

# Bright Horizons at USAA Child Development Center News

## From the Director

### Why Nature Exposure Matters

Interaction with nature has a profound effect on children's health and well-being. According to the National Learning Initiative (NLI), nature exposure impacts all areas of a child's development, including cognitive, social-emotional, and physical growth. Regular nature exposure can improve physical and mental health, increase problem-solving ability, promote cooperation and empathy, and even reduce symptoms of ADHD. Additionally, children who love nature and feel comfortable in it are more likely to become adults who are engaged and passionate about taking care of the planet.

#### Nature Study Ideas

- ☀️ Create natural areas outdoors. Plant a vegetable or flower garden. Add sand, water, tree stumps, bird feeders, shells, smooth rocks, etc.
- ☀️ Indoors have natural materials and plants for children to explore
- ☀️ Go on walks around the neighborhood. Adopt a tree and observe changes throughout the year
- ☀️ Examine different types of leaves and note their differences

*"Time in nature is not leisure time; it's an essential investment in our children's health (and also, by the way, in our own.)"* – Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature Deficit Disorder*

#### Resources:

- *Fun with Nature* by Mel Boring
- The Natural Learning Institute website
- The U.S. Forest Service website

## Important Dates

- ☀️ July 3<sup>rd</sup> - Fourth of July Parade 10 AM- Children will parade over to USAA's campus and around the front entrance
- ☀️ July 4<sup>th</sup> - **CENTER CLOSED**
- ☀️ July 6<sup>th</sup> - Campers Field Trip to Koizi
- ☀️ July 11<sup>th</sup> - Campers Field Trip to Tree Hoppers
- ☀️ July 25<sup>th</sup> - Camper Field Trip to the Aquarium
- ☀️ August 7<sup>th</sup> - VPK Open House- More information to come

## Reasons to Celebrate Happy Birthday!

- ☀️ Connor H.
- ☀️ Julisse A.
- ☀️ Owen s.
- ☀️ Lilly B.
- ☀️ Isaiah M.
- ☀️ Carmen I.
- ☀️ Aiden P.
- ☀️ Steven L.

### Bright Horizons at USAA Child Development Center

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Monday-Friday 6:30 AM-6:30 PM

# CLASSROOM HIGHLIGHTS

## Infant

An infant's first year is full of wondrous achievements. Babies are working diligently to expand their physical abilities, to discover the world around them, to build secure and healthy relationships, and to develop a sense of self. Our *Well Aware* curriculum allows teachers to guide infants in a developmentally appropriate environment that encourages safe exploration. In the Movement Matters classroom, Ayvah is practicing to climb up and down the stairs, as she holds on to the side rails. Ayvah is learning to make intentional movements. She learns this by practicing physical skills such as climbing up and down the steps.



## Toddler

*Science Rocks* provides a framework for teachers to weave scientific learning into all aspects of a toddler's day. Through intentional experiences, meaningful conversations, and enriched, teacher's help children become skilled lifelong researchers. As he creates an art piece, Aiden is using his sense of sight, touch, and smell to explore the lemon that he is using to stamp paint with. Through active exploration, Aiden is learning to use an object as a tool to complete a task. He learns this by exploring materials that engages his sense of touch, smell, sight, and taste.



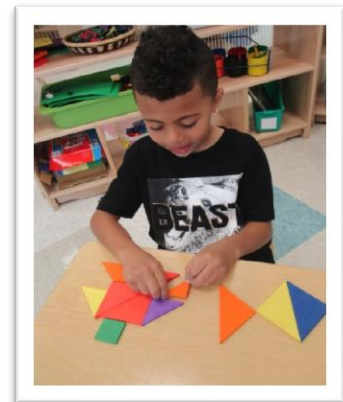
## Preschool

*Art Smart* ensures that children are engaged in comprehensive, authentic, and diverse creative experiences in all area, including visual arts, music, dance/creative movement, and drama. By infusing art into preschool environments and offering a variety of creative experiences each day, teachers enhance cognitive development, support self-expression, and nurture the budding artist in each child. In the Dramatic Play area, Sophie and Karma play as they cook, set the table, and then serve each other food. Sophie and Karma are learning to engage in dramatizations with their peers. They learn this as they pretend to be cooks in a kitchen.



## Kindergarten Prep

Children in kindergarten prep are fascinated by numerical concepts and mathematical thinking. They are enthusiastic mathematicians, engaging in math regularly as they build block towers, make patterns on a can vas, complete puzzles or measure the length of a shadow. In the *Math Counts* Station, Giovanni is using basic shape tiles to create a picture. "I made a person and a fish." Giovanni is learning to create new shapes from existing shapes. He learns this by creating visual images, such as a person and a fish, with geometric puzzles.



# READY FOR SCHOOL NEWS

## Family Traditions Celebrate Life!

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Regardless of the size of your family, traditions are a meaningful way to create cohesiveness, forge fond memories, and celebrate life. Meg Cox, the author of *The Book of New Family Traditions*, defines family traditions as “any activity you purposefully repeat together as a family that includes heightened attentiveness and something extra that lifts it above the ordinary ruts.”

Many of us smile when we think about our childhood traditions. We might remember Sunday afternoon walks, game or movie nights, holiday preparations, special family hugs, or a secret family handshake. Often the activity is secondary; it's the being together and sharing a custom that lives in our hearts.

Below are a few ideas for fun family traditions that you can start this year.

### **Commemorate a special day by planting a tree.**

Be it Thanksgiving, Earth Day, or to celebrate a holiday, planting a tree together connects us to nature, and produces an everlasting keepsake. Think of the library you can create by videoing and discussing the experience.

### **Designate a game night.**

A weekly game night brings everyone together for relaxed fun. Game suggestions include Apples to Apples Junior; Don't Wake Daddy; Bingo; Dr. Seuss Cat in the Hat; and Guess Who? You might play action games, such as Charades, Twister, Hide and Seek, and Freeze Tag.

### **Compose family newsletters.**

Rather than adults writing an annual letter, all family members can participate by talking about their year. Young children might depict their news by drawing, painting, and taking photographs.

### **Connect with residents in a nursing home.**

Developing a relationship with people in a nursing home enriches the lives of the residents, makes your family feel good, and helps raise children with grateful hearts. Perhaps plan monthly visits and share stories, make cards, bake treats, or simply sit and hold someone's hand.

As you plan the tradition, eliminate distractions, and reserve the time as you would any meaningful activity. Remember that family traditions are about enjoying time together. As Michael J. Fox says, “Family is not an important thing. It's everything.”

# BRIGHT HORIZONS NEWS

## Lemons to Lemonade with Four Ingredients

Need help taming your child's tantrums? Turn those parenting lemons into lemonade!

It might not seem like it, but your child is more predictable than you think—and each stage of your child's development, along with every meltdown, is a gateway to skill-building for your little one.

Hear from early childhood experts Ellen Galinsky, the Chief Science Officer at the Bezos Family Foundation and Executive Director at Mind in the Making, and Rachel Robertson, the Education and Development Vice President at Bright Horizons, as they discuss common parenting challenges and the science behind parenting that can turn frustration into great skills for life.

You can subscribe to the Bright Horizons Family Matters Podcast through iTunes, Google Play Music, SoundCloud, Stitcher Radio, and RSS. Learn more by visiting the link below.



### Podcast: Lemons to Lemonade with Four Ingredients

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