



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

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

- **Tuesday, March 15 ½ day school for teacher training
Noon dismissal; no PM Nursery**
- **March 15- deadline for early bird pricing for Second Nature Summer Program at SDP**
- **March 18 – deadline for lottery application to 4K**
- **March 25 – deadline to submit DOE School Survey**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Garden Party and Potluck Brunch (weather permitting).... Sunday, April 3 HOLD THE DATE
(raindate Sunday, May 1)

Spring BreakNo School..... Friday, April 15 – Friday, April 22

Arts Camp Mon, April 18- Friday April 22

Family Conferences starting Mon, April 25

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

March 8, 2022

Dear Families,

All last week I thought if I could get this newsletter written I could still pass it off as my Feb. issue, but clearly I can no longer get away with that. A lot of the information in this I have shared in bits and pieces as it became relevant, but this is where I can organize all the bits and pieces swirling around our schedules.

The past month has been just as busy as all the others, even with significant drop in Covid incidents. Top question from families has been about changes in mask mandates that have been on the news. To repeat, directly from the Dept of Health newest email to programs like ours:

Mayor Adams announced that masks may become optional for children and teachers in New York City public schools beginning Monday, March 7, 2022, if COVID-19 indicators continue to show a low level of risk.

Because only children ages 5 and older can get vaccinated against COVID-19 at this time, **masks will continue to be required for children and staff in child care settings for children ages 4 and younger.** The Bureau of Child Care will provide updated guidance after a decision is made regarding the mask requirement for older children in child care settings.

As a reminder, as of February 28, 2022, [masking requirements](#) will not be enforced in outdoor spaces that are used only by your program.



Which brings me to the next Covid question as our 4K kids are starting to turn 5. There has been nothing from DOE or DOH (or any parent) about getting your child vaccinated as soon as they are old enough. All we can say is that we urge you to do this for your child's continued safety and that of all our kids. It has been such a relief to not think about Covid for several weeks now; let's not forget though how it still lurks just outside our walls if we do not keep up our best practices- like vaccinations.

VACATION CAMP: – Science Camp was a HUGE success- just look for yourselves at the end of this newsletter. Alda will oversee Arts Camp again during the Spring Break- same fees. We are looking into these possible specialties- claywork, mural making, Artists and their Art, observational painting in our garden, collage. Look out for the Arts Camp flyer soon, but you are welcome to sign up for the week of April 18-22 whenever you want.

URBAN EXPLORERS: Our re-entry into the world of 2-year olds started this Monday. (SDP had 2's classes years ago.) Were our current kids ever that little? The weather was especially kind so it really was an outdoor program this week. Hopefully that will be the case every Mon and Thurs going forward. Plan is to repeat this next Fall and Spring too.



SCHOOL SURVEY:

Dept of Ed asks for feedback from all public school and preK programs every year. The results are collected and posted online for perspective families to use in making choices. I will be sending home this year's survey this week. The letter is personalized to each family with a unique code. You can complete the form on paper and return directly to DOE in the attached envelope, or do the whole thing online. Once again, not all the questions are

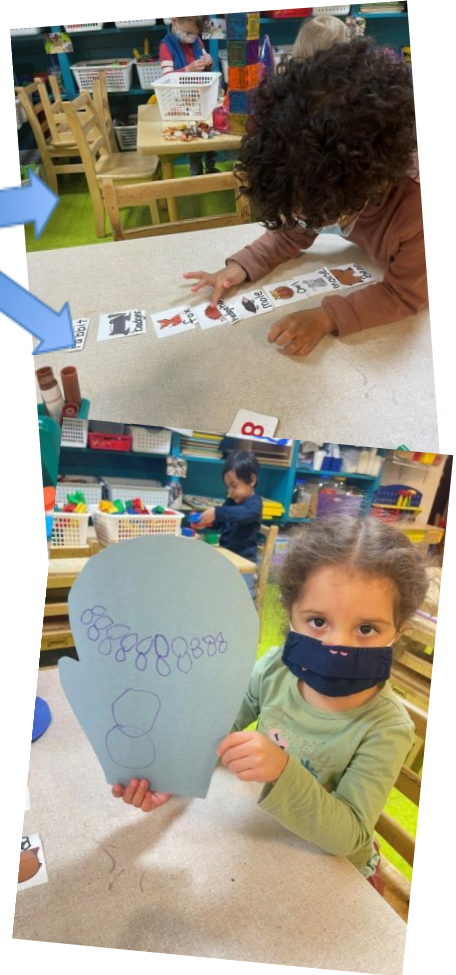
applicable to prek or to a non-public school setting, but your participation is appreciated as total numbers returned are tallied. These only go to official 4K and 3K families. Deadline for collection is March 25- Thanks in advance for putting in a good word for us!

SPRING FAMILY CONFERENCES: 4K teachers are starting to complete their students written reports. Plan is for them to come home to you the week of April 10. There is no written piece for Nursery kids. All families will have personal meetings again. Teachers will each decide how they want to split in-person or Zoom sessions. Looks like we have gotten used to the comfort of Zoom after all. Those will start the week of April 25, right after vacation break.

Nursery Unit of Study based on The Mitten by Jan Brett – 8 wild animals take shelter in a mitten to stay safe together in the winter.

LOOKING AHEAD:

- DOE lotteries for [doe.org](https://www.doe.org) to register. I want to make sure our current students to indicate you are a current student. It is not necessary to put more than Spuyten Duyvil down as a choice.
- **SUMMER CAMP:** Hannah wanted me to remind everyone that early bird rates are good til March 15. Chelsea and Hannah are working together to plan for a strong year-round planting and harvest cycle- great for the property, the garden production and kids.
<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/secondnature/home>
- **CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATIONS:** Charter schools use a separate kindergarten process from DOE. Their deadline is not until April 1. Both Bronx Community Charter and Dos Amigos have reached to us invited our families to consider their programs. Both are definitely work looking at seriously.



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District 10 only -<http://www.bronxcommunity.org/> - virtual tour March 9 at 6pm

Inwood but open to both district 6 and 10 -<https://s2dosamigos.org/en/>

THIS AND THAT:

COMPOST – still being collected from us every Monday so keep those food scraps coming. The trash bin for collection are just inside the lower gate.

TAX TIME – **SDP FEDERAL TAX ID 13-1858180**

Let me know if you need a letter verifying the amount spent in 2021 on childcare.

MARCH MENU – attached. Green Top Farms is planning to return to family style lunch deliveries again which we so much prefer. So much more sociable and SO much less plastic waste.



SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUBS: Ordering is always available. I still need another 2,000 bonus points for that Apple laptop. And, of course, the books are wonderful incentives to build pre-literacy skills at home. The delays in The supply delays of the past few months seem to have cleared up. There are new book selections available monthly. Remember we get bonus points for every dollar spent and the books are an excellent literacy support for your budding reader. www.scholastic.com/parentordering **activation code LH6ZW**

SDP BOARD MEETING: Next meeting of our Bd of Directors is Monday, March 14 at 6:30. Let me know if you would like the Zoom link. Broad participation from a range of families keeps our program current and vital.

DANCE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD:

- return of the School of American Ballet’s free community performances for families and children taking place on **Sunday, March 20 at 2:00 p.m. at The Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture in the Bronx. Flyer attached.**
- Jessie Sector, director of Dance at the Riverdale YM-YWHA, wrote to share that registration is open for Spring Semester of Dance Classes at the Y! “Now is the perfect time to join us and have the opportunity to participate in our in person, weekly classes, but also our end of the year Dance Recital in June!” for more info check their website, Riverdaley.org/dance. Their flyer is attached also.



Returning families know what this means – The CHICKS ARE COMING!! Delivery set for next week- Each class receives 2 one-week old chicks and 7 eggs in an incubator. Three weeks later, we watch hopefully welcome up to 7 little fuzzballs to our family. Each class will definitely keep you posted!

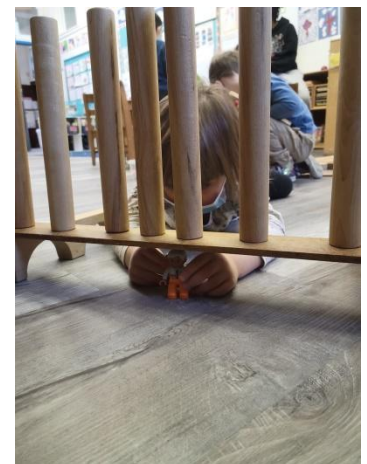
ARTICLE OF THE MONTH-

Too Many Americans Don’t Understand What Happens in Their Schools by **By Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara, NY Times, March 8, 2022**

I was struggling with what words of wisdom I could pass on to you all this month. Some days it does get hard to find the silver linings. Then my daughter sent me this today. Yes, schools really do matter! We are so lucky (and I am so grateful) to be part of ours.

Sincerely,

Judi



GUEST ESSAY

Too Many Americans Don't Understand What Happens in Their Schools

March 8, 2022, 5:00 a.m. ET



Credit...Ashley Gilbertson for The New York Times

By Maia Bloomfield Cucchiara

Dr. Cucchiara is a professor of urban education at Temple University.

PHILADELPHIA — As America enters a less acute phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is time to reflect upon what we lost and what we learned. America's failure to prioritize time in school should be at the top of the list.

Major disruptions to school schedules were perhaps to be expected in the early days of the pandemic. But we allowed them to persist to a troubling degree, even though we know that time in school is not fungible — learning lost now cannot simply be made up later.

How did we get here? Why was U.S. public education so vulnerable to pandemic disruption? How did bars, restaurants and other businesses reopen in many American cities before schools did? As an urban education scholar who has witnessed the damages Covid-19 inflicted on schools over the past two years, I believe our unwillingness to put schools first has two sources, which both originated long before the pandemic started.

First, Americans fail to take the work of teachers seriously. This manifests in teachers' low salaries compared with other professions, of course, but also in the requirements for entering and

remaining in the profession. Compared with teachers in higher-performing countries (such as Finland, Singapore and Canada), teachers in the United States receive less rigorous training before entering the classroom and are less likely to participate in high-quality, sustained professional development throughout their careers.

Teachers I speak with in Philadelphia often feel disrespected as professionals. They report having their judgment challenged by administrators, policymakers and parents, having to teach outside of their subject area or being required to attend trainings they find useless.

Much of the public discourse during the pandemic has positioned teachers either as villains putting their own safety over their students' needs or as heroes selflessly serving the public with little thought for their own well-being. But generally teachers are neither villains nor heroes. They are professionals who use the tools of lesson planning and repeated interactions with students to produce learning. Because Americans tend not to understand or appreciate this, we have not protected the conditions teachers need to practice their profession successfully.

Teachers need stable environments in which to practice their craft. Research on effective schools has demonstrated the importance of consistent supports, sustained relationships and strong leadership and, in contrast, the damage caused by too many disruptions. The quality of students' education depends on regular, day-to-day interactions between students, teachers and subject matter. Moreover, there is ample evidence that students thrive with consistency. Strong classroom management starts with routines. Students who move from one school to another tend to fall behind.

The second source of Americans' collective willingness to sacrifice in-person learning is an attack on public schools and teachers also decades in the making. From the right, critics have argued that public education is failing, school systems are inefficient monopolies and schools are sites for liberal indoctrination. While the left is generally more supportive of public education, progressive critiques of educational inequality, outmoded practices and narrow curriculums can also undermine faith in public schools.

It is rare in these debates for either side to acknowledge the important everyday work that happens in classrooms as educators design instruction, plan assessments and strive to meet students' needs. This disregard for the daily work of schools was especially clear in spring 2020, when teachers were expected to quickly, and with minimal support, pivot to remote instruction. Then, in Philadelphia at least, they were told for weeks they could not expect students to complete any schoolwork — but should still teach every day.

The consequences of such disruption are profound: In my research, I have seen teachers and students unable to build relationships, settle into complex projects, practice new skills or even sustain meaningful conversations from one day to the next. While one missed day or week can feel inconsequential — especially given the dangers associated with Covid-19 — when a week of disruption becomes two weeks and then becomes a month or more, learning and relationships suffer. Faced with so much instability, teachers become depleted, moving from ambitious instruction to survival mode. Students check out; teachers burn out.

I have also seen what it's like when teachers and students are in a rhythm — when they have sustained time together and know what is happening next. I have seen students who were shy and withdrawn in September become engaged socially and academically by January after forming relationships with their peers and teachers. It's no happy accident; such a change is a result of the school's investment in a powerful set of daily routines.

In December, I spoke at length with a ninth grader in a Philadelphia school that serves mostly students living in poverty. This student confidently explained to me the shift from an agrarian to market economy, describing changes in farming technology and social structure. She was able to do this because her teacher had planned and executed lessons that built on one another, ultimately creating a learning trajectory that made this synthesis possible. Each one of these lessons mattered; each one of the exchanges the student had with her teacher, her peers and the material helped her build upon and expand her knowledge. This is the work of schools, the craft of teaching. This is also what has been badly undermined these past two years.

If Americans truly valued this work, we would have done more to ensure teachers have safe, stable environments in which to practice their craft. This does not mean keeping schools open at all costs or prematurely eliminating mask mandates. But it does mean taking measures to prevent community spread of the coronavirus, even if they are unpopular and inconvenient to adults, as well as investing in adequate ventilation and widespread testing in schools. As the country continues to return to some semblance of normalcy, at least for now, we should remember the price students and teachers paid for America's decisions over the past two years. We should not make these mistakes again.

As a society, we show we value education not by calling teachers heroes while treating their work as expendable. We do it by paying attention to the conditions that make teaching and learning possible and by ensuring that — despite everything else happening in the world — schools are sites of stability, not chaos.