



BRIGHT HORIZONS AT
USAA CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
 Tampa, Florida

From the Assistant Director

As you may have noticed, we have made a couple exciting additions to our center's enrichment areas. Our Outdoor Classroom provides the children with meaningful, daily connections with nature. It is finally complete with the installation on a new platform. This is an open-ended space with endless uses- a stage for performances, a gathering area for group discussions or story time, and even a flat surface to build with blocks and loose pieces.



Another addition is in the *Movement Matters Zone*. The mirrored climber has been replaced with a brand new climbing wall. The children have been so excited to try it! This new addition is an excellent way for them to develop motor skills while building problem-solving skills in a safe environment.



Important Dates

December 1

- Parents Night Out, 6:30-11:30 pm

December 19

- Pajamas & Cocoa, 3:00-4:00 pm

December 25

- Center Closed

January 1

- Center Closed

Reasons to Celebrate

Frank T. 12/04

Jaxon L. 12/14

Alyx H. 12/30



Infant

As cries and coos turn into babbles and gestures, infants learn to use communication to connect with the world. While some of this occurs naturally, skilled teaching, intentional interactions, and a highly responsive environment encourage and positively support an infant's communications skills and are essential to optimal development. Jose is learning to explore picture books. He picks the book up and explores each page. As he turns the pages, his teacher names the objects on the page for him.



Toddler

Math is a thrilling way for toddlers to make sense of their world. Math Counts offers teachers a framework for planning a learning environment in which children can compare, sort, group, and manipulate safe, toddler-sized materials. Lorelai is using the large soft blocks to stack with. She is learning to understand the concept of on top of as well as understanding quantity by identifying one more. As she places each block on top of the other, she hears her teacher say, "Are you going to put one more block on top? Now that's 4 blocks."



Preschool

Science is part of everything children do each day. Preschool children are constantly engaged in research and experimentation, testing hypotheses, exploring properties, making discoveries, and learning how things work. In the preschool classroom, the children use scientific inquiry as they learn to use tools for investigation and discovery. While learning about gravity and motion, the preschoolers made guesses about which objects would roll down the ramp. Sage pushed various objects down the ramp to see which objects rolled and which ones did not.



Kindergarten Prep

In Kindergarten Prep, children are becoming more independent, increasingly responsible for their own choices and decisions, and ready to start tending to their personal care and safety. *Well Aware* is a unique and important curriculum component that ensures children are engaging in daily activities that advance their understanding of wellness and associated experiences. In Kindergarten Prep we learn to make healthy food choices and understand and create safety rules and guidelines associated with it. Connor is learning to use a butter knife safely as he cuts his apples and bananas into smaller pieces. He will use the fruit pieces to create a healthy fruit smoothie.

Cultivate Compassion

Do you know that compassion is a learned behavior? People are not born generous, thoughtful, and polite, or for that matter rude or mean-spirited. We develop attitudes from our early life experiences, family being the significant influence. Children, who live in an environment of understanding and empathy tend to relate to others with an open heart and mind.

Although modeling is a prime motivator, below are a few suggestions to help compassion become part of your family culture:

Discuss emotions. Young children need to be able to identify, understand, and respond to their own emotions before they can relate to how someone else might be feeling. Give children a “feelings” vocabulary by labeling emotions (mad, sad, glad, angry, frustrated, scared, and happy).

Help children consider how others might be feeling. Talk about how the other person might be experiencing a situation. At times, even very caring children will say or do something that seems mean-spirited. Ask your child how she would feel if someone said or did that to her.

Recognize children’s understanding and intent. There are times adults unintentionally put our motives and biases on children. For example, a young child who comments on another’s disability or color of skin is often merely expressing curiosity, rather than prejudice or unkindness. A toddler who hits or grabs toys isn’t being “mean,” she’s just being a toddler.

Acknowledge that actions are powerful. Practice caring by supporting others. Whether it’s helping a friend, drawing a picture for a relative, or assisting with household chores, purposely practicing helpful behaviors teaches compassion.

Promote compassion through play. Play helps children make sense of their world. While trying different roles, children uninhibitedly express their feelings, explore distressing or confusing issues, experience social cues, and begin to learn to appreciate different perspectives.

Read to connect children to broader experiences. Read fiction and nonfiction books about people who come from all walks of life, cultures, and circumstances. For age-appropriate suggestions, access Bright Horizons - Growing Readers <https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/reading-children-books>.

Make caring about others a family affair. As a family, discuss and plan small (and large) acts of kindness. Children might make appreciation cards and gifts for friends, relatives, and people who take care of us: military personnel, mail carriers, teachers, librarians, firefighters or police officers. Plan family activities to raise funds for organizations or write thank you cards to military personnel. One organization to review is Operation Gratitude (<https://www.operationgratitude.com/>). Volunteer as a family and get involved with organizations such as The Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, and learn about ways that your family can contribute toward the well-being of others. (<http://www.brighthorizonsfoundation.org/get-involved/resources/>)

Featured Parenting Podcast Episode

Making Work and Life Fit

Do you sometimes feel like there has to be a better way to fit working and parenting together into your limited time?

Maybe it's time to rethink your equation. Our guest Morra Aarons-Mele says we might feel like prisoners of the status quo (9-to-5, in the office), but we all have the power to fit work and life together on our own terms. The secret: ask for exactly what you need. She did it — and explains how.

Ep. 20: Making Work and Life Fit



<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/podcasts/making-work-life-fit>

Bright Horizons at USAA Child Development Center

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Monday – Friday 06:30 a.m. to 06:30 p.m.

