HUSKY HAPPENINGS
MAY 2026

THANK YOU FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR

As we are closing out another school year, we wish to thank you for the trust you have granted in allowing us to be part of your children's lives and their developmental journey. We look forward to more laughter, learning, and PLAY next year.

LITERACY

Children are hardwired to be curious about the world around them. They can't help it! It's like their inner-scientist is always on the lookout for new stuff to figure out.

ALWAYS TIME FOR BOOKS

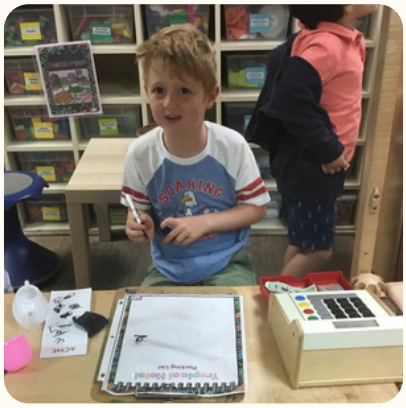
IMPORTANT DATES

- May 1 - Summer tuition due
- May 25 - HH Closed
- May 28 - last day of school and early dismissal
- May 29 - Party Day

DONATION REQUEST

Our staff will be ending the year with another funny-money auction. If you've been doing some spring cleaning and have anything you can contribute (like candles, hostess gifts, white-elephant style gifts, gift cards you won't use) please bring them to the HH office.

Literacy in Play



Studies have shown that PLAY lights up the brain's happiness centers. When learning through play, their brains release chemicals like dopamine that say, "Hey, this is fun, keep going!" This pushes them to explore even more. The National Association for the Education of Young Children found that children who learn through play excel at language and reading skills. Turns out, play is like a VIP pass to all-around development.

As children see letters and words around them, they start piecing together the puzzle of how they work. This natural curiosity is their secret weapon for diving into language.

Literacy is everywhere...

Look around. Letters, words, books, magazines, signs, advertisements, prices, even the bottom of shoes. There are letters and words surrounding us. Children are intrinsically wired to make meaning about the world around them and will continually question what words mean & say once they have an interest. The primary way that you can kickstart this interest - READ. Read at home. Read to them. Let them see you reading. Read out loud when you are making a recipe. Read directions when you are putting something together. Show them that words have purpose and value. They will catch on and once they start, it is hard to stop them!

Children are like natural-born literacy explorers, all through the magic of play! As early childhood educators, we see firsthand the amazing ways kids dive into learning about letters, words, and all things language - without ever having an adult put a worksheet in front of them.

Letters are everywhere! From cereal boxes to street signs and, yes, even those magnetic alphabet letters on the fridge, children are drawn to letters like those magnets. They ask questions like, "What's that word?" or "Why does that letter look different?" These little interactions kickstart their curiosity and wonder and this is the most organic way children learn the alphabet and concepts about print.

Play is like their superhero training-ground for learning. When they're lost in their imagination (or creative play flow), they cook up scenarios that involve reading and writing. You might catch them playing teacher, scribbling secret notes, or jotting down their thoughts in a little notebook. These imaginative activities not only help with their fine motor and hand-eye coordination skills but also set the stage for understanding how words come to life on paper.

You are doing an incredible job guiding your child's natural learning journey. By letting them tinker with letters and words while they play, you're giving them a front-row seat to the wonderful world of literacy. Feel free to answer their questions, join in on their creative games, and watch them flourish as they discover the wonders of reading and writing.

Promote literacy play at home...

Words, letters, sounds, print - they are all around us. A child's mind is wired to learn, and if you stand back, watch, and be a detective of their brain, you will see that children are naturally curious and drawn to figuring out the world around them. They are built to be explorers of language. When adults step in with worksheets, lessons, and flashcards, we take away the time for play and the time for being curious. If you want to be a detective and watch your child in their everyday play, here are some places you can see it naturally happen:

- Books! A home library can be just a couple of shelves. Visit the local library. Allow them to self-select what they wish to read.
- Read. All of the time. Allow them to see YOU read for pleasure. Model that you value reading each day. Read to your child. If they are too young to read yet (their brain might not be ready), you will see them pretend to read books too. They may even try to retell the events of the story by looking at the pictures. This is an important stage in literacy development.
- Names. The first letters or words your child will learn will most likely be the letters in their name or names of the people that are closest to them. Put their name on all their jackets, water bottles, etc.

Remember that earlier is NOT better. Children's brains all develop at different rates and they all have different interests. The comparison game is dangerous and can leave grown-ups feeling doubtful and children feeling stressed when pressure is put on them to learn things before their brain is ready. They will learn when they are developmentally ready. The neurological research says so. Trust it.

HH

SUMMER CAMP DONATION REQUESTS

We have another engaging summer planned for all the Huskies, Pups, and Top Dogs. If you can contribute to our NATURE PLAY we would welcome all sorts of loose parts:

- pinecones
- tree rounds
- tree stumps
- potting soil
- playground sand
- river stones
- driftwood
- sea shells
- acorns
- seeds
- child gardening tools
- straw
- gravel
- baskets
- milk crates
- anything else you think the children would love to play with!

...with Books!

Everyone knows books are key to building literacy. But did you know they are a tool for play as well? Books not only inspire the following play scenarios, but this type of book play also prepares pathways to literacy.

Pretend Reading: It may be tempting to see a child pretending to read and dismissively think it "doesn't count", but pretend reading is actually a **very important milestone in the process of becoming a reader**.

Whether they're reciting familiar words or "reading the pictures", when children pick up a book and play the part of a reader – even before they're able to independently read the print on the page – they **demonstrate and reinforce key literacy skills**.

Knowing how to hold the book and turn the pages from left to right, pointing to the text, retelling key phrases or words, recreating a familiar story, or creating a new story from the clues in the pictures, are all precursors to reading. Even the storyteller's sing-songy inflection and tone reflect literacy experience and preparation.

All of this means that when your child asks to read the same story over and over, each repeat read is modeling important skills your child will practice through play.

Playing with the Story: Many children take familiar stories as the inspiration for their dramatic play. They may dress up to play the parts themselves, use dolls or puppets, or simply tell the story as they draw or build. **Whenever children retell or play with a story, they are reinforcing the concept of story structure, practicing language, and building comprehension skills**.

Books are essential to literacy, but they can also be the **catalyst for powerful play**. That play in turn continues to build literacy. It's an awesome, process that creates passionate readers. This is why we not only read and share stories frequently in our program, but also include a book library as part of our play centers. **That access to books – at home and at school – inspires rich play and builds long-term literacy skills**.

Playing with books is another valuable way we play!

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