



**April 2020**

Dear MMO Families,

Resilience. Courage. Stamina.

Unprecedented things are being asked of you right now, in greater measure than any of us could ever have imagined.



As we all find our way in circumstances we have never navigated, I want to thank you. Thank you for the grace with which you have encountered sudden change and enormous stress. Thank you for the overwhelming notes of support and the occasional glimmer of humor.

We can't wait to have the energy and voices and life of your young children fill the classrooms of our silent school again. In the meantime, please know that the entire MMO staff and I are thinking of you frequently and wishing all the best for each of you throughout this trying period. Please stay home so that we can end this as soon as possible. May our children look back on

this time someday and recall memories of time with their families, play and discovery, and perhaps even new traditions.



Wishing you safety and good health,

**Jan Burgess**

**Executive Director MMO Programs**

**COVID -19 Update:**

**In keeping with federal guidelines MMO Programs will be closed at least through the end of April.**



*As we navigate our online connection with our students, we've heard back from a handful of parents: some want more Zoom time, some want less, some want more projects, some want fewer projects. We are trying to make available a variety of offerings so that you may pick and choose the ones that work for you! Thank you for your patience as we continue to hone our offerings. If we haven't heard from you yet, we welcome your feedback!*

# Pre-Kindergarten

## Fireflies

Hello Firefly Parents! I hope this newsletter finds all of you safe and healthy! It has been great seeing all of the children attend our Zoom meetings and I love all of the pictures you have been sending me of your children's work! In the coming weeks, I will continue to set up at least 2 Zoom meetings a week at different times throughout the day. On the days we do not meet I will continue to email you some fun activities for your children to do at home! We will focus on the alphabet and activities that go along with whatever letter we are learning. Looking ahead, the next few letters will be Nn, Oo, Pp, Qq and Rr.



As always, it is important to spend time reading with your child and just having some good old-fashioned fun! Go outside when you can, run a relay race, make a mud pie, and look for signs of Spring! I can't wait to be back at MMO with all of you. I miss those smiling faces! In the meantime, enjoy each other, read a book and hug your little ones tight. And please pass along a hug from me!

Here are a few fun websites you might find fun to check out:

- + Mommypoppins.com
- + Seussville.com
- + Switchzoo.com
- + Entertainkidsonadime.com

- Tara Nesta-

## Butterflies

So spring has finally arrived even though it definitely doesn't feel like it during these hard times. Just as many of you are managing to get through these unprecedented events, our Butterflies are adjusting to the new "normal" as well as expected. We have been engaging in virtual meetings through Zoom and shall continue to do so until we are able to meet again in person. I use these meetings to help distract our children and allow for a glimpse of laughter and silliness to shine through.

I will be providing you all with my lesson plans (as if we were in school) for what the children would be doing during the upcoming weeks. You may feel free to do all of it, some of it, none of it, whatever makes the most sense for you. You may substitute materials based on what you have available at home, etc. These are only suggestions. I wish to keep our routines as close to regular as possible for our kids.

Here are some websites with games and activities I think your child may find fun and engaging as well.

- Starfall - [www.starfall.com/h/](http://www.starfall.com/h/)
- ABC Ya - <https://www.abcya.com/>

PBS Kids - <https://pbskids.org/>  
Funbrain - <https://www.funbrain.com/>

Now that we are into spring our focus in school will be on the weather, the changing environment and life cycles of plants and animals. Try to get outside as often as possible to observe these changes happening all around us. Allow your child to draw pictures of what they see and make a journal to share once we return to class, go for nature walks, try growing flowers or beans in your home to notice how they grow. These are just some examples of activities to do while we are all at home. I really look forward to seeing my Butterflies in person but will continue our video meetings as often as possible. Please stay safe and healthy, keep practicing writing our letters and read any chance you get with your children. I miss you all so much and greatly look forward to playing with everyone soon.



- Gary Jacob-

# 3 Year-Old Programs

## Dragonflies



In the Dragonflies, we follow a daily schedule. The children know the schedule, follow the routines, and know what to expect. They love knowing what comes next, and keep teachers in line in case we forget anything in the schedule!

First, we have arrival time, where children enter the play and work space at their own speed, and say good-bye to grownups when they are ready. We then have Morning Meeting, where we sing our hello song, talk about our day, and open up the space for children to share ideas, feelings, or thoughts. After Morning Meeting, we play outside. We run, climb, jump, chase, sing really loudly, and laugh. After that, we have snack. Finally, we have Choice Time, where children choose their work and play. They decide if they want to play independently, or collaboratively. They do puzzles, draw, paint, create stories in dramatic play, play with kinetic sand, roll out playdough, write books at the paper table, race cars on the car track, sort dinosaurs, build with blocks, duplo, magnetiles, etc. After Choice Time, we have a read aloud.

I lay out our day to describe again what the Dragonflies are accustomed to, and what they love to do. During this unusual time, it would be great to keep to a schedule at home, so that children know what to expect, and can rely on that certainty during an unsettled time. Of course, your home schedule will be different than our school one, but you can draw and write one out, and have the children help draw and color it. Have it posted at home! What toys are available, and when? When can they expect some quiet read alouds? When do they go outside? When is it time to rest? Children are looking to us set the tone and boundaries, and reassure them that even in strange times, their work and play are important and will continue.

- Katie Wassel -

### Parents' Corner:

First and foremost, I hope this finds everyone healthy and safe. I wanted to thank MMO for making our MMO community one that far exceeds the walls of the physical building. From virtual classroom sessions to Zoom playdates to much needed parent-only "Zoom gatherings" over a glass of wine at the end of the day, our community shows up. And for that we are lucky.

Thank you so much to everyone who supported last month's Watchung Booksellers bookfair. We sold over \$2,600 worth of books and raised over \$500 for MMO. In addition, thanks to your tremendous generosity, we were able to clear most of the teachers' wish lists, and I know they are grateful and look forward to reading them when we return.

If there is any way that the Parent Association can make this uncertain, unsettling time a bit easier for you or your family, please reach out. If you have seen/done/experienced anything amazing that you think other families might enjoy, please pass it along. And if you just want to hop on a Zoom call and vent, we're here for that too.

Stay home. Stay healthy. Stay wonderful.

Warmly,  
- Shelby Ebert-Moser -  
President

# Aftercare Enrichment:

The month of March was a lot of fun while we were at school. We had Dr. Seuss Week which was so much fun. We read a lot of Dr. Seuss books like "One Fish, Two Fish" and "Cat in the Hat." The children went on a Dr. Seuss Green Egg Race and we also played Green Eggs and Ham Tic-Tac-Toe. For Wacky Wednesday, the children painted a picture while holding the piece of paper up in the air and used all different materials to paint with. We had a lot of fun and the paintings were very wacky! The children started to learn about their bodies. We sang a fun song naming all of our body parts!

I have enjoyed all of Aftercare's Zoom meetings with you. I hope you have been staying busy while being stuck inside at home. Miss Alex and I are doing Zoom meetings a couple times a week at all different times to accommodate all of our families. An email will be sent out the night before our Zoom meeting is scheduled. Please keep an eye out for an email from Miss Alex if you want to join an Aftercare Zoom Meeting. I have decided to put an activity in Aftercare's newsletter. The activity is an Indoor Scavenger Hunt. The kids were always asking me if we could do scavenger hunts so I thought sending one in my newsletter would make them happy and occupy their time.

Although we all would love to be back at MMO, we are doing everything we can to continue having Aftercare enrich your child's life and learning! We have loved our online classes thus far and cannot wait to continue them with all of you! Stay healthy and safe!

*Caitlin Ferrero,*  
Aftercare Lead  
Teacher

&

*Alex Latona,*  
Aftercare and  
Administrative  
Coordinator



## Indoor Scavenger Hunt

COLLECT ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS  
IN A BAG OR BASKET. CHECK THE BOXES  
AS YOU FIND EACH ONE.

- A TOY WITH WHEELS
- A BOOK WITH THE FIRST LETTER OF YOUR NAME IN THE TITLE
- A PAIR OF MATCHING SOCKS
- 4 THINGS THAT ARE GREEN
- SOMETHING VERY SOFT
- A TOY SMALLER THAN YOUR HAND
- SOMETHING ROUND
- A BOOK WITH NUMBERS IN IT
- 5 LEGOS THAT ARE ALL DIFFERENT
- A PHOTO OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE
- AN ITEM YOU CAN SEE YOURSELF IN
- AN ITEM THAT MAKES YOU FEEL COZY
- A TOY THAT HAS 3 DIFFERENT COLORS
- A MOVIE THAT HAS "S" IN THE TITLE
- YOUR SNUGGLIEST STUFFED ANIMAL

Ready for snack? Make sure everything gets put back where it belongs!



# Toddlers



## Bumblebees

Happy Spring Bumblebee families! I wish we were all back together celebrating this new season and the warmer weather that comes with it. Thank you to everyone that was able to join our first Zoom meeting last week! This is a new experience for everyone, myself included, so I thank you for your patience as we navigate this new method of teaching.



Looking ahead, here is the schedule that I will try to follow for our class. On Mondays, I will send a prerecorded video of myself reading a story for you to share with your child at a time that is convenient for your family. On Fridays, we can have a live Zoom meeting, where we can do show and tell, sing songs, or just allow the children to see familiar faces and just chat with their teachers and friends. On Tuesdays through Thursdays, I will send one to two fun activities per week that your child can work on, either independently or as a family. It may be something we've worked on in class, an exciting website to check out, or a fun recipe to try out.

For now, here's a fun activity that you can do whenever you need a break from the world: a dance party! This is an activity that is always a class favorite. Step away from the computer and the work, blast some music and get moving! Not only will you feel better, but, you will have fun doing it. Some songs that we love dancing to in our class are: "Can't Stop The Feeling" by Justin Timberlake, "I'm a Believer" by SmashMouth, and "Jump in the Line" by Harry Belafonte. If you have musical instruments at home, then dance parties are even more exciting!

Again, I mean when I say that we truly miss your children. Their funny stories, smiling faces, and excitement to learn about the world around them is something I look forward to being a part of, hopefully sooner rather than later. Be well, everyone!

- *Christina Serra* -



## Crickets & Grasshoppers



Happy April, Crickets and Grasshoppers families! We began the month participating in activities focusing around the wonderful world of Dr. Seuss. We decorated "Oh The Places You'll Go" hot air balloons and "The Cat in the Hat" hat cutouts. The children also worked on identifying colors by being given opportunities to choose the colors of materials they wanted to use to create with during art.

For the month of April we will continue to use Zoom as a tool in our efforts to keep in contact with the children and their families. During this recent transition to online learning the children will get to reconnect with their teachers while engaging in activities to strengthen their gross motor, cognitive and language development skills. The children will be invited to perform various movements to songs like "This Is The Way I Move" and "The Wiggle Song" while exploring the season of Spring. We will also be sending a few fun activities for home your way. We hope you enjoy trying some of them.

- *Margaret Filsaíma* -

# Infants & Toddlers



## Ladybugs

Spring is finally here, hopefully we can go out and enjoy this nice weather very soon. Thank you to everyone that was able to join our live Zoom meeting last week. It was great to see the children again. This is a very new experience for all of us and we appreciate your patience as we all learn this together.

Moving ahead, we would like to have a schedule in place for us so we can all feel like we are getting back into the groove of how things used to be in the Ladybug class. On Mondays and Wednesdays we will send a prerecorded video from a member of our teaching team reading a book/singing a song. This will allow you to be able to choose a time that is convenient for your family to sit and enjoy it. Tuesdays and Thursdays we will have a live Zoom meeting so the children can see the teachers and their friends. We will try and send a project or activity once or twice a week that we think the children will enjoy doing!

Although we learn through play, a lot of what we do during the day is helping the children reach developmental milestones. Saying please/thank you, holding a paint brush/stroking it on a paper, sitting in a chair/eating independently and taking on and off their own shoes are all building skills they will need later in life. While we cannot work on these things virtually, we look forward to still building the connections via stories and songs on Zoom. We can't wait until we are all back at MMO together. We truly miss the children.

- Joëlle Mondo & Claude Barthelemy -



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### Download:

Tadpoles (to stay in touch with your child's teacher)



MMO is a non-sectarian program of  
First Congregational Church  
[www.firstcongmontclair.org](http://www.firstcongmontclair.org)



**"Today was good.  
Today was FUN.  
TOMORROW is  
ANOTHER ONE."**

**One Fish Two Fish Red**

**Fish Blue Fish**

**by Dr. Seuss**

