



Spuyten Duyvil P R E S C H O O L

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IMPORTANT- gates are being left open. There are several to close when you come through- outside at sidewalk, at the tunnel and at the playground. PLEASE be sure to keep each closed. This is an essential safety piece!!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Scholastic Book Orders Tues, Oct. 12
- SDP Bd. of Directors Meeting .. on Zoom Wed, Oct. 20
- PreK 4 Kindergarten Meeting on Zoom..... To Be Announced – at least late October
- Photo Day(we are open Election Day)..... Tuesday Nov.2
- Double Good Popcorn Fundraiser starts week of Nov. 5
- Farm and Garden work day Saturday, Nov. 6
- Scholastic Orders sent in Monday, Nov. 8
- What About Kindergarten? Parent workshop Wed, Nov. 10 at 6:30 pm
- Veteran’s Day..... NO SCHOOL Thurs, Nov. 11

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

October 18, 2021

Dear Families,

Where to begin? Every year, Covid or not, has its own set of circumstances- delightful surprises along with often maddening challenges. It’s what makes my job (and life) so endlessly interesting.

Biggest news is that Dayana, upstairs 4K teacher, had her baby girl on Sept. 29. She will return on Dec. 20 from maternity leave. Brenda from the Nursery is covering as Head Teacher. Brenda knows half the children from the 3’s last year; the transition was seamless. Grazia, who was going to do Art Club weekly in all the classes, is filling in as assistant teacher with Martha and Michelle. The bodies were just moved around; the children kept going as before. The only loss is that Art Club is now on hold til January. Of course the Nursery classes get the full benefit of Grazia’s wonderful take on creative visual arts every day!



DRUMMING - After a few stops and starts, all our extended curriculum programming is in full swing. Babatunde (Baba to us) has returned for a second session. We are now good to go every Friday. The first rhythm the kids are working on is 1-2-3-stop. This can be done clapping, hopping, blinking, any movement- and, of course drumming. During the Stop beat Baba has begun to do 2 hits so we get 3-2-3-2. Keep up the practice at home. It really does help. Skipping the 4th beat is really hard to get.



CHESS@3 - Also started last Wed. Every class met for half an hour with McKenna, our lovely instructor. Larger groups go half class at a time. You should all be hearing stores about King Squooshy Feet who tenderly can only walk one big step (chessboard square) at a time. Parents- if you haven’t watched the movie **The Queen’s Gambit** yet, you should. Not exactly what the kids are doing now, but a great dramatic piece.

GARDENING – If it’s Tuesday, it’s working with Chelsea out in the beds, watering, planting and exploring. This will go on all year, rain, snow and sunny days. Nature doesn’t take a break for the weather.



Attention to the environment and life cycles is an easy connection for home- our **COMPOST** bins are working again. In fact, thanks to Chelsea's work we will become an official drop-off composting site with. This will come with a rebuilding of our current compost bins. Families are invited to collect food scraps at home and drop them off in the bin along the north fence next to the greenhouse in the front yard. Just dump in your collection at drop off or pick up. A simple guide on what to collect is attached. Be sure not to leave any labels or plastic in the bins. Classrooms all collect food scraps already and Chelsea empties the containers with the children on Tuesdays. She is going to set up a parent workshop in this after school soon-

Saturday, Nov. 6 – Adult Garden Work Day –

Our current planting beds were originally built by parents over 10 years ago. They have been shifted and re-constructed several times over the years as the shape of the front yard evolved. It is time to start over. Chelsea has designed a new arrangement more carefully using the southern exposure for maximum growth. The construction will be done on Nov. 6 – all supplies will be on hand. Adult volunteers needed to dig, saw, nail, even paint if there is time. We will start at 9 am. Let me know if you can commit some hours- doesn't have to be the whole day. **No children please-** the work goes faster and more safely if all attention can be given to the construction. No experience needed. Rain date is Sat. Nov. 13.

HEALTH / COVID INFO

Thanks to everyone who has been so careful in letting me know when their child has a cold, keeping kids home proactively and in general supporting all the steps we are trying to take to stay safe. Here's a interesting piece that has come up this year- RSV virus. I had never heard of this before either but apparently it has been around, just not as prevalent as recently and generally later in the winter. It seems to be basically a kind of common cold (which are also caused by viruses). There may be more significant symptoms – deeper, longer coughs, increased congestion, possibly low fever. So, of course, Covid testing is a natural response. RSV is highly contagious; of course so are colds. This is why preschools are always handwashing, sanitizing and offering tissues. We had one reported case this year but lots and lots of kids out with variations of colds. Given the larger Covid concerns we do want to be cautious, but I also want to point out a routine preschool condition – kids will have runny noses most of the time! As long as your child does not have a fever (that is most critical) and is acting with normal energy, send them to school. We have lots of tissues!

Next thought is about the face masks. We all have runny noses wearing masks; for the youngest children this is quite a mess. We change their masks frequently. Masks from home are going to get lost. It is not sanitary to keep them around when soiled. Disposable masks are much cleaner and we use them freely. We have a good supply but if families could donate more of the smaller of the children's masks, that would be helpful.

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUBS: If you ordered for direct shipping in our first order to your home you probably already received your books. I released the school shipping orders last week. I will send them home to you as soon as I get them.

Time for the next round of orders. Scholastic has November order sheets on their site now. If you want books for specific holidays, you need to think far ahead since delivery times are a bit slower now.

I am still saving for a MacBook Pro. We have nearly 70,000 bonus points but they now cost 74,500 points. Please help me get that much before the amount goes up again!! Plus the books are a very excellent value.

www.scholastic.com/parentordering **activation code LH6ZW**



COMING SOON:

PARENT HANDBOOK: ATTACHED. Let me know if you need a hard copy. I am glad to send you a printed copy.

SCHOOL DIRECTORY: this week

PARENT WORKSHOPS: Last month I promised we would be working with

DOE Social Worker Yolanda Mines, but that was put on hold when DOE needed to temporarily reassign all their support staff to public schools in response to the staff shortages around the Covid vaccination mandate. That crisis has mercifully passed so Yolanda is coming back to the schools. She and I are meeting next week and we will set up an outreach plan to connect families around shared common interests. More info to follow.

WHAT ABOUT KINDERGARTEN?

ZOOM WORKSHOP for 4's FAMILIES - Wednesday, Nov. 10 6:30-8 pm

- Introduction to types of classes, how to apply
- Review of District 6 and 10 public and charter schools
- Alumnae parents share their experience in this process

I will send home an overview of the schools our families have enrolled in to get you all started. It does seem daunting but it will work out for everyone. Zoom link will be sent home a few days before the meeting.

FUNDRAISING:

School Photos –

will be taken on Tues, Nov. 2. This is also Election Day but we have a regular school day. We will follow the same plan as last year which went extremely well. We have such a beautiful outdoor space. Each child has individual photo taken out front. The class picture is a composite of each child and teacher rather than the familiar whole class standing on chairs in rows. Orders are taken *after* the photos are done. You are given the online code later. Pictures will be back before Christmas so you can plan family gifts also.

The school gets a percentage back from the company so it is a win-win all around. We have worked with Irvin Simon Photographers forever. The service and quality is always excellent.



Double Good Popcorn –

This is a 2-part plan. Starting Nov. 5 the online store opens. There are 4 days to get friends and family to order. Popcorn is sent directly to you for a shipping fee. Then the brochure orders are taken for the next 3 weeks. Deadline to return orders with payment is Mon, Nov. 29. This lets you get orders over Thanksgiving from other supportive friends. This deadline is absolute as I have to get the orders in or delivery will not come before Xmas

Break. For these orders there is no shipping fee to individuals; the schools pays for it in bulk. Remember, the school keeps 50% of the sales!

We are also glad to accept straight donations now if you have family who wants to pass on the popcorn (then we get to keep 100% of the sale!) As a 501c3 all donations are tax deductible; I am glad to provide a tax letter for donations.

Next week I will send the info flyer and blank order form. To set up the virtual store, check out <https://www.doublegood.com/popup>. For now get your taste buds ready- the product really is delicious!

Amazon Smile Foundation: This is a parallel site to Amazon- uses exact same catalog of items, same personal account. However, when you sign up you are asked to pick a donation site. You enter Spuyten Duyvil Preschool and all your purchases earn a small percentage from Amazon to our school. It is not a lot but the more our families log into this, and send the word to their extended family and friends, the pennies build.

School Store: not much of a fundraiser, more of a school spirit kind of thing. We have t-shirts, hoodies, coffee mugs, tote bags- all with our unique little blue house logo- just let me know if you would like anything.

PRIVATE PAYMENTS:

All contracts and invoice through Oct. have been sent out. Unfortunately, not all have been returned or paid. This is the least pleasant part of my job. Please help me not send reminders. I need the signed contract also. Starting Nov. 1 monthly invoices will go out via email automatically so that will be easier.

Hip Hop and Violin bills are coming this week.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS- as a non-profit SPUTYEN DUYVIL is governed by a group of parents and community members. All families are invited to join. Our first meeting this school year is Wed. Oct. 20 at 6:30 on Zoom. If you indicated interest in the Family Questionnaire I will send you the link. Anyone else who wants to sit in, just let me know.

THANKS TO – Glenn Alvarez (Elisa’s dad PM N) for updating our website. Beginning in 2022 we will no longer offer part time private nursery- we will be all 3K and 4K funding during the school day. That meant a lot of outdated info had to be revised. There is still some way to go but Glenn was a lifesaver. Our social media presence is not so much, which in general I am fine with. We do have an old FaceBook page. If anyone wants to take on that updating and administering, let me know.

Ed’s merry band of garden volunteers have really cleaned up the outdoor space. Made it much more accessible to Chelsea and the kids. Thanks to all!

The beautiful Fall weather encouraged use of our outdoor Porch. Blocks, train tracks and Lincoln Logs are available for outdoor play as well as used indoors.



Sincerely,

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: Whole Brain Education

Why do we offer so many different kinds of activities to our kids?

As most of you know from your other children, cousins, friends in the playground, every child has their own interests and strengths. Some are natural builders, others make friends very easily or take easily to drawing materials. As parents we tend to support what we see budding in our kids- soccer, art lessons, etc.

At school we see that enormous range as well. Not only do we want to encourage the strengths but we want to expose all the kids to the range of possibilities out there. So often over the years we have been pleasantly surprised by an unexpected strength in a child that never seemed leaning towards a particular kind of learning – a hidden talent in understanding chess or a calmness when working in the soil.

Right brain-left brain is a familiar way of thinking about those personal strengths or leanings. While that is now not considered as rigid as formerly presented, different areas of the brain do specialize in different kinds of learning and expression. Giving the children activities that cover as many of those areas as possible encourages connections between those areas of the brain. Here is a little more info on this recent work in whole brain education.

[How To Help Children Develop Both Sides Of Their Brain](http://www.q-dees.com)

www.q-dees.com Jan. 26, 2021

Our brain is divided into two hemispheres: The left brain and the right brain. Not only these hemispheres are anatomically separate, but they also function differently. Some people even say that they have their minds. So why not start with a child’s brain development? Conventional wisdom tells us that our unique personality, thought-process, and behaviour are influenced by whether we are right-brained or left-brained. Right-brained individuals are supposedly creative and big picture thinkers, while left-brained individuals tend to be more analytical and logical.

However, a recent study from the University of Utah, demonstrated that the left-brain or right-brain inclined concept is a myth. The study looked at brain scans of more than 1,000 young people between the ages of 7 and 29 to determine whether one side of the brain was more active than the other. The study concluded that there was no evidence of brain ‘sidedness’.

Therefore the concept of being left-brained or right-brained is nothing more than a figure of speech. Indeed it is not a scientific fact. This finding resulted in the development of a 'whole-brain learning' methodology in which children are encouraged to accelerate their learning by linking their logical and creative minds.

That said, efforts to develop the brain should begin early. One of the main reasons is because of how fast the brain develops before birth and continues into early childhood; the most important years to build a strong foundation for upper learning, health, and life success. For the sake of clarity, we will refer to the two hemispheres as the right and left brains.

The Left Brain

How do left brain thinkers learn?

According to [The Whole-Brain Child](#), a book written by Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Payne Bryson, our left brain loves and desires order. It's logical, literal, linguistic (it words), and linear (it puts things in a sequence or order).

Lauded as the preferred brain, the left has a systematic manner of understanding learning. If nurtured correctly, children can pre-maturely unlock their potential to learn faster, instead of counting on their adolescence to figure out on their own.



Tina likes and



The Right Brain

The right brain, on the other hand, is holistic and non-verbal. It sends and receives signals that allow us to communicate through facial expressions, eye contact, tone of voice, posture, and gestures.

The right brain values big-picture thinking. The meaning and feel of an experience, such as emotions and personal memories. In other words, if the left brain focuses on the text, the right brain makes sense of the context.

What is right brain education?

A study by Georgetown University Medical Center hypothesizes that, unlike adults, young children have brains with a superpower. Findings indicate that young children use both brain hemispheres to understand language.

The finding also suggests a possible reason why children appear to recover from neural injury much more quickly than adults.

Brain Development in Children

Did know that the right brain develops first? Young children in their first three years are by default 'right-brained'. They, therefore, don't have the ability to use logic and words to express their feelings. They live their lives completely at the moment. In other words, logic, responsibilities, and time do not make sense to them.

According to Dr. Daniel Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson, the minute the toddler begins to ask "Why?" is when his or her left brain is beginning to kick in. This also answers why ages 2 until 7 matter so much for brain development and how good preschools can provide the right brain training.

Promoting Healthy Brain Development

From birth to 3 years old, a child's brain undergoes a crucial period of development. This period is when rapid growth happens.

During then, a multitude of factors can hinder this crucial stage of development. Notwithstanding genes playing an important role, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention claims that the following listed below contributes to developing a healthy brain:

1. Proper nutrition
2. Non-exposure to toxins or infections
- 3.

The real fun begins once the baby is born. Reading, singing, and talking to your baby along with making facial expressions and other forms of play are key to your baby's brain development. Children soak knowledge from their environments. Hence, parents owe up to a large proportion of a child's learning environment because children mimic and mirror what they observe around them.

This serves as right brain training as they associating emotions with their environment.

A great way to exploit this fact is to read out aloud or consistently reward children when they are performing good deeds. The author of [Atomic Habits](#), James Clear, explains that by doing so, children would naturally associate these instances with positive emotions.

How to Help Children Develop Both Sides of Their Brain

Children's brain development is strongly influenced by their environment and their interactions with the people around them.

Vision and hearing are the first to develop, followed by early language skill sets and cognitive functions. For children to be equipped with social, cognitive, and emotional skillsets, the development of both sides of the brain is crucial.

How can we help children develop both sides of their brain?

As written in the book, [The Whole-Brain Child](#) – "Two Brains Are Better Than One: Integrating the Left and the Right", there are two left and right brain activities for kids or brain games for kids, that parents can use to develop both sides of the brain.

Strategy #1: Connect and Redirect: Surf Emotional Waves

STEP 1: CONNECT WITH THE RIGHT

This means to **acknowledge our children's feelings**. As they consistently operate on their right brain, they have yet to develop abilities to reason or to use words in attempting to express themselves.

Brain activities for kids include:

1. Physical touch
2. Empathetic facial expressions
3. A nurturing tone of voice
4. Non-judgmental listening

STEP 2: REDIRECT WITH THE LEFT

This means to **rationalize with simple logic and language**. The use of the [Socratic Method](#) of questioning, would imbue the importance of asking, 'Why?'. To employ this is to reframe the narrative in which gets children to ask why.

Strategy #2: Name it to Tame it: Tell Stories to Calm Overwhelming Emotions

When your child is going through emotional distress, displaying understanding comes first. While they may not necessarily come from an ethical standpoint, employing stories/anecdotes would set the premise of desirable or acceptable behaviour. The conventional method of parenting is to scold or shame a child when a mistake is made. However, that causes the child to associate mistakes with negative emotions. The approach to resolving your child's mistakes can greatly affect a child's outlook on life.

Tell stories to your child in a calm manner so that it speaks to both sides of your child's brain. While doing so, highlight the emotions of the characters portrayed in the stories.

This enables the child to subconsciously reflect upon themselves. This is effective because the left is reasoned with the story told, while the right is reasoned with how characters react; this technique is to [tame the emotion by naming it](#).