



Spuyten Duyvil

P R E S C H O O L

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IMPORTANT:

Children will NOT be allowed into school on Jan. 3 without:

- **A negative COVID test taken within the previous 5 days**
- **Record of having received the current flu vaccine**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Winter Holiday Vacation **NO SCHOOL** **Thursday, Dec. 23 – Fri Dec. 31**
 Return to school Monday, Jan. 3, 2022

Half day school for staff development **Friday, Jan. 14, 2022**

MLK, Jr. Day..... **NO SCHOOL** **Monday, Jan. 17**

Lunar New Year**NO SCHOOL** **Tues, Feb 1**

Mid-Winter Break/ Vacation Camp **Mon, Feb. 21- Fri, Feb. 25**

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

December 15, 2021

Dear Families,

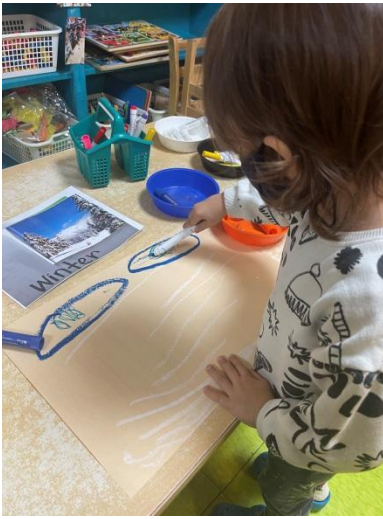
First things first –

There is a lot of confusion and missing information about what CDC, airlines and/or Spuyten Duyvil is expecting concerning COVID testing. This is the policy that we are implementing after the coming school break:

- Regardless of whether you traveled anywhere or not, every child must have a negative test taken within the previous 5 days. Remember that it is a holiday weekend so do not wait to do this if going to Urgent Care or your doctor’s office.
- I will be responsible for keeping the list so email me your child’s test result if before the morning of Jan. 3. I will confirm that I have received it. I do not need the hard copy but your child’s name does have to be on it.
- We are not accepting home testing this time. You may do rapid testing at a pharmacy or doc if you choose, just be aware that they seem to have a higher rate of false positives so you could be opening yourself up to that inconvenience.
- If you are flying, you can use whatever document you needed to fly home, but it must be taken no earlier than Dec. 29.
- During the rest of the school year, if you take a plane trip, same rule- negative test on your return.



- If your child is out for 3 or more days, the rule has always been that return is with a doctor's note. We are also requiring a negative test. Doctors have been often telling patients it isn't necessary depending on the symptoms; that is not good enough for us. Symptoms are not always a direct connection to a positive test.



One thing that is becoming more and more clear, from what we read and hear and from the personal experiences of other preschool directors in the area is that vigilant testing has been the best practice. We all want our school to stay open and running smoothly, as well as of course protecting everyone's health. Since we cannot mandate adult vaccinations, the only safeguard we can insist on is testing of the children. We will do this again after February break.

Back to the present- all programs are in full swing. Nursery is studying Seasons, class 2N is sharing about their families, 2S is deep in a comparative study of The 3 Little Pigs!

Chelsea has been busy finishing up the rebuilding after the volunteer workday on Nov. 6. The cold frames are complete. I ordered new indoor grow lights so she will be starting seedlings now. Before the snows have even started, at Spuyten Duyvil we are working on Spring!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - We are not doing the work Saturday this weekend, but the work needed can be done any day anyone can spare an hour or so- just let me know and I will put you to work. It should be done before winter really settles in and the ground freezes.

- Rake up leaves
- Spread mulch chips around backyard planting areas
- Plant daffodil bulbs everywhere

COMPOST – more and more families are dropping off food scraps- it is such a simple way to model eco-friendly behavior for your child. Chelsea is processing the decaying soil in our bins next to the greenhouse. Put your scraps in either of the black bins just inside the gate. Just be sure to remove all staples, labels and plastic bags before dumping.



Project Compost through the sanitation dept. arranges for pick up every Monday- I would hate for them to come just to find empty bins!

FAMILY DONE! Everyone should notes on goals you and the basis for the Spring encourage all families to or something in mind



CONFERENCES- have received their copy of the teachers' she shared when you met. This will form conference cycle in April. Of course, we reach out whenever you have a question concerning your child's time in our school.

I worked with the teachers in preparing the goals, and then read them all to see how the conversations went. I was also invited to many of the sessions too. A few patterns stood out to me across the classes. I don't know if the changes in family dynamics over COVID is at the root- it clearly impacted on everyone in so many ways we might not even have been aware of, or if pre-existing family trends are showing through, for example, more and more families having only one child. There were a lot of conversations about children needing to be more self sufficient, whether dressing and feeding themselves, having a broader range of social skills to negotiate situations with peers, comfort in connecting with other kids rather than just adults, resilience in facing disappointments and handling frustration. The most common recommendations teachers made were: have playdates at home (very different than the general play of playgrounds), sign your child up for physical group classes- swimming, ice skating are the best for developing muscle tone and strong core, soccer for the group work, gymnastics for coordination. We are seeing children not as strong in outdoor play as we have been used to. They also seem weaker in small motor skills, showing up holding a pencil, using adequate pressure in writing. The teachers are spending more and more time practicing these skills and the kids are improving quickly, which tells us that they are just not getting enough use of these muscles over time outside of school. More on this at the end of this newsletter..



WHAT ABOUT KINDERGARTEN?

DOE application process has opened and will be available through mid January. It is up to each 4K family to apply to their choice of kindergarten programs; there is no automatic enrollment anymore. If you were not able to join my Info Zoom at the beginning of Dec and have questions about the process or your child's best matches, feel free to reach out to me. I am attaching my overview of schools I know about again. There is not a lot of time now to visit programs before the deadline to apply, but you can certainly check the websites.

FUNDRAISING:

Popcorn and Donations – interesting results: our families earned \$7500 for the school during the Nov. push, nearly half from direct donations!

Top sales winner was Gabriella Salijanin's family. Gabriella went home with a bag of SDP stuff! We are very grateful to the sellers and the givers both.



If you need a tax letter for your donation, just email me. Spuyten Duyvil is a 501C 3; donations to us can be used on your tax return. For those of you looking for where else to donate before Dec.31, here we are. You can send a check or VENMO @spuytenduyvil.

School Photos – Everyone should have received their child's proof. The pictures were all beautiful (not surprising with such beautiful subjects!) You order directly from the company. If anyone is having any problems, let me know and I will connect you. We get a percentage back in the Spring from these orders. I still haven't been able to get an answer on whether they are providing class composites this year, but if not, I will make them from the individual shots they sent us.

School Store: hoodies and tees for adults and kids, coffee mugs, canvas totes

Amazon Smile Foundation: If you haven't signed up yet please do. We get about \$400 a year back from Amazon under this program. Given how many delivery trucks are in the area, seems to me we should be getting more!!!!

SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUBS: Keep in mind for shipments in the new year.

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



LOOKING AHEAD – We will hold **Science Vacation Camp** over February Break. It is only open to current SDP kids again this year. More info to come in early January. Alda will be back in the controls again, complete with her famous volcano! All 5 days, early and late care will depend on family need.

ARTICLES OF THE MONTH:

- **The Importance of Playing Games with Your Preschooler**
- **Kids are getting too much screen time – and it's affecting their development**

Continuing what the teachers and I noticed from many Family Conferences, we haven't said much lately about the dangers of screen time for kids. It was a hard topic over lockdowns as other options were few and far-between. But that is not true anymore and we fear we are seeing the results of the time kids spend on various screens more each year. Since this particular article came out 5 years ago there have many formal studies on the observable changes in brain chemistry with continued screen exposure- any kind of screen. The youngest kids are the most vulnerable. At school we see less gross motor development, poor small muscle strength, less flexibility in negotiating social settings. Parents often say that they are only using "educational software," but there is no such thing. If you want your child to learn letters and sounds, read and talk to them, want them to learn about dinosaurs, go to the Natural History Museum, read books, add a set of rubber dinosaurs to their block collections. We all know how hard it is to be indoors with little kids while you are working remotely, making dinner, helping older kids with homework. Just be aware of how much time that actually is.

Now the next part- good old fashioned board games for the family! CandyLand is still the top choice. Kids never get bored of it. Be warned about Chutes and Ladders- it is very hard for kids to get the sliding up and back part. The more linear the better- Sorry holds up well too for the older ones. Cards can be used to set up simple Memory games as well.

Have a safe, restful time with your families. The staff and I are again incredibly grateful for your faith and trust and support. We have come this far in yet another challenging year as well as we have only by hanging in there together! See you in the New Year!

<https://youtu.be/SJsc-N4a96U> here's a little holiday treat- a peek into Drumming class! Enjoy.

Sincerely,