

SEPTEMBER

The South Hills Child Development Center Inc. Monthly Newsletter

This month:

WELCOME! To our new students and their families, the South Hills staff offers our warmest greetings! There will be lots of tears throughout the next few weeks; transitions are difficult for adults as well as children! We will offer your child lots of comforting, nurturing, and positive reinforcement as we guide him/her through these first few weeks of school. We will offer the same to you, Moms and Dads! And we promise to communicate with you frequently regarding your child's adjustment.

Important Dates:

Mon, Aug 19 First day for full time, full day students & MWF full day students & Kindergarten and—**Pre Enrichment** begins at 11:30 each afternoon for our full day students who are 4 by September 1!

Tues, Aug 20 First day for full day TTh

Monday, Tuesday, Aug 26, 27 Scheduled orientation for half day students

Tues and Wed, Sept 3,4 First days for half day preschool

Fri, Sept 6 Book orders due

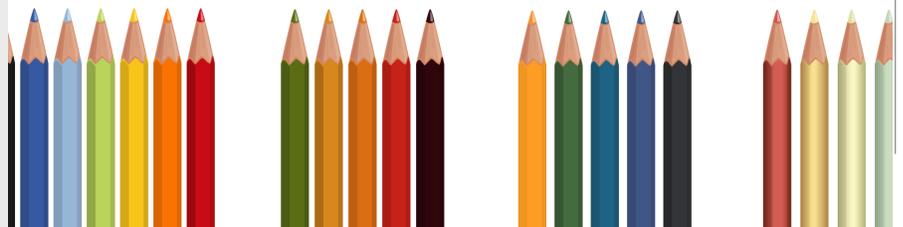


SOUTH HILLS
Child Development Center Inc.

Transitions

If your child is crying or upset when you leave the school, PLEASE call us when you arrive at work or home. We will be happy to reassure you about your child and give you an update. Many of the staff are mothers, and we KNOW how heart wrenching those tears can be! We realize that you also need to make this adjustment!

Please do not be surprised if the tears and separation anxiety begins three to six weeks into the new year—it is a normal adjustment, and we will assist your child and you throughout this process.



Don't hesitate to talk with us regarding your concerns. Teachers may not be available to speak with you when other children are in their care, or when other parents are present, (due to our commitment to confidentiality), but we can talk with you on the phone, or make arrangements to speak personally with you. We continually encourage our students to 'use their words' and encourage you to do the same when you have concerns! No one can address your questions better than we can, and we look forward to our partnership with you.

You may find Ms Connie's past blog regarding **Transitions** on our website helpful (scroll down to the first blog posting!)

Our School Age Summer Camp

We are so proud of our Summer Campers who worked SO HARD this summer raising money and collecting much needed supplies for Because You Care, our local animal shelter! The students, visited the shelter, learned about the needs of the dogs and cats there, and talked in depth with those "fostering" animals and other volunteers, including our own Ms Pam! They hosted a coin drive and a rummage sale, requested donations of needed supplies and cat/dog food from our generous parents, and spent the summer growing catnip and making a variety of animal toys to sell with all donations going directly to the shelter! The giant hearts of our students, along with their compassion and willingness to serve others is just so inspiring to us all!

Inspection

Our annual state inspection by OCDEL will take place sometime August 1-30.

Results will be posted on Dropbox. It is an unannounced inspection within a thirty day window.

Action Based Learning Lab

Since June of 2010, South Hills has been implementing Action Based Learning. This is a kinesthetic, neurological, and cognitive approach to learning. The children will be engaged in MUCH physical activity throughout the day as a means to reinforce such skills

as letter, number and sight word recognition, math problems, recognizing shapes, colors, and states for example. These activities can be introduced inside or outside, and our first choice is always outdoors. For that reason, **children MUST wear sneakers every day as part of our dress code**. The staff and I have been extremely proud of the children's work in ABL—their large motor skills, particularly balancing abilities, have developed rapidly due to our concentrated work. These early years are so crucial in terms of brain development; it is impressive to share in their children's development since we started this new program!

Here is a quote from the Action Based Learning Lab Manual:

"The brain sends information throughout the brain from the back to front (getting our thoughts to the paper), side to side (decoding and comprehending), and up and down (emotional connections). These processes are developed through early motor development. All of these stages are necessary for optimal brain development to facilitate the process of sending information throughout the brain from back to front, side to side, and up and down. If any of the stages are skipped or minimized, the child may experience difficulty later on when learning to process information or putting patterns into a sequence.

The learning process begins before birth. The brain begins to wire up in the fetal stage. The auditory system and the motor system begin to wire up. The auditory system begins to wire up as the fetus responds to the sounds of its surrounding, especially that of his mother's voice and heartbeat. The motor system begins to wire up as the fetus moves and sucks its thumb in the womb.

Following birth, the visual system begins to develop. The critical period or window of opportunity for vision is the first six months of life. A newborn's focus field is limited to the distance from the crook of the mother's elbow to the mother's face. Women are designed to breast feed infants to help develop the baby's peripheral vision. When the baby is held while nursing, s/he looks at the mother through the peripheral field. If an infant is bottle fed and is never switched from side to side, the development of vision may suffer.

In the first year of life the motor systems continue to develop with specific purpose in each stage. When the infant is placed on his/her stomach, he/she will instinctively begin to lift his/her head. This reflex develops the back to front of the brain across the motor cortex.

As the muscles of the neck, trunk, and back develop, the baby begins to raise up on his/her hands. Soon the dominant hand takes over, and the baby rolls from his stomach to his back. This stage develops the right and left brain hemispheres across the corpus callosum. Soon the baby learns to roll over and over, his first motor skill. This rolling action integrates the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic senses as well as develops spatial awareness. The baby learns to roll in both directions, handy when obstacles impede progress. Rolling develops the coordination of muscles from the center core to the extremities. In the next stage, the baby begins to tuck his/her legs under the trunk and starts to rock back and forth. This movement develops the hip and knee joints for support in the later stage of walking. While rocking back and forth, the muscles become strong enough to propel the baby forward. After falling on his face a few times (a positive learning experience), the baby learns to place one hand forward which causes the opposite leg to move forward for balance. Crawling and creeping begins. As the crawling/creeping pattern is mastered, the brain and body crosses its midlines, developing the ability of the brain to process information back to front, side to side, and up and down.

Your child comes to us after all of these stages, but the brain continues to grow rapidly and process new information. Connecting neurological, kinesthetic and cognitive skills assists all brain processes.

The Action Based Learning Lab™ is designed to fill in the missing stages of development and or/to practice needed components necessary for learning success. The skills in the ABL Lab benefit every child at whatever stage of development. The program has no batteries or wires or plugs, but relies on the brain and body's natural technology to make the connections needed for optimal learning."

If you would like to view any of the materials we use during our ABL workouts, please just ask! We are proud to keep you informed regarding this program!

Parking

PLEASE SHARE WITH ANYONE TRANSPORTING YOUR CHILD!

For all families:

PLEASE be extremely careful when backing up in our lot! We know it is very 'tight', and parents unfortunately often forget to hold their children's hands so a child can be behind your vehicle! USE EXTREME CAUTION PLEASE!

Please park in an east-west direction so we can squeeze as many cars into the lot as possible. Parking parallel to the street takes up four parking spaces that we desperately need!

The families whose children attend the morning preschool program from 9-11:30 will have difficulty parking in our lot during drop off and pick up time. We ask for your patience, as there are 24 families arriving within a ten minute period, and then leaving during a ten minute period at 11:30.

We know that parking is an issue, but we are proud that South Hills' parents typically are kind, careful, and courteous. **Dr. Scott John, who owns the Patio Shop next door, soon to be one of his satellite veterinary offices, has requested that parents no longer use his lot for parking as there are construction vehicles there sporadically throughout the day.** Do not block the entrances to the school, please, which creates major gridlock and is against local emergency traffic regulations.

Parents can park briefly at Forest Hills Commons to drop off/pick up, if necessary.

We do know that parking is a problem during these two ten-minute daily periods, as it has been for the past 24 years we have been in this location. However, we do not want to eliminate our half day program, which is very popular, so ask your patience in this area.

Please be sure to arrive on time at end of your child's scheduled program; teachers all have lunch supervision assignments with our full day students immediately following the morning preschool class, and supervision of the afternoon school age students arriving from Grandview immediately following the afternoon preschool class. State ratios can not be exceeded under any circumstances so your child may be moved to the Activity Room or office if you are late. A late fee is assessed for this additional child care.

VERY IMPORTANT: NEVER LEAVE ANY CHILD UNATTENDED IN A CAR IN OUR PARKING LOT! Millcreek Police strongly advise against this dangerous practice. As a private school, South Hills is a no idle zone. Please do not leave your car idling in our parking lot. Schools are NO IDLE ZONES by law.

Parent Coordinators

Each year, we ask for a parent to volunteer to be our 'Parent Coordinator' for each classroom. Project Approach includes 'field work', which is interpreted as real life experiences for children to research the subject we are studying. The Parent Coordinator will work closely with the teacher to organize evening and weekend field trips connecting our projects with these real experiences. For example, the children recently completed a Project focusing on trees. The Parent Coordinator arranged for a Saturday trip to the arboretum and a guided tour for the parents, children, and teachers in the pod. Since there are usually two coordinators or more in a pod, they will frequently be asked to work together if both classes in the pod are studying the same topic.

Your child's teacher may soon be sending home information regarding this, unless a Parent Coordinator is already in place, which is possible in the full day preschool classrooms since those children attend year round.

Sisson's Pumpkin Farm

Mark **Thursday evening, September 26 from 5:00-7:30** on your calendar! All families will soon receive an invitation to South Hills' Day at Sisson's Pumpkin Farm in Girard-- an annual tradition to welcome all of our families and give you the opportunity to meet each other! Look for notices in your child's take home folder as well as Dropbox!

Half Day Preschool Routine

Parents should walk their child into the classroom for the half day preschool. Each child is assigned a cubby for personal items, and play centers are available for the children to enjoy until 'meeting time' at 9:10. Please remember it is important to say a positive goodbye to your child before leaving; parents often feel it is best to 'disappear' when their child is distracted, but this positive transition is essential for children.

When arriving to pick up your child at the end of the half day preschool day, please wait in the hallway (the lights may be turned off so parents can view through the observation window). The right side line will be for the Orange room; the left side line is for the Red room. The teacher will open the door as the children sit in their meeting area; she will call your child's name to come to the door. Please check your child's take-home folder before leaving. Children will be dismissed one at a time so the teacher will be sure all children leave with the proper person. If your child runs to the door when s/he sees you waiting in the hallway, we ask that you redirect him/her back to the meeting space so the children will quickly learn the routine.

Kindergarten

We are so proud of the progress and accomplishments of our Kindergarten students. Due to our small class size (12) and two teachers for Reading and Math instruction, our students tend to excel throughout their school years, particularly in Reading, Math, Social Studies, Science, Writing, and Leadership Qualities, as consistently reported to us by educators and administrators in our county. Most students are immediately accepted into enrichment programs based on their South Hills education.

If you are interested in being placed on the Kindergarten waiting list, please contact Connie immediately, as openings are limited and enrollment will take place in December. Full week /year round students are considered first. Students transfer to the Kindergarten class in June.

Ms Connie's Blog

Please read the blog on our website, and feel free to comment or send Connie ideas for new blogs. Past blogs can be an important source of information—for example the **TRANSITION** blog from September 2011 can be of assistance at any time as parents transition their child into our program.

Alphabet Chart

A Zaner-Bloser alphabet chart can be accessed via our website under the pull down "Parents" menu. Please keep this for future reference. It details the exact formation of letters and the direction of the strokes. When you are working with your child at home, please reinforce these same strokes/directions using a top-to-bottom, left-to-right progression. Do not be concerned if your child is writing 'backwards' or 'mirror images'. It takes some time to train the eye to move in the correct pattern. Consistent, gentle and positive reinforcement are critical. Please provide your child with varied opportunities to write! (while you are making your grocery list, while writing personal correspondence, etc.) If you have any questions regarding your child's writing skills, please discuss them with your child's teacher or Connie.

Billing

You will receive your bill for tuition via email, so please be sure we have your current address. Our Business Manager is Dylan JK Vogt and he can be reached at dylanjkvogtshills@gmail.com if you have any questions or needs. Payment can be made online per his instructions. **We encourage online payments.**

All payments not made online can be placed in the black mailbox outside of Connie's office. Prompt payment is greatly appreciated to support our school's budget.

PreKindergarten Enrichment

Full day/year round students who will be four prior to September 1 are automatically scheduled for the PreK Enrichment program one afternoon per week until the term ends in June. Ms Kelsee Waldemarson is the teacher for this program in the Orange Room. The core work for PreKindergarten (early literacy, math, writing, gross motor, science, social studies, art, music, etc.) is completed during their time in their assigned classroom. PreKindergarten students who attend full day will also heavily focus on phonics and beginning reading skills during this afternoon program, to support the work in their 'home classroom'.

The PreKindergarten Enrichment program is in addition to these studies for our full day preschool students. It includes in-depth studies of art and artists, music and musicians, literature and authors. The fine arts are the focus of a curriculum designed by Ms Connie to increase attention span and observational skills. The children will hear chapter stories and analyze each chapter (characters, setting, conflict, resolution), and will have additional opportunities for journaling, and math work. They especially will enjoy the extra opportunities for print making, mosaics, painting with tempera and water color, working with clay, etc..

Schedules for the PreKindergarten Enrichment tracks have already been sent to each parent whose child is participating. If parents have any questions or did not receive their notification, please see Connie.

Scholastic Book Orders!

Watch for information regarding Scholastic Book Club orders in your child's Take Home folder. Scholastic is a popular publishing company for purchasing high quality, inexpensive books for your child. Beth is in charge of these orders if you have any questions regarding your orders. You will receive directions for ordering via internet using

the South Hills code. Books will come directly to South Hills and be placed in your child's Take Home folder. (Let us know if it is a surprise order; we will place it in a sealed envelope for you!)

Your order benefits South Hills as new books and school materials!

Box Tops

Please save all your General Mills Box Tops for Education for South Hills! Pass the word to your extended family and friends (we have many grandparents whose entire communities in Florida save these for us!). An envelope is located on the parent bulletin board to collect the box tops. Each coupon is worth ten cents, and they add up quickly! You can find a list of participating products at www.boxtops4education.com

This program provides important financial support to our program for the art supplies and materials the children use every day here at South Hills.

Music/Sign Language/Spanish/Home Work

Please be sure you check our home page on the website for updates on Music, Sign Language and Spanish lessons that will be presented this new month. The Kindergarten newsletter is also posted. If you want the words to songs that the children are singing, or signs/Spanish words that the children are learning, check the lesson plans, but also look in the main hallway across from the kitchen. There are brown envelopes containing photos of the signs, and the Spanish words with pronunciation as a guide for parents.

A Home Work page is also available via the Home page; Connie posts activities that parents can perform with their children at home to support their educational experience. Parents will find activities for all developmental skills, as well as directions to create Social Stories which are helpful for every child's transitions.

In addition, the Art Gallery features the children's art work via the monthly School Wide Newsletter, and can be forwarded to family members out of town so they can share in your child's successes!

Lunch/Snack Time

Snack time focuses on the USDA guidelines, and parents provide a fruit plus grain for morning snack; a vegetable plus grain for afternoon snack. Parents will receive the list of options when their snack day is assigned. The quantities to bring are listed next to the snack, We hope to help parents while shopping for snack, and eliminate leftovers! Our snacks have resulted in children eating more fresh fruits and vegetables, and trying new foods successfully!

A few additional notes:

If your child attends our full day preschool program, please be sure to **send spoons or other required utensils for your child's lunch, as well as two napkins (one for a placemat, one for wiping faces). This assists our budget immensely.**

Our snack policy might seem strict to some, but children with Celiac Disease and life-threatening food allergies are an enormous responsibility and one we take most seriously. Please assist us as we request nutritious snacks that have not been in contact with peanuts or any tree nuts (coconut, sesame, shea butter are included)

Please do not be upset if your provided snack is returned to you if we note the presence of nuts, or if it is not factory sealed. (As you may have noted, home made snacks are not permitted to be served at any preschools, and most insurance companies have this requirement as well.) We appreciate your efforts in providing snacks, but must follow our mandated guidelines.

FYI: Two teachers must check every snack to ensure they are on the 'approved snack list, for ingredients, and for the expiration date. This information is carefully documented and both teachers must sign the documentation.

We will also be requesting throughout the year, as most schools now are, that **no treats (including food, toys, art supplies, stickers, etc.) be provided to children at parties.** The dietary requirements for many of our children make this extremely difficult, but we promise that parties are always festive times, with the emphasis on social activities shared with friends rather than material items..

Annual Staff Fire Training

In September, all staff will receive our annual fire safety training by Mr. Gary Carver of West Ridge Fire Department. Training includes the use of fire extinguishers, an inspection of the building's fire alarm system, an inspection of our fire safety plan, and details of evacuation of the building in the event of a fire.

Website

Please commit to checking the website frequently (a minimum of once a month at the beginning of each month) to access our monthly newsletter; monthly calendar for important activities and events; Kindergarten newsletter; Sign Language/Spanish plans; Music plans; Ms Connie's Blog, and the students' Photo Gallery, which showcases the children's work. This Photo Gallery has been a meaningful way for families to share their child's work with family members/friends who are out of town.

In addition, please consider following us on Twitter@southhillsinc This is an effective way to send out quick notices (such as notifying you that we are sheltering in place due to tornado warnings, or a reminder that the children need to bring a flower bulb to school the next day)

We work hard to communicate with you. Recent research states that these busy days, a person must be told something three times in three different ways to 'catch it'. South Hills commits to six times/different ways of communicating information, as we know you are super-busy parents.

A Note From Beth, the School's Assistant Director, in charge of compliance

Parents,

As you can imagine, the beginning of the school year is a busy time. The staff is enjoying getting to know all of the new children, as well as their parents and extended family. It is a

major responsibility for all of the staff to immediately recognize and know to whom each child can be released, and we work hard to remember names and faces! This year in particular, we have many children being picked up by someone other their parents. Because our rules are so strict in order to ensure the safety of our children (obviously our PRIMARY CONCERN), I would like to clarify our policy regarding the release of children. Keep in mind, your child's teacher may not be the one releasing your child, since the teachers do have planning time in the afternoon on a rotating basis, and substitute teachers from other classrooms will be releasing children on those days. Also, teachers may be at meetings or absent, so other teachers may be releasing. For this reason, we must know exactly who will be arriving for your child.

*If your child is going to be picked up on a REGULAR BASIS (for example, every day, every MWF, etc.) by someone specifically listed on the release section of your child's Emergency Contact form, please write a note stating such. In this note, please include the person's full given name, and let them know we will be requesting identification. Often, we may ask the same person more than once for identification, since we have so many people to identify, and because different teachers may be releasing. Being prepared with identification is always necessary. The letter you write will be kept on file, and our subbing staff will be aware of anyone other than parents to whom we may release your child. **NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED WITHOUT PROPER IDENTIFICATION OR NOTIFICATION—NO EXCEPTIONS!**

*IN AN EMERGENCY, verbal permission via telephone is permitted. In that event, a DPW verbal permission form must be completed by the staff taking your call. We are required to call you back to confirm that you did actually make the call (we will ask if you are calling from home or work, since we will need to look up your phone number from your child's file and call the appropriate number). We will also ask you a question such as the code to the door, to verify your identity. This will be documented on the verbal permission form. If you leave a message on our voicemail, we will return your call to validate your request.

*If you are giving permission for a person to pick up your child on a specific day, (for example, you will be out of town and someone else is caring for your child), you can tell the teacher in the classroom when you drop off your child. The teacher will write down that person's full name and be sure it is added to our daily announcements so all staff will be aware of this. If the person is on the release form, nothing further is required other

than identification when the child is released. If the person is NOT on the release form, however, you MUST complete a written form (see me) giving us permission to release your child to that person on that day. If you would like to add that person to the release list on your child's Emergency Contact Form, you can do so by filling out an Addition to the Emergency Contact Form. (see me)

NO child can be released to anyone other than the parent without notification or a note on file.

THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILD IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY. Although we have complaints about our procedures, please keep in mind that these requirements are to keep all children safe. Please keep this for future reference, and support us by following these regulations. We don't want to interrupt you at work to clarify the release of your child if someone shows up that we were not expecting, and following these guidelines work well for all of us. Thank you for your assistance and support. See me with any questions.

MAJOR SAFETY NOTICE!!!

There are TOO MANY TIMES this past year that children leaving the school have run ahead of parents directly into the parking lot, many with parent permission to independently go to the car! PLEASE DO NOT PERMIT YOUR CHILD TO EXIT THE MAIN PART OF THE BUILDING WITHOUT YOU! Cars from neighboring businesses often drive through our parking lot, (and unfortunately not slowly!) as well as many delivery trucks, creating a HIGH RISK!

You would never permit your children to run out of the grocery store to the car—PLEASE make those same rules for your child here at South Hills. Your children are precious—and their safety is your first concern, as well as ours!

LICE!!!!!!

An informative letter regarding head lice has been sent to parents via DropBox, and we ask that it be taken seriously. **It is a HUGE burden to eliminate head lice from your home, and from our school, and it seems only sensible to use lice preventative shampoos and conditioners, or to at minimum add tea tree oil to your favorite shampoo.** These shampoos are most effective if hair is washed DAILY, and the elimination of a lice problem would be a welcome relief for us here at South Hills. We have never had more than two cases at one time, but it is not without an incredible amount of work (daily shampooing of carpeting by Mr Jerry and Ms Connie, eliminating bike helmets (so no bike riding), washing all bedding for naptime, washing all dress up clothes/doll clothes/puppets and bagging them until the crisis passes, storing all coats in plastic bags etc. PLEASE do not be the reason we have lice in the school. This daily preventative step can save families AND South Hills additional work and stress!

We also highly recommend the use of a Robicomb if your child does attract lice, as it "zaps" live lice and eliminates the use of harsh pesticides on your child's scalp

SCHOLARSHIPS AND POTENTIAL OPENINGS!

There are always potential openings when the new school begins as registered children may have to decline their opening due to toilet training, and there are typically a few parents who unexpectedly relocate. If you know anyone still searching for half day or full day openings, please refer them to us as the schedule may rapidly change in the next few weeks.

Future Funds scholarships are available through the United Way/Erie Community Foundation. Please contact **Ms Kimberly Beers at 814-874-0144 ext 15** for further information and applications.

From Connie--

After all these years,(I am starting year 48!) I still go through the same 'First Day of School' routine: I can't sleep the night before 'the first day' (butterflies!). I am so excited and happy to meet my new students and their parents. I love the smell of new crayons, opened on the first day of school! And I'm always pleasantly exhausted at the end of the day.

My staff and I consider it an honor to be among your child's first teachers. We look forward to our partnership with you, and will do all we can to make your child's first educational experience the best one possible. Our job is to instill a love of learning in your child! Thank you for choosing South Hills, and for sharing your positive experiences with your family and friends. You are my best advertising, and I greatly value your support!

♥ 