



January 2020

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



From the Director

Welcome to Winter!

We are excited, once again, to share the news of our Maryland EXCELS level. We renewed at a Level 3! Beginning in January, we will be beginning the process of having Play and Learn at Hunt Valley Accredited again by the Maryland State Department of Education. This is a two-year process and we are very excited!! Please watch for details regarding the Accreditation plan. Active parent participation in the process and program input is critical and we very much appreciate your time and feedback!

Please see the Parent Calendar for information regarding Wacky Wednesday themes. Dressing up is a fun way to bring these themes to life, and we always strive for 100% participation! We appreciate your help in our reaching this goal every Wednesday!

Winter Parent/Teacher Conferences will take place during the week of January 13. Signup sheets will be posted on your child's classroom clipboard. Please take the opportunity to meet with your child's teacher to hear all of the wonderful things your child is learning and doing!

We will be having a Parent Meeting on Tuesday, January 21. This is a great time for you to come hear about the exciting things happening with the center. We would also like to hear your voice! We will be discussing the start of the Accreditation process. If you would be interested in being a parent volunteer for this process, please be sure to attend this meeting.

On Friday, January 24, the staff and children will be celebrating Chinese New Year! Lessons for the week will be about this holiday. We will enjoy a Lo Mein noodle lunch and have almond cookies for afternoon snack. Kung Hei Fat Choi!

We hope our preschool parents enjoyed the Parent Investigation Day and the making of the Gingerbread Houses. We are already looking forward to our next Parent Investigation Day, scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, for the Unit "Healthy You!" You and your child will create your own Trail Mix, following your own special recipe. Watch for more information on this event!

We are now collecting unwanted crayons for The Crayon Initiative. This program collects, washes, separates into color groups, melts down, and reforms unwanted crayons into new crayons that are distributed to children in hospitals across the United States.

As winter bears down on us, please take a moment to visit our website and refresh yourselves on our Inclement Weather Policy, so you are fully prepared in the event of changes to program operation schedules due to weather conditions. In addition, please be sure that you have signed up for emergency text and email notifications, and that your contact information is up-to-date.

In addition, please be reminded that the children spend time outdoors throughout the winter, weather permitting. Please be sure that your child comes to school with a hat, gloves, coat, and any other clothing needed to keep him/her warm while playing outside.

Happy New Year from the Play and Learn at Hunt Valley Team!

Happy January Birthday to Ms. Kristen!



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New Year's Resolutions for the Whole Family (by Lisa Finlay)

Making your family better, stronger, more harmonious may not require a complete overhaul, but rather a few strategic tweaks.

1. Hold family meetings.

Give everyone in the family - including the kids - an opportunity to be heard. Provide the space for feuding family members to voice their feelings in a setting that models respectful communication and conflict resolution. Brainstorm beefs. Strategize solutions to stumbling blocks. You'll get greater cooperation when decisions are made mutually.

2. Say no to sarcasm.

Scorn is just anger thinly disguised with a sneer. So, cut the contempt. If you're mad, be mad. Communicating your feelings honestly and openly makes room for problem solving. Sarcasm complicates true communication and squeezes out solutions.

3. Laugh. A lot.

Laughter fills up the family's good-will tank, making your family more resilient in tough times. It also paves the way for positive parenting. What was it Mary Poppins said? "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down." Well, corrections are more easily digested when coated in honey. So, lighten up a little.

4. Focus on quality, not quantity.

If I told you to spend more time together as a family, you'd probably retort with, "There's just no time." I get it. Life is busy. But—building those vital bonds of belonging - whether with your kids or your spouse - is accomplished in moments, not hours. However, you've got to make those moments count. Be mindful. Put away your smart phone, and be fully present and engaged for a short while.

5. Don't forget date nights.

In our efforts to put "family first", we inadvertently put our marriages last. That's a problem. Our partnership is of primary importance. Parents are the bedrock of the family life, the executives heading the corporation. So, you two need to stay tight. And in order to stay connected, you need to put in time away from the kids.

6. Practice some self-care.

You can't be a good parent or a good partner if your tank is empty. We don't fully appreciate how empty our tank can get - and how drastically that can affect our interactions with others in our family. We start to sweat the small stuff, harbor resentment, become bitter when we've denied our own needs. There's nothing that a good yoga class or night out with friends can't fix. So, re-fuel frequently, and you'll get more mileage as a parent.

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/new-years-resolutions-family/>