



# Spuyten Duyvil

## P R E S C H O O L

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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Veteran's Day ..... NO SCHOOL ..... Monday, Nov. 11**  
**Deadline to sign up to take Gifted & Talented test ..... Tuesday, Nov. 12**  
**Scholastic Book Clubs order due ..... Friday, Nov. 22**  
**UPK Share Luncheon ..... Wednesday, Nov. 27**  
**Thanksgiving Break ..... NO SCHOOL ..... Thurs – Fri, Nov. 28-29**  
**SDP Board of Directors Meeting ..... Monday, Dec. 2 at 6:30 pm**  
**Fall Family Conferences .....info to follow..... Week of Dec. 2-6**  
**Scholastic Book Fair at school ..... Week of Dec. 2-6**  
**Family Breakfast/Lunch .....specific days to be announced..... week of Dec. 16-20**

*Check your school calendar for dates for the rest of the year.*

Nov. 8, 2019

Dear Families,

Picture Day went well- lots of smiles, bows and bangles. Delivery will come in about 1 month.

So many of you made it to this year's glorious Fall Festival. Bunches of thanks to the families who ran activities, donated and then purchased food and gave their time and energy to making the day so successful. And, not for nothing, we kept about \$1000 after expenses to help with general costs all year.



In case you are wondering where the teachers get their inspiration from for the amazing, original pinatas, that is where the idea of connected curriculum comes in. The raccoon is Chester from the Kissing Hand, the elephant is the same from Piggy and Elephant and mama monkey has her 5 little monkeys jumping on the bed! Completely independent on one another, each UPK class choose a favorite class story to bring to life – and then, of course, on Saturday we beat the life out of each!

### LENDING LIBRARY:

UPKers should be bringing home their book bags every week. Parents' homework is to read your child's choices at home. Talk about story, characters, interesting words, enjoy the texts. There is a literacy tip included each month. The November one will be *Picture Walk*. Be sure to return the bag each week so your child can choose new books.

We have a substantial school library in the upstairs common area. Families are welcome to browse this collection as well; let me know if there is a particular interest as we have another whole closet filled with books by subject. You are welcome to borrow these as well.

**BUSY MONTH:** There are many family events to be aware of in November. To help everyone stay on track I have signed our families up with **REMIND.COM**. You should have received a text inviting you to join. If you did not, let me know. I am hoping that a quick timely text will help with scheduling. Now what are all those busy events?



### UPK Share Luncheon –

We started this annual event a few years ago and it has been a delight! UPK classes will get more information closer to the day, but the idea is that every child brings in a small homemade dish from home. We put it all together, al 40 kids sit together at one long table and their teachers serve!! Not Thanksgiving, but hopefully following the admirable value of breaking bread with those you care about. (Sorry- parents not invited to this one!)



### Family Conferences –

Another week or so and we will set up the appointment schedule for each family to meet with their teacher starting Dec. 2. Conferences are either before school or from 3- about 5. The meeting should not be seen as a report, but rather a guided conversation between home and school on how your child is developing from our perspective and yours.



### Scholastic Book Clubs/Book Fair –

The November monthly orders are open now. I will release the order on Nov. 22. Some paper flyers are in the cubby room. Again, much more available on the Scholastic website. The more formal Book Fair will be set up outside the UPK rooms the whole week of Family Conferences. These books cost more (full retail price) but are generally hard cover and some more gift-like selections. We get 25% of the sales back to the school in cash and merchandise. A new piece of the Fair is their online store which opens the week before (Nov. 27). Again, more info at the end of the month, but if you want to get a head start on holiday gifts, check out the monthly orders now.

## WINTER VACATION CAMP- need to get your attention

Look out for a survey email asking for feedback about our pilot try at vacation camp. Families have been asking about our offering a program for when school is closed. This December does not seem to be needed by enough families; it is a choppy week with the holidays breaking up the week. We are planning our first single day Vacation Camp for MLK Day on Jan. 20.

Please take the time to respond to the survey so plans can best match needs.

### TOWN MEETING:

Have you attended one yet? If you do drop off or 3:00 pick up try to stop in on a Friday. The schedule is on the downstairs bulletin board.

### COMPOSTING:

Even though the weather is changing, Hannah will keep coming every week to work with the children outdoors. Tons of bulbs have been planted for next Spring. Harvest is over; the beds are being transitioned into winter and cover crops. You will start seeing plastic sheeting over the beds to help incubate them as the temp drops.



Since Hannah is able to actively process the compost we are generating from the farm and our classrooms, she can now accept your food scraps from home. Families are welcome to drop off their scraps- only raw fruits and vegetables, flowers, peels, skins. Nothing cooked, no meats or breads. The compost bin is to the right of the greenhouse. Do not put your scraps in the black metal tumbler, just the open bins alongside the fence in the corner. The children take this composting very seriously. You will be helping to complete the cycle we are doing in class by taking their lunch scraps outdoors, processing the decomposing matter and then refilling the planting beds. It is a very satisfying activity and so easy to do.





# COMPOSTING:

All organic matter will rot down over time to make a brown soil-like material that can be used for planting again. All plant and animal based material will eventually decompose. Here are the materials you can collect at home and bring into our compost bin at school. Only save uncooked foods and no meats- we don't want to bring in rats, flies or bad smells. The best compost mixture is half and half of greens and browns:

GREENS	BROWNS	Do NOT Compost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fruit and vegetable scraps</li><li>Teabags &amp; coffee grounds</li><li>Old flowers &amp; plant stems</li><li>Grass clippings</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Cardboard egg cartons</li><li>Autumn leaves</li><li>Crushed eggshells</li><li>Gerbil, hamster, guinea pig &amp; rabbit bedding</li><li>Paper towel cardboard rolls</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Meat or fish</li><li>Cooked food</li><li>Sandwiches</li><li>Plastic bags</li><li>Tin cans</li><li>Plastic bottles, drink cartons</li><li>Disposable diapers</li><li>Magazines</li></ul>

### BUSINESS ODDS and ENDS:

- UPK Lunch menu** is posted every Friday for the following week if you want to see what the kids **are offered**.
- Since food delivery follows federal mandated portions and food groups there is often more food than our little ones can eat, or milk that they can drink. **PLEASE- take home the leftovers** from the downstairs refrigerator. Any container without a class name on it is available for your dinner at home! And definitely take milk on Fridays. We get more deliveries the next week.
- Nursery families** – the orange mailbags on the door to the Nursery corridor have your children's names on them – check their for art work ready to go home and other notes.
- Immunizations and Medical Forms** – Everyone has been very cooperative in getting these required forms to me. Reminder that every child must have a current (within the past 12 months) medical form on file at school, including proof of all vaccinations, including influenza.

### KINDERGARTEN/ GIFTED & TALENTED CLASSES & TESTING

If you are interested in your child taking this test in January, the deadline to apply is Tues, Nov. 12 The guidebooks for G&T and general KG enrollment are available in the cubby room.

A few of us visited PS 7 for their Open House. The school was well run, the staff friendly and outgoing. They are very interested in enrolling more local families. They have lots of room to expand. There is a lot to be said for supporting your local community school and if programs are not what you would like to see, get involved and speak up. Meanwhile families in the immediate Kingsbridge Ave. area should visit. The guidance counselor will let me know once the rest of the monthly Open Houses are scheduled.

### ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: *The Wisdom of Play*

**David Elkind, Stuart Brown, Larry Schweinhart**, and other early childhood experts record their thoughts on the importance of play. Read how play is a child's way to make sense of their world, and why it is an essential part of emotional and physical well-being.

There is so much to consider when checking out schools for your child, and much of it you don't have any control over – what time is lunch? Logistics of drop off and pick up? Getting in through the lottery process? How many kids in the class? I encourage families to visit a wide range of schools to help clarify for yourself what is good, what is not acceptable and, honestly, what you could live with.

Here is a sample of one of the short pieces in this booklet. I urge families to download the rest.

<https://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/literature/wisdom-of-play>

If you have bulk copying available at work, please let me know. I would love a stash of these in hard copies to give to our own perspective families too.

Sincerely,

Judi

...it starts with the child and not with the subject matter.

History

By David Elkind,  
PhD

**E**arly childhood education, the care and instruction of young children outside of the home, over the last half century has become a downward extension of schooling. It is now the first rung on the educational ladder. In many respects, however, this most recent addition to the pedagogical hierarchy is quite different from its elementary and secondary predecessors.

**The early childhood** curriculum is the most holistic and least differentiated at any level of education. It is also the most solidly grounded in philosophy, in clearly articulated methodology, and in theory and research. Those who contributed to the discipline of early childhood education came from occupations and professions outside the academic domain. What they had in common was an understanding of children. And that is what makes early childhood education unique; it starts with the child and not with the subject matter.

**The philosophical foundations** of early childhood education were provided by John Amos Comenius, John Locke, and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Its curriculum and methodology were created by the likes of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, and Rudolf Steiner.

Most recently, it was scientifically grounded by the research and theories of Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, and Erik Erikson.

**While there are differences** in the approaches of these progenitors of early childhood education, they are overshadowed by one common principle: that early childhood curriculum and practice must be adapted to the maturing needs, abilities, and interests of the child.

**This was** the principle embodied in the first kindergarten program, developed by Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) and the first early childhood program to be widely adopted in both Europe and abroad. The kindergarten movement was propelled by the industrial revolution and the introduction of women into the factory labor force.

**Later, Maria Montessori's** (1870-1952) early childhood program was also widely adopted both in Europe and abroad. But it was not until after WWII that early childhood education came to be seen as an important first step on the educational ladder.

**In America,** the Head Start Program, launched in the 1960s for low-income children, had an unintended consequence. Although it was very effective, the title gave parents the impression that education was a race, and that the earlier you start, the earlier and better you finish. Middle-income parents wanted their preschoolers to have a head start as well. This gave added emphasis to the importance of early childhood education as the answer to improving the educational system.

**As a consequence,** kindergarten, once a half-day affair required by only 40 percent of US states, has become largely a full-day affair required nationwide. Academics, including math and reading curricula, testing and grades, are now the norm in many schools. Programs for younger children have expanded as well.

**Today,** some 80 percent of children under the age of six spend part or full time in non-parental child care settings. Having your child cared for outside of the home, once looked down upon as an abrogation of a mother's maternal instinct, is now a socially accepted practice. Indeed, those parents who choose not to put their children in out-of-home settings are the ones perceived as insufficiently concerned with their child's welfare.

**With the rapid expansion** and acceptance of early childhood programs, the basic principle of early childhood education, supported by an overwhelming amount of contemporary research and classroom experience, is dismissed as irrelevant. Instead, we have had a politically and commercially driven effort to make early childhood education "the new first grade."

**The articles** presented in this booklet make clear that a play-based curriculum is best suited to meet the emerging needs, abilities and interests of young children. We have come too far from where early education began: with the child.