

READY for SCHOOL Parent News:

School Readiness Myths

It is not unusual to hear school readiness "myths" in the broader culture. These typically are not based on sound educational theory. Here are a few common school readiness myths and the accompanying correct information:

Myth #1: Learning the ABCs/alphabet is crucial to school readiness. **The Truth:** Learning the ABCs/alphabet is a memorization skill. While it is important, and will help children understand the idea of alphabetical order in the future, learning to recognize and name letters and identify their sounds is even more important.

Myth #2: Children need to know how to count to 50 before going to first grade/primary school. **The Truth:** Similar to learning the ABCs/alphabet, counting to 10, 50, or 100 is a rote memorization skill. Again, while it helps children understand that there is an order to numbers, far more important is understanding the idea of 1-to-1 correspondence (that each number you count has a corresponding object, person, year, etc. to go with it) and understanding quantity (i.e., that "three" means "three objects").

Myth #3: The more "teacher-directed" the learning, the better. In other words, if a teacher is directly telling children something, that will increase their learning. **The Truth:** Actually, we know that children internalize concepts more fully when they are doing things - when they are digging, building, balancing, jumping, writing, counting, etc. vs. being told by someone else.

Myth #4: The more a program looks like the "school" we remember as children (desks, teacher up in front of the classroom, etc.), the more the children will learn. **The Truth:** Young children learn best in an environment that allows them to make choices (builds decision-making skills and independence); to select their own learning materials for at least part of the day (children are inherently motivated to learn); and empowers them to try new things with a teacher who guides the learning (children learn through active engagement with the people and materials in their environment).

Learning some "school skills" like lining up and raising hands before transitioning to school will certainly make the transition to formal schooling easier. However, what is most important is giving children the chance to fully explore and experiment in an environment with caring adults who guide, support, and extend their learning.

Important Dates

We are closed July 4th-
Independence Day!

July 23: Family Matters Series
webinar(see page 4)

Reasons to Celebrate

Happy Birthday!

Toddlers

Ethan D. -30th

Preschoolers

Maryn B.-3rd

Makayla T.-16th

Nishant S. -18th

Andrew M.-28th

Teachers

Kristina-22nd

Happy Anniversary!

Ms. Carey - 1 year

Ms.Svitlana -5 years

Connect with Bright Horizons



Classroom Highlights



Our little scientists explored different sizes of seashells. They were encouraged to select the shells from the basket as we talked about their size and texture. We used the words "big", "small", "smooth", and "bumpy". For the next couple weeks we will continue working on small and large motor skills by playing with sand and water, crawling, walking and playing with push and pull toys in the classroom and on the playground.



Our toddlers learned about *cause and effect* by manipulating jumbo LEGO, pegs and puzzles; they were also engaged in repetitive activities such as filling different sized buckets with sand and water, dumping them out then refilling them.

Preschoolers started the month of July talking about America and Independence Day. *In Language* we read "Arthur meets the President" and "Little Miss Liberty"; we learned about the American flag and talked about why people celebrate the 4th of July. *In Math*, the children made star patterns; in *Science*, we talked about mixing colors and painted with red, white and blue frozen paint.



Our campers had a busy first session! They talked about different places, explored maps, and created one of their own! We ended the first week with a visit from the New Canaan Nature Center. The children learned some new facts about snakes, hedgehogs, turtles and bunnies! For the "Cooking Impossible" week we shared our own cooking recipes, made painted toast and cheese quesadillas. Yummy! In the Art Studio we created drawings with pencil and oil pastel, then painted over them with liquid watercolor to create vibrant mixed-media paintings.

READY for SCHOOL Parent News--Executive Function: What Is It and How Can I Support Its Development in My Child?

The term, executive function, is an educational buzz word that's getting a lot of attention these days. Executive function has been compared to an air traffic controller in the brain. Through executive function, we manage the myriad complex tasks and challenges facing us daily. Executive function encompasses several skills, such as working memory, inhibitive control, and cognitive flexibility which are defined below.

Working memory refers to the ability to remember important facts or details, and call them up as needed. Through working memory, you remember to pay bills, take your child to a doctor's appointment, or perform tasks at work.

Inhibitive control allows you to make reasonable, measured choices, rather than responding to every whim or desire. You also learn persistence and focus. You clean the house when you'd rather watch television. Inhibitive control allows you to forge strong social relationships. You learn when to "bite your tongue," and when to be honest.

Brain flexibility refers to the ability to change course, admit a mistake, or see another's perspective. Flexible thinking is a necessary skill for any interactive relationship, including school projects, team sports, or assignments at work.

Executive function skills are critical for later success in school and social settings. Teachers sometimes refer to executive function skills as "getting ready to learn" skills, because without these traits, children have difficulty focusing, prioritizing and persisting at a task. Early childhood is the ideal time to boost these skills. Below are a few suggestions for building executive function skills in the early years.

- Establish predictable routines and schedules. Use visuals or charts to help children understand your expectations. Spend time teaching children how to complete simple jobs, such as picking up toys, washing paint brushes, or setting the table at lunch. Learning to follow through and complete tasks helps boost working memory and inhibitive control.
- Play games, such as "Simple Simon," or "Red Light, Green Light." These games teach children to listen and follow directions.
- Offer open-ended toys, such as wooden blocks, to build problem-solving and cognitive flexibility. How many ways can you make a tower?
- Encourage dramatic play activities, such as playing house or playing store. This type of open-ended play boosts problem-solving, language development, and focus. Scaffold play initially for young children by assigning roles or offering props. Say, "I'll be the waiter and you can be the cook. Let's pretend that we're making spaghetti." As children mature, their play becomes more independent, as well as more abstract. Children may assign roles or extend the play over several days. They may also use objects symbolically. For example, a child might use a block to represent a camera.

Resources:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). *Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control" System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function: Working Paper No. 11*. Retrieved from www.developingchild.harvard.edu

Galinsky, E. (2010) *Mind in the Making*; William Morrow Publishing

Family Matters Series Webinar

Bright Horizons® partnered with Ellen Galinsky, author of the highly acclaimed bestselling book *Mind in the Making* (Harper Collins 2010), to bring families a parenting webinar about executive skill development in young children.

You can watch the recorded webinar at www.brighthouse.com/execwebinar.

Bright Horizons News



Parents Magazine Spotlights Bright Horizons Expert

Bright Horizons was referenced in an article from the July 2014 edition of *Parents Magazine*. In the article, Potty Pressure, Linda Whitehead, Ph.D., vice president of education and development, offers thoughtful tips and advice about how to get your little one on track when it comes to potty prep. Linda advises that although the path to potty training varies from child to child, a little support from parents, teachers—and even from the other students—can go a long way.

Parents

Read the full article at <http://www.brighthorizons.com/pottypressure>.

A separate *Parents Magazine* article features feedback from Dr. Linda Whitehead, where she discusses the benefits of family-style dining. A large part of the Bright Horizons curriculum, family-style dining not only helps children develop healthy eating habits, but also enables children and teachers to enjoy a meal together in a calm, respectful atmosphere. According to Linda, family-style dining also boosts self-confidence, teaches children mathematical concepts and builds fine motor skills.

Read the full article at <http://www.brighthorizons.com/mealstyles>.

SAVE THE DATE: July installment of the Family Matters Webinar Series!

Family Matters

A Bright Horizons Webinar Series

Seize the Summer: Fitness for Busy Families

Presented in collaboration with PHA
Wednesday, July 23, 3:00 pm est

Keep checking www.brighthorizons.com/webinar for the latest information as it becomes available!