

February 2020



Play Centers at Sparks Elementary School

601 Belfast Road

Sparks, Maryland 21152

410.472.1400 ~ www.playcenters.org

Hours of Operation: 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. / 2:45 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.



This organization and its materials are not affiliated with, sponsored by, or endorsed by Baltimore County Public Schools, the Superintendent, or this Baltimore County public school or office.

FROM DIANE MELLOTT, CEO/COO

As we strive to continue to include outdoor play whenever weather conditions allow, parents are reminded to send their children with a heavy jacket or coat, hat, gloves, etc., so they are dressed appropriately for colder temperatures. Please join us in reminding your child that he/she is required to wear the outdoor items that you send, any time the Director deems that the temperatures require it. As you know, outdoor play is a critical part of the children's gross motor development and at this time of year is also a wonderful opportunity to kill some of those lingering winter germs. However, we do want the children to be protected while doing so. Should you have any questions regarding winter outdoor play, please feel comfortable discussing your thoughts with your Center Director.

We also wanted to share with you that Maryland Child Care Providers have been encouraged by members of the Maryland State Department of Education, the Developmental Disabilities Council, Abilities Network, and other agencies to reach out to our families to let them know that we are interested in and very willing to participate in School Team Meetings regarding your child, as deemed appropriate. The Director of your child's Before and After School Program may be able to provide information about your child's interactions in our program that may be beneficial to the discussion. Should you be interested in having the Center Director participate in those discussions, please let the appropriate school representative know. In addition, our Directors would appreciate any information that you may provide to them that would facilitate consistency between the school, home, and our program. We would also be very much interested in receiving a copy of any components of your child's IEP that you feel would be helpful as we continue to work to respond most effectively to each child's needs. Thank you very much for this opportunity!

Finally, if you haven't already done so, please visit our website to sign up for emergency text alerts and/or emergency email notifications. If you signed up and are not receiving alerts, please review your contact information for accuracy. If you are still not receiving alerts, contact our Main Office, 410-296-4880, ext. 102.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Melissa Barnes

Happy Valentine's Day!

THEMES

Super Bowl
Valentine's Week
We The People
Dental Week

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Diego Kearney
Gia Colton
Ranger Rachel Grayson

FROM ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE (AR)

Questions about your account ?
Questions about Military Subsidy or the MSDE Scholarship?
Please contact the
AR Coordinator / Subsidy Specialist, at 410.296.4880, ext. 111.

IMPORTANT DATES:

Monday, February 3

Special Election - Poll Preparation
Play Centers - **After School** will be **CLOSED!**

Tuesday, February 4

Special Election Day
Schools and Play Centers **CLOSED!**

Monday, February 17

Presidents' Day
Schools and Play Centers will be **OPEN!**

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♻️ 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>