CRESTVIEW UNITED METHODIST PRESCHOOL

January, 2018

Jan. 3—Back to School

Jan. 15—Closed for Martin Luther King Jr. holiday

Jan. 18—Pizza Day

Jan. 24 & 25—Pajama Days

Feb. 1-7– Registration for fall/summer

Feb. 9—Valentine Sock Hop

Chapel Stories
For January

We will hear about the wise men, Jesus is "lost" and the wedding at Cana.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

Jan. 2—Ellis
Jan. 20—Billie
Jan. 25—Ellie
Jan. 26—Arthur
Jan. 27—Kellan

Tax Time Is Coming!

Please submit any requests for end of the year statements in writing.

(E-mail is fine.)

Our tax identification number is 74-1819338.

PAJAMA DAYs ARE COMING!

On Jan. 24 & 25 your child can come to school in his/her pajamas! Please make sure your child has shoes and a jacket!

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration for the summer and the 2018-2019 school year is Feb. 1-7 for current enrollees. Information on registration will go out the week beforehand. The tuition for the summer will be $665 for the whole summer and $110 for Stay'n'Play for the whole summer. Stay'n'Play for the school year is $50/month. Other tuition rates are below:

Toddlers	2-year-old	3-year-olds	4-yr-olds
M-F $465	M-F $445	M-F $420	M-F $410
4 days $395	4 days $385	4 days $365	4 days $350
MWF $300	MWF $295	MWF $275	
TTH $255	TTH $245	TTH $240	

January 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Back to school, Chapel	4	5	6
7	8	9 Chapel	10	11	12	13
14	15 No school	16	17 Chapel	18 Pizza Day	19	20
21	22	23 Chapel	24 *Pajama Day*	25 *Pajama Day*	26	27
28	29	30	31 Chapel			

Why we need to let kids be creative

By Carolina A. Miranda, Parenting.com

It's a brisk winter morning in New York City and a class of bubbly preschoolers have burst into Room 5 of the Brooklyn Heights Montessori School for a period of free play. Amid an explosion of drawing, coloring, and play-dough kneading, Maxine, 3, and Harper, 4, two towheaded girls in pink skirts, are building a tower out of colorful wood blocks. Their structure, however, is top-heavy, and it begins to wobble. The pair stops and scrutinizes their work. Harper dismantles the tower and starts to rebuild. "Let's put it like this," she tells Maxine, using the biggest blocks to create a solid foundation. Up the tower goes again, this time standing firmly on a solid base.

This may not seem like a remarkable activity -- kids build stuff and pull it apart on a daily basis. But what Harper did in revising her construction methods was to engage a two-step thought process known as "divergent thinking." First, her mind flipped through her knowledge on the geometry of blocks (cubes are sturdy; cones, not so much). Then it generated new ideas for how she might use them (place large cubes at the bottom, instead of on top). Divergent thinking is key to problem solving and is the backbone of creativity -- understanding what is, and then imagining the possibilities of what could be.

The word "creativity," in our society, tends to be applied to artistic endeavors. But divergent thinking is an essential part of everyday life, whether it's navigating office politics or devising a new social-media network. When a toddler figures out that he can climb a strategically placed chair to reach a cookie on the kitchen counter, he has engaged in highly creative problem solving (to the chagrin of his parents). "We all have creative potential," says Mark Runco, Ph.D., director of the University of Georgia's Torrance Center for Creativity & Talent Development. "Our job as parents and teachers is to help kids fulfill it."

Whether that potential is being fulfilled is another story entirely. Kyung Hee Kim, Ph.D., an educational psychologist at the College of William & Mary, in Virginia, has spent the past decade poring over the creativity scores of more than 300,000 American K-12 students. The news is not good: "Creativity scores have significantly decreased since 1990," she says. Moreover, "creativity scores for kindergartners through third-graders decreased the most, and those from the fourth through sixth grades decreased by the next largest amount." The scores Kim is referring to are those generated by the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking -- the standard-bearer in assessing creativity in children since the 1960s. In fact, the results of the Torrance Tests are also better indicators of lifetime creative accomplishment than childhood IQ. The tests consist of open-ended questions, such as "How many uses can you think of for a toothbrush?" Scores are awarded based on the number and originality of the ideas produced. A creative child might respond by saying that he can brush his cat's teeth, polish a rock, and clean his fingernails -- all answers that show dexterity in generating a wide range of potentially useful ideas.

This unique ability is one that will be crucial to the workforce of the future. Today's toddler faces a universe of rapidly evolving technology, an ever-shifting global economy, and far-reaching health and environmental challenges -- scenarios that will require plenty of creative thinking. Here's what you can do to ensure your child gets it.

Testing, 1, 2, 3...

Ever since the No Child Left Behind Act mandated annual tests in reading and math, with scores determining which schools receive funding and which ones are shut down, the relentless focus on performance has seeped down to the earliest levels of education. Roughly half of all states mandate standardized testing in kindergarten -- even though studies show that children under the age of 8 are generally unreliable test takers. "There is a tremendous amount of variability in the development of children during this time," says Samuel J. Meisels, Ed.D., president of Chicago's Erikson Institute, the Harvard of child-development education.

Still, with funds and credibility at stake, it's become common knowledge that many schools now spend more time drilling for exams and less time supporting creative, child-driven learning -- of the sort that little Harper had with her building blocks, explains Jennifer Keys Adair, Ph.D., an early-education expert at the University of Texas at Austin. This focus on rote memorization can be detrimental to cultivating strong creative thinkers. "Children aren't given the opportunity to express their own ideas or come up with their own way of doing things," she explains. "Instead, the answer is A or B or C. There is only one right answer."

What You Can Do

Testing will likely remain a prominent part of education for the foreseeable future, but there are things you can do to counteract its effects. When choosing a preschool or daycare facility, look for one that offers children a balance of activities -- not just learning letters and numbers but also painting, performing, and pretending. The class should be given plenty of choices about what to do next, rather than have the teacher direct every activity.

Likewise, good teachers and caregivers will be creative themselves. "I look to see how much of the work in the classroom has been generated by the teacher rather than coming out of a prepackaged curriculum," says Meisels. "You want to see creativity demonstrated for the child." Instead of just tracing letters and numbers on worksheets, for instance, preschoolers should be writing them in sand or shaving cream or with finger paint.

More Free Play, Less Screen Time

At the age of 3, the favorite playtime activity of chubby-cheeked Samuel Serdar-Espinoza is to pretend to be a pirate. "He'll go put some outfit together on his own," says his dad, Ivan Serdar, a dentist in San Francisco. "Then he'll pop out of a corner and say 'Aaargh!'" The adventures of the dread Pirate Sam are a fine example of creativity at work: Samuel not only had to understand the concept of "pirate" (what it is), he had to find a way to interpret it in a way that others would understand (what could be).

Certainly, there is no shortage of studies that demonstrate the benefits of play. Play aids the development of physical dexterity, teaches kids how to negotiate group dynamics, and, ultimately, helps them cultivate creative-thinking skills. The United Nations has gone so far as to declare free play a basic human right. Unfortunately, organized activities are edging out such opportunities. Children's free-play time in the U.S. has dropped an estimated 25 percent since 1981, according to a report published in the Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine.

"Youth-development programs and team sports are fantastic, but there needs to be a balance," says pediatrician Kenneth R. Ginsburg, M.D. "Kids without freedom to play won't find their creative selves." Free play allows the brain to leisurely meander, one of the best ways of stimulating creative thought, agrees Rex Jung, Ph.D., a clinical neuropsychologist with the Mind Research Network in Albuquerque. When you take a break from gathering data, you allow the brain to loosely explore and reconfigure information -- which is why so many people have great ideas in the shower. TV and the Internet, however, interfere with this process -- and unfortunately, more than two thirds of kids under 6 spend an average of two hours a day using some form of electronic media, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation. This constant bombardment, says Jung, can inhibit divergent thinking. "If you're just a sponge," Jung explains, "you may be able to regurgitate facts, but you can't combine them in novel and useful ways."

What You Can Do

First, limit screen time to one to two hours a day, depending on your child's age. Ruthy Horak, a mother of three kids in Allen, TX, keeps close tabs on how much television her kids watch. "I've now had to put limits on computer time, too," Horak says. "I'll give them an hour -- then I'll make them turn it off and go outside and play."

Then let the kids figure out what to do next. Play is key, says Jung, since it lets the frontal lobes take a much-needed breather. "Building forts, imaginary friends, mock battles," Jung suggests. Whatever it is, "that downtime is so important."

Parents are welcome to join in, but follow your tyke's lead, Dr. Ginsburg reminds. When Samuel growls "aaargh" to his dad, Serdar will "aaargh" right back, and they'll pretend to be pirates together -- a perfect way to support his creativity.