science and math center will include a lesson on the water cycle and Evaporation, a Fairy tale STEM project, counting on Graph paper, creating shapes on Geoboards, and comparing our likes and dislikes using bar graphs and pie graphs.



## Butterflies – Miss Lisa



In January, we explored the elements of winter and even made snow in our classroom! We learned how different animals adapt to colder temperatures and the lack of available food. We made birdfeeders and hung them on the bushes by the playground.

In February, we will be observing Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day and celebrating 100 Days in school. We hope Punxsutawney Phil does NOT see his shadow on February 2. We have had enough of winter! We will be making groundhog stick puppets and experimenting with shadows.

This year Valentine's Day and the 100 Days in School fall on the same day – **February 14, 2017**. We will embrace the spirit of Valentine's Day by sharing how much we appreciate and love our family and friends. The children will be encouraged to speak kindly to one another, they will practice inviting friends to work together, and engage in many activities that promote teamwork, kindness and taking turns.

We have lots of fun activities planned for the 100 Days in School celebration on **February 14**. We will be making construction paper chains with 100 links, stringing 100 Cheerios on a necklace, building structures with 100 cups and estimating which container has 100 items. We are going to take 100 steps outside of the classroom to see where it takes us in the school.

This month we will be moving forward with the alphabet study we began in January. We will continue reciting poems and reading stories with the letters we are learning each week. The children will practice handwriting both upper and lower case letters. This month we will focus on learning the letters Ee, Ff, Gg and Hh. We will have Show-and-Tell on two days this month: **February 16** and **February 23**. Children will be asked to bring in something that starts with the first letter in their name for Show-and-Tell. I can't wait to see how creative the children are with selecting objects that start with the first letter of their name.

# Spotlight on Aftercare

## S.T.E.A.M. Challenge Island Jr. with Miss Shronda

Miss Shronda takes our young leaders each month to a “*Challenge Island*” and introduces them to the wonders of science, the thrill of engineering and joy of creative thinking. The challenges are **child-driven**, so they naturally adapt to an age appropriate developmental level. The music, the whimsy and the journeys to fantastical islands are so exciting to the students that they hardly notice all the academic and life skills they are acquiring in the process. From Rainforest Island to Amusement Park Island to every stop in between, our littlest learners soak up all the sun and learning of the Challenge Island Experience.

If you are interesting in having your child participate please secure a spot by contacting the office.



## Aftercare Enrichment:



In the month of February we will be focusing on dental health, shapes, colors, and Valentine’s Day. We will be talking about colors and shapes and incorporating art projects and books to go with the theme.

In addition to art we have our awesome instructors- music and movement with Tess, Yogarate with Ms. Nicole, Art with Ms. Mimi, rocking out with the Lil’ Rockers band, Art through Nature with Ms. Susan, and STEM with Ms. Shronda. So many exciting things to do in Aftercare! Please secure a spot by contacting the office.

- Danielle Hoover, Aftercare Enrichment Coordinator

## 3 YEAR-OLD PROGRAMS



### Dragonflies - Miss Megan

We explored some really fun themes, including polar bears, penguins, and other arctic animals in January! We answered some interesting questions like, "How do polar bears stay warm?" and "How do penguins stay dry?" We learned that penguins rub oil all over their feathers, which makes them feel waxy. This helps keep them dry when they go in the water! We also did a fun experiment with crayons so we could see how the wax repels the water.

In Dragonflies one of the STEM activities included an experiment to see how polar bears stay warm in the icy water. We learned that they have blubber that helps to keep them warm. We filled a bowl with ice water and put our bare hands in to see how

cold it was. Then, we put our hands inside a rubber glove and covered the glove with a layer of blubber (shortening). Then, we wrapped the whole thing in plastic wrap and stuck our hands back into the ice water. We couldn't feel it! The blubber kept our hands nice and warm!

During the month of February, we will explore themes including Groundhog Day, friendship, Valentine's Day, and taking care of our teeth! We will learn what it means if the groundhog sees his shadow. We will also talk about why it is important to be a good friend and how important it is to keep our teeth clean! Our STEM focus for the month will be a fun activity about measuring our shadows!



### Bumblebees - Miss Christina

As the new year began, we began learning all about the season of winter, and all of the changes that occur during this time. We started by discussing snow, and even had a snowball fight in our classroom! We then talked about ice, how ice is formed and did a science experiment trying to figure out what we could use to melt ice quickly. We made icy art by painting with salt and glue, and then made frozen art by mixing food coloring, baking soda, and vinegar on a giant block of ice. Once we knew all about snow and ice, we moved on to learning about snowmen. We made a giant class snowman and created a story all about him. Finally, we discussed penguins. We learned that penguins love to slide on their bellies on ice so we found items around our classroom and made predictions whether they would slide on ice like penguins or not. We also continued mastering our scissor skills by cutting out our own penguins.

During the month of February, we will be learning about hibernation and why certain animals hibernate in the winter. We will be having a special stuffed animal show and tell that week as well. We then will move on to Valentine's Day and things that we love. Once we learn about what we love, we will talk more about ourselves and each other. We will be talking about how we are alike and different and making graphs about some of our favorite things. As February ends, we will be diving right into learning about our five senses. We will be listening to different sounds, painting pictures of things that we see, and trying to guess what toy is hidden in a box just by touching it. For our science theme, we will be using our sense of smell to figure out what items are in concealed mystery cups. Finally, we will be cooking our own pizza bagels and, of course, get to taste them!



# INFANTS & TODDLERS



## Grasshoppers Miss Wendy



We made snow, played with snow, painted snow, and read about snow. Our winter theme has been snowy, even if the weather wasn't. We talked about the concept of melting as we watched our ice cubes melt before our very eyes!

In February we are going to read about and explore feelings. Our toddlers are beginning to notice how friends are feeling when they are sad, as well as beginning to be able to express how they feel throughout the day. Some of the books that we will read are;

- Taking a Bath with the Dog and Other Things That Make Me Happy.
- Glad Monster Sad Monster. ...
- On Monday When It Rained. ...
- Mouse Was Mad. ...
- Sometimes I'm Bombaloo. ...
- The Way I Feel. ...
- When Sophie Gets Angry — Really, Really Angry ...

Of course February will also bring my favorite holiday, Valentine's Day!



Thank you to the Lizard Guys who entertained our 3's and 4 year-old students!



Our interactive performance by the "Peas and Carrots" was a big hit with our infants and toddlers!



# Your young child and screen time

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated its recommendations regarding children and “screen media.” They are:

- Children younger than 18 months—use of screen media other than video-chatting should be discouraged.
- 18-24 months—high-quality programming/apps should be used together (parents with children), because “this is how toddlers learn best. Letting children use media by themselves should be avoided.”
- Children older than 2 years—no more than 1 hour per day of high-quality programming. “Co-view or co-play with your children, and find other activities to do together that are healthy for the body and mind (e.g., reading...talking, and playing together).”

Also, developing a personalized media use plan for children is encouraged. The AAP has a nifty tool for this, which can easily be found by searching ‘AAP Family Media Use Plan.’ Why does the Academy recommend limits? Young children learn best through exploring with their whole body and through their interactions with you and the real world. Examining books, pots and pans, blocks and other “open-ended” toys and materials (touching, tasting, shaking, problem-solving); engaging in sensory play, pretending, and playing outdoors are some of the ways in which children actively learn.

The infant brain in particular grows and develops more rapidly than at any other time in a person’s life, tripling in size between birth and the age of two. 1. This brain grows most fully when the child engages with her world and the people in it. Children developing language develop most fully by making eye contact with a real person, hearing “live” human speech, and having that exchange be two-sided, with questions and dialog between the young child and the other person (sibling, parent, caregiver). Having the television on can replace families having conversations. In addition, several recent studies point to the (negative) effects of screen use on attention in children. 2 Children living in homes where television is turned on in the background from morning until night tend to have lower literacy scores and may not read as early as children who do not grow up in households with “background television.” 3 Parents of young children today are faced with decisions about technology that their own parents never had to make. What are some ways you can cope with

these tough decisions and use limited media exposure successfully? Here are just a few:

- When you do watch television, watch *together*. Discuss what you saw later. Have your child tell the rest of the family at dinner what happened in the program they watched with you. Connect what children see on TV to the child’s real life: “Do you remember we watched a show about a mail carrier this morning? Here comes our mail carrier! Do you want to watch her deliver our mail?”<sup>4</sup>
- Be Involved. Resist the temptation to routinely use technology as a babysitter, and instead use it as a way to connect. If you are reading a book on an e-reader, read together. Write emails together... Look at science video clips together. Engage together.<sup>5</sup>
- Model healthy behaviors yourself. Do you watch television or play video games for hours each night? Is the television on in the background, even when no one is watching? Do you have your cell phone at the dinner table? Consider what your technology use models for your child. Your child learns from you.<sup>6</sup>
- Do not use television shows or videos to put children to sleep. This makes it more difficult for them to learn to fall asleep on their own. Also, young children need the love, safety and security that comes from sleep routines (story, back rub, song) shared with you.<sup>7</sup>

I have many resources available if this topic is of interest to you and you would like to explore it further. And no matter how you are interacting with your child, remember that YOU are their first teacher!



- 1 Carly Seifert, “The Impact of Television on Early Childhood Brain Development,” [www.living.thebump.com](http://www.living.thebump.com)
- 2 “Turning On or Tuning Out: The Influence of Media on Young Children’s Development Featuring Ellen Wartella, Ph.D,” [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- 3 Seifert (1);Wartella (2)
- 4 “Making Good Decisions About Television and Screen Time For Young Children,” [www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org)
- 5 naeyc for families: “Uncharted Territory: 10 Technology Tips for Preschool Parents,” [families.naeyc.org](http://families.naeyc.org)
- 6 naeyc for families (5)
- 7 “Making Good Decisions...” (4)

Jan Burgess – Infant/Toddler Coordinator

# INFANTS & TODDLERS



## Ladybugs Miss Joelle & Miss Malessa

January was a busy month for us. We started comparing big and little objects, which included trains, cars, crayons and animals. Painting with big and little cars was a BIG hit. Our STEM project for the month of January was a creative collage. The children were able to make their own collage with any materials they wanted. We talked about all the different textures and colors, and counted all the pieces they put on their paper. They are hanging up outside of our classroom, if you have not seen them yet.

During the month of February, our main theme will be transportation. However, we will break up each week by focusing on the children's skills that we see the majority find interesting. The first week we will be focusing on our fine motor skills. Each Friday we will let you, the families know which skills we will be focusing on for that following week. Watch out for the pictures of our hard work that will be sent via Tadpoles each week.



## Caterpillars Miss Claire & Miss Margaret

For the month of February the Caterpillar class will be focusing on the five senses. A lot of ways our young infants take in information about the outside world around them is primarily through sight, touch, taste, sound, and smell. The children will have the opportunity to explore the sense of touch by identifying the tactile differences in play dough, paint and water. Our little caterpillars love to chew on toys and cheerios, alike, and will have a chance to play in a Cheerio Sensory Tub to explore the sense of taste. During circle time, reading stories and singing songs will reinforce our sense of sight and sound. And to round out our sensational senses, the use of flowers and fruits will be provided for us to experience the sense of smell. These processes allow the youngest members of MMO to learn about their environment and have fun while doing it.



# Parents corner:

February offers some fundraising opportunities for MMO and the PA. Please join us on **February 8** as we hold our 2nd annual MMO Night at Panera Bread. Flyers have been sent home, and must be presented with your order; if you need another copy, please let me know.

Also, flyers have been sent home for our Valentine's Day fundraisers - if you shop at Chocolate Works or Metropolitan Plant Exchange, please present one of these flyers for a portion of the sale to be donated back to MMO.

For those who may have a child entering the Montclair public school system in the fall, please join us for our **Kindergarten Roundtable on February 15**. Parents of students who have already gone through the selection process will be in attendance to answer your questions.

Stay tuned for information on some exciting, upcoming gatherings that are in the works.

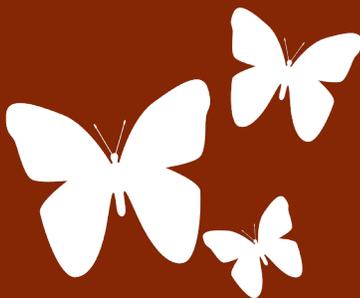
As always, if you have any questions or suggestions, please reach out via email, [mmoparentassociation@gmail.com](mailto:mmoparentassociation@gmail.com).

Nicole Dougherty  
Parent Association President

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