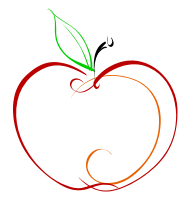


Countryside Montessori School

December Newsletter



The holidays are quickly approaching! I am reminded of this almost every night as my children keep asking me when we are going shopping. Each year my children earn money to purchase gifts for the toy drive. This is something we started many years ago when they attended Countryside. They will do additional things around the house to earn money and then we will go to the store for them to buy a gift for a child who is less fortunate than them. This has been a wonderful tradition that they look forward to each year.

As many of you have noticed, we had additional asphalt poured to the back parking area as well as the front drive. We are hoping the additional asphalt in the back lot will give parents a little more back up space so that we can keep our fence safe. Over the years, the fence has taken a few hits when parents back out of their parking space.

Thank you to all the parents who allowed their children to have a vision screening here at Countryside. This was the first year that we had such great technology to help detect vision problems. The screening took just seconds and the children only had to sit and looked straight ahead while a high tech camera took a photo of their eyes. We were able to detect possible concerns in four children. If your child received a note stating there may be a possible vision problem I hope that you have made an appointment with a pediatric ophthalmologist or that you have spoken with your pediatrician regarding the problem.

We would like to WELCOME Ms. Essha Davis to our Countryside family! Ms. Essha joined the Toddler Classroom in the middle of October and the children have all welcomed her with smiling faces and even some hugs! The addition of Ms. Essha has been a smooth transition and things could not be better in our Toddler Classroom! We are very happy to have her with us. Ms. Essha has a seventeen year old daughter of her own and brings with her the motherly care the children need when they are just two and three years old! If you have not had a chance to meet Ms. Essha please feel free to stop in and say hi when you have time.

Great News: Our new website will be published soon! There will be a parent login section where parents can access the menu, calendar, important forms, and the newsletter. Once the website is up and running we will send home information regarding how to login and access this information. We hope that the new website will help everyone access information at their convenience. A reminder...please call the classroom telephone if your child will not be at school. If you leave a message on the office phone the teachers may not receive that message until late in the day. So, in order to avoid any issues please always call or TEXT your child's classroom phone if you need to get a message to a teacher.

Reminder: The Toy Drive to benefit the St. Louis Crisis Nursery will end on Wednesday, December 13th. Please allow your child to pick out a \$5 toy and bring it to Countryside to donate to this wonderful cause. Toys will be delivered to the Crisis Nursery and given to children whose parents are unable to care for them do to extenuating circumstances. The Preschool children will be asked to talk about their donated toy during circle time.

Toddler/Preschool/Kindergarten Conferences: I would like to apologize for the delay in scheduling parent teacher conferences. With the staff changes we were not able to set aside time for conferences. I am pleased to announce that we now have a conference sign-up sheet in both the Toddler and Preschool/kindergarten classrooms. The Toddler Room will host phone call conferences and the Preschool/Kindergarten will have conferences in the front office. Please be prompt and arrive on time, conferences are only fifteen minutes each so we need to make sure we stay on track for the next parent. Thank you in advance for understanding.

If Countryside will close due to inclement weather a phone message will be sent by 6 a.m. and you may also find this information on Channels 2, 4 and 5. A message will also be left on the school phone.

We hope your family has a wonderful holiday season and a great start to the new year!

Infant Room

Classroom Phone: 314-873-2262



Happy Holidays! We hope everyone is having a great beginning to the Holiday season! Can you believe it is already here? All of our babies are getting so big, so quickly, it's unbelievable! Every single one of our children has met at least two new milestones over the past month. It has been a month full of learning and moving on to new levels of social interaction! We are very pleased with the progress everyone has been making!

With our children getting older we feel it's necessary, when possible, to give our children even more opportunity to learn and grow with new experiences. This is why we have begun to incorporate more outside time in our weekly schedule! The scheduled days we take our older babies outside are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Please make sure to bring clothing appropriate for the weather (coat, mittens, shoes, ect). Dependent on the weather and the overall well being of our children, determines whether or not we go outside on a particular scheduled day.

We are having a fun event taking place this month in the infant room, courtesy of Ms. Kyla! Holiday photos! Please bring in your child's Holiday outfit/ Dressy clothes in (separate from child) the week of December 17th. We are very excited to give the parents our holiday surprise this year... It's more than just the photos! ☺ We look forward to spending the holiday season alongside all of our children and each of their families! Thank you for all that you do!

Please note: all babies develop at their own pace. The following information should just be used as a general guide. This month our focus is on Cognitive Development:

3 to 6 Months

Cognitive: She is starting to understand that she can make things happen and will grab and shake toys to make a sound. Everything possible is brought to her mouth for further exploration.

6 to 9 Months

Cognitive: She is responding to her name and recognizes her primary caregiver. A favorite game is dropping a toy and looking to see where it falls. She looks for toys that are hidden or out of view. Everything she grabs goes into her mouth, as this is a way she learns about the object. She is beginning to move towards a toy that she wants in order to get it rather than wait until someone hands it to her.

9 to 12 Months

Cognitive: She tries to make things that she enjoys happen again, such as repeating a particular game, by bouncing and making sounds. She understands when a toy is hidden and likes to play peek-a-boo games with toys and people. She likes to imitate physical actions like blowing kisses and waving bye-bye.

All Ages:

Reading to Your Baby: Snuggle your baby in your lap and look at books that have large, simple pictures. Read the words or name the pictures. Simple songs and nursery rhymes are ways to encourage a life-long interest in words and language development for your baby. Read the words or name the pictures with expression in your voice.



Mom's Day Out Program/One Year Old's

Classroom Phone: 314-704-5255

What's Happening in Mom's Day Out?

November has been a very busy month in our classroom. Many of the children are talking a lot now. There is constant chattering all day long. It's so fun to watch their language develop as they talk to us and to their friends. Those who aren't talking yet are starting to babble a lot, so even if we don't hear real words, it sure sounds like a conversation anyway. We also notice language development in their understanding of what we say to them. Even our 12 month-olds will respond to simple commands.

During music time, some of the children have started singing along and doing hand motions too. That is a big change in the past few months, when most of them would just stare at us when we sang to them.

Art continues to be a highlight of our morning. We're still working on getting our youngest children to pick up a paintbrush or marker without 1) painting themselves, and 2) putting it in their mouth. But practice makes perfect and soon everyone will be creating masterpieces with little assistance. Make sure to send your child in play clothes. Our paint and makers are washable, so it shouldn't stain clothing, but sometimes we get really messy.

We have been fortunate that the weather stayed warm for most of the month and we were able to get outside almost daily. We will continue to go outside as long as the wind chill stays above 40, so it's very important that you send a heavy coat, mittens and hats to school every day. Our whole class goes out together, so regardless of age, your child needs appropriate outside clothing. It's also important that you find shoes that will stay on your child and have a hard sole. This would also be a good time to check to make sure your child's extra set of clothing at school is appropriate for winter.

We would like to welcome Marley and Ayla who have recently joined our class. Nolan moved to the 2's classroom last month and we enjoy seeing him play with the big kids. Kima is moving to the 2's this month and as much as we'll miss her, we know she'll have lots of fun with the older children. We also want to wish a very Happy Birthday to Tess, Joey, and Marley who turned 1 in November and Aliya who will turn 2 in December.

Your Child's Language Development, 8 – 14 months

The greatest indication of a child's language development before age two is not what s/he says, but what s/he understands. This is called receptive language. By 11 or 12 months of age, children usually understand about a dozen words and a few simple commands. By 14-15 months, they usually understand close to 40 words.

Frequently Understood Words:

8-12 months: mommy, daddy, baby, ball, no-no, bottle, names of family members, names of pets, bye-bye, shoe

12-14 months: hi, kitty, dog, cup, cracker, car, eyes, ears, feet, hair, hug, water, drink, chair, book, socks, dance, pat-a-cake, peekaboo, kiss, come here, sit down, stand up, get up, kiss me, bring me..., throw the ball, give Mommy....

14-18 months: milk, spoon, phone, keys, blanket, bed, cereal, let's go..., teeth, brush your hair, where is...?, turn on/turn off lights, open/close the door, go get...

It is critical during this age that you label your child's world. Talk in short, simple phrases, using speech just beyond your child. Try to name objects using correct vocabulary instead of turning everything into a babyish word. Talk to your child about what he/she is seeing, doing, hearing. When your child makes a sound, try to interpret it as meaningful. Once real words are being used, communication is the goal, not pronunciation. Model correct pronunciation but be excited about the communication that has taken place.

Language Development 14-24 Months

Look for your child to:

Understand more words and follow simple directions.

Use words with gestures to express wants and needs.

Say simple words and begin to use two-word phrases, “more milk” or “play ball”

Imitate adult inflections.

Be more interested in communication.

Look at books, recognize pictures, and enjoy repetitive stories, rhymes, songs, and poetry.

Point to body parts

Ways you can help: Encourage, listen attentively, and respond appropriately to efforts in communication.

Your reactions will reinforce your child’s interest in speaking. Use parallel talk: say what your child is doing; name what s/he is saying and playing with.

Toddler Program

Classroom Phone: 314-704-3419

Happy winter! The year is moving by so quickly. I can’t believe the snow will soon be falling! We are happy to welcome Essha to our classroom. She is our new assistant in the classroom. This month we will practice using tongs with our tongs transfer work. We will use the tongs to move different colored koosh balls from one bowl to the other. We will also have our lacing apple. The children will practice lacing the worm through the holes in the apple. We will continue learning our letter sounds and number recognition throughout the year. We will also continue practicing our wet pouring/ transfer work. We have been learning special winter songs; this newsletter includes two of the songs we are singing during circle time each morning.

Parents are more than welcome to be a classroom volunteer. We are always looking for people to make play dough, read to the class, and bring in flowers. We can have classroom readers weekly from 8:40-8:50am. You may choose books from school, your house, or the public library. Flowers can be brought in each week, and play dough will be every other week. The sign-up sheets will be hung in the classroom. Please feel free to add your name to any of these volunteer sheets!

If you plan on speaking to Miss. Rebecca during pick up time, please arrive 10 minutes early so we are not disrupting the schedule. This is especially important at the 11:30 dismissal, because there are children that stay for lunch and nap. Thank you for your cooperation on this! If you need to speak with Miss. Rebecca for an extended conversation please call or make an appointment with her. She can be reached on the Toddler phone (314-704-3419) between 4:00-5:00pm on M/W/F and between 7:00-8:00am on T/Th . If there is a message that you are comfortable texting, you may text this phone at anytime during the day. A text message is sometimes a lot easier to receive than a phone call.

Thank you,
Rebecca, Julie, & Essha

Important dates:

19th Mother’s Holiday Party 10-11:15

21st Winter Break begins at 11:30 –All children must be picked up at 11:30 unless they are enrolled in the Extended Day Program

24st-Jan 4th winter break

As a reminder, please make sure your child is dressed in layers and bringing the appropriate outerwear to school. We try to go outside every day, even if it is only for 5 minutes. I recommend getting a set of warm mittens and a hat that can stay at school. Please remember to label all of your child’s outerwear to prevent lost or misplaced items. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season!



A Pudgie Little Snowman

A pudgie little snowman
Had a carrot nose
Along came a bunny
And what do you suppose?
That hungry little bunny
Looking for his lunch
Ate that snowman's carrot nose
Nibble, nibble, crunch

I'm a little snowman(sung to I'm a little teapot)

I'm a little snowman short and fat
Here are my buttons, here is my hat.
When the sun comes out I cannot play.
Slowly, I just melt away.

Preschool/Kindergarten Program

Classroom Phone: 314-704-3401

Winter is coming as we head into December! The children had a great time during "Donuts with Dad". They were excited to show their dads around the classroom and present their gift to their dad as well. I would like to remind everyone about our toy drive this month and also our mother's holiday party on December 21st from 10-11:15 a.m. (more information will follow).

We have new things to talk about this month. First, we will be learning about South America. Children will have opportunities to help build a rainforest in our classroom and learn about the different animals that live in the Amazon rainforest. We will also be talking about all the different countries in South America and their native flags. We will continue to talk about living and non-living plants and animals.

As the seasons change, so do our activities in the classroom. In the Practical life room, we will be easel painting with primary colors. This gives the children a chance to mix colors together to make new colors. We will have a hand washing station, which consists of about 21 steps. This will help their coordination, concentration, order and independence. It will also help fight germs as we get into our cold season. The pouring, scooping and tweezing work in the Practical Life room have all increased in difficulty. We have chop sticks the children will work with to improve their fine motor skills.

In the sensorial area, the Red Rods help the child to recognize differences in size in one dimension-length. The exercise is similar to the preceding ones in that a mistake in the order is very evident to the child and can be corrected easily. It also offers the teacher the opportunity of introducing to the child the terms short, shorter, shortest and long, longer, longest. It gives the child a sensorial basis for learning to count when he begins mathematics.

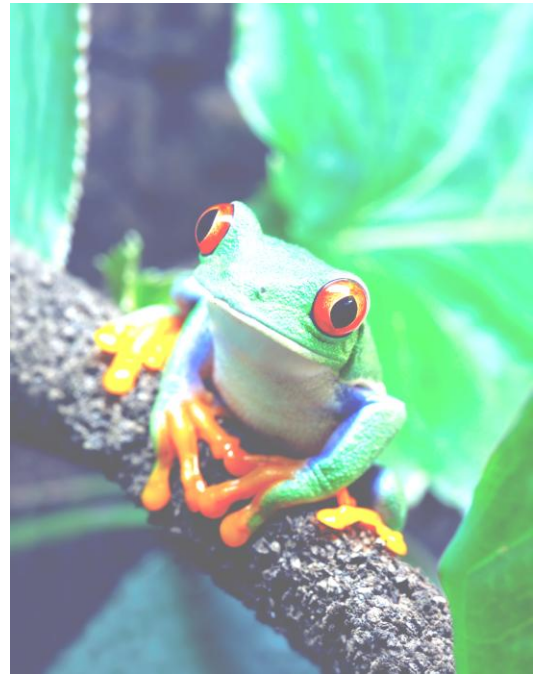
In the Montessori classroom the child's first introduction to numbers is made with a set of red and blue rods representing the quantities one through ten. The teacher helps the child to count the alternating red and

blue sections of each rod as they arrange them in stair-like formation. The child calls the smallest rod One, the next rod Two, and so forth. The number Two Rod is a unit, yet it is equal two of the Number One Rods.

At about the same time, the child learns the corresponding figures by tracing the numerals in sandpaper. The teacher helps him to place each of these numerals beside the rod that quantity. Working with it gives the child an opportunity to discover many mathematical facts. For example, if he places the Number One Rod on the same line with the Number Two Rod it will be exactly the same length as the Number Three Rod. The child is also able to see basic division; the number two rod will fit in the number six rod exactly three times. He can also use the rods to demonstrate the various combinations which equal the Number Ten Rod.

One of the group activities in a Montessori class is walking slowly around a circular line painted on the floor. In our classroom, we have continent map rug that is an oval shape that the children walk around for this exercise every other day. It helps the children to develop balance and control as they carefully put one foot in front of the other, heel to toe. There are many ways of increasing the difficulty of the activity and challenging the children carry little bells without ringing them as they walk. This activity helps them to develop coordination and grace.

What you might see in the Rain Forest...





Upcoming Events

Santa's Elves "Make surprise Christmas gifts for your family, sing songs and have a snack."

When: December 6 4-5:30 pm

Where: 5605 North Illinois, Fairview Heights, IL 62008

3 year olds – 1st graders www.newartlegacies.com

Chanukah: Festival of Lights

Date: Sunday, December 9, 2012

Venue: Missouri Botanical Garden

A traditional Jewish holiday celebration that includes festive Israeli music and dance, a menorah-lighting and Chanukah merchandise. 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

www.mobot.org, (314) 577-5100 or (800) 642-8842

First Night Saint Louis

Date: Monday, December 31, 2012

Venue: Grand Center Arts & Entertainment District

A winter celebration featuring visual and performing arts, musicians, storytellers, dancers, magicians, actors, puppeteers and visual and media artists. The opening ceremony begins at 6:00 p.m. on the Main Stage at Grand and Lindell. Children's fireworks at 9:00 p.m. and Grand Finale Fireworks at midnight.

<http://www.firstnightstl.org/>, (314) 289-8121

Kwanzaa: Festival of the First Fruits

Date: Friday, December 28, 2012

Venue: Missouri Botanical Garden

www.mobot.org, (314) 577-5100 or (800) 642-8842

Kwanzaa is a Swahili term that means "first fruits," and this contemporary African-American holiday centers around the feast table of the harvest. A Kwanzaa ceremony highlights a day of storytelling, craft and jewelry displays and authentic African drumming and musical performances. 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Noontime New Years Eve "Join in the festivities as they dance to music, make wish wands, noise makers, march in a noisy parade, and participate in a special countdown to noon."

When: December 31, 2012 10:30am-2:30pm

Where: At Magic House 516 Kirkwood Rd Kirkwood

Cost: Free with museum admission, kids of all ages www.magichouse.org

Ways to Volunteer at Countryside

Mom's Day Out (One Year Old Room) Parents

- ~Making play dough
- ~Donating fresh cut flowers

Toddler Parents: Please see Ms. Rebecca if you would like to volunteer for one of the following:

- ~Making play dough
- ~Donating fresh cut flowers for the tables in the classroom
- ~Story Time (time and day will vary)
- ~Sharing a special talent

Preschool/Kindergarten Parents: Sign-up sheets are located in the classroom

- ~Making play dough
- ~Donating fresh cut flowers
- ~Wednesday morning story time (8:30 a.m.)
- ~Sharing information about your Culture/Country
- ~Help the staff in the classroom when a teacher is absent

Newsletter: Send information to JM Hanser@aol.com (deadline for submission is the 25th of each month)

- ~monthly community events
- ~child friendly recipes
- ~any idea or information you think other families might enjoy



Please don't forget to send a hat and mittens each day!!!

Thank You!
The Countryside Staff