

USAA Child Development Center

February 2013



Meet Our Teachers:

Each month we will feature a member of our faculty. We have over 70 faculty members in our building and would like to give you the chance to meet each one of them. Our hope is that we will be able to help you become more familiar with each and every one of our staff members.

Jeremiah Gonzales **Preschool Teacher/Evening Supervisor**





Jeremiah graduated from San Antonio College with an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Education. He has over 120 accredited college hours, a 10 year CDA Certificate and a 2 year Teaching Certificate. Jeremiah has been working in childcare for over 12 years. He worked for the Head Start Program for 3-5 years and worked for private childcare providers for 3 years before coming to the USAA CDC. Outside of work, Jeremiah enjoys reading books of all genres, studying human behavior and body language, taking care of his nieces and nephews and attending Spurs games as he is an avid fan.



Amanda Ibarra **Infant Lead Teacher**

Amanda attended school in Las Vegas, NV to obtain her CDA. Amanda currently has the equivalent of an Associate's Degree and is scheduled to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education at Ashford University in 2014. Since she graduated from high-school in 2001, Amanda has been working with children. Although she has worked with all ages, she has discovered that working with infants is her passion. It gives her great joy to watch them grow. When not working, Amanda enjoys singing, doing arts and crafts, relaxing and spending time with family and friends.

Links to Visit

-  www.facebook.com/brighthorizons
-  www.twitter.com/brighthorizons
-  blogs.brighthorizons.com/momtomom
-  www.brighthorizons.com/community

Important Dates

Postal Party

Thursday, February 14th

Scholastic Book Fair

Thursday & Friday, February 14th & 15th

Parent's Night Out

Saturday, February 16th; 6:30pm—10:30pm

Chili Luncheon

Thursday, February 21st

Preschool Showcase

Thursday, February 28th; 4:30pm—6:30pm

Kitchen Corner

This month we would like to provide you with a recipe for a snack that is easy to make and very nutritious. Ask your children to assist you in making baked apples. Cut your favorite type of apple into slices or chunks, place in a bowl with olive oil and sprinkle with cinnamon and a little bit of sugar. Place the mixture into a baking dish and place into the oven. Bake at 320° for 12-15 minutes. After taking the baked apples out of the oven, let them cool for a few minutes. You are now ready to enjoy your treat by itself or you may pair with a bit of cream cheese for dipping. You and your loved ones are sure to enjoy this delicious and nutritious snack.

~John and Jeanette

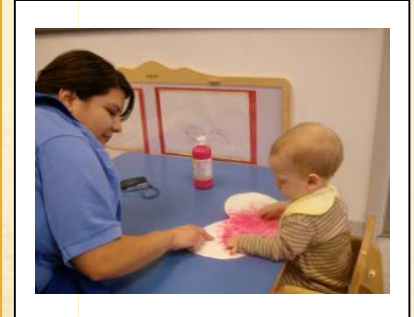
All That We Are Learning...



By: Lori Cassell

Infants

Infants will be focusing on early literacy, speaking and listening this month. Teachers will plan “routine time” talks for each infant. While feeding, diapering, washing hands or moving an infant, teachers will make sure to let him/her know what they are doing and what is going to happen. Infants will also be encouraged to participate in a picture activity. Teachers will cover large pictures with contact paper so that the infants can see and touch them and will place them on the wall or floor. Teachers will choose photos that will interest their infants and will talk to them about what they see. Teacher-child interactions provide a framework for the use of language. Each day, teachers will model communication skills for the infants through the use of expressions, tone of voice, body language and the use of classroom materials.



Toddlers

Toddlers will focus on learning about feelings/emotions, farm animals, the postal system and community helpers such as mail carriers. Children will be encouraged to explore their emotions by making different faces in a mirror and exploring the meaning of their expressions. Teachers have planned activities such as assisting the children in creating an “Old MacDonald” felt board story, baking a delicious strawberry shortcake and encouraging the children to dress up as different community helpers. Children will explore art this month by using a variety of wet and dry art materials to assist them in creating masterpieces. As children show interest in the materials throughout the day, teachers will encourage them to glue, paint, collage and color using various writing utensils.

Transition

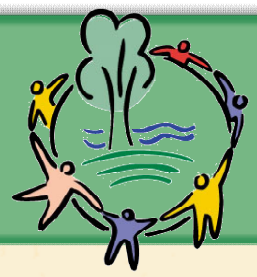
This month, children will be focused on learning about friendship. Planned activities will be centered around acts of kindness, manners and putting others first. Children will be encouraged to write letters to their friends and classmates. They will work together to prepare healthy treats to share with each other. For an art project, children will work together to trace their bodies on paper to make life-size cut outs of themselves. While participating in the project, children will talk about each other’s hair color, eye color and features that make them unique.



Preschool

Preschoolers will be busy discovering the postal system, farm animals, cowboys and friendship. To aid the children in learning more about these topics, teachers have prepared activities such as creating a friendship salad, exploring fingerprints, viewing and discussing pictures of things the children care about such as family and pets and creating classroom mailboxes. Children will also be focused on learning about what kinds of foods are made from each type of farm animal and will be creating animal riddles. The children will learn more about language arts as they write letters to their friends, mail cards to family and read their letters aloud to their friends.

Toward a Better World



Making Happy Happen: Encouraging Optimism and Building Resilience in Children

When parents of a newborn are asked what they want most for their child, they almost always say something along the lines of, “I just want her to be happy”. But, as children grow, we tend to spend most of our energy helping them achieve, whether it be in school, work, hobbies or other endeavors. Somehow we’ve linked happiness and achievement. But the truth is, achievement and happiness are not synonymous, nor does the presence of one guarantee the other. While progressive achievement is a worthwhile goal for children, it should not be pursued instead of (or even worse, at the expense of) happiness. But how do we prepare children to be happy? How can we set our young children on a course that leads to life-long contentment?

One of the best ways to nurture happiness is to prepare children for the adversity which they are guaranteed to encounter in life; in other words, develop their resilience. Ann Masten, a leading researcher on resilience, calls it “ordinary magic,” a commonplace phenomenon that can do wondrous things. Purposefully developing childrens’ naturally resilient tendencies will give them essential life skills, the skills to cope with challenges, adopt a positive perspective, and develop self-confidence and self-worth. These are all essential ingredients for happiness.

Luckily, early childhood teachers and parents have many opportunities to nurture these important resilience skills. At Bright Horizons, we do this each day through: strong and nurturing relationships between teachers and children; our *Toward a Better World* curriculum that teaches about diversity, empathy and acceptance; and daily opportunities for social and emotional development. Here are just a few examples of how this may look in a classroom:

- Two children want the same ball. Rather than telling them how to solve the problem, a teacher supports their conversation as they find a solution themselves.
- An infant is tearful. As the teacher picks him up she says, “I am sorry you are sad. I will help you,” in a warm, nurturing tone.
- A toddler is trying to grasp a toy out of their reach. The teacher moves the toy closer, but does not give the toy to the child, allowing the toddler to achieve success on their own.
- A pre-kindergartener is trying to tie her shoe and is frustrated. The teacher encourages a friend to help her.

Parents also have an endless amount of opportunities to build children’s resilience. Here are a few ideas:

- Giving children responsibilities in the household, from picking up toys to getting the silverware out for dinner.
- Listening when a child is upset or frustrated, but allowing him to attempt to solve the problem on his own or with support if needed.
- Modeling empathy and compassion toward others.
- Teaching, and practicing, coping skills so children learn how to deal with difficult emotions (even in traffic!).
- Using encouragement (i.e. I see you working so hard to write your name. Your lines are getting straighter.) more than praise (i.e. Good job!).
- Focusing on a child’s specific skills, strengths, and interests and celebrating personal achievement rather than aiming for generic goals.

The roots of lifelong happiness and resilience develop in early childhood and should be nurtured throughout children’s lives. We have only a short time with children while they are little; it is up to us to make each moment count and help them so they can achieve the goal set forth for them as newborns, “To be happy.”

Resources:

Ann Masten article: <http://www.pbs.org/thisemotionallife/blogs/ordinary-magic>

Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg’s website: <http://www.fosteringresilience.com/>

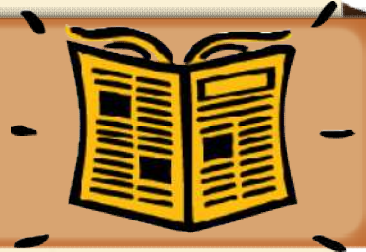
A Parent’s Guide to Building Resilience in Children and Teens, Kenneth Ginsburg (American Academy of Pediatrics Press, 2006)

The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness, Edward Hallowell (Ballantine Books, 2002)

The Price of Privilege, Madeline Levine (Harper, 2008)

Healthy Children, Healthy Lives, Sharon Bergen & Rachel Robertson, Redleaf Press, 2012

Bright Horizons News



Parent Webinar Series

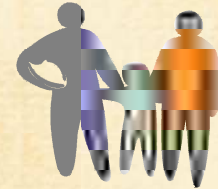
As a way to connect with families of young children, Bright Horizons has created the [Parent Webinar Series](#). Exploring topics from toilet training, to reading, to social responsibility, we have reached out to thousands of families and shared our expertise.

We are happy to announce our next parent webinar:

Good Nights, Great Days: How to Help the Whole Family Get Some Sleep

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

8:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. EST



Once you got past the infant stage, did you think your child would peacefully sleep through the night? Is your child giving up naps before he's ready to? Ready to stop co-sleeping but don't know how? And how in the world are you going to get through the upcoming time change?

Grab a cup of coffee and join [Dr. Craig Canapari, MD](#), pediatrician specializing in the care of children with sleep and breathing problems at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children to find out how to get your children to go to sleep and stay asleep. He will answer many of your questions on sleep...or lack thereof and provide tips and strategies for giving your whole family a good night's sleep.

Registrants of this webinar will receive two special offers. One from our friends at [Barefoot Books](#), the children's publisher known for their imaginative, colorful, fun books including many beloved bedtime stories and the other from [Gunamuna](#), creators of the GUNAPOD wearable blanket featuring the 4 zip all around WONDERZIP.

In addition, 20 lucky webinar attendees will receive a lovely bedtime storybook provided by Barefoot Books.

To register for this webinar, please visit www.brighthorizons.com/sleepwebinar.

Presenter Bio: Dr. Craig Canapari, MD

I'm a pediatrician at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children in Boston specializing in the care of children with breathing and sleep problems. I'm also the Medical Director of the Pediatric Sleep Laboratory at Massachusetts Eye and Ear Institute. I live outside Boston with my lovely wife and our two little boys, who are ages 5 years and 2 years old respectively. They are a riot. Once my first son was born I realized that there is sometimes a gulf between textbook "perfect" parenting, and what actually works in the real world.

Activity at Home: Feed the Birds

Put bird seed in either a purchased or homemade bird feeder. For younger children, simply watching for birds at the feeder will be exciting. For preschoolers and older, document your findings by taking pictures, writing the words or making a chart. If using a chart, you can tally the kinds of birds that are observed. Older children might research birds in books or on the internet at www.nbr.nbs.gov - Bird identification Center (you can even hear bird songs from this site). Make a bird journal with your pictures and results. Have your child note if he sees any differences in varieties of birds in different seasons.