



# Newsletter

## November 2019

### A Note from the Director's Desk

And just like that, autumn turned to frosty winter and the holidays are at our door. We've been bundling up in order to provide regular outside time, regardless of weather. Thank you for being diligent about sending warm outdoor gear every day!

We are pleased to announce that our Assistant Director, Rhiannon Reardon will be shifting out of leading the toddler classroom in order to provide more mentoring support to the lead teachers at ZALA. We are excited to share her wealth of wisdom with the rest of our team in a more powerful way, and we'll keep you apprised as to the transition of a new lead teacher into this classroom. Rhiannon has been a pillar at ZALA from day one in so many ways, and we are thrilled to see her be able to flourish professionally in a way that speaks to her strengths while benefiting the rest of our program.

After reviewing the data from the recent survey on holiday hours, (with our thanks to the 27 respondents) we have decided to close ZALA on the two days around Christmas, the 24<sup>th</sup> and the 26<sup>th</sup>. Supporting Zoot's mission is the reason this program exists, yet our numbers were significantly low enough to close without creating a hardship for our Zoot or membership families. We hope the entire community at ZALA will benefit from these days with family and enjoy a brief pause before what is bound to be a very busy year ahead!

If you have any questions, ideas, concerns or compliments, send 'em our way! We are listening and your voice matters to all of us here at ZALA! As we pause to give thanks, you and your families are at the top of our list!

Happy Thanksgiving, Victoria Brailsford

### Dates to Remember

**November 1:** Pajama Day!

**November 11:** Veteran's Day Holiday: 7:30 – 3:00 pm (our kitchens are closed: please pack a lunch for your child this day)

**November 27:** 7:30 – 12:30

**November 28-29:** Closed—Thanksgiving Holiday

**December 12:** 3:30 pm ZALA closes for Family Holiday Party starting at 4 pm; all families and staff warmly welcomed and encouraged to attend.

**December 23:** 7:30 – 3:00 pm.

**December 24 - 26:** Closed for Christmas Holiday

**December 27:** 7:30 – 3:00 pm

**December 30:** Normal hours and operation

**December 31:** 7:30 – 12:00 (no lunch served at ZALA)

**January 1:** Happy New Year! ZALA closed.

**January 2 & 3:** Normal hours and operation

### Weekly Happenings:

**Music** with Mrs. Rachel every Monday morning

**Gymnastics** every Tuesday & Thursday morning in the cafeteria

**Bookmobile** every other Friday: Nov. 8 & 22

# A Recap of Last Month

## First Contact

October was spook-tacular month in First Contact! We loved the early weeks as the leaves began to fall and were very fascinated in the later weeks as the snow began to fly. We welcomed baby Isla and her sweet smile to the class. The twins were very excited to move to the Bridge room with Miss Katie and old friends - we will miss their sweet giggles. We are excited for the coming months as the year winds down.

– Miss Marisa

## Bridge

Hello! What a fast month! Each month seems to be going by faster and faster! As the kiddos are growing more and more each day! Macy and Paxton are thriving in Warp Drive, although we miss them!!

We have welcomed Elyck & Eyrly full time and we are a happy class of 4 girls!

Our favorite things are Gymnastics on Tuesday & Thursday! We love running & jumping!

Also Music with Ms. Rachel is a hit! We rearranged our classroom for something fresh and got some new toys! Our biggest goals are continuing over all Independence and communication!!

Happy November!

Best,

Ms. Katie

## Warp Drive

Well it appears winter is upon us with very little time to enjoy fall. In October we learned about scarecrows, leaves, acorns, and apples and pumpkins. We went on walks to collect leaves, acorns, and apples. We noticed the different colors leaves turn in fall and how bare trees are without their leaves. November we will learn about Pilgrims and Native Americans, sharing and getting along with others, and what we are grateful for. November will be a month of many transitions. Paxton and Macy will be fully transitioned into Warp Drive. I am taking on a new role in ZALA which will take me out of the toddler room as a lead teacher. I will see you all on a regular basis still. This new role will give me an opportunity to spend time in each classroom, mentoring and shadowing staff, and assisting with the children in each class. A new toddler lead teacher will be announced soon. During this process you will see some changes in the classroom environment to provide more interest areas. Please share with the teachers any information that would be helpful to them about your child, family, or expectations.

– Miss Rhiannon

## Holodeck

In the words of one preschooler, "Miss Megan, why is there so much snow in the fall when there should only be snow in winter?" This October we have been making the best of the unexpected snowfall by gearing up and heading out to romp in the snow. Some favorites have been forging new paths through fresh snow and having snowball fights. We spent the month learning all about apples! The preschoolers enjoyed apple taste tests and art inspired by Dr. Suess' *Ten Apples Up On Top*. Their absolute favorite activity was cutting up apples to make into applesauce. After a taste test, we put our homemade applesauce into a dehydrator to make some delicious fruit leather. Yum! After some additional Halloween themed learning, we are excited to spend time trick-or-treating in our amazing costumes this Halloween!

– Miss Megan

# Developmental Tidbit

## Topic: Pathway to Independence

In early childhood, developmentally appropriate practice is about giving our little ones enough support and help to flourish while recognizing that they are always changing, and too much help, or help for too long can get in the way of optimal development. As early childhood guides and teachers, we work collaboratively with the child through the stages of acquiring abilities that lead to the next stepping stone towards functional independence. We observe carefully, share with one another, and learn together about how to best support each child's individual needs.

*"When babies feel well nurtured and can rely on the comfort and warmth of their parents or other caregivers, they are taking the important first step on this important journey of learning through relationships...the ability to work with others to get what he needs gives a child the confidence to operate in a complicated world."*

Stanley Greenspan, M. D. **The Secure Child**

### Transitions

Transitions from one area of the program to the next age grouping can create a bit of uncertainty and hesitation. Experienced teachers reflect on seeing many children remain in environments which no longer meet their needs only to eventually "regress" a bit and seem "not ready" socially or otherwise to shift to the next level. As we think back to the times when families were much larger and may have included cousins and extended family, transitions were much more fluid between ages and activities than the walled-off separation of ages in a licensed childcare center. This makes for an adult-managed transition as we plan for days for the child to spend part of a day with the older group and teacher and start to become acquainted with the differences there. While we do this, we want to maintain a certain amount of flexibility throughout the process in order to meet the needs of each child.

Like all transitions, observation and planning help pave the way for a peaceful bridge from one area to the next. There are clear physical, social and cognitive changes that young children undergo as part of this journey. It is ideal to avoid "holding patterns" for too long as children are rapidly experiencing phenomenal growth in the first five years of life. The child can only construct him/herself in an environment that truly meets developmental needs, it is their work to test their abilities with what they find. For this reason, we strive to turn over some of the materials and activities without re-arranging the entire environment, which can prove unsettling.

As a rule of thumb, we avoid doing things for children that they can do themselves to support this pathway to independence. Helping children do more often this involves simplifying activities, modeling skills and allowing children to practice. For toddlers, this might mean turning on and off the faucet, refilling a pet's water bowl or bottle, or learning how to pump on a swing. Preschoolers typically relish the opportunity to be in charge of their own environment. Yes, they make many mistakes and often forget to carry out tasks, but we try not to be discouraged by these speedbumps. Even if it is easier for us to complete many tasks rather than ask a child to help, we want to remember that with a lot of practice, encouragement and patient teaching, they will get there, and they need these opportunities to care for their world.

*"Across the forehead of every child are written the words: Help me to do it all by myself!" Maria Montessori*

## Welcome, new teachers Savannah Sloan and Sheylah Bos

Zoot Adventure Campers were fortunate to spend a couple days with our new teacher Savannah Sloan in October who brings a wealth of experience in outdoor learning. Savannah will also be spending time in ZALA and we're so happy to see her join our team. Sheylah Bos joined our group of substitute teachers so she will be another new face that you'll see in our spaces.

Please help us give them a warm welcome! We also have a departing teacher, Kalindra Frankhuisen who will be pursuing other opportunities. We wish her well!

### A Note from Miss Rachel at Musikgarten

#### Musik Note: Fingerplays & Sign Language

Taking October's music insert about Body Awareness a step further, we explore the child's hands with finger plays and sign language. Finger Plays is the common term used for activities involving the hands and fingers. Ask your child to sing "Five Little Pumpkins" to see a finger play in action. Sign language is incorporated to increase concentration on gross and fine motor movements. Watch a child focus on moving an individual finger or trying to form a specific sign and you will see the process of practice reaping reward...it is such a confidence boost for children as they gain control of their bodies!

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**Toddlers** delight in the rhythmic speech that usually accompanies touching and manipulating each individual finger during finger play activities. Some children enjoy doing the finger plays on their own, but others may ask for help every once in a while. Either way, finger plays and sign language are beneficial in terms of independent finger movement, listening development, word association and an increased vocabulary.

Finger plays with **Preschoolers** are very simple but necessary activities as children continue to grow into themselves. A key factor of finger plays is dexterity. Dexterity is required for so many activities related to school, athletics, child play and daily life, but *a child's fingers are one of the last things of which s/he gains control.* We encourage hand and finger development through simple songs, chants, signs and rhymes while reinforcing counting and multiple language skills.

– Mrs. Rachel

