

# BUILDING BLOCKS CHRONICLE



## Emily's Corner Message from the Director

Happy New Year!!! December was a wonderful month at Building Blocks! The children's excitement was very contagious and reminded the staff about the magic of the holiday season. A special thank-you to all the families that took part in the Adopt-A-Family gift drive and food drive. The gifts went to a local family

and the food to a local food pantry. What a great way to give back to the community and instill the gift of giving in our children. 2007 will be an exciting year at Building Blocks! We're looking forward to the introduction of family-style meals, individual child portfolios, new and different curriculum approaches,

forming a Parent Advisory Council, and an increase in enrollment! We will be kicking off this year with our Pizza Kit Fundraiser. See your folders for more information. If anyone has any questions, concern, or suggestions please feel free to speak with me anytime. Happy 2007 to everyone!!!

www.BuildingBlocksSchool.com

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January 2007

**\*\*Dates to Remember\*\***  
**January 23-Pizza Kit orders are due**

**January 26 - Vision Screening at 9:00 am for 4 year olds**

## The Importance of Proper Hand Washing

### Did You Know?

**70** is the number of hours a viruses can survive on common surfaces

**80** percent of germs are spread by touch

**300** is the number of surfaces a child can touch in just 30 minutes

NIH/National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Fact Sheet, December 2004

Building Blocks has new hand washing procedures for both staff and children. A copy of the procedure will be available for parents and signs are posted at hand washing sinks throughout the center. Proper hand washing and disinfecting fre-

quently touched surfaces will greatly reduce the risk of transmitting illness-causing germs at the center. It is important that each family member washes their hands when entering the home after work, daycare, shopping trips, play dates, and any other activities outside the home. Disinfect hot spots like doorknobs, toys, the computer keyboard and mouse, light switches, faucet handles, and the remote control frequently.

Look for lots of hand washing information, classroom activities, and discussions with your child this month because proper hand washing will be a focus center wide. Please help us kick off a

healthier new year by reminding your child to wash their hands after arriving at the center each and every day!

### Q&A

**Q** Once one member of my family gets sick, it seems the rest of us are bound to catch it. How can we break the cycle?

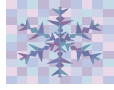
**A** It's almost impossible to control germs that come into your house, but you can help stop those germs from spreading. Make sure every family member washes their hands when entering the home after work, daycare, shopping trips, play dates, and any other activities outside the home. Disinfect hot spots like doorknobs, toys, the computer keyboard and mouse, light switches, faucet handles, and the remote control frequently.

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**WASH HANDS**



### Tuition

Just a friendly reminder that tuition is due on Fridays by 6:00 p.m. A \$20.00 late fee will be posted on Monday to your account if tuition is not received on time. Notices will be placed in your child's folder when a late fee has been applied to your account. If something comes up and you are unable to make a payment on time please notify us. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

### Huron Valley School District Snow Closures

As it is stated in our parent handbook we will be on modified hours when the Huron Valley School District is closed for snow emergencies. The hours are 8:00am—5:00pm. This way we can allow our staff to safely arrive and depart during snow emergencies.

### Vacation Time

As stated in our parent handbook each family that is enrolled full-time receives two-weeks vacation. When requesting to use vacation time please provide a signed note including your child's name and the week your child will not be present at Building Blocks. We ask that vacation time be used for an entire week and not broken down into separate days throughout the year. If you have any questions

## General House Keeping Items

regarding vacation time please contact Emily.

### Lunch and Snack Menus

Monthly lunch and snack menus are posted on the Parent Communication Board on the front porch. Lunch menus will be available for you to take home. The \$10.00 snack fee will be charged to your account at the end of the month if you fail to provide snack. If your snack day falls on a weekend feel free to bring in your snack the Friday before or on the Monday after.

### Winter Clothing

Please remember to bring warm winter coats, snow pants, hat, and gloves or mittens every day for your child.

**Licensing rule R 400.5106 (6) states: The center shall provide daily outdoor play when children are in attendance for 5 or more continuous hours per day, unless prevented by inclement weather or other weather conditions that could result in children becoming overheated or excessively chilled.**

The question, "Why do children need to go outside everyday, even in the winter climate?" becomes a hot topic. Open spaces in outdoor areas encourage children to develop gross motor skills and fine motor play in ways that may be

difficult to duplicate indoors. Against popular belief, cold weather does not make children ill. Studies have indicated that children, who are taken outdoors, even during cold weather for short periods of time, have fewer incidences of respiratory illnesses. Every child benefits from outdoor play-every day.

These guidelines are from the Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Division. It is recommended that the following be taken into account when deciding about outdoor play in winter:

- **Wind-chill factor/temperature at or below 20 degrees F**
- **Severe weather conditions**
- **Knowledge regarding weather related symptoms children may exhibit**
- **Appropriate clothing for conditions is available**

If you have any question regarding outdoor play in the winter months talk to your child's teacher.

## Family Style Dining in Child Care

In family style dining, all food is placed in serving bowls on the table and children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. The caregivers sit at the table with the children and enjoy quiet conversations and a relaxed meal together.

### What are the benefits of Family Style Dining for Children?

- **Children can learn and practice many social skills, such as taking turns, passing food to others, saying please and thank you, and helping to set the table**
- **Children are more likely to try new foods when they see the other children and adults eating them**
- **Mealtimes become an active learning time and offers opportunities for discovery, trial and error, independence, and decision making**
- **Children enhance their fine motor control when scooping, pouring, and using tongs while serving themselves food**





Thank you to all of the families who helped make this past year a fantastic 2006. I would especially like to send out a very heartfelt thank you to all the families who took time and helped us with Adopt-A-Family, it turned out great. In December, we focused and learned about our holidays. Amelia seemed to really take off with her walking skills,

## Ms. Amanda's Baby Dolls

she's almost got it! Emily is so cute showing us more of her personality each day. Megan's smile lights up the room! Kennedy is talking in full sentences. Alex's language skills have expanded greatly. Alivia loved singing her heart out to all the Holiday music. Makenzie can hold a conversation almost as well as an adult. Abbigayle enjoyed being the pretend mommy in the classroom all month. We're looking forward to 2007

and watching everyone grow and change. We wish Amelia a Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday!!! This month we will welcome Ethan who also turns one this month.

A big thank you to Kristen Kasperski from Oakland Family Services for conducting the Ages and Stages assessments for our children under 3 years of age. We hope our parents see this as a useful tool. Have a safe and fun New Year!

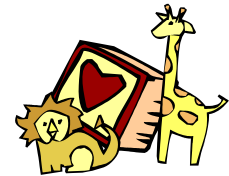


## Mrs. Janet's Toddler Tidbits

This past month the toddlers were busy, busy, busy! Danielle, Karissa, and Lindsey spent sometime with the Young Preschool class and will transition this month! Makenzie, Alivia and Abbigayle will join us on more of a

regular basis now. December was filled with art projects, play dough making and exploring, and regular visits to the literacy room for large motor activities. This month will be filled with lots of new and fun ex-

periences for all.



## Mrs. Mary's Marvels



Welcome 2007. Another year has past. Onto the new year with new friends joining our class. Welcome Karissa, Lindsey, and Danielle! Alexa and David will be moving up to the Pre-K class. I will miss them, but stop by often for one of those "great hugs"! Last month we spent a lot of time

working on holiday projects. Working with scissors has been a "hot" topic for us this past month. Kailee and Hunter love to cut up tiny little pieces and David and Skylar have "mastered the art." The children will be cutting out their art ABC mobiles more on their own. This month we will be using the art

easel with many different materials - foil, newspaper, paper bags and painting on them with glitter, sand, and oil mixed into the paint. Keep a look out for some wonderful "masterpieces."

Ms. Mary



Happy New Year Building Blocks Family!

December was really fun month! Of course, the children had a count down till Christmas every day when we did calendar. Everyone was excited for Santa! We began the month with our "Joy to the World" theme and learned about different cultures and looked at the world map and globe to see where different people live. We listened to music from around the world. The children are doing great with their writing and letter recognition

## Ms. Jackie's Pre-K

and sounds. We have added new words to our word wall. We're working on portfolios and assessments to help us see their progress and what areas need to be repeated or introduced so everyone is well prepared for Kindergarten. Lessons in health and hand washing will be repeated again this month. We have continued with our numbers and understanding of adding and subtracting. Different properties of water were explored with our science experiments. Chris Van Alsbury was our author of the month. The children enjoyed "The Polar Express",

and the projects that we introduced along with book. Many fun art projects were done throughout the month.

I am looking forward to the New Year and I am very proud of the progress all of the children are making! I want to wish all of you a very happy and healthy New Year!

Ms. Jackie





Happy Birthday To You!

January Birthday's

Ethan ~ January 5<sup>th</sup>

Coral ~ January 6<sup>th</sup>

Amelia ~ January 10<sup>th</sup>

Skylar ~ January 17<sup>th</sup>

Staff- Ms. Amanda ~ January 29

The "Reggio Emilia" Approach



The drawing were created by the 5 year-old children at the Anna Frank School in Reggio Emilia, Italy

On January 8<sup>th</sup> all Building Blocks staff members will begin the first of many Professional development trainings on the Reggio Emilia and Project Approach to learning in an early childhood environment.

Loris Malaguzzi (1920-1994) founded the 'Reggio Emilia' approach at a city in northern Italy called Reggio Emilia. The 'Reggio' approach was developed for child-care and education programs serving children under the age of six.

The approach requires children to be seen as competent, resourceful, curious, imaginative, inventive, and possessing a desire to interact and communicate with others. The 'Reggio' vision of the child as a competent learner has produced a strong child-directed curriculum model. Projects begin with teachers observing and questioning children about the topic of interest. Based on children's responses, teachers introduce materials, questions, and opportunities that provoke children to further explore the topic. Thus, curriculum planning and implementation revolve around open-ended and often long-term projects that are based on the reciprocal nature of teacher-directed and child-initiated activity.

Please if you have any question about this approach speak with Ms. Emily.

Tell friends about Us!!

We offer children the opportunity to explore new ideas, practice making choices, feel competent and in control, interact with others and fine tune new skills.



We are looking for a few new friends to play with here at Building Blocks. We are very excited about all the great things the children are doing here and looking for friends to share it with. We have enrollment spaces available and if you know of anyone looking for care, please recommend us.

We will be more than happy to give you \$50 off your weekly tuition for every referral that

*"We are very excited about all the great things the children are doing here and looking for friends to share it with."*

signs up for a minimum of 3 part time days. If you need more information please see Emily.

Goodbye and Hello



This month we will say goodbye to a staff member and hello to someone new. Ms. Amy Jo will be leaving Building Blocks on January 5<sup>th</sup> to take on a manager role at Burger King! Ms. Amy Jo has expressed an interest in working part-time during school breaks and in the summer. Join us in

wishing her good luck! On January 8<sup>th</sup>, Ms. Laura will be joining our staff. Ms. Laura has her Associate's Degree from Oakland Community College in Early Childhood Education and has held several positions in a variety of pre-school setting. Please give her a big welcome.

Be Mine LITTLE CEASAR'S FUNDRAISER

We will have our annual Pizza Kit fundraiser this month. As stated earlier in the newsletter we will start on January 3, and collect all orders by January 23, 2007. We had great success with this fundraiser in the past and we hope to surpass our sales this year. The delivery will be the week of January 29, just in time for "Superbowl Sunday", what a great edition pizza (Lots of pizza) would be to your Superbowl party! We

will be offering a "Free" night of babysitting to any family that sells 20 or more kits. Parents will be able to drop their children off on Friday, February 9, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. for a night of fun and activities. This will be a great way to have a night on the town to celebrate Valentine's Day or any occasion. Please check your file folders for more information.