



Newsletter February 2021

A Note from the Director's Desk

Hello Families!

Love is in the air! What a great opportunity to thank all of you for allowing us to foster your child's growth and learning. Our teachers love what they do. This is evident in the nurturing relationships they develop with each family and individual child at ZALA.

Congratulations to Mary Alice for being ZALA's first Employee of the Month. Mary Alice is so poised and soft spoken no matter the situation she is dealing with. She has seamlessly stepped into Holodeck and been successful at carrying out daily routines and sticking to the schedule Megan has worked to so hard to implement for the preschoolers. Mary Alice has great communication skills with parents, children and staff. She is always willing and able to offer a hand to anyone, work extended hours, and come to the administration team with ideas and solutions. When she is working with children she's always sure to ignite their curiosity and allow them to explore their surroundings. She is a great role model for all of us, big and little.

There was a slight hiccup with Mosaic evaluations which affected ZALA's original timeframe for Parent Teacher Conferences. Evaluations will take place on Feb 23 with conferences to follow in March. More information will be sent out soon in preparation for ASQ and conferences.

Rhiannon

556-7439

Dates to Remember

February 2-26: Student Ages and Stages Questionnaires

February 15: President's Day, Early Closure: 3 PM, lunch from home.

February 23: Mosaic Evaluations Speech, OT, & PT evaluations for P/T Conferences in March.

March 1-25: Parent Teacher Conferences, dates and times TBD via Doodle Poll.

Zoot Adventure Camp (ZAC/PIR)

February 15: President's Day (all schools) Sack lunch from home, Early closure 3PM

March 5: PIR (Monforton)

March 15-19: Spring Break (all schools)

April 8-9: PIR (Bozeman, Monforton 9th only)

Weekly Happenings

Music with Mrs. Rachel every Monday, resuming February 8

Gymnastics with Miss Savannah/Miss Mary Alice every Wednesday and Friday.

Bookmobile visits ZALA February 12th and 26th for book pick up/drop off from 2:45-3:30 pm.

Art with Miss Sydney & Mrs. Laura every Tuesday and Thursday.

A Note from the Teachers

First Contact

January was a wonderful start of the year. First Contact had a blast this month reading books. We loved the “find it” pages and using our recognition skills to match the imagines. We also loved playing outside - especially in the house on the playground. Ringing the ding-dong door bell and playing peek-a-boo through the window was our favorite! We loved playing with our big friends as two of them are moving up to the Bridge classroom in February! Locklyn and Arlo will be truly missed, but we are excited for them to move up to the next classroom as they continue to grow and learn! First Contact is ready for a February full of love and sugar!

– Miss Marisa

Bridge

Hi Bridge families! This month was full of sensory, friendship, and independence! We loved playing in water, shaving cream, beans, and moon sand throughout the month. The few instances of fresh snow was also a welcomed experience for both tasting and playing! We welcomed a new student, Colton, into our class this month! It's been so lovely watching the other kiddos form friendships and include him in games and play. We've continued to build our independence by working on our eating and bathroom routines! We're looking forward to another month of new friendships with the arrival of Locklyn and Arlo from First Contact staring in February! How exciting!

– Miss Juliet

Warp Drive

So much has happened already in the New Year! We switched up our classroom environment and our schedule. We've enjoyed getting to do more art projects and more outdoor adventures! We also got to welcome Weston into our classroom. Can't wait to see what the next month holds for us!

– Miss Laura

Holodeck

January went by in a flash in the preschool room! With 13 kids in our class, our room is busier than ever. Lucky for us teachers, we have a fabulous group of kids who are so welcoming, helpful, and silly with each other. The hilarious conversations we get to overhear as teachers never fail to make us smile. With Miss Megan stepping into Warp Drive for a few weeks in January, Miss Mary Alice did a Feelings & Kindness study with the kiddos. The kids worked on identifying feelings in themselves and others, showing kindness in their words and actions, and appreciating what makes each of us special and unique. We are looking forward to a fabulous February!

– Miss Megan

Developmental Tidbit

Topic: Promoting Perseverance

Author: Miss Jessica

As adults, we know the value of persistence: it helps us find solutions to problems, keep at challenging tasks, and stick with that New Year's diet. For our children, perseverance helps them learn to hold a fork, tie their shoes, and read. Temper tantrums over obstacles, quitting at the first sight of difficulty, and overreliance on adults are all signs that a child may benefit from an increase in mastery motivation, the "persistence at mastering challenging tasks" (National Association for the Education of Young Children). Nurturing this internal motivation in our children is an important job of all parents and teachers. Below are some tips on how to help your child learn to persevere through challenges.

- 1. Be a Good Example:** Children learn far more from us than we often realize. Watching us work through problems teaches them that diligence is valuable and helpful. This is also true when we seek assistance from others when we get stuck, rather than just giving up.
- 2. Words are Important:** While certainly well-meant, telling your child that they are "so talented" or "so smart" when they do well can actually intensify discouragement when they don't succeed. Instead of relying entirely on this type of encouragement, also use phrases such as, "I can see you worked super hard on that!" and "you stuck with that even though it was difficult," to foster the idea that not only are talent and success valuable, but so are hard work and perseverance.
- 3. Don't Do It For Them:** It can be tempting to help your child as soon as they come across a stumbling block, but resist the urge to take over and let them explore different possibilities and choices. This encourages them to become independent problem-solvers.
- 4. Timely Assistance:** Make sure your child knows you support them and are there to help if they need it. Lending a hand (without taking over) allows your child both to succeed and to begin learning the benefit of teamwork. Another way to assist your child is to offer advice and ideas when they get stuck in a rut.

Sources: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/tyc/oct2017/mastery-motivation-persistence-and-problem>

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/244-parenting-strategies-for-a-persistent-child>

MusikNote from Mrs. Rachel

Music Note: February – Traveling Movement

Most people think that you get the children up and moving to get all the wiggles and giggles out of them. While there may be some truth to that, it is also true that in music classes, there are times that we get children up and moving to teach a specific spatial or musical concept, and there are times when we engage your children in traveling movement activities to give them the mental energy necessary to attend to the next activity, such as a listening game or sensory game. So, not only are traveling movement activities enjoyable for most children, they are also energizing to your child's brain.

Toddlers

Traveling Movement activities are fun and particularly appealing to toddlers. Most of them have only recently started walking and they are anxious to practice it as much as possible. Add to that all the possible variations, such as marching, stomping, and running, and the attraction is obvious!

Favorite traveling movement activities are ones that involve various ways of moving that alternate with stopping on cue. However, you should be aware that although these activities are included in the toddler class, I really do not expect your child to have mastered the art of stopping until around the age of 4. They are included in the toddler class because children need to practice before they can be expected to reach mastery. Your toddler's language center in the brain is not as well developed as his/her impulse to move. Therefore, once s/he is moving it is very hard to stop on cue. Just as the brakes on your car take a certain amount of time to stop your moving vehicle, your child's "brakes" are not yet fully developed and need practice and adult understanding.

Preschoolers

Traveling Movement activities are exciting and energizing experiences for children as they combine moving their various body parts in specific ways with the added challenge of moving through space. Whether we are doing a circle dance, a line dance, or an expressive movement activity, we are challenging your child to control his/her body, understand its placement in space in relation to other class members, be able to stop and start with ease, and understand spatial concepts such as in and out, directionality, high, and low.

Favorite traveling movement activities involve various ways of moving that alternate with stopping on cue. They are probably so popular because children instinctively seem to know what they need, and what they need is to practice stopping!

Your child loves to move and once s/he is moving, whether the movement is walking, running, or jumping, it is hard for your child to stop on cue. It takes a few seconds – or more – for him/her to stop. This is because your child's movement center is better developed than his/her language center. *Impulse control* is when a language cue overrides a motor cue, and your children need to have many opportunities to develop this skill.

My music schedule in ZALA has changed for the next couple of weeks as my daughter has shoulder surgery February 1st. I am very excited to bring music back to the classroom on February 8th.

I miss your kiddos! Please give them an extra hug from me.

~ Mrs. Rachel

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Gymnastics Recap from Miss Savannah

