

News from the First Presbyterian Child Development Center.



## Your Weekly News & Updates from FPCDC

The school year is off to a booming start at FPCDC. Pre-K children are all settling into a new routine. Pre-K is a wonderful year to allow children to grow and develop all of their skills. Kids enrolled in pre-k programs aren't just learning how to recognize letters and numbers; they are also learning critical social skills and the importance of working independently in the classroom.

The theme for all of our classes the next two week is Eric Carle and his wonderful books. I am sure you have all read the classic "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" or "Brown Bear, Brown Bear What do you See?", but these are just two of his many children's stories. The secret of Eric Carle's books' appeal lies in his intuitive understanding of and respect for children, who sense in him instinctively someone who shares their most cherished thoughts and emotions.

If you have any of the Eric Carle library of books in your home and would like for your child to share them with their class, please label the book with a name on the inside cover. Bringing a personal book would be a natural way for children to learn about sharing and helping them boost self-esteem. Stop by and take a look at some of the creative activities going on in the classrooms for the next two weeks. You will be impressed!

**Often people refer to childcare centers as a playschool, and when you come in, you will observe the children playing. Play is the key element of learning in the FPCDC. So if anyone ever says**



**to you, "all they do is play", then you can readily agree and know that your child is in a sound and developmentally appropriate environment!**

## Why Play?

Along with a need for safe and supervised care, many parents enroll their child in a child care or preschool program with the expectation that they will be learning academic skills that will prepare them for future school success. Because many of the parent's early school or care experiences were rigid school environments comprised of worksheets and teacher-directed activities, they are often dismayed to find their children playing for most of the day.

After all, isn't play just an idle waste of time? Surprisingly, child psychologists and educational specialists will answer this with a resounding "No". Many early childhood teachers and child care providers are now recognizing what they have found in numerous research studies: Play is the most effective and powerful way for young children to learn. Often it is said that play is the work of childhood, the primary method for them to learn about themselves, others and their world.

Some scientists have found evidence that play can sculpt the brain and build denser webs of neural connections. When we play we literally exercise our brain cells. The nerve cells in the brain actually thicken and grow as we learn.

*"Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world."  
~ Albert Einstein*

## What is play?

We do not have to be taught to play. It is a universal activity, although it takes many forms. Indeed, children of every culture engage in play. It is true free play that is the most influential in learning and development. This form of play has specific characteristics.

Play is:

- fun
- child-directed and chosen
- process-oriented
- non-goal-oriented

*"Knowledge arises neither from objects nor the child, but from interactions between the child and those objects."  
~ Jean Piaget*

## What does play teach?

Play is the best way for young children to learn the concepts, skills, and tasks needed to set a solid foundation for later school and life success. Most child care programs focus on developing the whole child: socially, emotionally,

physically and intellectually. Many common play activities meet these goals.

<b>PLAY ACTIVITY</b>	<b>WHAT IS LEARNED</b>
<b>Fingerplays</b>	language development, fine-motor skills, counting, coordination, and self-esteem
<b>Circle games</b>	large motor skills, creativity, cooperation, and spatial concepts
<b>Pretend play</b>	social skills (cooperation, turn-taking and sharing) language and vocabulary development imagination, emotional expression
<b>Puzzles</b>	problem solving, abstract reasoning, shapes, and spatial concepts
<b>Block building</b>	a foundation for more advanced science comprehension including gravity, stability, weight, and balance
<b>Sand-box play</b>	measuring, problem solving, and fine motor skills
<b>Cooking</b>	math skills(counting and measuring,) nutrition and science concepts(prediction, cause and effect)
<b>Coloring/Painting</b>	creativity, emotional expression, symbolic representation, fine-motor skills

## Service Spotlight

The spotlight this week is on Ms. Heather. Ms. Heather is our Pre-K assistant in classroom B. She also does the elementary after-school and summer program.

Ms Heather has been with FPCDC for 10+ years. Heather has a CDA, and she is one of the most patient and understanding teachers on staff. Heather has the natural ability to guide children and help them develop their potential. She goes above and beyond for every group of children she has taught. All of the children love her and most of all respect her. Heather handles her job with confidence and composure  
Thank you Ms Heather!



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