



Parents as Teachers

May 2024

Reflections from our Coordinator...

May is here! That means it's time for our 35-Year Anniversary Celebration at Touch-A-Truck. The event will be held this Saturday, May 4th from 9-11 here in our Hilltop Parking lot. You will be impressed with the line up of vehicles for you and your children to explore. We have a couple of new additions this year and we can't wait for you to experience them.

The event will also be a chance to look back over 35 years of PAT in the Blue Valley School District. I am so proud to be part of this legacy. It is impossible to count the number of families and children who have been impacted by the ongoing investment that the state of Kansas and the Blue Valley School District have made. We now have families in our program who were babies in the program themselves! In my 17 years with BV PAT, I have never been more passionate about the importance of supporting parents in the early years. PAT was founded on research and what was known about the brain and early development, and science keeps piling up year after year. The first 3 years of a child's life are key to establishing a firm foundation for not only academic readiness but for strong social and emotional skills as well. We are committed to helping parents have the tools and information they need to thrive in their role as parents and build safe, stable, nurturing relationships with their children. We are so glad to have you as part of our program.

May 6th we will be meeting as a staff team to begin planning ahead for next program year. I am excited to share that through the generosity of the Blue Valley Education Foundation's Women's Giving Circle, we have been granted \$15,000 towards implementing Conscious Discipline principles into our home visits and Group Connections for the upcoming year. We have exciting things in store and know they will help you feel more confident and calmer as a parent and be more equipped to find joy in parenting and handle your child's big emotions. We will be accepting new enrollments for August so please encourage your friends, families, and neighbors to join!

Stay tuned for upcoming information about ways to stay connected to PAT through the summer. If you have not yet joined our PTA, now is a great time to join. You will be able to take advantage of membership benefits for the rest of this year and all of next year for this year's price!

Hope to see you at Touch-a-Truck this weekend!

Warmly,

Michelle Kelly

Program Coordinator

CALENDAR

**Touch-a-Truck
Drop in event
9-11am**

Saturday, May 4th

**Evening Playgroup
Registration required
May 8th
6-6:45pm**

**To VISIT OUR WEBSITE
CLICK [HERE](#)**



Touch-a-Truck and 35th Year Anniversary

Come join us on Saturday, May 4th from 9-11am to celebrate spring and enjoy a morning playing on our playground, exploring a police car, fire truck (9-10am), bus and more. We will have a book mobile that will be collecting new and gently used books for children PreK to 6th grad. 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.

PTA Corner

If you're looking for an opportunity to thank your educators for the special care they've given your family this year then please consider participating in **Staff Appreciation Week, May 5th-9th. You do not have to be a PTA member to participate.** The PTA has organized a week of fun to share our gratitude for all of our Hilltop SUPERHeroes. We'll be decorating the school with a superhero theme and showering our staff in love with special treats and raffle prizes daily! Here are some ways that you can contribute.

Chalk the Walk: Stay after Touch a Truck, May 4th, to help the PTA Chalk the Walk. We'll be located at each school entrance with chalk to decorate our teachers' walk into school.

Door Decorations: Donate your time and creativity by volunteering to decorate a classroom or office door. **We will be decorating the doors Sunday, May 5th from 12:00-2:00 p.m.** Follow this link for [decoration ideas](#) and to [sign up!](#)

Item Donation: Donate something from our wish list. From gift cards to food items there is a lot to choose from on [this list](#).

Monetary Donation: Wanna help but need to keep it simple? Monetary donations go a long way. These will be used to purchase additional gifts, supplies and food for the week. Use our donation page to [Donate Now](#). **Be sure to choose "Staff Appreciation"** as the use for your donation. You may also bring cash or a check (made out to BVEC PTA) to Hilltop Learning Center in an envelope marked "Staff Appreciation."

Our year is wrapping up and now is your time to save on PTA membership for the 2024-2025 school year. Membership dues are set to increase to \$30 per family on July 1, 2024. If you **join now you only pay \$25 for your entire family for the 2024-2025 school year.** So if you want access to more playgroups, music time, and other special events sign up [here](#) today!



Three Years of Service

Parents as Teachers provides three years of service to families with children birth to age three. We provide universal access to all families, however the school board directs our priority categories for service. Those include: first time parent with a child under one year, children with special education needs, teen parents, and families with multiple children under three.

You are your child's favorite toy. There is nothing in the world your child would rather do than play with you! Use the ideas below as a starting point for the many joyful ways there are to explore, play, learn, and discover with your child.

THEME: ANIMALS

Talk Together

For your baby: What animals do you see outside? Name these different creatures for your baby: birds, squirrels, ducks, dogs, cats, rabbits. Which animal does your baby seem most interested in? Make each animal's sounds. Which sound makes your baby giggle?

For your toddler: Baby animals are a special part of spring—can you spot any in your neighborhood? Go on a "safari walk" with your toddler and ask her to tell you when she sees an animal. Does she know the animal's name? The sound it makes? Does she know where it lives (nest, pond, trees, etc.)? Watch these animals with your child and talk about what you see.

Read together

For babies, try: Whose Nose and Toes? by John Butler, Does a Kangaroo Have a Mother, Too? by Eric Carle, Good Night, Gorilla by Peggy Rathmann, Baby Animals by DK Publishing, and Country Animals, Farm Animals, and Pet Animals by Lucy Cousins.

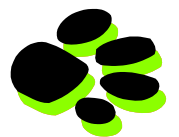
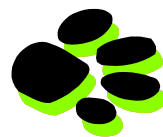
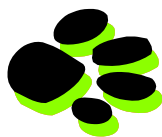
For older toddlers, try: Over in the Meadow by Ezra Jack Keats, Make Way for Ducklings by Robert McCloskey, Mrs. Brown Went to Town by Wong Herbert Yee, Cock-a-Doodle-Do! Barnyard Hullabaloo by Giles Andreae, The Napping House by Audrey Wood, and I Love My Mama by Peter Kavanagh.

Play Together

For your baby: Babies are often captivated by watching animals outside or through the window. Stick with your baby and let him watch as long as he wants, though be very cautious about approaching animals you do not know. Teaching your child animal safety begins early. You can support your baby's interest in animals by, for example, installing a bird feeder to encourage birds to visit. For an indoor activity, you can give your baby swatches of fake fur and feathers to touch (both available at craft stores).

For your toddler: Cut pictures of animals out of magazines and glue them to sturdy cardboard. Make sure there are matches—2 pictures of horses, 2 pictures of sheep, etc.. Lay these pictures out (face up) on the floor and see if your child can match the animals that are the same. Matching games build thinking skills in your toddler. You can also play "barnyard". With your child, walk and "talk" like an animal—perhaps meow like a cat or "trot" and neigh like horse. Which animals does your child like to be? Turn a big cardboard box into a barn and see if your child would like to pretend to trot in and out.

Language, Books and Learning blurb



Blue Valley Schools

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ANIMALS