

Preschool Special Education

Teacher Brianne's Newsletter

April 2025

What we worked on in March

● PLAY ●

Play has been shown to be a **powerful way to enhance learning and brain development** and more specifically enhance their **executive function (EF) skills** (Gibbs et. al, 2021). Play is how children explore their world and learn in both an explicit and implicit manner. Research shows that young children with well-developed executive functioning skills is an **important predictor for later academic and life success**

(GIBBS ET. AL, 2021)



 **Dr. Roseann**
CALM BRAIN | HAPPY FAMILY

Coming up...

April 7–11 - Spring Break, No school/sessions

May 12—Special Ed PTSA Meeting 6:30

May 26 - Memorial Day, No school/sessions

June 6 - Early release (afternoon sessions canceled)

June 13 - Last day of school for preschool students

Education Spotlight: Play for Academic Skill Building

Did you know that play is not the opposite of learning, but that when children are playing that they *are* learning and supporting their academic growth? Play is essential for learning, **especially** in early childhood. We have research in the field of neuroscience that demonstrates that not only does physical movement (which is the basis for the way young children play) creates new brain cells—call neurogenesis; it also shows that play builds new neural connections between different parts of the brain. Previous newsletters discussed how play helps develop cognitive skills (executive function) needed for engaging in rigorous academic learning. That is all setting the stage, however, as the play that your child engages in is also directly developing academic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Pretend play lays a foundation for learning to read and write because making up stories enables kids to develop a sense of narrative. Moreover, oral language development is vital to literacy. Children who can play with words, discriminate syllables and individual sounds, recognize or make rhymes are primed for reading! Those skills are called phonological awareness and children who are fluent in those skills (because they spend time playfully saying silly words) become strong readers. Play enables children to “symbolically represent” ideas (constructing, pretending, scribbling). Symbolic representation is KEY for learning to read and write because written words symbolically represent spoken words! Many mathematical concepts are also embedded into play activities where children explore concepts of size, weight, dimension, quantity, scale, ratio, etc. which are best discovered through open-ended materials such as blocks.