

# HUSKY HAPPENINGS

[www.huskyhouseforkids.com](http://www.huskyhouseforkids.com)

Hello from  
Husky House!

*Greetings families!  
We've had an incredible month filled with laughter, learning, and unforgettable moments. Here's a look at what we've been up to and what's coming next!*

## HUSKY PUP DECEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Pups December Themes are **Grassland Biomes & Fair Play**

This month Pups will have an emphasis on games, both cooperative and competitive.

Introducing students to new games provides an engaging way to practice listening skills and following rules. Competitive games include a clear outcome with a winner, giving children opportunities to learn how to manage disappointment, handle losing gracefully, and celebrate success with humility.

Cooperative games have children work together to make the best decisions for a winning outcome. Through these activities, students build social-emotional skills while having fun.



## WHAT'S COMING UP FOR HUSKIES?

### Big Events:

**STEM Club (Thursdays):**  
making edible geodes, DNA models and a mystery bag engineering challenge

**Art:**  
Comic Book Creating, Watercolor in the style of Monet, Collage in the style of Matisse

**Large Motor/ Movement:**  
Bubble Run, Balloon Tennis, Werewolf Tag, Bed Sheet Ping Pong

**Top Dogs (Tuesdays):**  
4th & 5th graders have opportunities just for them to play silly games, participate in community service projects and lead special projects (like slime making!) for the Husky Pups

*We're so grateful for the energy and enthusiasm your children bring to Husky House. As we head into the final stretch of our 2025, we want to thank you for entrusting us with their care...*



You can reach us anytime  
at 925-283-7100 or [officestaff@huskyhouseforkids.org](mailto:officestaff@huskyhouseforkids.org)

# Risky Play...

## Important Dates

**December 19** is an early dismissal day. If your child is regularly scheduled for Friday care, we will be expecting them at their earlier timing at no charge.

**December 22 & 23 and January 2** are Pajama Party Days. These are additional sign ups through the Eleyo system. Attendees are encouraged to come comfy in their PJs. Please contact us if you'd like to be added to the waitlist.

**December 24 through January 1** Husky House is CLOSED

**January 19** Husky House is CLOSED for staff CPR & First Aid training and certification.

## Reminder

Please let us know ahead of time if your child will not be attending on their regularly scheduled day.

You can contact us by email or phone 925-283-7100



Let's take a moment to remember the thrill of risky play from our own childhood. Those daring adventures we embarked upon with wide-eyed excitement. Risky play is vital for children! It's a chance for them to explore the world with all its wonders and challenges.

When children engage in risky play, climbing high, jumping over obstacles, or conquering new territories, they develop their physical skills, learn resilience, and cultivate problem-solving abilities.

It's about more than just fun; it's about fostering their independence and nurturing their confidence. So let's encourage and celebrate the joy of risky play, reminding ourselves of the incredible experiences that shaped us, while supporting our children in creating their own memories and growth.

We want to highlight an aspect of play we believe is important – **risky play** – and its impact on your children's growth and development. Our instinct as guardians is to protect our children at all costs, but sometimes, taking a step back and letting them take risks is exactly what they need to thrive.

Risky play refers to those activities that make us say, "Oh no, be careful!" You know, like climbing trees, exploring new places, or even trying out physical challenges. As it turns out, research tells us that these "risky" activities are actually incredibly beneficial for your children. They help them grow physically, mentally, and emotionally—pretty amazing, right?

There was a study published in the Journal of Playwork Practice that said risky play "allows children to push their physical limits, learn to assess risks, and gain confidence in themselves" (Sandseter, 2007). So, when they're climbing that tree or attempting a daring jump, they're actually developing skills that will serve them well in life.

And that's not all. Risky play also helps children become more resilient and emotionally strong. According to Professor Ellen Sandseter, taking risks and facing small challenges helps children develop "emotional resilience, coping mechanisms, and adaptability" (Sandseter, 2009). So, when they experience a few bumps and scrapes along the way, they're building up the emotional muscles they'll need to handle whatever life throws at them.

We get it. Safety is always our top priority as caregivers. But here's the thing—we can find a balance between keeping them safe and allowing them to spread their adventurous wings.



# How to support risky play...

Here are a few ideas to help you **let go of the "be careful" instinct** and give your children the freedom to take risks at home:

- **Set up a safe play zone:** Create a supervised play area where they can explore, climb, and experiment without major risks. Make sure the space is free from hazards and use safety equipment when needed.
- **Believe in their abilities:** Trust that your children can assess risks and make decisions. Encourage them to take calculated risks and believe in their judgment. Of course, offer guidance and support *when they need it*, but let them feel that sense of accomplishment when they conquer a challenge.
- **Keep those lines of communication open:** Talk to your little adventurers! Encourage them to share their thoughts and concerns about the activities they want to try. Listening to their perspectives will help you understand their point of view and support their decision-making process.
- **Start small, then go big:** Begin with age-appropriate challenges that nudge their boundaries a bit. As they gain confidence and skills, gradually increase the difficulty level. It's like unlocking new levels in a video game—slowly but surely.
- **We have an amazing place nearby where children are encouraged to try new things and take initiative - Adventure Playground on the Berkeley Marina.** (it's one of our favorite field trip destinations)
- **Lead by example:** Show your children that taking risks and embracing challenges is part of life. Let them see you stepping outside your comfort zone and trying new things. Children often learn by watching us, so be their fearless role model.

Yours in Play,  
**The Husky House Team**



# STEMsters

We were approached by STEMsters, a science club at Acalanes High School, who asked if we would be interested in having them volunteer with our program.

The STEMsters and their academic advisor come lead science experiments on Fridays every few weeks. Their first project with us was Marshmallow Launchers.

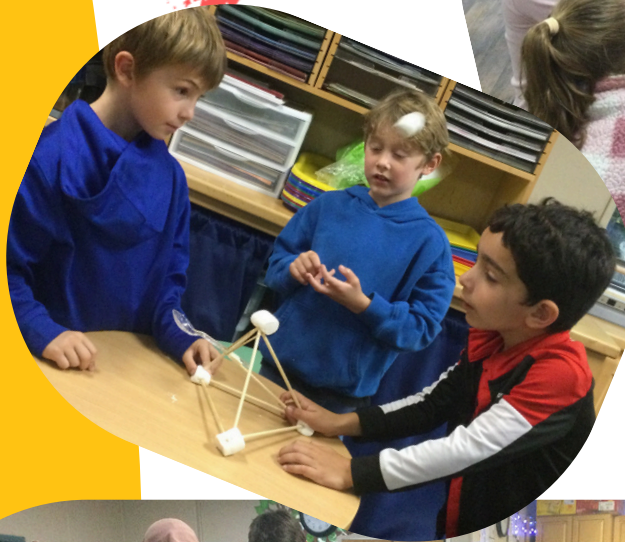
These older volunteers provide a positive social experience for our Huskies. Seeing “cool kids” come mentor them in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math creates excitement to try new things and learn new concepts.

## Meet Darcy, Teacher

I've worked in education and child care since 2005, and I've been a part of the Husky House community since 2018. My favorite part of working here is building strong, meaningful bonds with students and helping create programs that let them explore, grow, and lead.

I love developing our STEM Club and contributing to the growth of our Top Dog program. I'm passionate about project-based engineering, hands-on tinkering, and finding creative ways to spark curiosity.

More than anything, I'm committed to bringing people together, whether through sports, group games, or shared projects. I take pride in creating a vibrant, high-energy community where students feel connected and inspired.





# WHY WE PLAY

## ...with Healthy Risk!

Children look to the adults in their lives to keep them safe. But it's also our responsibility to encourage them to take calculated risks.

Risk is a necessary part of every day. In our effort to protect the children we care so much about, it may sometimes be tempting to remove all risk. **In the long run, however, that may actually cause more harm.** Children need to be able to make calculated risks, meaning the risk has been thought through, weighed, and judged to be worthwhile. Children need lots of experience with risk to help them become proficient with these calculations.

Consider a child who has been protected from every possible challenge. This child would in fact never learn how to be cautious. **Without taking safe, calculated risks, children miss out on learning how to gauge their abilities and manage risk.**

As famed writer, Roald Dahl, declared, ***"The more risks you allow your children to make, the better they learn to look after themselves."***

Along with learning to calculate risks for careful decision making, children also gain experience overcoming the challenges associated with risk – even when that means getting up after failure. This builds **confidence and resilience.**

Conversely, if children are never allowed to take reasonable risk, they become subject to **learned helplessness**, believing they aren't capable of taking on challenges, or that failure is something always to be avoided.

Some mental health professionals believe that **an over-avoidance of risk may actually contribute to anxiety in children.** This may be due, in part, to a hypersensitive view of risk. Additionally, it's interesting to note that the treatment of clinical anxiety involves approaching risk in small doses and recognizing that it can be managed. Children who are allowed to make healthy, calculated risks are essentially engaging in their own on-going, natural type of therapy.

Children need to be allowed to risk spilling water in order to learn how to pour, risk skinning a knee to learn how to run, and risk hurt feelings to learn how to be a good friend. Taking these kinds of risks within appropriate boundaries and in a safe and supported environment is **key to learning and healthy development.**

**That's why we play with healthy risk!**

