



February 2020

Play and Learn at Hunt Valley
11350 McCormick Road ~ EP 1, LL 1 ~ Hunt Valley, Maryland 21031
Phone: 410-785-7077 ~ Fax: 410-785-5768 ~ Email: HVDirector@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 Groundhog Day, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, Transportation, American History, Animal Friends, and more, during this short month! Please see the Calendar for Wacky Wednesday fun! Happy Leap Year!

On Monday, February 3, the children will research whether Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow and what that may mean for the coming of spring. We will make lists and draw pictures of things we like to do in the winter and things we like to do in the spring. Which season is your favorite?

We hope our preschool parents enjoyed the Parent Investigation Day of making Gingerbread Houses. We are already looking forward to our next Parent Investigation Day, in conjunction with the Healthy You Unit. On Wednesday, February 5, you and your child will have the opportunity to create your own trail mix recipe. Watch for further details!

Friday, February 7, is National Wear Red Day. On this day we invite you and your children to wear red to help raise awareness about heart health. Let's try for 100% participation!

On Friday, February 14, we will celebrate Valentine's Day with crafts, games, and a class party. Please watch for party treat Sign-Up Sheets. A Class List will also be distributed so your child can bring in Valentines for his/her classmates. Dress your child in red or pink on this day to add to the fun! Thank you for your help in making this day an extra-special one!

On Monday, February 17, and throughout the week, we will celebrate Presidents' Day with American History.

Thursday, February 20, is National Love Your Pet Day. Everyone is encouraged to bring in a picture of themselves with their pet or a pet they would like to have some day. We will then create a center-wide collage. As an additional activity to support animals in our community, we are accepting donations of pet toys throughout the month of February. Look for the donation box located near the entrance. Thank you for your support of each of these activities!

Parent/Teacher Conferences will take place the week of February 24. 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 the wonderful things your child is learning and doing!

Monday, February 24, is National Tortilla Chip Day. Several flavors and styles of chips (and salsa!) will be sampled at afternoon snack.

On Tuesday, February 25, get out your purple, green, and gold and get ready to celebrate Mardi Gras the Play and Learn way! The children will start the celebration with a pancake morning snack. Then they will make special crowns for the fun parade we will have throughout the center. Our fun day will end with a special afternoon snack of King's Cake. As they say in New Orleans, "Let the good times roll!"

We would like to extend a special "Congratulations!" to Ms. Michelle, who celebrates 3 years with Play and Learn this month! Please join us in thanking her for her dedication and devotion to the children and to the Early Care and Education Field!

Please mark your calendar now! Play and Learn at Hunt Valley will be closed on Friday, April 10, 2020, for our Annual Cleaning Day, and on Friday, May 1, 2020, for a center-wide Professional Development Day. Thank you for your support!

Happy February!

Ms. Noel and Loveable Super Star Staff

Happy February Birthday to Sophia L. Cecelia A., and Nova B.!



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Page 2 - Parents' Corner

10 Thing Every Parent Should Know About Play

By: Laurel Bongiorno, PhD

1. Children learn through their play.

Don't underestimate the value of play. Children learn and develop:

- cognitive skills – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store
- physical abilities – like balancing blocks and running on the playground
- new vocabulary – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs
- social skills – like playing together in a pretend car wash
- literacy skills – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant

2. Play is healthy.

Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.

3. Play reduces stress.

Play helps your children grow emotionally. It is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

4. Play is more than meets the eye.

Play is simple and complex. There are many types of play: symbolic, sociodramatic, functional, and games with rules—to name just a few. Researchers study play's many aspects: how children learn through play, how outdoor play impacts children's health, the effects of screen time on play, to the need for recess in the school day.

5. Make time for play.

As parents, you are the biggest supporters of your children's learning. You can make sure they have as much time to play as possible during the day to promote cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development.

6. Play and learning go hand-in-hand.

They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab.

7. Play outside.

Remember your own outdoor experiences of building forts, playing on the beach, sledding in the winter, or playing with other children in the neighborhood. Make sure your children create outdoor memories too.

8. There's a lot to learn about play.

There's a lot written on children and play. Visit www.naeyc.org for articles and books about play. David Elkind's *The Power of Play* (Da Capo, 2007 reprint) is also a great resource.

9. Trust your own playful instincts.

Remember as a child how play just came naturally? Give your children time for play and see all that they are capable of when given the opportunity.

10. Play is a child's context for learning.

Children practice and reinforce their learning in multiple areas during play. It gives them a place and a time for learning that cannot be achieved through completing a worksheet. For example, in playing restaurant, children write and draw menus, set prices, take orders, and make out checks. Play provides rich learning opportunities and leads to children's success and self-esteem.

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/10-things-every-parent-play>