



Spuyten Duyvil P R E S C H O O L

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Spuyten Duyvil Preschool Fed Tax ID 13-1858180
If you need a tax letter or form signed to verify childcare costs for 2022, just let me know.

UPCOMING DATES TO NOTE:

- 4K Movie Nite Fri, March 24
- Garden Party & Family Potluck Brunch**CHANGE OF DATE**.....Sat, April 29 11-2 pm
- Vacation Arts Camp/ Spring Break from school..... Mon, April 10- Fri, April 14
- Spring Family Conferences begin week of April 23
- Memorial Day..... NO SCHOOL Monday, May 29

March 23, 2023

Dear Families,

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?



March can be a long month- no days off, damp and still cold and then, mid-month, we change the clocks and lose an hour of sleep! But curriculum is in full swing here:

- 4K- 2S finished up their dramatic area restaurant and continued with polar animals, focusing now on the ever-popular Orca.
- 4K-2N Dinosaurs are in the house! Kids are digging up fossils, learning about what different animals eat to live, learning new HUGE names.
- 3K- The Five Senses rule- first the sense of Sight and now sense of Hearing – see this photo

4K MOVIE NITE – MARCH 24 –
We are all set for our second Movie Nite this year. The movie will be

UP! Again we will visit and eat from 6-7 pm and then showtime. Hot dogs, movie popcorn, S'mores, chips and box drinks available in our concession area, otherwise known as the Annex. Remember to wear your jammies! One adult per child please. Cash and Venmo for purchases (\$15 per family donation as entry please).



VACATION ARTS CAMP will be April 10-14. Sign up now!

Alda is putting together a very rich schedule for the week. Artists studied will include Picasso, Matisse and Van Gogh, plus full group projects working with Dolores Zorriegueta, teacher of Somos Artistas, afterschool on Mondays. (FLYER ATTACHED)

GARDEN PARTY AND POTLUCK BRUNCH:

While the daffodils have bloomed and the willow tree in the backyard has started sprouting baby leaves, we still have a few weeks to go for full spring swing. Our official welcome to Spring is our family Garden Party. The school

calendar has the date as April 30, but for personal reasons I need to switch to SATURDAY, APRIL 29. I know that may interfere with soccer and other weekend activities, but Sundays has its own conflicts for other families. I will send home more info about this day later but for now just mark your calendars. Basically, families bring lunch/brunch foods for sharing, kids play in back, adults work with Liana on cleaning up planting areas, building more landscape borders, weeding, etc.

SPRING CONFERENCES:

We are coming up on our second round of reporting to families on their child's development this year. In November parent and teacher wrote up a set of goals for each child. In late April there will be follow up meetings. Your teachers will reach out to you right after Spring Break to set up the times. You will again have a choice of in-person or Zoom conference.



3K will have a discussion based on those goals and teacher observations since. 4K has a comprehensive written checklist and short narrative assessing the children in the different learning areas as outlined in the NYS Standards as they align with our school's work. That will come home to you the week we return so families can go over it before meeting with teachers the following week.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS:

- **Invoicing** – We do our recurring billing through Quickbooks which should send automatic bills on the first of the month to contracted families, but apparently, despite me setting it up correctly, it doesn't always work (even though from my end the system shows the invoice was entered). Let me know if expected invoices don't appear in your email.
- **DOE SCHOOL SURVEY** – Despite my email earlier this week, I do not have the access codes list that would give each family the code needed to enter their feedback to the Dept of Education. I have 2 different lists; I wrote for clarification. If and when I get that information I will pass it along to everyone. The current deadline is next Friday so not sure where that leaves us. But I hope everyone knows my office is open to anyone with anything they need to ask or share about any part of SDP's program. You can also contact our Board members at that contact board.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com.
- **FOLLOW UP ON DEPT OF HEALTH CLOSING-** Even as the unpleasant memory of that experience in January slowly fades, there were some continuing business the SDP Board and I had to finish up. First, as we received 9 violations that day; it is usual that programs get all kinds of minor violations from all DOH visits, anything from a bulb in an exit light not working to flies collected on a fly strip as in our case. Typical practice is that the program then presents at a hearing a few weeks later with explanations and defense against these violations, all of which carry a minimum fee of \$200, a lot of money for small programs like SDP. I made this presentation end of Jan; 5 of the 9 violations were dismissed and they were the more critical ones that led to the closing. There was no sufficient evidence or grounds for these. This is the first time I have ever had violations dismissed. Of course, to my thinking, that means there were no grounds for us to be closed but we cannot reverse time. Just wanted our families to know that, as I conveyed at that time, your children were always safe in our care.

Next, our Board of Directors has filed an official complaint with the Dept of Health commissioner concerning the unprofessional practice of the inspector that made these rulings. I still plan on doing the same now that we have confirmation that the closing was unjustified.

THIS AND THAT:



- **TOWN MEETING** – next Friday Town Meeting is next Friday, March 31 at 9 am.
- **CALENDAR CHANGES:** Since we unfortunately lost 2 weeks of school in January we had to adjust the school calendar to accommodate the required 180 days. Therefore we will be open April 6 and 7 (first day Passover and Good Friday), but then still closed the following week for Spring Break. We are also open on other previously closed days- Eid on Friday, April 21 and Juneteenth. Given there were 10 days to make up our school year now will go into the last week of June.

- **Anyone a lawyer??** We are still looking for a lawyer in our families to consult with. Ideally, we would love for this much needed position to be a Board member too.

SUMMER PLANS?

Pick up a copy of New York Families issue on Summer Camps in our downstairs entrance.

Spuyten Duyvil does not have our own summer program, but we are glad to share information about the programs we are renting to this summer. Each one does their own enrollment and programming but we feel their work is compatible with the kind of instruction and philosophy at work for your kids the rest of the year. If you are interested in any, contact them directly-

- **Second Nature Summer Program**, Hannah Saunders – July 17- August 18
<https://sites.google.com/nyu.edu/secondnature/summer-camp?>
- **Scribble Art** - Aug 21 – Sept 1
<https://www.scribbleartworkshop.com/upcoming-classes/summer-camp-nyc>
- **Music Camp** run by Val Fleeer and Ben Covey (Bella's parents) August 21 – Sept 1
201 741 6131 vfleeer@gmail.com

ARTICLE OF THE MONTH: ***How to Get Kids to Hate English NYTimes 3/9/23***

Anyone remember No Child Left Behind? Us teachers used to call that All Children Left Behind as all the conditions, limits, parameters of instruction to whom, when and how came rolling out of Washington under the second Pres. Bush. That begat Common Core, Foundations and the current NY State Prekindergarten Learning Standards. At Spuyten Duyvil we have the philosophical standing and practice over the years to work as we always have- integrated all the learning pieces into unified themes organic to each class- as in Dinosaurs, Polar Animals and the 5 Senses. These are also available through a lot of the published curricula but not developed by teachers from their own students' interests and backgrounds. Our way expects a lot more from our teachers and offers so much more for our kids.

For me as a classroom teacher one of most onerous pieces of all this was the leveled reading bins which led to kids announcing I am Level H; you are only Level D. Equally harmful was the fracturing of solid literature into predigested chunks. Coming off of the authentic literature immersion policies of the 1990's it was a cruel change. Not surprisingly, as this opinion piece lays out, 20 years later kids and literature are estranged. Funny thing is everyone noticed the effect that the Harry Potter series had on reluctant readers. Regardless of what Level reader you were pegged at in school, every kid was dragging around books about wizards and villains that weighed as much as they did. How come education didn't take a clue?

Anyway, have a read and then get a solid book you remember from your childhood to read to your own child tonight.

Sincerely,

Judi



Integrated Curriculum: Dinosaur study with Pattern Blocks