



# PARENTS AS TEACHERS

December 2020

## Reflections from our Coordinator...

Can you believe the end of 2020 is near! What a year it has been. Each of us has faced numerous challenges and stressors this year and the good news is, we are still here, we keep showing up. Each of you have had to learn how to parent in new ways, find new ways to entertain and enrich your child and you have risen to the challenge. We are so grateful for every PAT family for continuing to show up for us as well. We appreciate you gathering items for your child and logging into Zoom month after month. Your parent educators have been working hard to stay connected, to make your visits meaningful, helping you continue to focus on what is most important for your children and your family. From the bottom of my heart, thank you! It sparks joy and hope for us to see parents digging and in making life work right now. This past year has built resiliency into you and your children and my hope is that we will all be stronger and better for what we are enduring. As we get ready to ring in the New Year, my hope is that we will take time to reflect on 2020. There is much to learn by taking time to think back on the challenges you have faced, how you made it through them, and what you learned through the process. I personally have also been reflecting on all the things I am grateful for as this year comes to an end. In spite of so many things lost, there were also things myself and my family gained.

As we move into 2021 (man that sounds good) we will be continuing to seek feedback from you and continually adjust to keep improving the quality of our virtual services. Please know that your opinions matter, and we want to hear what is working and what creative ideas you have to help us keep improving. Feel free to reach out to myself or your parent educator. We also need you to continue to share this program with your friends, neighbors and coworkers. We do not currently have a waiting list, and we would love to welcome some new families into our program.

I wish you and your family a bright and joy filled holiday season.

With hope and anticipation,

*Michelle Kelly*

Program Coordinator

Blue Valley Parents as Teachers

Mkelly@bluevalleyk12.org



## CALENDAR:

### Parent Chat

Dec. 7th 8-9pm

### Virtual Baby Play/Baby Sign

Tuesdays 12:30-1pm



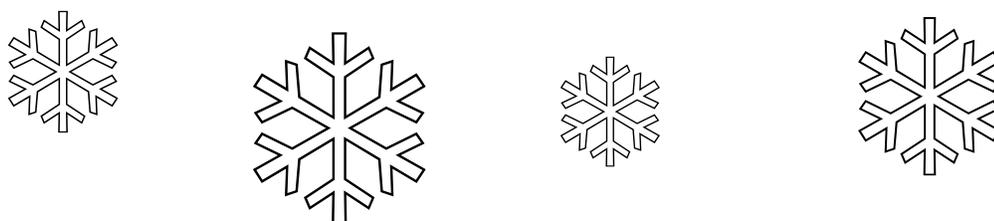


## **Parent Chat for Parents of 24-36 Month Old Children**

Put the little ones to bed and join Parent Educators Sarah and Monica for a time to chat with other parents about fun activities you are loving to do with your 24-36 month old child. This will be a great time to connect with other parents and share ideas and ask questions. Educators will bring a few activities ideas and we encourage you to also be ready to share an idea you have enjoyed with your child. If you have a place you have found fun to go to while it is cold and safe during this pandemic we would love to hear about those as well. To register click [HERE](#).

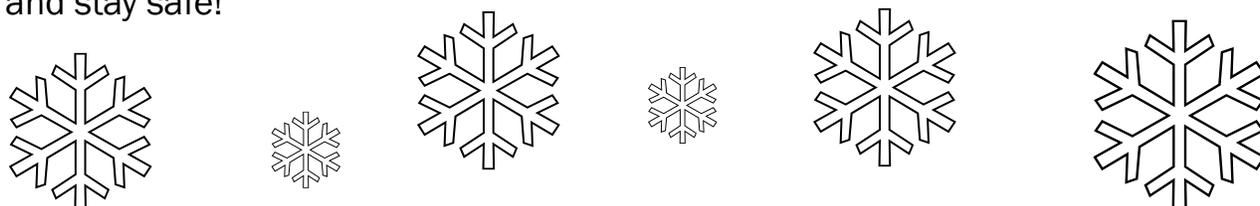
### **Virtual Baby Play/Baby Signs**

During this next session of Baby Play we will be teaching and learning “baby signs” you can use to support early communication skills between you and baby. Each week you and baby will have the opportunity to learn new baby signs through use of interactive songs and rhymes that you can incorporate into every day experiences and transitions. This will also be a great opportunity for you to connect with other caregivers each week. Age recommendation is 6 months-12 months. Class dates: Jan. 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th and Feb. 2nd and 9th. Tuesdays, 12:30-1pm. Space is limited. Click [HERE](#) to register.



### **December Office Hours**

Our office at Hilltop Learning Center will be closed from Wednesday, December 23rd, through Sunday, January 3rd, 2021. All emails and voicemails will be returned on Monday, January 4th, 2021. Enjoy the winter break, always buckle your child in their car seat and stay safe!





## **Look for Ways to Sincerely Praise Children for Their Accomplishments**

A child needs to feel the significant people in her life notice what she does and are proud of her accomplishments. This message can be given by a hug as well as with words. A baby's first step, the creation of a pretty picture, or blocks stacked into a tall tower are obvious times for praise. Less obvious times are good too—for example, when a messy child shows the slightest sign of neatness or when she has completed a task without being asked to do it. It doesn't matter how the accomplishment stacks up in relation to other children. The important thing is that the child accomplished something. A good rule of thumb is to praise children as often as—or more often than—you correct them.

*~Growing Together*

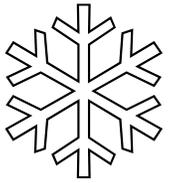
## **Sensory Overload During Holidays**

Holidays can be a difficult time for infants and toddlers. Their normal routines are often changed or nonexistent, and they are exposed to a variety of new people, smells, sights, and sounds. Often, these changes can overload and be too much for an otherwise happy, outgoing child. Overload can happen when too much activity is going on around a baby or when a baby has low tolerance to activity. All children have limits on the amount of stimulus they can tolerate. These limits vary based on how the child is feeling and the level of interest in the situation. Your child may show the following signs that he/she is overwhelmed: becoming irritable, withdrawing by turning away, ignoring a person or activity, attempting to hide, or crying. How can you help?

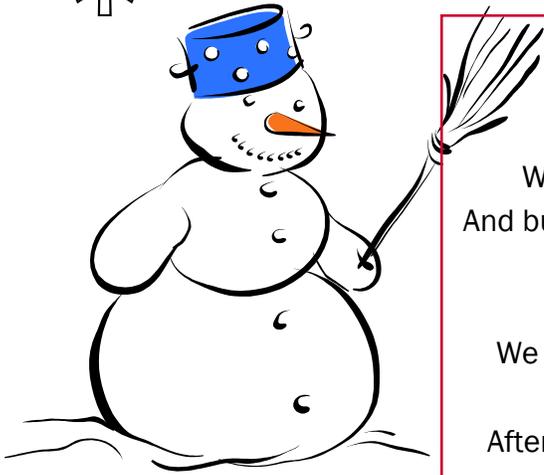
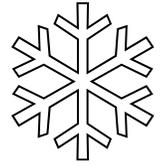
The following suggestions can help avoid overload:

- Be aware of your child's limits and introduce new kinds of stimulation gradually.
- Schedule time for you and your child to share special one-on-one time.
- Be sensitive to your child's reactions and be willing to remove him/her from a stressful situation.
- Let family members know what your child enjoys and what he/she doesn't.
- Try to keep your child's routine as close to normal as possible. A well-rested, well-fed child is able to handle more stimulation than one who's tired and hungry.





# December FUN



## SNOW FINGERPLAY

Snow, snow has fallen today (*flutter fingers*)  
 Come, lets go out to play (*motion to come*)  
 We'll roll three balls, large, medium, and small (*three fingers*)  
 And build a snowman, proud and tall (*form snowman in air, stand tall*)  
 Then play a game before we freeze. (*shiver*)  
 I'd like to play fox and geese (*point to self*)  
 We can make angels with pretty wings (*move arms up and down*)  
 Lie down and give your arms a fling.  
 After awhile we'll sure tire, so we'll go inside and sit by the fire (*sit*)

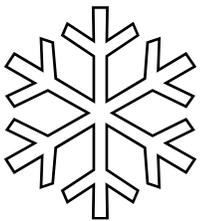
## MAKE SLUSHY PRETEND SNOW

You will need:

- ◆ 8 rolls of cheap toilet paper
- ◆ 1 bar Ivory soap, shredded with a vegetable peeler
- ◆ Warm water

Unroll one roll of toilet paper into a large bowl or tub, cover with shredded Ivory and add water slowly until the paper starts to disintegrate between your fingers. Squish until very wet. Add more toilet paper and then more water. Keep the container covered. Texture improves overnight. Add more water until you have the consistency you like. Your child may enjoy this wonderful sensorial experience!

# CELEBRATE



## MAKE CLOUD DOUGH

You will need:

- ◆ 8 cups of flour
- ◆ 1 cup of vegetable oil
- ◆ Heaping tbsp. non-toxic Tempera paint powder
- ◆ Potato masher or pastry cutter & wooden spoon.

In a large bowl stir together flour and oil. Add the tempera paint powder, give it another stir, then using a potato masher work the dough for several minutes until the color is uniform and the ingredients are soft, silky and well-mixed.

Blue Valley Schools  
 P.O. Box 23901  
 Overland Park, KS  
 66283

This publication available in alternate formats.