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## April 2021

**Theme:** Growing Gardens

**Writing Skills: Letters:** Ee, Pp, Gg **Color:** Purple

**Shape:** Square **Numbers:** 15 & 16

**Social Development:** Planting the garden, Watching the garden grow, Vegetables in the garden, Visitors in the garden

Please check out the posted flyer about our Spring Egg Hunt happening on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. You can also find the times for each classroom that the hunt is happening.



Dear Families,

Good news! This month's Scholastic Reading Club flyers are ready for you to explore with your child. Children read more when they choose their own books, I encourage you to look at the flyers together. Each flyer is filled with grade-specific, affordable titles and Storia® eBooks. Place your order online at [scholastic.com/readingclub](http://scholastic.com/readingclub)  
Flyers are available online.

**Shop Online:** [scholastic.com/readingclub](http://scholastic.com/readingclub)

**Class Activation Code: NM8JM**

**SUNBLOCK**

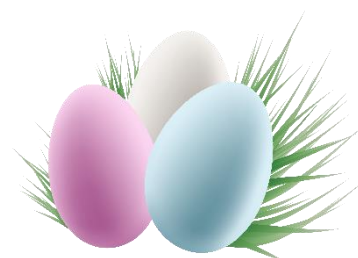


Spring will bring to us stronger rays of sunshine. Please consider applying sunblock to your child each morning before arriving at school. If you are interested in having sunblock reapplied to your child in the afternoons please complete and return a Sunblock 2021 form.



## April Birthdays

- Tatum - Shepard - McKenzie -
- Stella - Jack Y. - Jack F. - Brynn -
- Taylor - Charlie W. - Helena - Everett T. -
- Mila - Nicholas - Ms. Elida - Ms. Brooke -



## TOP 3 BENEFITS OF LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

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I am a strong supporter of children learning through play; therefore, I want to share with you what I feel are the Top 3 Benefits of Pretend Play. Who doesn't want to play "grocery store" or "rocket to the moon"? These were some of the pretend play scenarios I loved playing as a child and now I get to watch my kids do the same.

There are many stages that a child goes through with regards to pretend play.

For example, an 18-month-old will pretend to feed a doll or cover a teddy bear with a blanket so the bear can go to sleep. However, a 5-year-old might come up with an elaborate scenario involving setting up chairs and pretending it is an airplane.

My kids love turning the dining room into an airport and the kitchen into the plane. They even make tickets which each passenger has to hand in at the gate (aka, the kitchen counter).

Each stage of play children go through will aid in their development.

### Top 3 benefits of learning through play

#### 1. **Play Encourages Communication**

Play allows children the opportunity to develop speech and language skills as well listening skills. Children talk and listen while they play. Whether this be during solitary play which typically involves self-talk and narration (e.g. "now my car is driving up the hill and then it goes down, wee, wee, wee") or play with a companion, children communicate to add purpose to their play. The more vocabulary a child is exposed to on a day-to-day basis, the greater the variety of words a child will incorporate into play.

I love seeing and hearing some of the scenarios my children come up with. For example, they love playing restaurant. They have to decide who will be the cook and who will be the server. My daughter is the older one so she gets to write out the menu, but they both decide what will be included on the menu (usually milk, juice, coffee, hot dogs, sushi, spaghetti and ice cream – quite the combination). And they always make sure that we pay for our food. Sometimes there are disagreements about who gets to play which role or what will be included on the menu, but I try to teach them how to work through these issues and we also talk about compromising.

## 2. Play Improves Cognitive Development

Children who engage in pretend play tend to have more sophisticated levels of interaction with others. Bergen, D (2002) found that more and more evidence supports the connections between cognitive ability and high-quality pretend play. Moreover, if children are deprived of play, their long-term capabilities related to problem solving, social skills and academic areas (e.g. literacy, math and science) could be lessened. The complexity of these skills demonstrate that many areas of the brain are most likely involved. For more information please see the complete [study by Bergen](#).

Additional research about the benefits of learning through play shows that:

- Children whose fathers played with them had greater levels of imagination and cognitive ability than those whose dads did not play with them.
- Children who played with their parents also participated in other activities, had positive mental health, stronger friendships and experienced a stronger family bond when compared to those whose parents did not play with their children as much.
- Children whose mothers played with them showed a greater level of attachment to their moms and enjoyed more positive development compared to children whose mothers did not play with them regularly.

## 3. Play Encourages Relationship Building

Play helps to promote the development of social skills. Children who play with their parents and peers learn how relationships work through their play experiences. As play becomes more important in a child's life, an increase in the number and quality of friendships has been seen.

Many people don't realize that social skills are a vital part of language development. Language is so much more than simply spoken words!

These are my top 3 benefits of learning through play. There are definitely many more than these and I am sure I could go on and on about this topic.

If you are interested in reading about the role of play in normal emotional development, please read the article "[Free Play Is Essential for Normal Emotional Development](#)" found in Psychology Today.



By Tanya Thibodeau

[seemeandliz.com](http://seemeandliz.com), a site dedicated to teaching parents how to best interact with their babies