



February 2018

Play and Learn at Community Place
50 Community Place ~ Crownsville, Maryland 21032
Phone: 410-987-3312 ~ Fax: 410-987-0968 ~ Email: CPDirector@playcenters.org
Visit us at www.playandlearnmaryland.org ~ Tax ID: 52-1259566



From the Director

Welcome to the month of February! LOVE is in the air! The month will bring lots of learning and fun as we explore Black History, Transportation, Groundhog Day, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, Chinese New Year, American History, and more during this short month!

Friday, February 2nd, is Groundhog Day! The children will do a special art activity and see if Punxsutawney Phil sees his shadow. Will we have 6 more weeks of winter?

Friday, February 9th, is Pizza Day! From the Toucans to the Hawks, children will be making their own pizza and having it as a special afternoon snack.

On Tuesday, February 13th, we will be celebrating Mardi Gras, also known as Fat Tuesday. As part of the festivities, the children will decorate Mardi Gras masks and will taste a bit of the King's Cake, a New Orleans Mardi Gras tradition. To add to the fun, we encourage you to dress your child on this day in Mardi Gras colors - green, purple, and yellow!

Wednesday, February 14th, is Valentine's Day. The children will exchange Valentine cards in the morning and will have classroom parties in the afternoon, beginning at 3:15 p.m. Please dress your child in red or pink!

The children's enthusiasm will be high as we celebrate the Chinese New Year - Year of the Dog - on Friday, February 16th. The children will have great fun making dragon puppets and learning about a different culture. During lunchtime, the children will have the opportunity to taste Chinese food and attempt to eat with chopsticks. Gong Xi Fa Cai!

On Monday, February 19th, we celebrate Presidents' Day! We will be doing a special art project and then parade around the center to celebrate our various Presidents. Dress your child in red, white, and blue for this event!

On Monday, February 19th, and Tuesday, February 20th, Portrait Café will be taking photos. Further information will be provided in advance.

On Monday, February 23rd, we will have a special Face Painting Day! Please be on the lookout for a permission slip for this activity.

Reminders:

- ◆ Please make sure you are signing your child in when dropping off, and out when picking up.
- ◆ Please refrain from allowing your children to bring in toys from home.
- ◆ Please be aware of our outside policy. If the temperature is below 32 degrees, we will not take the children outside. We will, instead, do an alternate activity indoors during that time.
- ◆ Also, please review our illness and medication policies. If a child has a fever of 100 degrees, they must be picked up. Please refer to your Parent Handbook or see Mr. Duane if you would like another copy of our policies.
- ◆ As the weather turns colder, please make sure your child has an appropriate amount of clothes in his/her change of cloths bin, and that they are also weather appropriate. Thank you!

Join us in wishing a "Happy Anniversary" to Ms. Robyn who celebrates 25 years, and Ms. Terri Bennett, who celebrates her one year anniversary, with Play and Learn! We thank them for her daily dedication and love for the children!

Happy February!

Mr. Duane, Ms. Melani, and Loveable Super Star Staff



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Page 2 - Parents' Corner

How can I best protect my child against the flu?

Johns Hopkins Children's Center pediatric infectious disease specialist Pranita Tamma, M.D., shares insights for parents.

First, with your pediatrician's OK, have your child vaccinated. Added prevention is also key. Teach your child how to wash his or her hands when he or she is in school or away from home with either soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub. The flu virus spreads mainly by droplets when infected people cough, sneeze, or even talk, but it can be spread by touching surfaces on which one of those droplets has landed and then touching one's nose, mouth or eyes. This is why hand washing is so important – both for the person with the flu and others around him or her. If someone in your household has the flu, ask your doctor if preemptive antiviral medication is an option for others in the home. Clean common surfaces like the kitchen counter, bathroom sink, light switches, door knobs, etc., frequently with household disinfectants. If your child has the flu, keep him or her home from school, daycare and any other activities that could expose others to the virus. If your child needs to go outside of the house, he or she should wear a mask to reduce the likelihood of spreading the virus to others. We urge that children six months and older be vaccinated, especially those at risk for complications from the flu. Your child's pediatrician will know what's best for your child, especially if there are preexisting conditions, including allergies, that require careful review.

What are its symptoms?

The symptoms of the seasonal flu include a fever (temperature of 100°F or greater), as well as a headache, sore throat, extreme fatigue and body aches, coughing, sneezing, runny nose, vomiting and/or diarrhea.

How should I treat it?

Consider giving your child acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (e.g. Advil or Motrin) as directed on the bottle for fevers, headache and body aches, or by your pediatrician. Have your child drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated. This is especially important if your child has a high fever, vomiting or diarrhea. Keep your child apart from other members of the household, help him or her rest and keep him or her at home at least 24 hours after fever and other symptoms subside. Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, washcloths, towels, beds, pillows, etc. until everyone in the household has been free of symptoms for five days. Because the flu is caused by a virus it does NOT respond to antibiotics.

When Should I Seek Medical Treatment?

Children most likely to need medical treatment from their doctor for influenza infection are those who are very young or have serious medical conditions (such as asthma, cancer or lung disease, or who are on dialysis). If you think your child needs medical treatment, call your pediatrician's office first. Your doctor may want to speak with you over the phone and recommend treatments rather than have you come into the office, where your child can infect other people.

How long is the incubation period and how long does the contagious phase last?

Most healthy children and adults with the flu can infect others beginning about one day before developing any symptoms and up to seven days after the symptoms resolve. People with weakened immune systems can remain contagious for up to several weeks.

Is it possible to get the flu even after vaccination?

Getting a flu vaccine greatly reduces the risk of getting the flu but it does not guarantee that a child will not get the flu. In developing the vaccine, physicians and scientists make a best guess based on recent flu patterns to determine the most likely flu strains for the season. Unfortunately, there can be strains circulating in the environment that are not in the vaccine. The flu vaccine includes three strains of the influenza virus. The good news is that even if the vaccine strains and the circulating strains are not perfect matches, the vaccine can still provide some protection because viral strains share similarities. It takes about two weeks for the vaccine to elicit the proper protective response, so if someone is infected soon after receiving the vaccine, or if he or she was exposed to the virus before receiving the vaccine, symptoms can still develop.

Is the flu vaccine safe for kids with allergies?

Even though the flu vaccine contains egg protein, most children with egg and other food allergies can be immunized safely with a few basic precautions. Children with established diagnoses of severe egg allergy should not be immunized without consulting a pediatric allergist. Most, however, can be vaccinated safely after a skin-prick test to the vaccine itself to gauge the risk for a reaction. Children with suspected yet unconfirmed allergies and those with mild egg allergies can usually be vaccinated in their pediatrician's office. An estimated 2 percent to 3 percent of U.S. children are allergic to eggs. Leaving them unprotected against the flu can lead to many unnecessary yet preventable infections and hospitalizations. Many children with food allergies also have asthma, putting them at even higher risk for complications from the flu. Pediatricians should make special efforts to vaccinate those at high risk for complications, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). Can children recently immunized "shed" the vaccine or virus to others? Such transmission of an attenuated influenza strain is very uncommon, perhaps because only low titers of vaccine virus are shed.

For more information on the flu, please visit <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/articles-and-answers/healthy-children/a-parents-guide-to-the-flu>