



Newsletter

December 2019

A Message from the President

What a Year 2019 has been for us here at ZALA, lots of changes. I am excited to announce some special changes. First, help me congratulate Rhiannon on her promotion to Director! We are all excited to have her step in permanently and run the day to day, she comes with 13 years' experience running her own child care program in Manhattan. We are all very blessed to have her. Megan Hohn will be stepping into the Assistant Director role along with teaching in the preschool class. We are very excited to have such a dynamic duo taking us onward and upward in 2020! We are also thrilled to announce that Katie Collins, one of our subs, will be joining us permanently and taking on the lead teacher role of the Warp Drive classroom. (See her letter included in this newsletter.) We have appreciated Katie's presence in the toddler classroom for the last year and know our children will blossom under her lead. Help me to congratulate all of these amazing ladies in their new roles.

A Note from the Director's Desk

Zoot Adventure Camp is ready for a new semester. We're emailing registration packets soon so please watch for them.

Please join us for the Zoot Family Holiday Party for all ZALA families on December 12th. ZALA will close at 4pm to allow our teachers to clean and close our center. Miss Petra will have a face painting table. We will have photos with Santa and a dramatic rendition of *The Grinch*. There will be ornament making stations, food and beverages and the party will run until 6 pm.

ZALA is excited to offer a variety of milk options during the month like almond, oat, and soy milk.

Your feedback is valuable to us! We are listening and your voice matters to all of us here at ZALA! Happy Holidays to one and all!

Dates to Remember

December 11: 4:30-5:30 Open House-Meet Katie Collins (new toddler lead teacher); lemonade and cookies will be served.

December 12: 4:00 ZALA closes for Family Holiday Party; all families and staff warmly welcomed and encouraged to attend.

December 23: 7:30 – 3:00 pm. (**ZAC** closes at 3:00)

December 24 - 26: Closed for Christmas Holiday

December 27: 7:30 – 3:00 pm (**ZAC** closes at 3:00) Pajama Day!

December 30: Normal hours and operation (**ZAC**)

December 31: 7:30 – 3:00 (sack lunch from home) (**ZAC** closes at 3:00)

January 1: Happy New Year! ZALA closed.

January 2 & 3: Normal hours and operation (**ZAC**)

Zoot Adventure Camp (ZAC)/PIR: ZAC will run on the days indicated above. Unless otherwise noted, ZAC runs 8 am to 5 pm.

Weekly Happenings:

Music with Mrs. Rachel December 2nd, 9th and 16th. Join us on **Monday, December 16th** for an interactive parent/child Traditional Christmas music class.

Gymnastics Tuesday & Thursday morning on Dec 17th and 19th.

Bookmobile: Friday: December 13th 3:15 – 4:15

A Recap of Last Month

First Contact

November was a fast paced month! We welcomed Emmett to First contact and soaked up all the baby loves. We said farewell to Owen as he moves on to Bridge Classroom. We will greatly miss his kindhearted spirit, loving hugs, and sweet smiles! First Contact was really into stacking towers this month and how very thrilling it is to knock them over just so a teacher could stack them back up to knock back down again! As November comes to a close and the end of the year quickly approaches I just want to send a warm hearted thank you! Thank you for all the support and love. We are excited to close out the year with a month of holiday fun!

– Miss Marisa

Bridge

We welcomed Owen Smith! He has transitioned so well. We are continuing to get more furniture and continually rearranging to keep the classroom fresh and exciting. Outside time is always an adventure with bundling up and taking the long walk to the playground! It's always quite comical. Our main focus for November and December will be to improve our fine motor skills and continuing art projects and interests with that! Every day our goal is to gain more communication skills and learn more sign language and of course independence. Thank you for sharing your wonderful kiddos with us! Looking forward to having a fun filled December!

--Ms. Katie T

Warp Drive

November was such a fun month in Warp Drive! We took many walks to the pond to visit the geese and made the best of the early snow by getting outside as much as possible! The children absolutely love the book "The Gruffalo" by Julia Donaldson, so we read it daily. Several children know the book by heart and "read" along! We made playdough turkeys and explored Thanksgiving by reading plenty of books, finger plays, and we made "turkeys on a stick". We are loving our new weekly Adventure Time in the cafeteria with the Bridge and Holodeck classes listening to stories and doing crafts together. We rearranged the classroom and set up specific areas for dramatic play, building, art, and a new reading nook. We are looking forward to making a few more changes when the rest of the furniture arrives!

In December we are looking forward to experimenting with ice and snow and some Christmas surprises. We will be working with the children on "where things belong" in our classroom, as there are more changes ahead! Keep an eye out for the changes in the classroom layout and functionality.

– Miss Katie C

Holodeck

The holiday season is here and in Holodeck we are EXCITED! In November, our preschoolers learned all about being grateful and thankful and had many class discussions about how to show gratitude. They were overwhelming thankful for food (especially desserts), moms and dads, ZALA, their friends, glitter, and snow. All month long, I was impressed with the kindness, patience, and love they showed to friends and teachers. We had a blast making hot cocoa goodies for the Holiday Bazaar and our little salespeople sold out quickly. We will be using the funds raised to build a beautiful new bookshelf in our room. Our preschoolers also enjoyed learning about turkeys and making some fun artwork. Their favorite silly turkey words are snood and wattle. In December, we are studying holiday traditions and of course, doing some fun Christmas themed activities. Happy Holidays!

-Miss Megan

Developmental Tidbit

Topic: Family Holiday Traditions

The holidays can be so much more magical when we take the emphasis off toys and gifts or filling our schedule with busy events and happenings. The hurried pressure so many parents feel this time of year can get in the way of creating peaceful and fun moments together as a family. Here are some kid-friendly holiday activities to choose from to help fill this special season with meaningful moments and memories to cherish.

1. **Take a holiday trip to library.** Enjoy the holiday section of books in the children's area and don't be afraid to ask the children's librarian if you need help finding a family favorite. Reading with your child not only strengthens your bond together, but also helps improve language and cognitive skills. In Iceland, each family member gets a new book on Christmas Eve and spends the rest of the night enjoying a cozy read-in.
2. **Make homemade ornaments.** There are abundant sources online for creative ideas. You can keep it as simple as cutting out and baking gingerbread cookies, adding a hole at the top using a straw or other object for the string or hanger, and decorate away when the cookies have cooled.
3. **Play "I Spy" with the ornaments on your Christmas tree.** To start the game, turn off all other lights to best enjoy the glow of your lit tree. Play "I Spy" with an ornament you can see, and let your child find the ornament you describe. For added challenge, give the child the beginning sound of an ornament: *I see something that starts with a /P/ sound. Can you find it? Yes! P, pinecone! You found it!*
4. **Give your child a new ornament every year.** (Or perhaps a grandparent wants to do this!) When you decorate the tree together, your child will enjoy finding their ornaments and hanging them in a special spot where they can best see them! When your child grows up, they'll have their own collection to start with their own family.
5. **Fill your home with the special scents of the season** by boiling your potpourri on the stove, lighting scented candles, using an aromatherapy diffuser or making your own pomanders by pressing whole cloves into mandarin oranges, whether in rings or special patterns. Arrange them into a bowl for a centerpiece or enjoy them as part of your decorations.
6. **Write a letter to Santa.** With some help from the United States Postal Service, they can get a letter back (that you write) complete with a special postmark from the North Pole! Find details for letter writing on the usps.com website. The United States Postal Service recommends that you send this letter in the first week of December to allow time for Santa's letter to be mailed from Alaska.
7. **Make your own advent calendar.** This can be as simple as creating a holiday colored paper chain with a countdown to your special holiday. The child tears away a link in the chain each night before bed, seeing a visual countdown to the special day!
8. **Decorate your home windows with paper snowflakes!** Folding and cutting snowflakes can be an annual part of your holiday decorations. As your child grows older, they will be able to help more and more!
9. **Adopt a family or give gifts through a local charity.** Many local nonprofits run programs to let you give special gifts to a family in need, the food bank or the humane society. The magic of an anonymous gift to can be a very special joy for your child to participate in.
10. **Make reindeer food to sprinkle outside on Christmas Eve.** There are many recipes for reindeer food such as apple and carrot shavings, mixed with oats. They even make edible glitter these days, but check your ingredients before sprinkling to be sure they are safe for birds and other wildlife. Bundle up and go outside on Christmas Eve for a short walk together after dinner, sprinkling reindeer food and enjoying Christmas lights nearby. You may even have some favorite holiday songs you like to sing together on this special walk in the frosty air—or stop and make some snow angels!

Remember, in the early years of life, the motto is always, **Less is More!** One way to avoid overwhelm, tantrums and meltdowns is to limit your schedule and stay home where you can, enjoying the simple joys you can create right under your own roof. With warmest wishes from all of us at Zoot Adventure Learning Academy and Zoot Adventure Camp for a peaceful and joyous holiday season.

Zoot Adventure Camp / PIR Camp

Zoot Adventure Campers have been enjoying field trips with our new ZALA van! They have visited the Museum of the Rockies, Rocky Creek Farm and the Bozeman Maze in the past month or so, and we're thrilled to be able to get them out more often as part of our camp days together. Teachers Deb Hurn and Savannah Sloan have planned and led some fun-filled days for our campers! Check the dates to remember section of each month's newsletter for news that applies to our PIR Camps.

Welcome Miss Katie Collins

Hello ZALA families,

With Rhiannon transitioning into her new role as Director, I'm excited to transition from substitute teacher to lead teacher in Warp Drive! I will be starting a more regular full-time schedule on January 6th. In the meantime I will continue to work closely with Petra who has stepped into that classroom. We are working on a new classroom layout and curriculum plans to help enhance the Warp Drive experience for all.

I just wanted to take a minute of your time to introduce myself. I have a Bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Early Childhood Education. My childcare experience includes 2 years in a daycare setting and 6 years as a full-time nanny. The 11 months that I have been working part-time at ZALA while continuing my full-time nanny responsibilities has served a dual purpose: I have been able to provide a supportive transition for the children as they move from home care to preschool; and my work at ZALA has confirmed for me that my personal and professional goals are perfectly aligned with the company's commitment of "giving children a safe and trusting environment to grow and explore".

I am very excited to continue to guide and watch your children develop and grow. Good communication with parents is critical to that goal, so I look forward to getting to know each of you better and encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,
Katie Collins
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Katiec@zootadventurelearningacademy.com

MusikNote December: Curriculum

Welcome to the last month of 2019. Your children have been learning through music for the past three months as we have seen the end of summer, the very short fall and now into winter. Our musical journey follows the cycles of seasons along with integrating “songs that teach.” On this last month of the year, I want to share details of the music programming I use in class and some resources your family can utilize at home.

The core of my music classes is based on the philosophy and program guidelines created by Dr. Lorna Lutz Heyge and Audrey Sillick. In 1994, these two ladies merged experiences and expertise of music education with childhood education to develop the music curricula known as MusikGarten. The original curriculum is written for parents and children to do together as a group community class. I taught these family classes for many years throughout the Gallatin Valley and loved how the music and movements met the needs of children. So, when given the opportunity to teach a music class for children alone, I used the effective core principles of the MusikGarten curriculum with modification for a classroom setting.

MusikGarten uses classic folk music repertoire and a holistic approach. The songs selected have depth and long-standing tradition. The music is categorized by function and is based on themes from everyday life that nurture independence and human development. I use the weekly programming and then supplement with other children song writers to bring repertoire expansion of various musical styles. These “songs that teach” add music, rhyme and poems to daily activities to increase memorization and add an extra element of fun. I also include some oldies, to keep my generation of music alive.

What you can do to continue the music at home...The number one, easiest option is to sing, sing, sing. Children do not judge your voice, nor should you let your own critiques keep you from belting out in song! Do an online search of “kid songs parents can sing,” and you will be amazed at the song lists that appear and how many of these songs you know but just needed the title to get you started. YouTube has videos by Jack Hartmann, who is one of my favorite children song composers! He is silly but not over the top and his music has a wide age range with multiple focus areas. From Amazon you can purchase music by Cedarmont Kids, Wee Sing, Raffi, Kiboomers, Imagination Movers, Choo Choo Soul and Twin Sisters or stream the various “Preschool” or “Kids” channels.

When selecting online songs, look for music that have simple and catchy repetition to encourage children to find their singing voices. Use songs with hand and finger plays to increase dexterity. Songs that specify individual movements or are for partners develops body control. Calming songs that go well with rocking and humming increase focus and listening skills. *Any* song can be accompanied with your own version of an instrument to integrate more developmental milestones of coordination and creativity. Look up “DIY Musical Instruments” to see paper plates, cans, balloons and strings be transformed into a home band.

Families can purchase MusikGarten music sets through the company as family packets for Toddlers and Preschoolers. The family packets are based on age, theme and season. I have listed some purchasing options of the Fall to Spring programs below. Let me know if you have questions and/or are interested in purchasing from MusikGarten. If we have enough interest, I can place a group order for shipping discounts. Email rachelwatermanstudio@gmail.com with your order interest by **Wednesday, December 4th** so we have an idea of quantity.

I am happy to provide parents with a list of the specific “teaching songs” that I use in class. All of these “teaching songs” are available for purchase from online music sources. Though, for free, the Bozeman Library has a good Children’s music collection, mostly in CD format. Also, I am always looking for new music and would love to hear about your family favorites that I could add to my collection!

Music in *any form* nourishes a child’s body! With the upcoming holidays, it is a great time to continue making music at home.

Join us for music class on **Monday, December 16th** as we end the year with a Traditional Christmas music class.

MusikGarten Purchasing Options:

Toddler Packets (4 Themes: Sing, Dance, Play, Clap) Include: Song book, CD, digital download and instrument @ \$37 each plus shipping.

Preschoolers Packets (2 Themed packets: Wind, Sun) Include: Song book, 2 CD's each theme, digital downloads, listening cards @ \$46 each or \$84 together plus shipping.

Instrument Sets 1, 2, 3 can Include: jingles, sticks, scarves, grooved sticks, drum, rattles, bean bag, sand blocks, finger cymbals, cloth bag @ \$18 to \$49.95 depending on selection plus shipping.

*Contact me with product questions and specifics. If you are interested in ordering MusikGarten products as a group for shipping discounts, please let me know by **Wednesday, December 4th**.*

Sincerely,

Mrs. Rachel

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406-570-0179

