

COLLEGE PARK

**NURSERY SCHOOL
 & KINDERGARTEN**

4512 College Avenue, College Park, MD 20740
 Tel: 301-864-5355 Web: www.CPNSK.com

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6 —
 MARCH 2010

March and April School
 Calendar

MARCH

**3/6 (Sat) OPEN HOUSE,
 10:00-1:00
 EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE
 INVOLVED!**

**3/17 (Wed) Board Meeting
 (everyone welcome), 7:00pm**

**3/29-4/5 (Mon-Mon)
 SPRING BREAK
 NO SCHOOL**

APRIL

**4/6 (Tues)
 CLASSES RESUME**

**4/21 (Wed)
 MANDATORY MEMBER-
 SHIP MEETING, 7:00pm
 (last one!)**

**4/30 (Fri) Financial Aid
 Applications Due**

FUN FAIR COUNTDOWN



The countdown has started.....the Open House and Fun Fair is this coming Saturday, March 6th, from 10 am to 1 pm. We've had a tremendous response with donations, willingness to cook and bake for the food sales, and working the event. However, we still need more help to make this, our most important fundraising event for the school, a success.

If you haven't had a chance to sign up to help, please take a moment this week to do so. You will also find a printable flyer (page 5) for your family, friends and neighbors.

If you have any questions about how you can help, please contact Nancy Gavin, Open House Coordinator, at nancygavin100@hotmail.com.



Snow Quotes 2010

As overhead in the halls and Rainbow Room at CPNS&K ...

"I am shorter than the snow"

"I love the snow. My mom bakes cookies every day it snows!"

"I like to eat snow. It tastes spicy!"

"I don't like the snow. Snow wrecks school."

"I helped shovel the sidewalk. My mom says I shovel better than my dad."



WHAT'S INSIDE

2/3....GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN
 4.....ABOUT TOWN

4.....BOOKS
 5.....PRINTABLE FUN FAIR AD

GETTING READY FOR KINDERGARTEN

One of the most nerve-wracking questions for parents is how to prepare their children for kindergarten. Learning the alphabet, basic spelling and reading, recognizing and writing numbers and some basic addition and subtraction are often on your local kindergarten's curriculum, but do your children really need to have acquired these skills *before* starting kindergarten? There's a real debate among educators and parents about how much a child should know before kindergarten: even within the same school, teachers and administrators may not agree on what they need to know. But, in the era of No Child Left Behind, what remains clear is that your kindergarten experience may be very different from what your child will experience or is experiencing right now. In other words, consult your prospective or current school for advice on what to expect and how to prepare your child for a successful kindergarten.

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Our very own Miss Joan, however, has some calming words for anxious parents: "Don't stress too much! What's most important for a preschooler approaching kindergarten is to learn to feel comfortable in social

environments and to enjoy coming to school." Miss Joan explains that this is the foundation for all good learning. In other words, regardless of diverging opinions on kindergarten, there are some basic building blocks for a fun and educational kindergarten experience:

1. Developing Social Skills

So much easier said than done! Social skills — listening, taking turns, sharing, following directions — are vital for anyone, of any age. Miss Joan explains that studies have shown that many children who find academics challenging later in life are those who struggle with social and emotional relationships. "It's through play that children learn to navigate relationships with their peers," Miss Joan elaborates. "The toys at school don't belong to them — they need the time and space to learn how to regulate their relationships and figure out how to communicate what they want or need from their classmates." Understandably, working out these complex relationships can't be done by simply sitting at a desk

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and communicating solely with the teacher.

"Help a child learn good social and emotional skills," Miss Joan states, "and good teachers can teach them almost anything. That social and emotional wellbeing is what makes a child feel good about themselves and will help her not quit when faced later with any academic challenges." Miss Joan further maintains that preschool and kindergarten — particularly, the play-based environment at CPNS&K — is an environment not easily replicated in your home. It's at school that these social and emotional skills are best tested and perfected.

2. Fun and Games as Learning

Good teachers strive to make classes fun, so what your child does in school may seem like just play. But the "work" children do *through play* really is important for learning. In every project, song, circle time or free-play period, a child uses her listening skills, patience, and problem solving. Often her communication, analytical skills, and fine motor skills are also developed when doing something that seems innocuous to adults, like playing with blocks amongst a group of other children, building a train track with a peer, or doing an independently-directed craft project involving pincers, beads, and bottle of glue.

Singing songs subtly introduces kids to memorization, rhythm, and tempo, all of which will come in handy for learning reading, math, and science. Something as simple as cutting and pasting can hone fine motor skills, as well as teach such lessons as patience and how to ask for help when the craft doesn't go as planned.

It's important for children to remain enthusiastic about school. At the preschooler- and, most importantly, kindergarten-level, "kids love to play," states Miss Joan. "All studies show that play is relevant to kindergarten. Kids learn through doing things over and over again, but that repetition has to be relevant and fun: play is how you begin teaching things like fine-motor skills, simple counting, and basic social interaction." By trying out new toys or crafts or play settings, "children in kindergarten help develop bigger vocabularies in a way that is relevant but also fun," Miss Joan

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adds. If parents are concerned about whether a child is retaining new knowledge and skills through play at school, try replicating those games at home, Miss Joan advises. For instance, "if we're doing a bingo game in my kindergarten class with upper and lower case

letters, I really encourage my parents to bring home that game and reinforce that knowledge at home. It's fun and easy."

3. Growing Independence and Problem Solving

As frustrating (or scary!) as it is, our kids will ultimately stand on their own two feet – literally and metaphorically. A spirit of independence can be infuriating in a two year old, but remember that it's that independence that will later translate into your child wanting to read and write on her own.

As kindergarten approaches, consider having your child do some basic chores, like making the bed or helping fold laundry. This helps them feel part of the home community; they'll likely be asked to do chores at school so this will help the preparation process.

Also, encourage problem solving. Families can use everyday problems to work on these skills. For instance, if they spill milk because they're holding a cup in a strange way, Sharon Wilkins, author of *Ready for Kindergarten: An Award-Winning Teacher's Plan to Prepare Your Child for School*, says parents should use the opportunity to say, "Can you think of another way we could have done that so you won't spill the milk again?" Even the most basic home activity or problem can provide a sense of autonomy, problem-solving skills, and self confidence.

Miss Joan agrees. If parents are worried about the approach of kindergarten and any academic learning that lies ahead for their children, don't just concentrate on getting them to write their names or memorize the alphabet. Use language in a constructive and fun way. For instance, Miss Joan suggests letting your children hold the books you read to them, show them how you read from left to right, and have them turn the pages. Soon, the "logistics" of reading will become automatic and your child will want to be an independent reader.

"Have your children help you with shopping lists or writing emails or letters to grandparents," Miss Joan suggests. Teach them how to think, organize, and use language and learning will become relevant. "This is an essential part of preparing them for kindergarten," she concludes.

Remember that CPNS&K's half-day Kindergarten class is fully licensed and provides a fun and rewarding play-based curriculum of social development, language, health, science, art, music, literacy, social studies, physical education, math and cooking.

*(Adapted in part from
www.parenting.com, in addition to
original materials)*

ABOUT TOWN ...

- 2/6-3/21 *Peter and the Wolf*, the familiar, classical musical story is expanded into a live theatrical experience for kids at the Imagination Stage in Bethesda:
<http://www.imaginationstage.org/shows-a-tickets/0910-season>
- 3/6-3/7 *Taste of Chocolate*, the annual chocolate festival in Old Town Fairfax, VA, postponed from snowy February:
<http://www.chocolatefestival.net/>
- 3/7 *Artful Afternoon: Adventures in Children's Literature*, at the Greenbelt Community Center, where you can see the play "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" based on the C.S. Lewis classic (3pm); help create a puppet show based on Leo Lionni's book "Swimmy" (1-3pm); or enjoy the "Bugs and Bugsicles" book reading and activity for ages 4+, with Greenbelt author Amy Hansen (1-2pm).
<http://www.greenbeltmd.gov/arts/index.htm>
- 3/12 *Prince George's County Annual Spelling Bee*, at the University of Maryland's Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, where you can see the county's top middle-school student spellers vie for top honors and possibly advance to the National Spelling Bee:
<http://claricesmithcenter.umd.edu/2009/c/performances/performance?rowid=9841>
- 3/27 *Smithsonian Kite Festival*, marking the beginning of the Cherry Blossom Festival, is down at the Washington Monument and is proof that spring has sprung. Check out the kite competitions, hot trick competitions, and make-your-own kite events (or just bring your own and test the wind):
<http://kitefestival.org/>

BOOKS FOR THE SEASON

Is it spring yet? Even if the tulips aren't yet blooming, try these books to get you and your little ones into the new season ...

And the Spring Grass Grew All Around: I'm Going to Read (Level 1), by Emily Bolam. The classic children's song gets the early-reader treatment with colorful illustrations by a well-known illustrator. Ages 2 and up.

Oh Yes! Oh Yes! It's Springtime, by Susan Ring. The Little Einsteins, Disney's little geniuses, are back in this tale of a tulip on its way to the Netherlands to join the fields at springtime. Ages 2 to 5.

It's Spring! by Linda Glasser. A strikingly illustrated book, with cut-paper drawings, tells the story of a little girl observing the arrival of spring and its effect on animals and plants. Includes simple nature-based science projects. Ages 4 to 8.

Mud, by Mary Lyn Ray. A cheerful, poetic homage to the coming of spring and all its muddy fun. Ages 2 to 4.

A Nest Full of Eggs, by Priscilla Belz Jenkins. Part of the popular Let's Read and Find Out Science Series (Level 1), this story shows young readers how baby birds grow inside eggs, hatch, learn to fly, and how they leave for warmer climates in the winter – only to return each spring. Ages 4 to 6.

Rabbits and Raindrops, by Jim Arnosky. A colorful book with simple text tells the story of baby rabbits emerging from their warren in springtime only to spend time with their forest friends during a rainstorm. Ages 2 to 4.

Comments or
suggestions for the
CPNS&K Newsletter?
Items for submission?

Please contact
Laurelle Lo at:
laurellelo@starpower.net



Open House and Fun Fair

Saturday, March 6, 2010 • 10:00am - 1:00pm

We invite you to visit our school and join us for some fun and games in the Rainbow Room. A lunch and bake sale will be held as well as a raffle/silent auction with plenty of activities for the kids to enjoy.

College Park Nursery School is an accredited parent-run cooperative offering half-day classes for 2-4 year olds, half-day kindergarten and extended day after-care until 3:00pm. Co-oping classes allow parents to volunteer in the classroom as teachers' aides up to twice a month.

Visit our website for more information on the school, its class schedules and curriculum: www.cpnsk.com

301.864.5355
4512 College Ave., College Park, MD

We are located on the lower level of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, just behind the Maryland Book Exchange.
We are non-denominational and not affiliated with the church.