



# Spuyten Duyvil

## P R E S C H O O L

3041 KINGSBRIDGE AVENUE BRONX, NY 10463 TEL. 718 549 1525 FAX 718 884 0667  
director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

Indigenous Peoples Day      **SCHOOL CLOSED** ..... **Monday, Oct. 11**  
Scholastic Book Orders ..... **Tues, Oct. 12**  
PreK 4 Kindergarten Meeting on Zoom..... **To Be Announced – at least late October**  
Photo Day .....(we are open Election Day)..... **Tuesday Nov.2Double**  
Good Popcorn Fundraiser ..... **starts week of Nov. 5**

*Check your school calendar for dates for the rest of the year.- attached to this email for your reference.*

Sept 28, 2021

Dear Families,

In-between Delta warnings, booster musings, memos, newsbreaks and then all the day-to-days of child-raising, work and life, somehow we started school on time and in good form. We are fully staffed (altho we could use some substitutes on call if anyone has a recommendation), 3K and 4K is fully enrolled. There are spaces in the afternoon nursery still.

**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!!**

### NEW STAFF:

We have 2 new classroom hires this year- Molly McGill as assistant in the Annex 4's and Colleen Thompson as assistant with Dayana in class 2N 4's. We do not have to separate the groups as strictly afterschool as last year so now Amanda and Nicola are full time extended day staff with Nicole and Winifer working hourly to fill out supervision for the afternoon hours after classroom staff finish for the day. One of the many things on my To Do list is to fill out the Faculty page on our website so everyone can "meet" all our wonderful staff members. We have a very eclectic mix of professionals from a wide variety of cultures, range of ages and interests. The connectors are an appreciation of the magic of young children and a willingness to collaborate with their colleagues towards that work.

### OTHER PROGRAM NOTES:



I am glad to announce the return of other treasured regular programs as well.

**CHESS@3** - starts Wednesday. We worked with them for many years skipping last year to minimize the outside exposure. Teachers break their class into 2 groups (other than Annex and PM Nursery that work as one). Half class goes to the Studio for a 1/2 hour lesson while the teachers have the other half in the room for more individualized activity. The children work as a team with focus on learning how each piece moves. There is a lot of mathematical thinking involved (diagonal, 1 space, etc.). Instruction is based on oral storytelling of a kind of fairy tale where the story explains why that piece moves the way it does. Do not expect your child to sit down quite yet with you to pit strategies, but even that can come in time.

**GARDENING** – will start again on Tuesday each class sending 4 children outdoors at a time; we did this all last year as well. Chelsea Matias will be our new nature educator. Chelsea comes to us with a lot of experience both in urban gardening and food production and working with young children in sciences.. Look forward to bags of parsley and tomatoes coming home in the next few weeks. I believe there is still time to get another lettuce crop in, but first lots of weeding and composting to do.



**DRUMMING** - I have been envious of the school drumming program at Bronx Community Charter School for many years- now we will have it too. We are set to begin ext Friday, whole class for 45 minutes in their classroom. Babatunde O’huru will be the instructor. He did a sample lesson today; it was perfect! The children will be following a variety of African rhythms along with dances that match these beats. Now other schools can be jealous of our music program!!

**ART CLUB** - Grazia LaRocca, super long-time teacher at Spuyten Duyvil has returned to us once a week to offer each class open ended art activities as part of their regular Workchoice Time. We are thrilled to have her with us again. Look for samples of your kids’ work with her in future newsletters.

I look forward to seeing home videos of all these extras in the next few weeks. These programs are all within the school day; every child participates.

**Afterschool Add-ons:**

**Hip Hop** is on Wed and Thurs. There were so many interested families we are adding another session with Mary Cartales, an experience movement therapist we have worked with before. She is a close friend of Gina- actually has been Gina’s mentor in learning about children and dance.

**Violin** now has 5 classes each week, all starting this week. Invoices for these will come soon- as long as I keep decent records I will get to that fun part soon.



**SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUBS:**

Generally this does not need much explaining. Parents that went to school in the U.S. often took part in Scholastic Books growing up also. The attached letter explains how it works- short story is very inexpensive, fun to order and receive for you and your child(ren), brings literacy to life and earns the school reward points. Check it out.

You can order online at any time but if we chunk the orders we can increase the bonus points for the school. I have been saving for a MacPro laptop for a few years- need another 3000 points!

Look over the offerings on the website- don’t just look at the preschool flyers. You will find favorite books throughout the grades. Remember older siblings too.

I will release the Sept/Oct orders on Oct. 12. If books are delivered to the school there is no shipping fee.



Making of Class Rules connected to reading of a favorite book, *No David!*

**SNACK & MEALS: October Menus attached**

3K and 4K children receive lunch as part of the DOE funded program Our vendor is Green Top Farms. We have had quite a few conversations about “picky eaters”. More often than not this has more to do with habit than dislike. When a child tastes a food and doesn’t care for it (like me with veggies), that is fine. It looks very different when the child pushes the food away, turns their head and says no. There is always fresh fruit and usually rice or pasta, so no one goes hungry. When a child won’t even take the apple, it is generally not about the food.



The food is tasty and varied; most children eat very well with more and more feeling comfortable each day. It is a very different setting than home and takes some adjustment. I will send you the monthly menus. A few private students are purchasing lunch too rather than bring from home. If you are sending home lunch look over the attached Lunch Guidelines.

- NO nut foods at all – this includes almond butter. For Lunch Bunch Sunflower butter is fine but needs to be labeled as such or will not be taken out of the lunchbox.
- Early Drop-off Breakfast-Children may bring breakfast from home if they arrive before 8 am. The school supplies snack.- milk/water, cheese sticks, pretzels, fresh fruit, goldfish crackers. We are happy to accept snacks for the class from home- remember to send enough for the whole class- we can never get enough fresh fruit- grapes, bananas, seasonal berries, peaches.
- Again, as long as we know what the dietary restrictions are we can make accommodations. This is also true for cooking which all the classes do regularly.
- Birthday snack - mini cupcakes are perfect. Birthday juice boxes are OK too. The goal is to for the kids to share good wishes with the birthday child, not to be the major celebration for the family- SO no party plates and such and please NO goody bags. Check with your teacher first for date and time and what the class needs might be

**COMMUNICATION:**

**Parent Handbook:** We have a very complete Parent Handbook which I want to slightly revise before sending it out. Look for it in your INBOX soon. Most of rules you already know- just highlighting for parents to call in when your child is going to be absent; we need to log this. Attendance is mandated for 3K and 4K as these are publicly funded programs.

**School Directory** will go home to every family shortly so that families can easily reach out to each other for playdates and other community interests. If you do NOT want your contact info included you should have indicated this on the permission form you turned in at the beginning of the year. Send me an email as a reminder also.

**Contact Teachers** – Every class has their own email account to reach their own families or for you to direct questions to them. They do not check it during school hours so do not use that to let us know of same day pick-up changes. Use the school phone or my email for that.

Margaret & Chassity <a href="mailto:mv.upk.sdp@gmail.com">mv.upk.sdp@gmail.com</a>	Dayana & Colleen <a href="mailto:2NUPK@gmail.com">2NUPK@gmail.com</a>
Martha, Brenda & Michelle AM & PM Nurseries <a href="mailto:Nurserysdp@gmail.com">Nurserysdp@gmail.com</a>	Alda & Molly Annex <a href="mailto:ajupkannex@gmail.com">ajupkannex@gmail.com</a>
Judi Director	<a href="mailto:director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com">director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com</a>

**Class weekly Newsletters.** We will only be emailing these letters, accompanying articles and notices to families. If there are other parents/guardians that should be receiving these emails please be sure I have that contact info. Teachers will be sending short updates weekly; I write a longer newsletter monthly.

**PARENT WORKSHOPS:**

In the past we held occasional workshops to bring parents and caregivers together around common issues. Families were always under a lot of pressure; I don’t have to tell any of you what that is like now. None of us have definite answers to any of it, but there is a lot of experience among us as to systems and ways of thinking that can help. This year we are working with Yolanda Mines, a social worker supplied by the Dept of Education. Yolanda

came by last week. She is very experienced both in schools with young children and with families. She has a lot of resources to refer families to. While we all value the face-to-face, there have been some benefits to Zoom meetings - no need for childcare, increased availability. Yolanda and I will start putting together a calendar for this! We welcome any suggestion of topics. Previous ones have been: Setting Boundaries, Separation, Developmental Stages - please suggest others.

And then there is the big topic - **What About Kindergarten?** We do have a lot of experience over the years in how the various schools have approached education philosophically and in practice up til now. I can tell our 4's families not to worry, but you will. We do a comprehensive parent workshop on this with parents from previous years at different district 6 and 10 schools sharing their experiences and answering your questions. Probably do this late Oct, early Nov. There is plenty of time. This is not as insurmountable task as it seems right now.



**FUNDRAISING:**

As a contracted vendor with NYC Dept of Education, we receive monthly funding for 3K and 4K classes. But that amount pretty much just covers salaries. NYC has upgraded our contracts so the squeeze should lighten, but there are always jobs to do in an old building, we want to keep the consultants and special programs live and teacher salaries have not been at the levels our staff deserves. We are very frugal in recycling materials. In fact, part of our philosophy is to make something out of nothing, to find the magic and imagination in everyday items.

In addition to the bonus points we earn from the Scholastic orders, there are a few other ways you can help our school:

**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.



**Popcorn Sale:** This has been an incredibly successful fundraiser- and super delicious! I have some bags of this amazing snack I am selling at the gate this week (leftover from an order that came in just before closing last March). The past 2 years we asked our families to put that friendly pressure on co-workers, neighbors and family. Clearly your communities are a bit different now, but we still cleared \$12,000 in our share last fall..

**DOUBLE GOOD POPCORN FUNDRAISER** to start Nov. 5 and run most of November. More info when we get closer. Consider this as part of your holiday gift-giving. It really is extremely yummy and nearly no work for you or the school, just enter the orders and sit back! We get 50% of the sales.

**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- attached flyer with prices.

**PRIVATE PAYMENTS:**

I am still catching up on contracts and invoices. Since many 3K families had credit coming, most don't owe anything til Dec. Other private bills will come automatically by the 1st of the month and due within 10 days. I should be caught up by the end of the month. Last year we accepted VENMO, but they raised their fees more than Quickbooks, so I am going back to that online payment. Of course you can always pay by check, money order or cash if you prefer.. We appreciate payment by the first of the month, but also understand that families have a lot to cover. If there is particular issue, just let me know. Otherwise, any payment not made in the month due will be charged a late fee.

**PARKING:**

One problem that has taken care of itself is parking at the school. Since most drop off and pick-up happens at the gate your cars are not left unmonitored. However, I do have Courtesy Cards from the school to let traffic officers

know you will be right back. Be sure to leave your blinkers on and do NOT park in front of the church. That is much more likely to generate a ticket.

**LAST THANKS:** **Ed Boyak, former parent and committed gardening guy is overseeing general maintenance.** We finally have a working **Grounds Committee**- and don't our grounds look so much better for it! There are plans to redo all the planting beds, some are needing replacement, others could be more accessibly arranged. A weekend work day is being planned for later in the fall. Volunteers to be recruited soon.

**ARTICLE OF THE MONTH:** ***Just Playing*** By Anita Wadley in **Chicken Soup for the Unsinkable Soul**

Every month I send along a reading from the news on education, parenting, etc or a relevant article that has resonated with families over the years. This is just a short, light poem that puts the progressive, child centered educational approach followed at Spuyten Duyvil in perspective. It is not just that "play is a child's work," which is a common phrase in these discussions. It is more than that. Play does not have to be justified as "work" to be legitimate; it is not a dirty word. Too often adults also cannot find the play or joy in their work so we make these distinctions- what a shame. "I just played today," should be magic words to a parent's ear at the end of a busy day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judi".

When I'm building in the block room,  
Please don't say I'm "just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
About balance and shapes.

When I'm getting all dressed up,  
Setting the table, caring for the babies.  
Don't get the idea I'm "just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a mother or a father, some day.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint,  
Or standing at an easel, or molding and shaping clay,  
Please don't let me hear you say "he's just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm expressing myself and being creative.  
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair  
"Reading" to an imaginary audience,  
Please don't laugh and think I'm "just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs,  
Or packing my pockets with choice things I find,  
Don't pass it off as "just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle,  
Or some "plaything" in my school,  
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "play."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.  
I may be in business some day.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,  
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is just "play."  
I'm learning to follow directions and see differences.  
I may be a chef someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body,  
Please don't say I'm "just playing."  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning how my body works.  
I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today,  
And I say, "I've played."  
Please don't misunderstand me.  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in work.  
I'm preparing for tomorrow.  
Today, I'm a child and my work is play.

