

Preschool Special Education

Teacher Brianne's Newsletter

May 2025

What we worked on in April



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/sessions for preschool students

Education Spotlight: All Play is Valid

It is ok if the way that autistic children play looks different than the way that their neurotypical peers play. Just because it looks different, it doesn't mean it's not play or that it doesn't hold value or lead to the same incredible outcomes we have discussed in the previous newsletters. All play is valid and valuable. Some children, especially those with autism may engage in play that seem repetitive or unconventional such as lining up toys, spinning objects or focusing on very specific details or scripts. Has anyone ever commented or have you ever wondered if the child knows *how* to play or how to play *appropriately*? Well, to answer that question, you have to consider another question: what is play? There are several theories and definitions, but certainly two aspects that are consistently agreed upon include intrinsic motivation and pleasure. So, if a child is driven to engage in a certain activity and truly enjoys it, we should consider this as their form of play instead of trying to push them into playing like neurotypical children their age when they don't enjoy it. Play comes from a child's own interests, strengths and needs. I asked members of a discussion group of Autistic individuals to relate their experiences with play as children. There were so many who wrote about the depth of learning and joy that their play activities brought to them, even though it was misunderstood by others. They spoke of intricate stories and imagined worlds or scenarios happening in their minds which helped them practice social interactions long before they were ready to engage in them with others. Many also described their love for designing, organizing and tinkering with objects that helped them understand processes or mechanisms.