



the discovery center

February 2021



DIRECTOR'S CORNER — PARKING LOT SAFETY

Of course, the parking lot continues to be an active and congested place during the height of drop off and pick up, especially on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Sometimes the snow piles certainly don't help either. I am grateful to everyone for their cooperation and support as we work together to make the drop off and pick up in the parking lot a safe and efficient one! I would like to remind you of a few safety issues that continue to be of concern.

—Never leave your car running in the parking lot when you are dropping off or picking up.

—Infants and other children should never be left alone in your car.

—Look for parking spaces in the back of the lot. There are often many spots at the end of the day that go unused because families are waiting for just the spots in the front.

—Please limit your conversations outside, especially during the busiest drop off and pick up times. We are also asking you to please be mindful of safety protocols

of distance between people and the wearing of masks by children and adults to and from the car.

—Please do not allow children to slide down the hill in back or run around unsupervised. We've had some close calls in the parking lot and in the back of the building. Please also do not allow your children to climb in trees or remove the orange snow marker sticks. We appreciate your support with these concerns.

Your patience and support with the parking lot can make a world of difference and keep everyone safe and keeps things running smoothly!

Thank you,
Debbie



Tips for Reading with Your Child

☺ Be prepared to read (almost) anytime and anywhere. Keep books in different places around your home—in the bedroom, in a basket by the door (for reading “picnics”), and near a cozy chair. Keep books that your child can enjoy independently in the car, especially for those long car rides or unexpected traffic jams! Demonstrate that books can be enjoyed almost anytime and anywhere.



☺ Delight in sharing this enjoyment. Choose books that you enjoy, too. If you are reading a book that irritates or bores you, your child will pick up on your reaction, and the benefits from the reading experience may be lost.

☺ Let your child determine who takes the lead in your shared reading experience. Your child may want to select the books and do all the reading aloud one night. On another night your child may want you to read aloud. Allow the child to direct the reading experience.

TAKE A WINTER VACATION!



With the cold weather in full swing (at least for the moment), it can sometimes lead to a case of cabin fever for the whole family. With the pandemic, we have all spent a great deal of time at home these days! We could all use a little vacation that is for sure! Why not create a “stay at home” vacation to beat the winter /pandemic blues?? After all, a family vacation means being together without the distractions of everyday life. It means exploring new worlds and creating new memories. And fortunately, a vacation can be as simple as taking a walk, playing in the park, or checking out your own town. The best trips are short ones where your children can move around and talk with you about what’s happening. Visiting nearby, everyday spots can be a real adventure for your young

child and a refreshing break for you. Here are a few “family vacation” ideas:

- ◆ Has your preschooler ever enjoyed an escalator ride so much that she wanted to do it again and again? Indulge him/her and ride an escalator several times. Explain the safety rules and then enjoy the ride. For a very young child who is learning basic concepts, this is a fascinating demonstration of “up and down”. With an older child, watch how the steps flatten out and speculate about where they go.
- ◆ Find the tallest building in your area and go to the top floor. Look out a window to see if you can find your home or another familiar landmark.
- ◆ Stop at a pet shop when it isn’t crowded, or go to a florist or a bakery and savor the smells together.
- ◆ Find out when deliveries are made to your local supermarket or fast food restaurant. From a safe distance, watch the truck being unloaded.
- ◆ Go sledding or ice skating and stop off for hot chocolate at a favorite “out of the way” spot.

Remember, children think about experiences by acting them out. So, some time after you return home, be sure to talk and pretend together about what you saw. Use stuffed animals to set up a pet store. Line up kitchen chairs to play train or bus. Set up a card table or two and play restaurant (I remember my sisters and me making up menus and experimenting in the kitchen all winter long while we were growing up!).

MORE FAMILY FUN IN THE GREAT INDOORS!

Winter days are often short and cold. And even though your children may have played outdoors during the day, the long evenings indoors can make them feel restless. Rather than turning to TV to fill the time, plan some activities you can do together. Here are a few ideas to start with:

- * Have your child draw a picture to make a greeting card for his or her teacher, neighbor or favorite friend or relative.
- * Make up a reason for celebrating. Create homemade decorations, play some games, and have a party. You could celebrate the whole family’s unbirthday, or an unexpectedly sunny day.
- * Don’t forget the old throw-a-blanket over a card table trick for making a house.
- * Sit nearby and watch while your kids relax and play in the bath tub. Have some water play toys on hand—sponges, small strainer, funnels, plastic measuring cups, clean plastic plant pots with a hole in the bottom, ping pong balls, etc.
- * Make a masking tape highway for toy cars. Run it from room-to-room, under tables, behind the couch and over the footstool.
- * Tell stories: old fairy tales, stories of when each child joined the family, made-up adventures of your dog or cat, or tales that grandparents told you.
- * Make blocks by stuffing crumpled newspaper in empty boxes. Disposable diaper boxes work well. Tape them shut and build away!
- * Wrap up in a warm blanket. Sit together in a big chair and read and re-read a favorite book.