



Parents as Teachers

April 2024

Reflections from the Coordinator...

PAT Family,

What a spectacular weather weekend! I had the joy of having one of my college kids home for the weekend. Seeing his car in my driveway, making extra food, and having him sleep under our roof for a few nights is good for my soul. It is crazy how fast the years go. I know there were moments when we're at your stage of parenting that I dreamed of the empty nesting days. I get it, I was there. If you are doing parenting right and are fully invested and being intentional, it is really hard some days. Let me speak to your heart today if I may...try to look at your child through new eyes just for a moment. Dream ahead to the day you will watch them pull out of your driveway and head off on a new adventure. Then look back at your little person and savor the moment. The gift you have today is time. You are still the center of your child's world today. By middle school, their focus will start to shift to their friends and by high school you barely see them. So, spend a moment today for that extra snuggle, to pull them in your lap and read a book, or to just watch them play. They are amazing little humans that are learning and growing mostly by being in your presence. Try to steal 10 minutes each day to be fully present in the moment and enjoy your little person, I promise your future self will thank you!

I also wanted to share some exciting news. This year at our Annual Touch-a-Truck event we will be celebrating Blue Valley Parents as Teachers 35-Year Anniversary. We already have a great line up of trucks coming, so mark your calendar for May 4th from 9-11 here at Hilltop. We are looking for a few sponsors to help offset some of the event costs. If you have a business or know someone who does and would like to donate, please let me know and I will connect you to our PTA. We typically have 300+ families attend.

Finally, we have a few openings remaining for day home visits, so if you have a friend or neighbor who has a child under three or is expecting, please pass along our information. Active PAT families are our best recruiters.

Warmly,

Michelle Kelly

Program Coordinator
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CALENDAR

Saturday Playgroup
April 20th
9:15-10am
REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

Evening Playgroup
April 10th
6-6:45pm
REGISTRATION
REQUIRED

Worm Walk Nature
Play Group Connection
Saturday, April 13th
10-11am
Wilderness Science
Center
5001 W 163rd Terrace
REGISTRATION
REQUIRED



May Playgroups- Sign Ups begin April 16th

In-person playgroups offer many benefits including connecting with other families, new activities for children to explore and children learning to interact with one another. In order to help keep our groups a safe size, we will be requiring families to sign up two weeks in advance. We are always looking at ways to help families make connections with one another during playgroups. In order to help facilitate ongoing interaction as well as less exposure, we will be running playgroups in 3-4 week sessions. For May, you have the opportunity to sign up for a group that will meet weekly at the same time for three weeks. You can choose to sign up for a group with children that are a similar age to your child, (baby play, 1-year old or 2-year-old groups) or, you can choose to opt for our birth to 3 year old group if you have more than one child or would like your child to be around children of all ages. We will continue to offer one evening playgroup for dual working families who cannot attend during the week.

- **Only one adult may attend per child.** A nanny or grandparent is welcome to bring child in place of parent if necessary.
- No siblings are allowed in the baby play, one-year-old or two-year-old playgroups. Siblings may attend the birth to 3 years old playgroups (if they are 36 months or younger), evening or Saturday groups. Please indicate name and age of sibling attending at time of enrollment. (non-walking/crawling babies are an exception)
- **All adults must show a valid state issued photo ID or passport to enter any BV Building. Please plan to bring ID with you to each playgroup session or you will not be able to attend.**
- Strollers and car seats are not allowed in the playroom, please plan to wear or carry your baby while in the playroom when not on the floor playing.
- If you miss two sessions in a row, your spot will be given to the next family on the waiting list.

MAY PLAYGROUPS

Baby Play-for non-walkers (4-12 months)

Tuesdays 12:15-1pm: 4/30, 5/7, 5/14

Playgroup for 1-Year-Olds (12-23 months)

Wednesdays 10:15-11am: 5/1, 5/8, 5/15

Thursdays 9:15-10am: 5/2, 5/9, 5/16

Playgroup for 2-Year-Olds (24-36 months)

Tuesdays 10:15-11am: 4/30, 5/7, 5/14

Wednesdays 9:15-10am: 5/1, 5/8, 5/15

Playgroup for Birth to 3 years old

Thursdays 10:15-11am: 5/2, 5/9, 5/16

Wednesday, May 8th Evening Playgroup 6:00-6:45pm

Worm Walk and Nature Play

Join us from 10:00-11:00am on Saturday, April 13th as we explore the outdoors for a Worm Walk at the Wilderness Science Center (5001 W 163rd Terrace). We will enjoy story time together, explore the environment for worms in their habitats and explore a sensory-rich art making experience. This is most appropriate for children 20 months and up. Registration is required and space is limited. Click on the following link to register:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10COD49AFAA23A31-48749071-worm>



SAVE THE DATE! Touch-a-Truck and 35th Year Anniversary

Come join us on Saturday, May 4th from 9-11am to celebrate our 35th Anniversary and enjoy a morning playing on our playground, exploring a police car, fire truck, bus and more. We are expecting 10+ vehicles for families to explore. All Parents as Teachers, Early Childhood and PTA families are invited, no registration is required. Bring a Blue Valley resident with children birth to 5 and encourage them to sign up for one of our great programs. Staff will be onsite to help them get started. This is a drop in event.

PTA Corner

With the school year wrapping up our PTA is already looking forward to next year. If you join now your membership will be valid through the end of next year. (This includes bonus members only playgroups this June!) As a reminder, our membership is available to any family living in the Blue Valley school district with children 5 and under; the once a year cost of \$25 covers the entire family. **Starting July 1st, 2024 our membership dues are set to increase to \$30 per family.** You can click [here](#) for more information on how our board came to this decision and how it benefits you.

FUN WITH BOXES!

For Infants:

Give baby his own "treasure box" to play with. Start with a cardboard box about 16 inches tall or tall enough that your baby can just reach over the side when sitting or kneeling beside it. Fill the box half full with folded newspapers so he cannot tip the box over by pulling on one side. Then put 4-5 toys or safe small objects on top of the papers in the box. Some of the objects should be new to him or toys he has not played with for a while. Show baby the box and have him look over the side to discover the toys. If he has to stretch to reach the objects, they will be more valued prizes. This box will be his "fun box", a magic source of new things to play with. Put just a few toys in at a time and change them often. After your baby is used to crawling over the box to find new sources of entertainment, move the box to a new location when he isn't around. See if he goes to the old location or if he can find the box in the new location. This activity teaches a baby to get into new things and explore his surroundings. He can learn so much about his world by being curious and by having his curiosity rewarded. It is your job now to see that things within his reach contain nothing that can be harmful.

For Toddlers:

Toddlers love to play with boxes in lots of different ways! Use small boxes like shoe boxes to help sort your toddler's toys. Have her help put the toys away in the right box to develop matching and sorting skills and develop her independence. Make "furniture" for your toddler's dolls and stuffed animals. Make a bed, refrigerator, stove, etc. Pretend that boxes are buildings to drive your toddlers cars around. Talk with your child about where the cars are going and what the "buildings" are. Use a small box as a "mystery box". Put items in the box and have your child put her hand in (without looking in) and try to identify what is in the box. Tissue boxes work great for this kind of activity. Also use boxes to bang on with wooden spoons or paper towel holders. See what different sounds different boxes make.

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