

Greenbelt Children's Center



Accredited by NAEYC's National Academy of Early Childhood Programs

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SEPTEMBER 2009 NEWSLETTER



Dear Parents,

Our children are off to a **wonderful** start for the 2009-2010 school year! Everyone seems to be making very good adjustments to their new environments and schedules, becoming more comfortable with their new classrooms and friends.

Each week, expect for the children to be introduced to themes or units that are incorporated into the daily activities of the classroom. Units for the month of September may include:

Wonderful Me!
Stranger Dangers
Manners

Orientation to the Classroom
Getting to Know Your Family
Safety & Fire Drill Practice

School Rules
The Season of Fall
Making Friends



Please remember to check the **Parent Information Board** in your child's classroom at least once each week. The daily schedule and weekly lesson plans are posted there. You can view them to obtain specific information about your child's activities. We ask that parents fulfill a weekly "homework assignment" which is: to help your child to select an **appropriate item** that is related to the classroom unit **to bring to Show & Tell each Friday**. *This is one way for you to be involved in your child's program, helping to bridge home and center activities, and spend some quality time together with your child.* We really appreciate your help in making Show & Tell a valuable language arts experience for the class.

Check out our Web site www.greenbeltchildrenscenter.com! This site contains a lot of information and we will be posting our monthly newsletters there for you to read.. Check it out!

Parent Handbooks have valuable information about center policies and procedures that parents need to know. These were given to each family at your orientation appointment. **Please be sure that we have received any updates of immunizations, new emergency phone numbers, or other information.** Each child also has an "Art Folder" in the classroom where parents can find artwork, notices, and information placed there for parents to take home. Try to check it daily but keep in mind that children's work will often be displayed on the classroom walls before being filed to take home. Also remember that we use the Work Sampling System, so some work will be saved by teachers to be shared at Parent Conferences held twice per year. Eventually, you will have your refrigerator covered with creations - if you don't already!



PARENT -TEACHER OPEN HOUSE: Back To School Family Learning Party & Potluck Supper!

We will be having Parent-Teacher Open House on Thursday, September 17th, for all pre-school classrooms. Parents must be here promptly at 5:30 PM. This is an opportunity for you to meet all teachers and staff who work with your child and get general information about the program. It is our belief that parents and teachers need to work together as a team, especially when children are so young. Parents and teachers will get to know each other and **establish relationships** so that each would feel comfortable sharing information. *We ask that you bring a dish to share and we will have a quick potluck supper from 5:30 to 6:00 pm followed by a story time with the PG County Librarian, Myra Katz, in the Terrace Room in this building. Then everyone will return to their classrooms for some back to school events, Fundraiser samples will be served as refreshments so that parents can sample the tasty treats that are for sale!* Parents, please remember that *individual conferences will be arranged at a later date, for specific questions regarding your child.* It would not be appropriate to discuss an individual child's progress in front of the other families, so we ask that those types of questions be reserved for private conferences (November). At that time, teachers will have a written summary of his **individual progress** in each domain area. This will be based on teachers recorded observations and samples of children's work.

Please take this opportunity at Parent Open House to socialize and meet the parents of the friends your child is making this year and will talk about at home! We are very excited to be working with your child this school year and sincerely hope that the time set aside to spend with you at the Open House will be time well spent! PLEASE JOIN US!!!

Wolf Trap for the Performing Arts and Inter Act Story Theatre

These fine arts programs begin in October for Rooms 1 & 3 with Inter Act and in January for all classrooms with Wolf Trap. The programs are funded by the Maryland State Department of Education's Judith P. Hoyer Grant to the local system and is a benefit from our partnership with Greenbelt Elementary School and the Early Childhood Support Office of the Prince George's County Public Schools. The Wolf Trap program is a series of literature-based drama and music/creative movement classes. The teaching artist leads students to explore and enact a specially selected children's book. Students also create and dramatize original stories based on a special book. Various multicultural stories are used throughout the series. The program develops creativity and drama skills, promotes reading comprehension skills, fosters an appreciation of literature and promotes self esteem. Classes will appear on new monthly calendars as soon as they have been scheduled.



The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

Congratulations, parents! You have chosen a program that has incorporated the "Gold Standards" for the highest quality of care and education, and we have had these high standards assessed and validated by NAEYC. Our program has voluntarily undergone a comprehensive process of internal self study and continuous improvement. We have met all 10 of the NAEYC Early Childhood Program Standards. We have processes in place to help us continue to make improvements, and we are required to produce an annual report to keep our accreditation in good standing. (Parent participation and surveys are a part of the process, as well as things like planning for children's transitions to the next school year at the end of the year.) We will keep you informed of our efforts and invite you to be a part of the process. Last year's parent surveys are posted on the Parent Information Bulletin Board in each classroom. Also, because NAEYC's Annual Conference is here in Washington, D.C. this year, we have scheduled our Fall In-service Day for Friday, November 20, 2009 so that the faculty can attend the conference. GCC will be closed that day so please mark your calendars now.



Parent Participation: Ways to Participate at GCC

A form was given to you at enrollment about ways that you may participate at GCC. Please add any ideas that you may have about ways you would like to be involved at GCC. If you turned one in last year but would like to update your form, please see Mrs. Gee in the office. Also, last year a Parent Advisory Board was started. Founding members are: Kristal Peters (Kaylin, Rm 2), and Quillen McLean (Ramiyah Rm 2 & TJ Rm 3). Myisha Hagler (Trinity Rm 3 & Takiyah Rm 2) and Chanita Johnson (Marvin Rm 3) were also members. To date, the Advisory Board has: provided a Teacher Appreciation Luncheon and gift bags held on Teacher Appreciation Day last spring, provided help setting up the classrooms for the summer program and lunch for all staff during the In-service Day last June and arranged for lunch for all staff of GCC & Greenbelt Nursery School when a joint training was held here in the Terrace Room for the In-service Day held in August. We are very grateful to have such a caring community of parents who show their appreciation of the faculty and support and respect the work that is done here. We have a need for more parent involvement and here are a couple items that we would like some help with: The GCC playground was installed in 1993 after much fundraising but is now starting to show signs of age and although it is still safe, it will need to be replaced. Help with fundraisers will be needed to tackle this very large project. Also, we will reach our 20th anniversary in May 2010 and would like some help planning a large celebration. We are considering renting a local park and inviting all past alumni from GCC during the past 20 years to join us in the celebration! If you would like to help with these or other projects by joining the Parent Advisory Board, please contact Mrs. Gee.

Fall Fundraiser starts September 1st and runs through October 2nd! Look for the details in your child's Art folder. If everyone participates, we can do great things! Families last year helped us to buy a new stove for the kitchen. This year our target is the playground equipment. Our playground was installed in 1993 and is starting to show signs of age. This will require a huge effort to replace. The goal is for each family is to sell at least 10 items. The top seller over 25 items will get a \$100 Savings Bond! For every 10 items that a family sells, one chance will be given for a special drawing for a FREE WEEK'S TUITION for one child! The items will be delivered to GCC for parents to pick up on Wednesday, October 21st. Mark your calendars now! We hope we can count on you to participate in our fundraiser! We plan to have samples of items available for tasting at Back to School Night.

Welcome Back our GCC Staff!

Please welcome our wonderful faculty! Ms. Maria Bigelow, from the Prince George's County Public School System will be co-teaching in Room 1's pre-kindergarten class in connection with the Public-Private Partnership between GCC and the Prince Georges County Public School System. This program is partially funded by the Judith P. Hoyer Grant to Local School Systems. Also returning this year is our fabulous Room 1 Team. It includes Ms Christine Grabisch & Ms Donna Nance, Senior Staff



Teachers, and teacher's assistant, Crystal Walston, graduate of Eleanor Roosevelt High School's Child Development Program. Ms. Maureen (Mimi) Cagle, Ms. Sonika Wright, and Ms. Beverly Cunningham are our wonderful Teachers in Room 2. Our dear Ms Mimi has been hospitalized from complications after foot surgery and so Ms. Beverly Adamson has been substituting during the interim. Beverly A. will be completing her Child Development Associate Credential this year, so the interactions with children and parents is very beneficial. Returning Room 2 Assistant, Ms. Angela Laymon, is also a Greenbriar resident. Room 3's fantastic team includes Ms. LaVenja Johnson, Assistant Director/Teacher and Jill Barracato, Pre-K & K Teacher/B&A Coordinator & Ms. Mary Edwards, Teacher Assistant and also a Greenbriar resident. We are also expecting volunteer interns from ERHS's Child Development Program who will work during the morning on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, as well as some who may volunteer in the afternoon, such as Jordan Veney in Rm 2 and Corriea Hawkins in Rm 3. Student interns from the University of Maryland may join us this semester and more interns may join us after the new year,. We expect to have field placement students from Prince George's Community College this year as well. Due to GCC's high accreditation and the high standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, we serve as mentors for teachers in training. Please help our new and returning faculty members to feel welcome and appreciated! We are very glad that they are here!



THE FIRST FOUR STAR CENTER IN MARYLAND, *GREENBELT CHILDREN'S CENTER!!!*



Greenbelt Children's Center was again awarded a **FOUR STAR certificate** and is in the process of renewing same with the Maryland State Department of Education's Office of Child Care. The four star level is only awarded to centers that reach THE HIGHEST performance standards. Four star standards require that the center be accredited, that the staff be credentialed at the highest levels (4-6), that the program provide for abundant reading and early literacy activities and use a variety of evaluation tools to assess the quality of care for the children. The center must also assess the quality of the experience for the child using environmental rating scales (ECERS), parent and staff surveys, set yearly goals and make revisions. The center must have a salary scale and benefits package for staff that recognizes education and experience. The staff is required to complete continued training each year and our fine faculty and staff at Greenbelt Children's Center meet these expectations every year! This quality initiative of the state of Maryland rewards our center with extra funding for the attraction and retention of teachers and is used to fund the retirement plan at GCC. As a parent, you should feel very good about the choice that you have made for your child! Greenbelt Children's Center is a very good place to be.

Extra Curricular Activities Offered at Greenbelt Children's Center

Club Espanol by Lessons From Abroad will be held on Fridays every other week for 30 minute sessions. The Spanish language program is free for all GCC pre-school students and is paid for by the grant from MSDE. Each family will receive a folder of information for practicing the Spanish language words at home with your child. We also have a physical fitness program through *Funfitastic*, the providers of one of our favorite special events during the summer program. We have scheduled this to take place monthly on Wednesdays. It will use a creative-movement based curriculum through which children will learn about fitness and health with silly stretches, exercise stories, aerobics, gross motor skill activities, and health discussions. We are also very happy that Mr. McKinney, Music Instructor (and parent of 2 GCC students, Azinwi Rm 1 and Ambe B&A Rm 3), will be returning for *Music Mondays* each month!

Reminders:

- Tuition must be paid *in advance by the first day of each week*.
- All items brought from home must be labeled with your child's name.
- Each lunch must have a protein and two servings of fruit and/or vegetables, every day.
- Remember to remove from the lunch box, **label, and date** all **perishable items** that contain meat, egg, cheese or dairy, for refrigeration. Please do not ask for *other* foods to be refrigerated, ***we do not have the space***. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated!
- Reminder– we have the capability to accommodate parents who want to make payments by VISA or MasterCard.



You must present the card for swiping and sign the receipt or use the pin pad. Just stop in the office.

Child Care Subsidies Available to Help Families at Greenbelt Children's Center

Eligible families may apply for these subsidies:

Military Subsidy operated by National Association of Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRA) 1-800-793-0324 x 163

MD Purchase of Care (POC) Voucher operated by the Dept. of Social Services 301-909-6200

PGCPS Subsidy for eligible pre-k students who are 4 years old by September 1st. Operated by GCC

Tips for Turning Everyday Activities into Learning Activities (You are the first & lifelong teacher !)

Talk, listen, read, play. Learning begins in everyday moments. This information comes from the "Countdown to Kindergarten Campaign" of the Maryland Committee for Children.

From the moment he is born, your child is learning about his family, his environment, and his own amazing abilities. As he grows, every experience contributes to his knowledge and his self-confidence. When he arrives at kindergarten, he will be able to use all the skills he has learned. His kindergarten teacher will invite him to look at books, draw pictures, share stories and make new friends. The kindergarten teacher will observe and record your child's progress- looking for the skills that will help him succeed in school. If some skills are missing, she will plan activities that help him develop these skills.

As a parent, you can help your child get ready to succeed in school. There are many activities that will fit easily into your daily routine and will help your child grow in 7 important areas of development that he will need for kindergarten and beyond:

- **Personal and Social Development-**skills needed to understand & manage feelings, interact with people & assert himself in the world, based on relationships with parents and others. How a child feels about himself, a child's view of himself as a learner, and his sense of responsibility to himself and others.
- **Mathematical Thinking-** the basis for understanding of numbers, measurement, patterns & shapes and using these basic concepts to solve problems in order to do elementary mathematics.
- **Scientific Thinking-** exploring the environment & learning the importance of asking questions; children need to be given the opportunity to investigate their world through observing, describing, questioning, forming explanations, & drawing conclusions.
- **Social Studies-** refers to children's understandings of the world around them; they begin to understand themselves as separate individuals & begin to recognize and appreciate the differences in others & to be aware of the culture & world around them.
- **The Arts-** children's participation in dance, dramatics, fine arts & music; involves children participating actively & learning to place value on what they are seeing.
- **Language and Literacy-**all the skills needed to learn to read & write & express ideas
- **Physical Development & Health-** include skills such as holding a pencil to draw & write, running & jumping and knowing how to stay safe & healthy.

Field Trips !

The Pre-k grant provides funds that support field trips for Room 1 and 3 to go to the Pumpkin Patch in October. The trip is scheduled for Friday, October 23, 2009 and expected times are: **Depart 8:30 am Return 1:15 pm. The groups will travel to Sunrise Farm in Gambrills, Maryland.** Parents are invited to chaperone and join the groups but will be responsible for paying admissions required in advance of the trip, details will follow. There is a PG County Law requiring parents chaperoning on a public school field trip to be fingerprinted and bring us the yellow slip as proof to copy and keep in your child's record. To get fingerprinted to be able to chaperone on this or future trips, call 301-952-6775. There will be at least two more trips after these, spread throughout the year. Look for permission slips to sign for each one, posted in the classrooms before each trip.

