

# Preschool Special Education

Teacher Brianne's Newsletter

November 2024

## What we worked on in October

Teacher educator Barb O'Neill calls play the 'linchpin' to supporting challenging behavior. I seek to use play as a basis for my approach in providing special education services for whatever goal I am working on with a student. On the outside, someone might observe a teacher playing with a child or facilitating play between children, but in reality, I am using that 'linchpin' to create meaningful, authentic opportunities for skill practice that will drive the child's development along the path of growth, just as this wagon wheel is held together with this linchpin to travel to new places.



## Coming up...

**November 2**– Imagine Museum Event from Special Education PTSA 5:30–7:30

**November 4–5** Parent-Teacher Conferences. No school for preschoolers. If your child is NOT in ECEAP in the Everett School district, please use Parent Square link to sign up for a meeting time either on zoom or in person.

**November 11**–Veteran's Day, No school

**November 18** – Special Education PTSA meeting (the zoom link will be emailed to members)

**November 27–29**–Thanksgiving Break, No school/sessions

## Information and Education Spotlight: Play

I decided to dedicate the newsletters this year to play as it is such a crucial aspect of growth and development for young children. Each month I will provide information on how play impacts different areas of development or how it can be utilized as a powerful tool in supporting that development. Mentor and early childhood educator coach who specializes in supporting teachers to intervene with challenging behaviors, Barb O'Neill, says, "Play is crucial for truly transforming challenging behavior in early childhood. That's because children learn everything best through play! Research has found that children acquire the following skills through play: self-regulation, empathy, cooperation, direction-following, concentration, focus and paying attention, persistence, turn taking and sharing. Play is one of the best ways for children to learn "self-regulation" because when children are invested in play they are more likely to compromise to keep play going. Play time grows kids brains! Play builds new neural connections between different parts of the brain... Many teachers report seeing a decrease in challenging behavior after spending even a few minutes per day playing with children who exhibit challenging behaviors." A great theorist in the field of child development, Lev Vygotsky is quoted to say "In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself", which means that children are able to perform skills beyond their typical ability when they are engaged in play. Let's be smart as parents and teachers to use this amazing tool of play to engage our children in being their best selves. I will give some specific examples and suggestions of how to use play and playful behavior to encourage cooperation in the next newsletter. If you are really interested and can't wait, you can check out the book How to Talk So Little Kids Will Listen, where I learned the strategies.

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