

Children of Hope Child Development Center

December 2025

Hope Happenings: News from Mrs. Mueller's Office

Jessica Mueller
Preschool Director



It is a magical time of year . . .

Cooler weather, Christmas Lights, baking in the kitchen- all the wonderful sights, sounds and smells that lead us up to Christmas. Thinking back, I can remember the joy, wonder and excitement around the Christmas season as a child. Our hope is that we can help to build that wonder and excitement during this month. It will be busy, crazy, and wonderful.

Please join us for our annual Christmas Program on Dec. 16th. The Gliders and Penguins will dazzle us with a Christmas play and songs. The Owlets will entertain with song and dance in their own room on that day. Please know you are welcome to bring Owlet siblings to the Program once they are done in their room.

We will also be listening to the Polar Express book on the 11th and sharing in cookies and milk during classes. On the 15th the Gliders will try to track down the silly gingerbread man, but I have heard he is pretty sneaky. On the 17th the Penguins will spread some Christmas cheer around campus as they carol to the office, the Ladies Knitting Group, classrooms and the community room. Our Christmas Store will take place on December 15th-18 with all classes and children that want to participate given time to shop and find some treasures to gift to others. We will finish out time together in December, with a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus. They will share stories, snacks and holiday cheer with the children. We will take some pictures to send home too.

We will also take time to slow down and focus on being present with each other and to celebrate Jesus in this season. When you stop to take time to spend with a young child you can see the awe and wonder still exists as it did so many years ago in the manger. Have a blessed Christmas and see you in the new year.

Warmly,
Mrs. Mueller 😊

Happy Birthday!



STAFF BIRTHDAYS

30th- Deacon Connie



Church Events:

***December 24th- Children's
Christmas Eve Service- 4:00PM***

Sunday School December 7th

Praying and Playing Dec. 14th

Chapel this month:



**December 8th-Gliders
December 9th- Owlets
December 10th- Penguins**

**Chapel starts at 8:30 and
everyone is welcome to attend.**

**Don't forget to wear your
purple school shirt on your
chapel day!**

LUNCH BUNCH



Pick Up at 1:00pm: \$15

Pick Up at 2:00pm: \$20

Will invoice via Brightwheel weekly.

NO LUNCH BUNCH December 18th due to Staff Lunch for Christmas

UPCOMING EVENTS

Christmas Break Dec. 19th-January 5th



Enjoy this extra family time!

Polar Express-December 11th



Glider Gingerbread Hunt Dec. 15th



Penguin Caroling Dec. 17th



Christmas Program

Dec. 16th @ 9:00 for Penguins and
Gliders in the Sanctuary
8:35 for Owlets in their classroom



Santa and Mrs. Claus Visit



The jolly red man himself and his wife will be on campus December 18th to read a story with the classes, take some photos and spread some holiday cheer.

There is no Lunch Bunch this day.



Christmas Store Donations are still gladly being accepted.

Christmas Store Dec. 15th-17th (18th if needed)



Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit ChallengingBehavior.org.

More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, ChallengingBehavior.org.

How to Plan Activities to Reduce Challenging Behavior

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

Unfortunately, there is no "Guidebook for Parents" that tells you exactly how to raise children who behave perfectly at all times. Each child and family is unique, which means that there is no one solution or strategy that is going to work for everyone, every time. However, while it isn't magic, simple planning ahead can work wonders to help improve your child's behavior. You can plan activities to teach your child important skills such as sharing, taking turns or handling disappointment. You can also plan ahead to prepare your child for new events in her life such as changes in her schedule, a road trip, a new baby or a visit from grandparents.

For example, Abby is three years old and is usually happy at preschool where she loves to draw and play with the doll house. However, at home when Abby plays one-on-one with another child, she often ends up throwing toys, screaming "Mine!" or crying. What can Abby's mom do? Instead of always "managing" these outbursts, she can intentionally plan activities to teach Abby the skills of sharing and taking turns. She can also plan activities that give Abby an opportunity to practice these new skills.

Try This at Home

- **Tell your child exactly what to do.** Telling your child to "share" or "be nice" does not actually tell her what she should be doing. For example, if Abby throws her toys, her mom can say, "Abby, toys stay on the floor or on your lap." If Abby hits her friend, her mom can say, "Hands down. Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging. Use your words. You can say, 'I am angry. Help please!'"
- **Use a Visual Schedule.** A visual schedule will help her to understand what is expected. To learn more about visual schedules, read the *How to Use Visual Schedules to Help Your Child Understand Expectations* handout in the Backpack Connection Series.
- **Practice, practice, practice.** Intentionally create situations where she can practice the desired behavior. For example, Abby's mom can help Abby learn to take turns while playing with her sister or an older friend. She can ask Abby's sister to "help teach Abby to take turns" while playing with one doll. Abby's mom provides the toy and reminds the girls to take turns when playing. The girls can practice the skill of sharing during their time together.
- **Catch your child being good!** When your child is using the desired behavior, you can encourage her by responding with enthusiasm. For example, "Wow, I saw you share the sand toys at the park with those two girls. What a great friend you are!"
- **Prepare your child before an event.** For example, Abby's mom can say, "Abby, your friend Ella is coming over to play today. When friends come over,

we share our toys. I know how special doggy is to you. We could put doggy in a safe place and you do not have to share her."



- **Hope for the best but plan for the worst!** If you know that your child might have problems when playing with other children, stay nearby so that you can intervene if needed. You might also provide two sets of an identical toy (e.g., two bubbles or two balls) and then offer a change in location to play to diffuse difficult situations.

Practice at School

School offers many opportunities for children to practice social skills and learn emotional vocabulary. Teachers can set up art or quiet activities where children have the opportunity to practice sharing, learning to wait and taking turns. As children interact with each other, teachers provide positive language. For example, "Abby, I see that you are pointing to the red marker. You can tap Jacob on the shoulder and say, 'Can I have a turn?'" After the interaction, the teacher provides the children with encouragement. For example, "Way to go! Class, Abby and Jacob are working together. They are sharing and taking turns!" Teachers can also use daily schedule changes to teach the skill of handling disappointment. For example, "Oh no, Miss Marcle is not here today. We won't be able to go to music. I am really disappointed. What should we do?" At this point, the children can learn to problem-solve and come up with a positive solution.

The Bottom Line

Much of the frustration that parents experience can be avoided by planning ahead and teaching children a desired behavior before a difficult situation occurs. When you are unprepared for your child's challenging behavior, such as whining or temper tantrums, you might respond with anger or in other ways that make the situation worse. Remember that you are in control of the daily schedule and routine. If your child is having problems with activities such as play with others, drop-off at school, or bedtime, you can plan activities that will give her the opportunity to learn the social skills she needs. Planning ahead can reduce challenging behavior such as meltdowns, whining and temper tantrums and increase desired behavior such as flexibility, using words and patience. Planning activities that teach skills such as sharing and taking turns will provide her with the tools she needs to increase self-esteem and be successful in school and life.



Instructions

The story you tell reflects a specific, personal stressor or concern for the child. Slow down, be present, connect and enjoy this profoundly helpful activity with a child who is having a tough time.

- Hold the child gently by the wrist. Massage each finger from base to top, starting with the pinky. On each finger, state one positive thing about the child.
- When you get to the thumb, describe the stressor. Then fold the thumb into the center of the palm, wrap the fingers over it and offer calm reassurance. Give a little squeeze to the hand to cement it in the brain.

4

"This little finger likes to draw pictures."

3

"This little finger likes to play with friends."

2

"This little finger likes to blow bubbles."

1

"This little finger likes to run."

5

Thumb: Describe the stressor or concern.

"But the thumb said, 'What about me?' The thumb was worried it might not like joining soccer." Fold child's thumb in and wrap fingers around it and say, "The fingers said, 'You're safe. You can do it. We know you can do it.'"

Story Hand

A Story Hand is an *I Love You Ritual™* in the form of a gentle hand massage accompanied by a personalized story that helps a child deal with stress or anxiety. It offers children soothing comfort and connection during difficult times. The thumb discloses the stressor or concern and at the same time reassures the child that they are safe and capable.



Please make drop off and pick up times with your child.

NO CELL PHONE ZONES 😊

SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

We at **Children of Hope Child Development Center** are committed to providing a smoke-free environment for children, staff members, and childcare providers. Due to hazards from exposure to second-hand smoke and as a recognized Empower childcare facility, it shall be the policy of this childcare facility to provide a tobacco-free environment for children, staff members, childcare providers, and parents.



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Page/Follow us on
Insta!**

Also, join our Private Group
Children of Hope Preschool/
Child Development Center of
Ahwatukee