

Whistle Stop's

Parent Connection

February-March 2008

Welcome Back

We'd like to welcome back **Hillary Burns**, a part-time employee who works mostly in the Senior building. Hillary is a sophomore at Grand Valley State University. She has recently returned from studying abroad in London, England. Welcome back, Hillary.

Tax Information

Year-end tax statements are available upon request. If you would like a copy, please let Toni know in writing, and she will have a copy available for you by the end of the day.

Our tax ID number is:

38-2806644

Accreditation Update

Child care centers that are accredited by the **NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children)** must submit a yearly report to maintain their accreditation status.

Since Whistle Stop has gained its accreditation, Toni has submitted our annual report to the NAEYC. For this report, we needed to have an inspection of our playgrounds. In January, a licensed, certified playground inspector came to evaluate our playgrounds and

made recommendations for the Senior building playground (ages 2½ and up). Now we are in the process of having all the pieces of playground equipment brought up to code.

Health Policy

Whistle Stop's health policy states that **a child who has a fever or vomiting must wait 24 hours before returning to Whistle Stop**. This policy is stated in our parent handbook.

If a child has a fever on Wednesday afternoon, for example, he or she should wait 24 hours and return to Whistle Stop on Friday morning. We appreciate your help in keeping our children and staff as healthy as possible!

Reminders – 6:00 PM

Closing Time

Please note that **Whistle Stop closes at 6:00PM** each night. **Please make a point to arrive early enough to gather your child's belongings and leave the building by 6:00 PM.**

Please also recognize that our staff has commitments they must attend to (classes, families, etc.) and need to leave on time. Thank you for your cooperation.

Science on the Playground

Shortly before Christmas, two large trees fell on the Senior building playground. We are waiting for Marywood to have them removed, but in the meantime, the children and staff have found this to be a great asset for learning about science as they study the fallen trees!

Staff Birthdays and Anniversaries

Happy belated birthday to **Kotoe Laackman** who celebrated her birthday on January 15.

February Birthdays

Maryann Glynn – February 2

March Birthdays

Mae Froyland – March 6

Hillary Burns – March 14

Karin Smith – March 17

Nancy Schaefer – March 28

Gloria Tipton – March 31

There are no staff anniversaries in January, February, or March.

Staff Training Update

The January staff meeting featured speakers from **Kent County Child and Family Resource Council**. They discussed mandated reporting of suspected child abuse and neglect. They highlighted what to look for in recognizing signs of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse or neglect in a child.

Whistle Stop has been fortunate to have never had to report this type of incident in the last 18½ years.

Parents Night Out

Whistle Stop will host a special **Parents Night Out on Thursday, March 13, 2008 from 6:30 to 8:00 PM**. It will feature an adults-only wine and cheese event for parents and an opportunity for them to make "Me-books" for their children.

These fun booklets are made with photos of your child with his or her family members, pets, vacation sites, hobbies, or favorite activities.

Whistle Stop will supply the craft materials. Simply bring 6-10 photos of your child and enjoy an evening out with friends and fun! Please RSVP to your child's teacher by March 10 if you would like to attend.

Do You Take Life Too Seriously?

(Taken from The Playful Adult by Sue Baldwin)

Here are some tips to help you remember how to make everyday life delightful!

- On rainy days: Float Popsicle sticks in puddles. Put a plastic sheet on a hill to create a "slip and slide".
- When waiting in line: Start a joke telling contest with the people around you.
- When driving: Look for letters in the words on road signs, and see who can complete the alphabet first.
- In a meeting: Eat M&M's and time how long it takes one to melt in your mouth.
- At restaurants: Oooh and ahhh over the dessert menu. Order a favorite to split with a friend.
- When exercising: Exercise early in the morning, before your brain is awake and knows what you are doing.
- When singing: Sing with your dog and see whether you can copy each other.
- On snowy days: Make snow ice cream. Avoid yellow snow! Hop like a rabbit to leave unusual footprints.
- On parenting: Let the children plan the dinner menu. You cook whatever the child chooses (within playful reason).

Fun for All Ages

Infants and Toddlers

1. Throw some lightweight scarves into the air. Encourage the baby to catch one. You can also put one on your head and have the baby pull it off.

2. Trace the outside of a toilet paper tube on the lid of a shoe box three times. Cut out the circles. Take turns putting the tube into the holes, talking about whose turn it is.

3. Lay a piece of contact paper sticky side up on the floor. Tape down the corners. Place some toys on the paper and show the baby how to lift them off.

4. Build a tunnel by covering chairs with sheets making twists and turns that will build spatial awareness and require control of arm and leg muscles. Although you may be too big to join in this fun, go partway into the maze to demonstrate, or greet your youngster at the exit.

Preschoolers

1. Have the children dance around the room acting like they are eggs being scrambled. When the leader shouts "Ice Berg", everyone freezes in place. The first one to move is the next leader.

2. Have the children line up. The leader shouts out "touch blue". The children are to all find something blue in the room to touch. The leader keeps shouting out things to touch (i.e. Touch knees, touch something alive, touch something red, etc.)

3. Pass out different sized pieces of yarn to the children. One person puts their piece down on the floor, then go around letting all the children add to the picture. Stand back and admire your creation.

Taken from: News & Views

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