



April 2018

Play and Learn at Annapolis
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Visit us at www.playandlearnmaryland.org ~ Tax ID: 52-1259566



From the Director

April showers bring May flowers and much more at Play and Learn! We look forward to Spring activities and mild weather for plenty of outdoor fun.

Thursday, April 5th, is Mustache Day. (I must-ash you to wear a mustache to school on this day!)

The Week of the Young Child will be celebrated this year on April 16th through 20th. This annual event is sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and celebrates early learning, young children, their teachers, and their families. Please see the April Parent Calendar for information on daily themes or how you can dress up for the activity of the day. On Tuesday, April 17th, a Dental Hygienist will be visiting the center to discuss going to the dentist and good brushing habits. A permission slip will be provided in advance.

On Wednesday, April 25th, the Turtles and Dolphins will participate in an In-School Field Trip. The format of this activity will be an interactive science and storytelling show. Also on this date, the Leapfrogs will participate in the Discover Nature Program. Did you ever wonder what happens to a raindrop after it lands on the ground? We will join the AACO Master Gardeners to find out the answer as they introduce the water cycle to the children. The children will enjoy a related story, a walk through the Tawes Garden, and then will make a fun craft to take home.

Nature will be our focus as the children and teachers celebrate Arbor Day on Friday, April 27th. The children will participate in a Nature Scavenger Hunt as we extend learning into the outdoors.

As the weather changes and we look forward to warmer temperatures, please be sure to dress your child in layers and also to make sure to change out the clothing in your child's clothing bin with seasonally-appropriate attire in your child's current size. Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Permission Slips will be available soon. Please complete this form and return it to your child's teacher, along with non-aerosol sunscreen and bug repellents, labeled with your child's name.

Happy Anniversary wishes go out to Ms. Chelsea who is celebrating 14 years, Ms. Jennifer who is celebrating 7 years, and Ms. Emonie who is celebrating 2 years with Play and Learn this month! Please join us in thanking them for their dedication and service to the children, families, and community!

Happy Spring!

Ms. Sindy, Ms. Beth, Ms. Chelsea, and Superstar Staff

IMPORTANT REMINDER — The center will be CLOSED on Friday, May 4th.



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Page 2 - Parents' Corner

ENCOURAGING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE BY CREATING A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

By Nina Gallegos, Certified Parenting Educator

Henry Ford once said, "If you think you can, you can. If you think you can't, you can't. Either way, you are right." This is so true and so worth passing on. So how can you as a parent create a "can-do, will-try" attitude in your children? You can start by encouraging positive thinking and by creating an environment that nurtures your children's beliefs in their abilities. Having that confidence enables them to take risks that will help them reach their potential.

Positive Self-Talk

In his book *Positive Self-Talk for Children*, Douglas Bloch writes about the importance of affirmations, positive thoughts or ideas that one consciously focuses on in order to produce a desired result. For example, if you teach your child to have an optimistic view of solving problems with such words as "I can handle life's challenges," then later when confronted with an obstacle, your child can tell himself, "I can find a solution. I can keep trying." As a result of his internal dialogue, he is more likely to persevere. In this way, a child's positive self-talk becomes a positive self-fulfilling prophecy.

Positive Time

To foster that "I-can" attitude in your children, spend time with them. As you observe the uniqueness that each of your children possesses, focus on their strengths rather than on their weaknesses. This favorable assessment helps them to see themselves as capable and supports them as they take chances that will develop their areas of competency. The following is a great exercise to do with children: Ask them to write a list that describes what they are good at doing or what innate qualities they possess, such as having an engaging smile or being good at dancing or reading. Place in several different locations throughout the house, such as on the refrigerator, on the bathroom mirror, or above their beds. After days of seeing the list, they may internalize the ideas and gradually adopt the "I-can" attitude.

Positive Tools

The principles of etiquette are passed on from one generation to the next with the knowledge that good manners and compassion are fundamental to building useful and satisfying lives. Research suggests that well-mannered individuals generally share similar characteristics and values, including: self-confidence, consideration for others, respect, common sense, tact, and flexibility. In addition, people your children encounter are more likely to respond favorably to a respectful approach.

Although peers, other adults, and the media will certainly exert considerable influence on your children as they mature, you are your child's first teacher and role model. The mechanics of good manners can be learned at any age, but the earlier in childhood the process begins, the more natural mannerly behavior becomes. Two of the best ways to teach respect and consideration are by modeling and by expecting such behavior from your children.

Manners provide a code of conduct, guiding your children's interactions with others. They help your children to think about how others may feel and how to make others comfortable in a given situation. Teaching proper etiquette not only produces polite children, but it also creates compassionate, thoughtful, and empathetic adults. Well-known American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Manners are the happy way of doing things." These "happy ways" are among the extraordinary gifts you can give to your children.

Positive Moods

Children are very sensitive to their parents' feelings and attitudes; they pick up when their parents are upset. Since bad moods are contagious, consider what you can do when you are feeling stressed. Some tried-and-true ideas include: taking a walk, reading an inspirational book, calling a friend, gardening, cuddling with a pet, helping a neighbor, starting a gratitude journal, listening to music, taking a bubble bath! While parents can't expect to always feel cheerful, they can use their difficult moments as opportunities to teach their children to: be effective problem solvers, deal with negative or difficult feelings in productive ways, and handle challenging situations proactively.

Positive Nutrition

Encouraging your children to eat healthfully will benefit them not only now, but also when they are adults. Filling your refrigerator with a variety of fruits and vegetables of many different colors provides your children with the opportunity to make healthful eating choices.

By giving their bodies proper nutrition, they will be able to feel their best and put their best foot forward in the world. By teaching them about portion control, you will also instruct them in self-control and how to delay gratification, two hallmarks of children who succeed in life.

Positive Design

Have you ever noticed titles of house and home magazines? Some examples are *House Beautiful*, *American Dream Homes*, *Beautiful Kitchens*, *Fine Gardening*, etc. They all have something in common: the use of "positive" words. Incorporating positive design into spaces to create an uplifting atmosphere is relatively easy.

Paint Color

The use of color in your home can play a key role in how you feel. For example, using soft colors such as browns, grays, and pastels can help to incorporate peace and tranquility. Conversely, brighter colors can provide energy and add a bit of fun. Matching the room colors to the mood you want to create in your home is the key to turning your house into a home that reflects your family's personality.

Words within Art

Sometimes you don't have to speak a word to send a positive message. Having a simple sign in your home can be a wonderful way to share the power of positive thinking and communicate a core family value. For example, our family dog is incredibly loved by our children. When I saw a piece of wood art that read "Think Pawstive" with dog paws all over it, I knew it would be perfect for us. Displayed prominently in our foyer, it is a strong reminder to see the good in the world.

One little message on a sign can make a huge difference in your outlook on any given day and in your life in general.

Remember

Thinking positively, when practiced intentionally on a daily basis, can become a way of life. The benefits to your children's self-esteem, mood, and general enjoyment of life are endless. In closing, think about these wise words from author Karen Salmansohn: "True happiness isn't about the things you have; it's about the thoughts you have. That's why it's called positive thinking and not positive thing-ing."

For more information visit, <https://centerforparentingeducation.org/library-of-articles/focus-parents/encouraging-positive-attitude-creating-positive-environment>