

# GREENBELT CHILDREN'S CENTER OCTOBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

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## OCTOBER NEWS

The month of October is a very exciting one for everyone at Greenbelt Children's Center! The units for this month include The Five Senses, Parts of the Body, The Season of Fall, and Fire Safety. Where do you find the daily activities scheduled for YOUR child??? On the Parent Information Bulletin Board in your child's classroom! Our teachers post them up just for YOU! Remember, YOU are the first and lifelong teacher in your child's life and we want to make sure that we include you in our program.

### Back to School Night

We were overwhelmed at our "Back to School Night" with 61% family attendance! We hope that parents were able to get all the information about assessment and goals for the children, activities and routines, ideas for doing learning activities at home and more! There was an opportunity to meet all the staff and taste samples from our fundraiser with Claire's Gourmet. We thank Prince George's County Librarian, Barbara Spears, for presenting a wonderful story time that included books and flannel board activities. The children were so engaged during her presentation. She is very skilled and we were fortunate to have her back again. She lead the evening with our theme of social and emotional foundations for early learning

### Judith P. Hoyer Grant

The Hoyer grant award for this year provides funds for the Pre-k program in Room 1 which is subsidizing 40% of parent fees for income eligible families in that classroom during 42 weeks of the PGCPs year. This MSDE grant also funds the Spanish Language Program, Technical Support, Wolf Trap Artist in Residency programs, the Lending Library, the Book Club Events and field trips. It will also fund the hearing, vision and speech screenings for all Room 1 children. Everyone else will have the opportunity to have their child screened for a nominal fee. Speech screenings are scheduled for October 18, 2011. Hearing & vision screenings are scheduled for November 2, 2011. Both are offered to children in Room 2 & 3, at a nominal fee. Additionally, GCC received a matching grant from the MD Arts Council

to bring InterAct Story Theatre workshops and a Story Teller performance. The center is funding Funfitastic Physical Education, McKinney's Music and French Class. All our GCC children and families benefit from these "extras". Kudos to the staff for all the extra work that must be done to document the outcomes of all these benefits, the paperwork is unbelievable and our staff goes way above & beyond the call of duty. Room 2 is using the Creative Curriculum by Teaching Strategies and Room 1 and 3 use the Houghton Mifflin updated version of their curriculum, which were also received from other MSDE grants previously.

Our "Project Security Blanket" Disaster/Risk Management Plans that our community of staff & parents has been working on for several years are posted in each classroom. There was legislation making this a requirement in all early childhood programs licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education. Become familiar with the plan to know what would occur in different emergency situations and feel free to comment or suggest improvements.

Parents are invited to take an active role at GCC, which includes responding to Family Survey forms asking you if you have been informed about all of the above information, as well as information from the Parent Handbook that was reviewed with each of you when you first visited GCC. We count on you to be able to answer all the questions favorably when the time comes to conduct the annual surveys again! If you need a new Parent Handbook, please just ask!

Many parents expressed favorable comments about the Family Learning Event and their opportunity to meet with faculty and view materials of instruction. It was nice to hear parents express their appreciation of the teachers that evening and we encourage parents to do this often! Tell the teachers thank you when you notice their hard work and efforts, write a letter for their file, bring them flowers or breakfast! There will be a Teacher Appreciation Week in the Spring but don't wait until then to tell them that you appreciate them. They really have a demanding job! Come spend a day here observing or volunteering to see just how much they do each day. Teachers are happy to have such an enthusiastic community of parents to partner with this year!

## Congratulations to Greenbelt Children's Center!

Greenbelt Children's Center is a very good place for young children! Our center has maintained national accreditation with the National Association for the Education of Young children since 1999. Additionally, the center administration underwent a comprehensive evaluation called the Program Administrator Scale (PAS). The purpose of the PAS is to measure Early Childhood Leadership and Management of an early childhood program. Research has shown that overall administrative practices are crucial for ensuring high quality

outcomes for children and families. GCC was assessed on 25 items by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The national average rating is a 4.0 out of 7.0 and we are happy to report that our baseline rating was 5.8, and our current rating was 6.0 when GCC was reassessed again, well above the national average. The process was very complex and documentation to prove actual practices were reviewed by MSDE. Also, Mrs. Gee, Director and adjunct faculty of Prince George's Community College teaches a 3 credit class on Administering and Managing Programs in Early Childhood Education on Monday evenings during Fall & Spring semesters. The college has seen a 20% increase in enrollment in early childhood education as a result of a recent funding initiative called the Professional Development Fund. It pays college and books for anyone willing to work in child care for as many years as the degree earned. Due to class, on Mondays, Mrs. Gee is here until 3:45 pm instead of 6 pm. The rest of the week her schedule is 9-6 pm except on Wednesdays when she works 7 to 3 pm.

### **Fire Safety Education Program**

This is National Fire Prevention Month and the children will participate in the Stop, Drop, Roll, and Cool Program and learn about fire safety and calling 911, in case of emergency. Practice at home with your child to learn their name, address and phone number. We hope you have the occasion to visit your local firehouse with your child as they have been scheduling open houses for this month! We are arranging for a visit from the Greenbelt firefighters to come to GCC also.

### **10/28/11 8 am—1 pm Annual Field Trip to the Pumpkin Patch!!**

**Children in Rooms 1 and 3**, their teachers, and parents will have the opportunity to go to Sharpes at Waterford Farm in Brookeville, Maryland to pick pumpkins and ears of popping corn, go for a tractor pulled hay ride, tour the farm, participate in a program about bees & the role they play for crops, view farm animals, and enjoy a maze. *The cost for the children will be paid by the MSDE Hoyer Grant to the Local School System and includes one pumpkin and ear of corn per child.* **Details and a class permission slip will be posted in Classrooms 1 and 3 soon!** The children will carry and eat lunch at the Farm in a pavilion area, weather permitting. Boots are recommended in case of muddy fields and the trip will occur even if it's misty that day. **Parents must sign the classroom permission slip in order for your child to attend.** We will need parent chaperones, so please volunteer to attend if possible. Parent chaperones will need to pay admission at the farm on the day of the trip, November 5th. Please remember that parents of public school pre-k children must show proof of PG County Background Check. You may call PGCPs at 301-952-6775 for more information. Besides, we like your company and want you to have some October FUN!

**IMPORTANT REMINDERS!!!!!!**

- Check your child's extra clothes box before leaving today. We have already had some cool weather and had only shorts and a tank top to dress a wet child in. Winter is coming! See if your child has seasonally appropriate extra clothes on hand in his cubby!! Your child depends on you for this!
- Daylight Savings Time ends Sunday, **November 7th**. Set your clocks **back one hour** and please change the batteries in your **smoke detectors!!**
- Please make sure that all forms are now complete and in your child's file in the office. Remember to **update** your child's **emergency information card** if any phone numbers have changed. Be sure to also **update** the office with any **booster immunizations** your child may have received.
- Have you checked out a book from the Lending Library this week? We have so many good choices for you & your child to enjoy together! Remember the minimum goal each month is **10!**

### **Other Childcare Subsidy Programs**

We have an agreement with the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Association (NACCRA ) that makes it possible for parents to participate in the United States Armed Forces program to subsidize the child care expense for any child with a parent serving in one of these capacities: Operation Enduring Freedom or Operation Iraqi Freedom (first priority), children of active duty military members of all other branches of the Department of Defense (DOD) (priority two), including the Coast Guard (priority three), and children of DOD APF and NAF civilian employees. You may contact NACCRA at 1-800-793-0324 x 163 for more information. There is also a Maryland Child Care subsidy called **Purchase of Care (POC)**. This program is available to income eligible parents, through the Department of Social Services. However, there is a shortfall of funds and a freeze has been in place since February 2011. The number to call to find out if you are eligible is **301-909-6200**. We also have families that participate in the Federal Education & Employment Act (FEEA) child care subsidy and a subsidy that HUD employees can access. You should check with your Human Resources Department at work to see if your employer offers childcare assistance or has a flexible spending account program for dependent care. Take advantage of that great program if it is available at your place of employment.

### **Policy for Delayed Openings & Emergency Closings**

Remember that we follow the closing announcements for Prince George County Public Schools for emergency closings due to snow, etc. If PG County Schools are closed, GCC will be closed. If the public schools have a delayed opening due to bad weather conditions or other emergencies, then Greenbelt Children's Center will have a delayed opening also and will start at the time designated by PG

County Public Schools. For example, if they open one hour late, GCC will open at 8 am, if they open 2 hours late, GCC opens at 9 am. If they close early, we may do the same. We do not want to endanger our children, staff or families and follow this to keep everyone safe.

(ChildCareExchange.com), she observes that children must be able to:



- Recognize shared interests
- Gracefully join into play
- Pay attention to non-verbal communication cues
- Listen to and respect feelings
- Empathize with another person's perspective
- Cooperate
- Accept others
- Extend a trustworthy helping hand

**Fall Harvest Celebrations!!**



On Monday, October 31st, at about 11 am, the classrooms traditionally celebrate the Season of Fall and the end of the Harvest with fun and games, and party goodies! **We are inviting parents, grandparents and others to come and join the fun.** Look for a classroom sign-up sheet to contribute time or healthy goodies to the event in your child's classroom. And by all means, join us for a howling good time! **(Please, no costumes).**

**Speech Screenings on Tuesday, October 18th**

Take advantage of the availability to have your pre-school child's speech screened for a nominal fee (\$22.00) by United Testing Service (UTS) on this date. The forms and payments should be turned in to the office by October 12, 2011. We have arranged for Hearing and Vision Screenings on November 2, 2011. Both screenings will be covered by grant funding for children in Room 1. Look for details in your Art Folder soon.

**Fall Fundraiser**

A special thank you to everyone who is helping to raise money for the playground! **Please mark your calendar to remember to turn in orders & money by 6 pm on Monday, October 3 2011 and to pick up your order on Wednesday, October 19h between 3 and 6 pm, as we do not have refrigerator storage space at GCC.** The **drawing for a week's free tuition and Savings Bond winner will be announced at the Harvest Party on October 31st**. We really appreciate families collecting payments and turning in only one payment for your fundraiser payable to GCC, making it easy on Ms. Jill, who volunteers to do the fundraiser each year. Special thanks to Rachel Alexander, Brian and Nathan David, friends of Daniel Copeman, - Rm 3 for sending in a generous donation to our playground renovation! What great friends!



We will start a Scentsy Fundraiser that will run through November 17th. Orders can be made online or on November 17th from 3-6 pm on-site with Tracy & Jackie Jackson. We are almost ready to purchase the new climber/slide that is posted on the front door!

**Social Skills that Children Need**

In Karen Stephen's article, "Social Skills Children Need To Make and Keep Friends" in the Parenting Exchange Collection #10, Exchange Magazine

***Reading Aloud***

***Research shows that reading aloud is the BEST way to give children the tools they'll need to become good readers, listeners and students. Reading together is also a special time for you to bond with your children. Let them snuggle next to you as you share stories, laugh at silly characters and root for heroes.***

***Here's how:***

- ***Read slowly with expression, use different voices for different characters,***
- ***follow words with your fingers as you read,***
- ***point to pictures and say the names of objects & colors,***
- ***have your child repeat the names,***
- ***make bath time reading time with waterproof books or telling a story to them while they bathe,***
- ***take books every where you go (the car, doctor and dentist appointments, etc.)!***
- ***Remember to have fun!***



***Remember to read at least 10 books per month from the Greenbelt Children's Center Lending Library!!!***



Thank you to the parents and Grandparents who joined us for our first Book Club Event on Grandparents' Day: AJ's Grandmother, Daniel's Grandmother, Evan's Mom & Dad, and Zoe D.'s Grandmother! We also thank Zoe S.'s Mother for the coffee & donuts that were brought in for all the teachers. We also thank Sears Appliances at Beltway plaza for bringing in soft drinks for the teachers. All staff have been invited to lunch on Saturday, October 8th at Teppanyaki Grill by the family of Ibrahim. What a great community!

### **Parent-Teacher Training Thursday October 20th 6:30-8:30 pm**

Remember when you enrolled and we told you that you are your child's first and lifelong teacher? We meant it! Our faculty is required to take a minimum of 24 hours of continued training annually and we are inviting you to join us for our next two hour training. Dr. Debbie Wood will enlighten us on the topic of "Why Do Children Misbehave?". This is for adults only but we have arranged for two substitutes to provide childcare for the first 20 children ages 2 years and up signed up by their parent on the list in the GCC office. Hope you mark your calendars now and sign up to join us!

**Maryland has developed Common Core Curriculum based on Common Core Standards Developed from the federal government.** We expect that parents will be hearing more about this via a new 32 page publication called a Parent's Guide 2011-12 that will be sent home to parents of Kindergarteners and fifth graders this year. An excerpt follows:

#### **"Fall 2011 A Parent's Guide: 2011 - 2012 School Year**

How can I help my child get ready to enter school? (cont'd.)

Ready at Five, in partnership with MSDE, has an online series called Parent Tips that contains information about how parents can

help build a child's skills and abilities. The series can be found at **ReadyatFive.org**. Maryland's Early Childhood Curriculum Project provides information and resources to child care and other nonpublic early childhood programs for disabilities, birth through 6-years-old. For information about materials and how you can be assured that your child is learning the skills needed to start kindergarten on the right foot, go to [MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDEdivisionschild\\_carepreschool\\_curriculum](http://MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDEdivisionschild_carepreschool_curriculum).

The **Maryland Model for School Readiness (MMSR)** includes a kindergarten-level assessment, which teachers complete for each student, as well as a set of indicators of what children should know and be able to do. The information collected, allows teachers to plan instruction that will help develop the skills, behaviors, and abilities necessary to meet kindergarten expectations and move on to the first grade. For more information about the MMSR, go to **www.MdSchoolReadiness.org** or Instruction-Early Education on [MdK12.org](http://MdK12.org). Healthy Beginnings, developed by MSDE's Division of Early Childhood Development in partnership with the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education, are developmental guidelines for families and caregivers that can be used as a reference guide, or as a resource for planning daily or weekly activities. Further, these guidelines describe what children from birth to three-years of age are learning at specified age ranges, and how adults can support their development. The information can be downloaded as an application and features excellent tips of parent-child activities at home, in the park, or on the playground. Additional parent materials and resources can be found at [http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child\\_care/commres](http://www.MarylandPublicSchools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/commres)."