



# Toddler Times

## January 2024!

Happy New Year 2024!

We are excited to start another calendar year at West Hill Educare with you.

This month Ansel and his family join us right away! Ansel turned 2 in December, right after Austin and fills out our youngest age-cohort perfectly. Next month, everyone will be 2! Please join us in welcoming Ansel, Sabrina and Josh.

*We hope you enjoyed your winter break as much as we have and **THANK YOU** for the generous holiday gift! We greatly appreciate the thought and effort that goes into a group gift and love the community that builds here over time. (Did you know our sign was a gift from the first graduating class at WHE back in 2009?)*

## 2024 Parent Handbook

Be sure to review our [2024 Parent Handbook](#)  
This year we

- added a few sections per recommendation of [QUALITYstarsNY](#) i.e. how parents participate in our program, how to enroll
- made a few revisions to try to clarify our health policy/practices and had our consulting Pediatrician, Carolyn Koppel review it

*Please let us know your thoughts, if you have questions and anything that would be useful for our next version, thanks!*



## Calendar

**1/1 & 1/2 Mon/Tues**  
Happy New Year!

**1/15, Monday**  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Holiday/Birthday

January						
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
	8	9	10	11	12	
	15	16	17	18	19	
	22	23	24	25	26	
	29	30	31			

## Will There be Inclement Weather?

- For everyone's safety, we follow ICSD's lead re: inclement weather; if they are closed, we close; if they are delayed, we're on delay
- Check <https://www.ithacacityschools.org/> for up to date information

## Please Label Clothes

Please label your child's clothing, mittens, jackets, shoes and other items with their name or initials whenever possible. It's amazing and true, we can get things mixed up!  
**Thank you!!**

# Drawing Development in Children

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*Children are focused on the process...*

For preschool children, the end result is not important. Young children are consumed with making a mark, mixing colors, figuring out how their hands, fingers and assorted tools like brushes work. The progression of children's art development is somewhat predictable, though the timeline varies from child to child.

## Stages of Drawing

### Scribbling Stage (18 mo.-4 years)

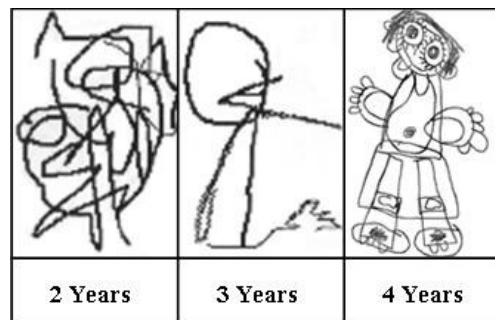
- random, accidental marks
- kinesthetic movement that represents drawing and writing for children
- developing to controlled/ purposeful, then naming scribbling—so fun!

### Pre-Schematic Stage (3.5 -7 years)

- beginning representational drawing such as radii and tadpole figures
- floating objects begin to land on baseline, have depth

### Schematic Stage (5-9 years)

- use symbols for people, art as tool to communicate



## Art...

- Builds fine motor skills
- Develops hand-eye coordination
- Develops creative expression
- Lays the foundation for writing
- Increases attention span
- Helps improve focus & concentration
- Builds time management skills

## Learn More! (information on this page is from the following sources)

**LOVE THIS SITE!** (Plastic English)

[Drawing Development in Children](#)

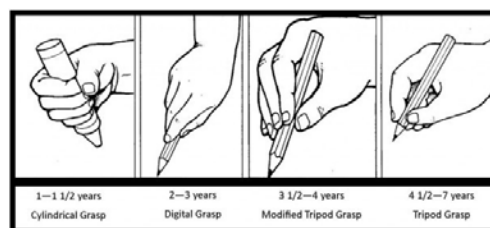


this site also has a page called *describing a picture!*

**OT Toolbox too!**

[Drawing Milestones—OT Toolbox](#)

[LittleBigArtists.com](#)



## What's Your Limit?

### Helping Children Develop a Sense of Wonder with Art

Bev Bos was an advocate for play-based learning. She operated a home-based child care program for preschool children in Sacramento, CA for decades and also facilitated creative workshops for adults.

She let kids do some pretty crazy things...

Watch this video to learn more about her and consider what you think of her ideas!

**Bev Bos**

**[Starting at Square One](#)**

(link to 37 minute video)



# Discipline

## What is Discipline?

The word discipline as based in Latin means *disciple*, meaning *student*. When there is a student, there is also a guide—that's our role. The source of discipline is internal, it is not something others do to us, it's a choice, mine, yours, your child's choice.

Discipline is learning to apply standards to achieve meaningful objectives, a.k.a. getting along, getting something we want.

As adults we continue to rely on self-discipline to achieve personal goals, get what we want, and to get by in society.

## How do we support the development of our child's self-discipline?

In her article, [Discipline is Learning and Nurturing Combined](#), Magda Gerber comments that "parents often think of (discipline) as punishments and rewards." She continues, "I see **discipline as being a social contract** in which family (or community) members agree to accept and obey a particular set of rules."

## The Rules

Rules are easiest to both abide by and reinforce when they are *stated positively, they are understandable, generalizable and consistently reinforced*.

**Our classroom rules are 1) be kind, 2) be gentle, 3) be safe**

We like these rules because they are simple, generalizable and definitive of what it means to be respectful.

Some things to keep in mind when considering household rules:

- When guiding a child's behavior **strive to make a positive request** i.e. "Keep your feet on the floor!" Maybe inform with rule: "It's not safe to climb on the table."
- [Consider the impulse behind the behavior](#) —what is driving the child's behavior and how can you support the child getting that need met?
- Make rules you can reinforce.

Children are observing all the time, and testing to be sure if we are consistent, if we have the same rules as others, the same rules day to day — OH, and they're checking if we follow those rules too. Sigh.

**Consistency is so important:**

***you want your child to believe you and that you mean what you say.***

\*Knowing your bottom line is a key skill for guiding children, as is recognizing their needs.\* "I know you need to move. We need to finish shopping and I can't even think when you scream. Would you like to help drive the cart or have an apply while we shop? When we're done we can go to the children's garden or the playground." Be careful not to say you'll leave the store if they don't stop screaming unless you'll really leave.

Otherwise, next time they may not think you mean it either. *And you don't want that.*

- This article about [Maria Montessori's thoughts on discipline](#) highlights the power of choice in gaining participation and how experiencing logical consequences helps to develop inner discipline



# January Curriculum

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## Primary Themes

- New year, winter
- Shadows/light
- Civil rights, racial equity, Martin Luther King
- Sequencing (visual daily schedule)
- Tracks, tracking, forest animals
- Geometric shapes and solids

(including searching and sorting activities)

*circle, square, rectangle, sphere, cube, rectangular prism*

## Books

- 13 Moons on Turtle's Back
- A Day at School
- Making Tracks—Park, Tree, Thank You Tree
- The Story of Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Peter's Big Snow
- My Senses
- Family pics new location

***and more!***



## Activities

- Playdough with forest animals, footprint stampers
- Colored pencils on white or black paper; painting over white pencil on white paper
- Tabletop Painting with tempera
- More ripping tissue paper, starch as glue
- Pouring, sweeping
- Continue tonging
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Greeting new family/people—grace and courtesy

## Songs

*Remember, there's a spot on our website, just for parents, with a secret entrance where you can find some recorded songs from WHE1, maybe there will be more over time!*

- Earth, Air, Fire, Water
- This Little Light of Mine
- Chicken Dance
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Baby Beluga
- Grey Squirrel

***plus good oldies and more!***







# Toddler Times

## TODDLER HIDE AND SEEK! is.the.best.

Here's a [great clip](#) of some of the best of what we get to enjoy.

Warning: The link will automatically download the video.  
(Do you think we could win America's Funniest Home Videos with this one?)



## February 2024!

Let's call it cabin fever—or is it just being 2?

*Terrific, tumultuous, tenacious 2.*

That cold snap, so cold we couldn't go outside for days, brought it on! We did enjoy a couple days of sledding between days of so much warmth.

This week it's been about slippery, dripping muddy, puddly mud.

While we still see predominantly solitary, parallel and associative play, we are definitely seeing some very social play. Theoretically cooperative play isn't until 4+ years of age, but in a rudimentary form, it definitely sneaks in earlier!

This past month Kata and Ansel built a tower together, Griffin and Ellie made a pizza store using the hay bale as their service window; many kids helped to make a snowman together and many worked together to collect muddy water, pour it into tubes and onto themselves.

Each month, I wonder how will this newsletter come together. It evolves as I try to shed

light on challenges I hear families are having.

This month, we dive into the importance of loving responsiveness—even when your tank is empty, and your child's is full.

*Warning*

*—it may be a little heavy.*

### Support Time for Parents? ...

Want to get together? Talk parent stuff?  
Ask questions and gain support and/or ideas from each other?

Jude is willing to support a bi-monthly group. Send her a text to let her know your best evenings/days and times.



## Calendar

2/19-2/23/2024

School Recess

February					
M	T	W	Th	F	
				1	2
5	6	7	8	9	
12	13	14	15	16	
19	20	21	22	23	
26	27	28	29		

## Enrollment Plans for Fall 2024

Hard to believe—it's that time of year when families in this area begin planning for the next school year, but are not sure we will have any spots. We anticipate caring for this group as long as you are interested—to school-age—which doesn't make for many openings!

Although we agree to a 30 day's notice for contract changes, and we'd like to hold onto your child as long as possible, please let us know if you are planning to make a change in your child's care.

# The Importance of Loving Responsiveness



Children watch what we do and listen to what we say. Relentlessly. They imitate what we do and say, we want them to, it's of developmental importance. Sometimes this is fun or funny, sometimes it's alarming or annoying. Our little mirrors challenge us both knowingly and unknowingly, pushing our "buttons," and shining a light on the things that are hardest for us, testing to see if we are consistent in our rules or limits and if both parents (and other caregivers) have the same rules. They're learning about power, negotiation, and what they can control.

Parenting is not all joy. Parenting is hard. Children get to our core. When we are pushed, modeling what we want can be tough! AND—If we are willing to reflect and perhaps operate differently, our children help us to be better people. Maybe we realize we're holding on too tight and need to loosen up. If we want quiet, we must be quiet.

In our [November 2023 issue](#), we reviewed some ways to support and guide your toddler. We included a link to a short video about [how early experiences shape brain chemistry](#). Attachment develops in relationship and over time. Children are born ready to interact, and NEED interaction and engagement to develop. Optimal development is supported by nurturing, responsive care from committed, stable caregivers. Through interactions with their caregivers, the child's efforts are validated and reinforced or discouraged based on (family) culture and expectations; they learn to trust, gain a sense of self worth, build skills to regulate their emotions and learn about their ability to impact their world. Attachment provides a foundation from which children draw security, strength and the confidence to explore. The most important factor in creating healthy attachment is positive physical contact, its greatest impediment is fear.

"A frightened child never learns"



- Maria Montessori

Here is an example of how fear could influence a child's attachment with their caregiver.

Once a child is mobile, they relate to their adults as a safe base— the child wanders off to explore, then returns to "touch base" when things are hard or scary.

Hard or scary *to them*.

This is when they need our support. We may not think the dog is scary, but it is scary to them—*they are not OK*.

With support, children learn how to navigate big, scary feelings, build resilience and learn to regulate their own emotions—over time. (This can be a long time... how many of you still call your person?)

If their fears are negated, their body retains a sense of fear that may build with another scary encounter: they are alone with this fear and may be scared to explore more, impacting their learning. *Experiences build brains.*

*One safe, stable, nurturing person—at least one.* This person is often, but not always, a parent.

It is not always easy to be there for your child.

Many things affect our behaviors too: our own experiences, how we were parented, our own experiences of trauma, interpersonal violence or drug use may get in the way. We may not always be able to mitigate the triggers or behaviors that push our buttons. We've lived the years to be able to say "because I say so, *just because*," but this does little to help children understand.

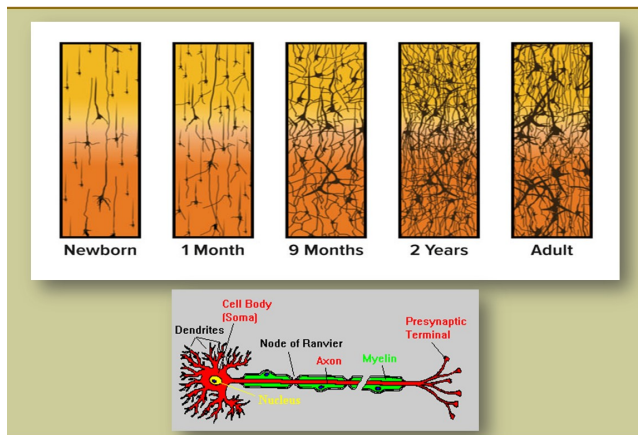
"Sometimes, I realized in order to help my child, the **best way** is **for me** to settle down myself first. I will take a deep breath, **calm** my heart beat, calm my **tone of voice**, tell myself to **ignore onlookers** stares and comments, **then** move on to settle my child."

Imagine how your child feels—when they are having sensory overload or fear—they can't think. They have "lost their mind," **they have no words**, *even if they have them when they are calm*. Emotions drive cognition. We can relate, when we are stressed, we *lose our mind, can't think, feel sick to our stomach*. Too much of anything is just too much.

# Brain Development

Brain Development from birth to two foundational and unparalleled. We are born with all the neurons we are going to have, and during the first two years, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed per second. The brain appears much like the adult brain by 2 years of age.

Early childhood experiences can enrich or negatively impact this development. Learning new things when we're older (like a second language) seems harder because it is—what we don't use we lose from two years on!



The brain develops from the bottom up, favoring survival then gaining emotional connections. Executive functions don't fully come into play until 7 years of age. While toddlers brains are growing, they literally think slower.

## Aggressive Behavior in Toddlers

Aggressive behavior in children is hard to experience.

[This article](#), full of examples, highlights that the “period between 18 months and 3 years [as] an exciting time. **Toddlers are becoming aware that they are separate individuals from their parents and the other important people in their world.** This means that they are eager to assert themselves, communicate their likes and dislikes, and act independently (as much as they can!). At the same time, it's common to experience aggressive behavior in toddlers because they still have limited self-control and are just beginning to learn important skills like waiting, sharing and turn-taking.”

In addition to many of the strategies mentioned, we also help children to

- Focus on breathing
  - Identify emotions, efforts, help find words
- [Putting words to feelings](#) has been shown to help with emotional regulation



## Make Sure Their Cup is Full

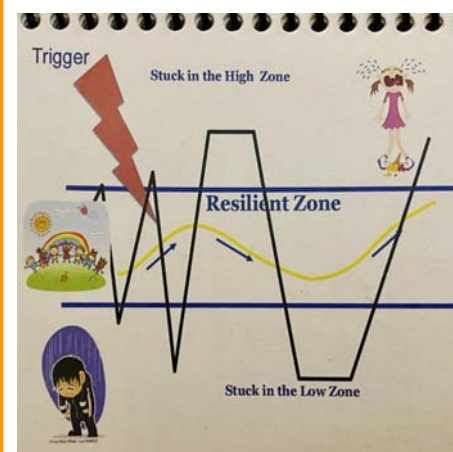
*Wants something time, Wants nothing time*

—a Magda Gerber gem that deserves a full article, but for now, [this tidbit](#).

You child wants to see you. *They want your full attention.*

Rather than giving distracted attention, consider trying to give focused time doing whatever your child wants. Let them know after you play awhile, you need to do some other things for a bit while they play on their own. Hopefully you will find that being fully present for 15 minutes will give you a little much needed space.

## The Resilient Zone



Good times can go bad in the blink of an eye. Sensory overload seems to come on all of a sudden, as an observer you wonder what happened—you were just having fun, then all of a sudden, it was too much. Maybe the sensory overload leads to a tantrum.

Some stress is good, we learn from stress and challenge.

But *too much of anything is too much*. Chronic stress negatively impacts us.

Staying regulated doesn't mean being flat. There is a range of arousal that is optimal, it is when we are hyper- or hypo- aroused that we are “dysregulated.”

When periods of dysregulation are frequent or last over periods of time, we may experience physical challenges as exhibited by the long-term effects seen with Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES).



# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

Do you know about the ACES study?

From 1995-1997, the CDC and Kaiser Permanent conducted one of the largest studies of childhood abuse and neglect and household challenges and their impact on later-life health and well-being. Over 1,700 participants were all asked if they'd experienced any one of ten adverse experiences prior to their 18th birthday.

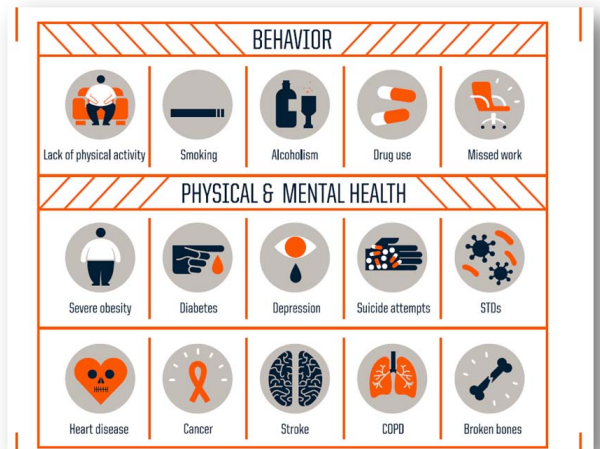
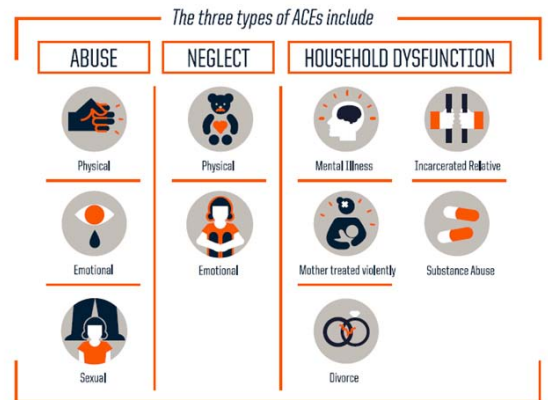
What they found is astonishing. They found that 64% of adults in the United States had experienced at least one ACE before the age of 18 and apx. 17% had experienced four or more.

The impact of ACES last a lifetime and are tied to at least 40 illnesses. Preventing ACES could potentially reduce many health conditions.

There is always variability in response to traumatic experiences. Developmental stage, prior experiences, coping skills, modes of attachment and individual temperament all play a role.

Young children are greatly affected by experiences and events that happen around them.

**Supportive relationships, active skill building and positive childhood experiences build resilience.**



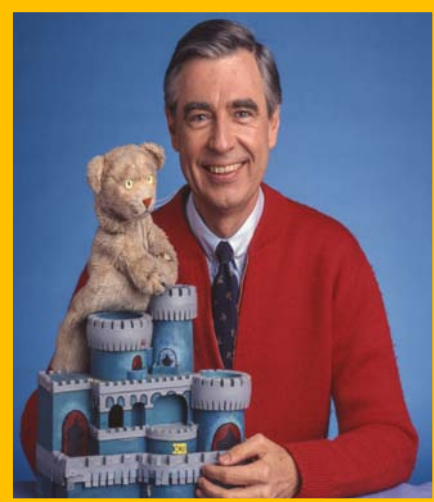
**A Big Impact on Little Kids (what you may see): [Learn more](#)**

If you are not familiar with ACES, here is a [\*must watch video with Nadine Burke-Harris\*](#)

***What happens in childhood,  
doesn't stay in childhood.***

Further reading: [The Body Keeps the Score](#)  
by Bessel Van der Kolk, MD

## Junlei Li: Appreciating the Deep and Simple in Early Childhood Education—my new hero...



The research and practice of Junlei Li, Harvard School of Education, focuses on understanding and supporting the work of helpers—those who serve on the frontlines of education and social services.

Mr. Rogers often said that "deep and simple is far more essential than shallow and complex." What is deep and simple in the work of early childhood? From orphanages to impoverished neighborhoods, we can discover caregivers' intuitive yet powerful human interactions. By capturing and learning from what ordinary people do extraordinarily well in simple, everyday moments, we can grow communities of practice, nurture intuition into intention and plant the seeds for sustainable systems change.

(Quoted and adapted from [link to YouTube video](#))





# Inside







Outside

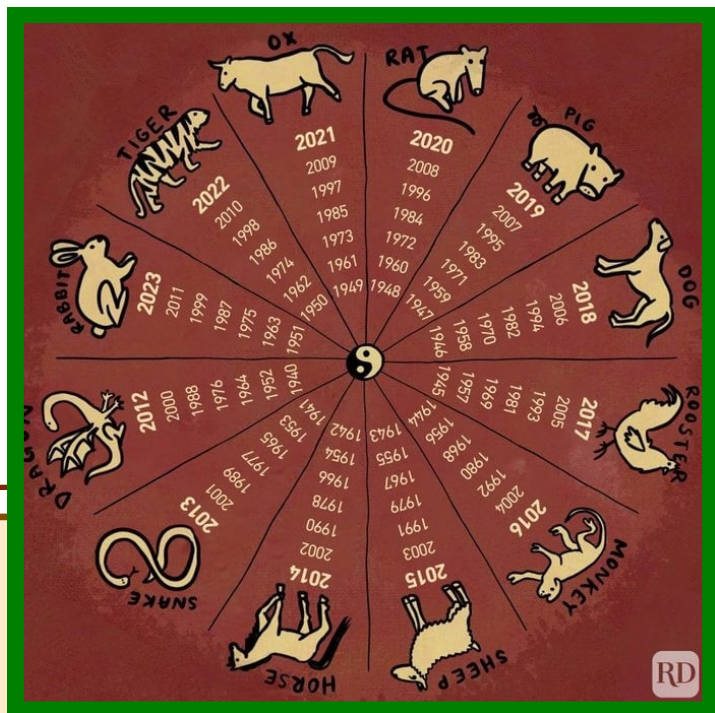


# February Curriculum



## Primary Themes

- Chinese New Year, 2/10
  - wood dragon, emerald green
- Wood: what it is, what we do w it
- Lanterns, sushi, stir fry
- Snowflake match?
- Pic series: A Day at WHE



## Activities

- Playdough with heart cutters
- Colored pencils/crayons on white or black paper; liquid watercolors; gluing, sponge-print making
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Grace and courtesy

## Songs

- Earth, Air, Fire, Water
- The Earth is Our Mother
- This Pretty Planet
- Little Blue Ball
- This Little Light of Mine
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Magic Penny
- Build a Little Snowkid
- Down by the Bay

## Books

- The Emperor's Great Race
- Long is a Dragon
- The Squiggle
- Chinese NY Colors
- Tree
- Thank You Tree
- Baby Beluga
- Owl Moon
- Peter's Big Snow
- Panda Opposites



## Lucky Noodles

This is one of the best recipes, everyone will eat their vegetables.

### Enjoy!

#### Dressing:

- 4 T sesame oil, toasted
- 8 T soy sauce
- 1 T rice vinegar
- 1 T brown sugar
- 2t salt
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed
- 1" piece fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 1 T sesame seeds, any type
- 1/2 block firm tofu, cubed
- 1 pound fresh noodles

#### Garnishes:

- Snow peas, slivered
- Mung bean sprouts
- Grated carrot
- Cucumber, thinly sliced and cut small
- Cilantro

Combine dressing ingredients in a large bowl. Cook noodles in boiling water until just barely done, drain and rinse with cold water. Put the noodles into the bowl with the dressing and toss gently to coat.





## Calendar

*No holidays this month.*

March					
M	T	W	Th	F	
					1
4	5	6	7	8	
11	12	13	14	15	
18	19	20	21	22	
25	26	27	28	29	



# Toddler Times

## March 2024

At least we can say it's March with all these crocus blooming. I've told many, but not all of you that we've been watching the bees, thanking the bees for helping us to have, as one child remembers it, apples.

We had a lot of fun in February. We got into all kinds of art, gluing, printing and of course painting. The images in this newsletter really capture a variety of our (inside) activities from this past month.

It has been fun to hear more and more language, especially as it comes out socially, playing with friends. Today, when one child was considering whether the play people figures were family, she declared, "they're friends" and later ran off to play after touching base with me joyfully calling out, "Hi friends!" There is definitely more themed dramatic play coming out. Although the panda village is always a hit (at the beginning of the month), the doctor's kit is even moreso and they have been very engaged caring for the dolls, each other and us! The dashiki, party shirt, flip flop and road protection gear dress ups were also a real hit.



Gosh these kids are getting older!



# Why is Social-Emotional Development So Important?

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**We are born ready to connect.** In her compelling presentation, Mary Helen Immodoro Yang begins by illuminating a little talked about a birth reflex: at birth, infants look for two black dots, close together (eyes).\*

More recently referred to as early childhood mental health, social-emotional development refers to children's emerging capacity to experience, regulate and express a range of emotions. Through play, children express their own ideas and when playing with others, have to learn to adjust to another person's ideas and wants. Of course language and communication skills are integral to emotional learning and together they have been found to be more important than academic skills (knowledge of letters, numbers, colors and shapes) when entering Kindergarten.

Healthy social and emotional development is rooted in nurturing and responsive relationships and it enables children to develop close, satisfying relationships over their lifetime. As infants, the security of primary relationships literally give the

child the confidence to explore their environment and to learn.

There is even a social emotional ages & stages questionnaire. The authors of the **ASQ®:SE-2** state:

"Managing emotions is one of the most crucial social-emotional skills a child will learn, and one that may require the most support from parents, families, and caregivers. Trouble falling asleep, extended tantrums, and difficulty moving between activities are all

signs that a young child might need more focused support to strengthen their self-regulation skills."

Psychology Today offers more information about *how we control our emotions* and what they call the **3 R's of emotional learning**: regulation, reconstruction and resilience.



\* I need to listen again, the presentation blew me away years ago—you can listen to this compelling 1.5 hour presentation [here](#).



# March Curriculum

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## Primary Themes

- Spring: signs of Spring outside
- Emotions
- Secondary Colors
- Birds
- Sponge printing, painting, gluing



## Activities

- Playdough with flower and egg shaped cutters
- Colored pencils on white or black paper; sponge painting, liquid watercolors
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, rhyming, letter games
- Counting and number games
- Grace and courtesy



## Books

- A Day
- Lots of Feelings
- Caps for Sale
- Moon
- Thank You Earth
- Monkeys Jumping on Bed
- Moon
- Thank You Earth
- What's the Weather?
- Saltarin y la primavera
- Tingalayo

and more!



## Songs

- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Rain songs:
  - Ants Go Marching
  - Puddle Boots
- Long Tail Feathers
- Robin Red Breast

and more!







April 2024



# Toddler Times



March was tumultuous weather-wise but we greatly enjoyed breaking out! We have been having lots of fun both inside and out, with new materials, blooming minds and budding friendships. We thank you all for being so tolerant of our *mucky* yard. We all know how important and great mud play is for preschool kids, but still— ***thank you for tolerating all the mud.*** We are working on solutions and to start with have mud pants that we will provide and wash for anyone who would like.

A new family will be joining us April 22! Welcome Zeffie McCasey and their parents, Laurretta Dolch and Indi McCasey. Do the parents' names sound familiar? Laurretta grew up here and Indi is the ED @ Ithaca Public Education Initiative.

## 2023-2024 Tuition and Enrollment Policies Changes

### Calendar

Spring Recess

Closed April 1-5 & 8th

OPEN 4/10 ICSD Holiday



April						
M	T	W	Th	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	
8	9	10	11	12		
15	16	17	18	19		
22	23	24	25	26		
29	30					

Although this only affects a few, everyone should know...

Effective immediately, new enrollment is limited to 5 days/week.

Current 4 day/week children can continue part-time until September, adding days as needed. Effective September 2024, all spots will be for 5 day/week enrollment.

## Parent Support & Social Time

We had a great time at our March meeting! The group would like to gather monthly alternating parent-coordinated social gatherings with a bi-monthly time for parent support.

***Anyone up for coordinating a social in April ?***

Tuition is due early this month! **If possible, please bring your payment by 3/29.** Please let Jude know if you need to make a different plan. Thanks!

Our next Parent Support Group will be Wed. 5/8, 5-6:30 @ Boatyard Grill  
\* hopefully the white chairs will be out!

## Practical Life

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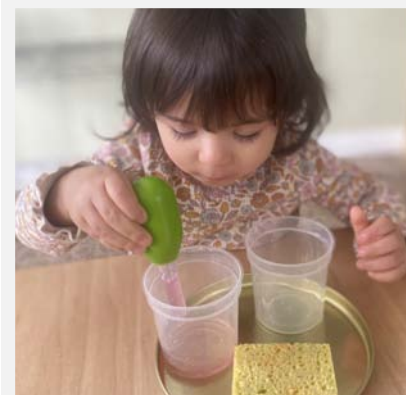
Practical Life is the name Maria Montessori used to refer to the area of the curriculum dedicated to *Care of the Self*, *Care of the Environment*, *Grace and Courtesy*, and helping the child to refine *Elementary Movements* and aimed at developing *concentration, coordination, independence and order*.

**Care of the Self** is the ability to dress oneself, including mastery of clothes fasteners; the development of personal hygiene habits, inspiring artistic creativity and refining the manipulation of eye-hand coordination and fine motor control. Practical Life activities involve *pouring, spooning, twisting, squeezing, stringing and lacing* and *food preparation*

**Care of the Environment** includes dusting, cleaning, washing, flower arranging, taking care of plants and the natural world, gardening

**Grace and Courtesy** involves greeting, offering, accepting, apologizing, table manners, and general kindness towards others

**Elementary Movements** consists of navigating the room, activities like walking, sitting at the table, getting up and tucking in your chair, holding/carrying/putting down/picking up/returning materials to the shelf



**Purposeful Work** inspires engagement. It includes activities that give children a sense of purpose and allow them to more deeply pursue their interests. Activities that may be considered purposeful by the child change as their developmental needs and interests change. It may be learning to clean the table today, and how to cook in the future.

**Control of Error** fosters success and independent learning. Controlling error when learning to pour means not filling the cup—filling it just a little; having just enough water in the pitcher to be soaked up by that thirsty sponge or just enough in cup to be drawn into the baster.



### Self-Correcting Materials

A puzzle is an example of a self-correcting material. The box contains just the needed pieces. It is clear when it is done correctly.

### Open-Ended Materials

There is no one way to explore or use open-ended materials. The pounding work Ellie is doing here is open-ended. So is sand play, art, building a tower with blocks, playing with a doll.



## Ball = Sphere & Diamond = Rhombus?

Maria Montessori used the idea of a **spiral curriculum**, although the term was coined in 1960, by Jerome Bruner. A spiral curriculum is designed to connect a child's prior learning with new learning. Major topics and skill areas are revisited with increasing complexity throughout a child's education.

There are many examples of how this is applied throughout the curriculum:

- starting with concrete experiences and moving to the abstract and symbolic
- going from 3D to 2D, using objects, then photos of real objects and building vocabulary by using accurate nomenclature i.e. learning the names of geometric solids and plane figures  
*a ball = sphere and a diamond = rhombus?*



### Bead Stair

The *Bead Stair* gives a sensorial and visual sense of number.

Children first sort the bead bars from smallest to largest. As they pinch and count the beads, children learn to pinch each bead once and to say one number for each bead, gaining *a sense of number* and learn *1-1 correspondence*.

### Vocabulary Enrichment



One of the things I love about Montessori is its integrated emphasis on concrete learning.

In regards to language development, research shows that children's vocabulary skills are related to their self-regulation skills (Vallotton & Ayoub, 2011). The seemingly simple task of learning words has broad implications for overall development and well-being.

When it comes to learning to read, children progress from matching object:object, to matching object:picture, then picture:picture, picture:word, learn letter phonetics, word building, then decoding and ultimately reading.

The 3-part cards shown use picture:word matching to help children begin to distinguish letter and word shapes.





# April Curriculum

Toddler Times

April 2024  
p. 4



## Primary Themes

- Continue with Spring: signs of Spring outside
- Natural world, prepare to plant seeds from CACFP
- What plants need, sequencing their growth
- Worms, Bees
- Animals and Their Young

### Activities

- Playdough: flower cutters/tortilla press
- Gluing, painting, printing
- Color mixing
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, sand tray, rhyming
- Counting and number games
- Grace and courtesy
- Flower VEC
- Seeds
- Birds: identifying calls
- Emotions
- Recording selves
- 1-10 Felt peas! short bead stair



### Books

- A Day
- Lots of Feelings
- Caps for Sale
- Bees
- Birds
- Thank You Earth
- Monkeys Jumping on Bed
- What's the Weather?
- Saltarin y la primavera
- Tingalayo

and more!



### Songs

- If You're Happy and You Know It
- Rain songs:
  - Ants Go Marching
  - Puddle Boots
- Long Tail Feathers
- Robin Red Breast
- Maria Isabel: beach, scarves

and more!

## Animals & Their Young

The interactive Enchanted Learning site will get you up to speed on animal nomenclature! This month we will focus on the accurate names for animals and their young. We will continue to refer to this table over time!

[Names of Animals, Babies and Groups](#)

Image	Name	Male	Female	Baby	Group of Animals
	Alligator	bull	cow	hatchling	congregation, pod (of young)
	Alpaca	male	female	cub	herd
	Antelope	buck	doe	calf	herd
	Ape	male	female	baby	shrewdness



# Toddler Times



## Calendar

**May 8**

Parent Support w Jude  
@Boatyard Grill, outside,  
weather permitting

**June Social tbd**

(Seeking parent coordinator)

**May 27 Memorial Day**

## Calendar Changes

**OPEN**

**June 19 Juneteenth**

**CLOSED**

**July 3 Midsummer Break**

**August 30 Labor Day, per  
ICSD Draft 24/25 calendar**

May				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

June				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28

July				
M	T	W	Th	F
1	2	3	4	5
8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31		

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
5	6	7	8	9
12	13	14	15	16
19	20	21	22	23
26	27	28	29	30

## May 2024

Incredibly, this week marks the midpoint between Spring and Summer. The hedges are filling in before our eyes. We definitely see the difference daily and when you look across the lake, the hills have a green quality to them.

At WHE, we're hearing and seeing so many birds and learning their calls. We hope to continue our luck as hosting birds around our yard. Just this week we saw a downy looking pileated woodpecker hatchling pecking its way along a tree! Griffin, Sybil and I also had the amazing experience of seeing a worm disappearing into the ground and ultimately squeezing out worm poop! We laughed and laughed and laughed. And I have told this story more than once already!

This newsletter plays with color themes based on common, local birds, and their eggs. The image of the bird on each of this month's newsletter pages is a screen capture from an online video, and the image is linked to the video so you can learn more about each bird. Meanwhile, it's time to get planting! In May our garden will grow... In addition to a few other things, we will plant seeds and plants from the CACFP program. Let us know if you would like to grab a snippet of chives or thyme already, *anytime*.

## Current Updates

This month we welcome the first substitute that we've hired since we re-opened! Ros Stone is a neighbor of ours who can help out with our current needs for a sub and hopefully in the longer term as well. Ros is the mom of almost 9-year-old twins. She lives down the street and has most recently been working as a nanny. We caught her at a good time! Ros will be here training a couple days this week and will cover for KC May 6-10. Please check in daily with Jude.

## 2024-2025

When ICSD publishes their draft calendar for next year, we begin ours as well. This newsletter contains documents for the 2024-2025 year including:

- WHE Calendar
- WHE 2024-25 Tuition & Enrollment Policies







**Pileated  
Woodpecker**

**MIND in the Making**  
The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs

**ZERO TO THREE**  
Early connections last a lifetime

**Making the Link Between Positive Parenting and the Seven Essential Life Skills for Children.** How does parenting and child development intersect? The way we parent can nurture the very skills that children need—not just for success in the short-term—but across their entire lives.

# Positive Parenting and the Seven Essential Life Skills for Children!

## When Parents...

## Children Develop Essential Life Skills...

Provide age-appropriate guidelines and limits for child behavior.

Recognize and regulate their own feelings and behaviors before they respond to their children.

Work to understand or imagine the child's point of view.

Respond with sensitivity to their children's cues.

Delight in moments of connection with their children.

Act as a role model by seeking help, support or additional information about parenting when needed.

Balance both parental needs and child needs. Recognize and celebrate their child's strengths, abilities and capacity to learn and develop.

Recognize that parenting is process of learning, and, at times, it can be stressful. Missteps are a natural part of child-rearing.

**Focus and Self Control**

**Perspective Taking**

**Effective Communication**

**Making Connections**

**Critical Thinking**

**Taking on Challenges**

**Self-Directed, Engaged Learning**

## Toddler Creed

If I want it,  
it's mine.

If I give it to you and  
change my mind later,  
it's mine.

If I can take it away  
from you, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago,  
it's mine.

If it's mine  
it will never belong  
to anyone else  
no matter what.

If we are building  
something together,  
all the pieces are mine.

If it looks like mine,  
IT'S MINE!

Author: Unknown

*Positive parenting is about making child-rearing choices that reflect your beliefs and values as a parent, considering your child's age, stage of development, and temperament. It means being sensitive to children's individual needs and supporting them with empathy and respect.*

[Learn more here](#)



# The Iron Triangle of Early Childhood Finance

Toddler Times

May 2024  
p. 3

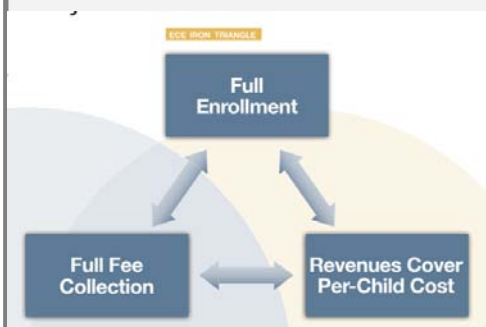


Child care finance. It sounds simple—in some ways it is.

When we re-opened West Hill Educare in November of 2022, we were fortunate to be 1 of 3 programs in Tompkins County to receive a child care desert grant from the state of New York. We have had to do a number of additional things to meet the terms of the grant—notably child assessments and working with New York's quality assurance program for early childhood, [Quality Stars](#). This month marks our final payment from the grant. Another deliverable for the grant, was creating a sustainability plan, which showed that we could survive without it.

In order for income and expenses to balance, child care programs must establish rates that cover the **true cost of care**, which itself can be challenging to figure out—especially for home-based providers, who have costs that are related to both the program and their home (utilities, mortgage, trash). There is time spent running the business in addition to time spent with children—all of this must be accounted for to determine the true cost of care. Parents in the United States pay the bulk of the cost of child care, and grants and subsidies are especially rare for home-based programs. Hopefully there will be more this year—the state is thinking about some retention grant funding...

The other two components that make up sound early childhood policy include **full fee collection** and **full enrollment**. Thank you for all being so consistent and timely with your payments—and for that we are grateful. The latter, full enrollment, is where we've been taking it easy! We have *all* benefited from this, and when the kiddos were younger, we really wanted fewer children. The grant helped to cover some costs while we were first enrolling children, subsidizing the cost of both enrolled and yet unknown children to come.



As children in our group are getting older, we are comfortable having a couple more children join us, just when we need them, to help balance our equation. This past year, we have all seen an increase in costs—inflation and tax increases that are crazy. We recognize that child care takes a big chunk out of your budget, but do have to raise fees each year in order to survive. We want to be here for you! We are glad to be able to set fees for next year at our 2023-2024 under 2 year old rate.

*(See 2024-2025 tuition and enrollment policies on the next page)*

## Requirements for Working in Child Care in NY State

As we are about to welcome our first substitute caregiver, we thought you might be interested to know what is required of substitute caregivers. All employees (and even volunteers) that work regularly with preschool children in licensed programs in NYS are held to the same requirements!

Before working in a child care program, all potential employees must go through a background check and fingerprint clearance—there are five different sources that are checked! In addition, each person must have a medical statement and complete more common paperwork documenting their experience and references. A person can work in the program, under supervision while waiting for their prints to clear.

Child care quality has been shown to improve with caregiver training. Over their first 6 months, all employees/volunteers must complete 15 hours of training, and a total of 30 hours must be completed every two years as long as the person is employed in child care. Training topics include: child development, nutrition, program development, safety and security, business records, child abuse and maltreatment identification and prevention, shaken baby, statutes and regulations related to child care and child abuse, and adverse childhood experiences.





# Tuition & Enrollment Policies 2024-2025



## Monthly Tuition

*(Enrollment limited to full-time 8:30am-4:30pm, M-F)*
**\$1,555**

**Annual Materials fee**
**\$ 250**

*Due at time of enrollment, billed annually in September*

- Rates averaged over the year, for equal monthly payments, regardless of scheduled holidays
- 30 days' notice required to terminate contracts
- Limited early care (8-8:30am M-F) *by arrangement*  
\$15/day; \$275/month - 5 days/week

The following is required to secure enrollment

- 1) Non-refundable Last month's deposit, applied to last month of care
- 2) Non-refundable annual materials fee

WHE Provides	Families Provide
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nurturing, responsive care</li> <li>• Prepared environment</li> <li>• Healthy vegetarian meals/snacks</li> <li>• Parent support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rest mat or blanket</li> <li>• Indoor shoes</li> <li>• Diapers, diaper cream</li> <li>• Families provide diapering wipes, sunscreen and general lotion if child needs specific different items than we offer.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunscreen, lotion, insect spray</li> <li>• First aid supplies</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water-based disposable wipes</li> </ul>	

**WHE follows the ICSD school calendar with the following adaptations:**

**ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS OPEN**

- ♦ ICSD Parent/Teacher Conference days, Superintendent, and Professional Learning Community days
- ♦ 10/3/2024 ICSD Recess
- ♦ 1/29/2025 Lunar New Year

**ADDITIONAL DAYS WHE IS CLOSED**

- ♦ 6/20/2025 Juneteenth Extension
- ♦ 7/3 & 7/4/2025 Independence Day holidays
- ♦ 8/4-8/8/2025 – Summer break

*Additional enrollment policies including payment deadlines, late fees, absences for personal illness and other reasons are included in enrollment contract.*

4.30.24







West Hill Educare  
Calendar  
2024-2025



September					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	2	3	4	5	6
	9	10	11	12	13
	16	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	26	27
	30				

Labor Day Recess 9/2

October					
M	T	W	Th	F	
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	28	29	30	31	

10/3 ICSD Recess (open)

10/2-4 Rosh Hashanah

10/11-12 Yom Kippur

10/14 Indigenous People's Day

10/16-23 Sukkot

10/31 Diwali Festival

November					
M	T	W	Th	F	
					1
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	18	19	20	21	22
	25	26	27	28	29

11/5 Guy Fawkes Day

11/11 Veterans Day

11/27-29 Thanksgiving

December					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	2	3	4	5	6
	9	10	11	12	13
	16	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	26	27
	30	31			

12/25 Christmas

12/25-1/2 Hanukkah

12/26-1/1 Kwanzaa

12/23-12/31

Winter Recess

January					
M	T	W	Th	F	
			1	2	3
	6	7	8	9	10
	13	14	15	16	17
	20	21	22	23	24
	27	28	29	30	31

1/1 New Years Day

1/20 Martin Luther King, Jr.

1/29 Lunar New Year (open)

February					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	3	4	5	6	7
	10	11	12	13	14
	17	18	19	20	21
	26	27	28	29	

Burns Night (1/25)

2/17-2/21

Mid-Winter Recess

March					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	3	4	5	6	7
	10	11	12	13	14
	17	18	19	20	21
	24	25	26	27	28
	31				

3/1-30 Ramadan

3/31 Recess Day/Eid al-Fitr

April					
M	T	W	Th	F	
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30			

4/12-20 Passover

4/14-4/18 Spring Recess

4/18 Good Friday

4/20 Easter/Orthodox Easter

May					
M	T	W	Th	F	
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29	30

5/26 Memorial Day

June					
M	T	W	Th	F	
	2	3	4	5	6
	9	10	11	12	13
	16	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	26	27
	30				

6/1-3 Shavuot

6/6-7 Eid al-Adha

6/19 & 6/20 Juneteen Recess

6/26 last day ICSD for student

July					
M	T	W	Th	F	
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	28	29	30	31	

7/3 & 7/4 Holidays

August					
M	T	W	Th	F	
					1
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	18	19	20	21	22
	25	26	27	28	29

8/5-8/9 Summer Break

8/29 & 9/1 Labor Day Holiday

**PLEASE NOTE :** WHE remains open on parent/teacher conference days, superintendent and professional learning community days.

We will remain open 10/3 & 1/29 and will be closed 6/20 & 7/3.

rev 4/30/2024



# May Curriculum

Toddler Times

May 2024  
p. 6



## Activities

- Playdough
- Mortar & Pestle w different seeds: cumin, fennel, cardamom
- Seed Planting; in garden and take home pots
- Gluing, painting, printing
- Color mixing
- Care of environment: pouring, sweeping
- Initial sounds, sand tray, rhyming
- Counting and number games
- Physical agility: balancing, jumping

## Books

- Don't Squash that Bug!
- Here to There, Nat Geo Kids
- Meet a Bus Driver
- A Spring Stroll in the City
- Does a Bear Poo in the Woods?
- I'll Take Care of You—a big book about a bird and a seed
- Seeds—Tom Robbins
- More, by IC Springman —gives *a sense* of quantity
- If you were a Dog
- The Me I choose to Be

## Primary Themes

- Birds
- Seeds
- Gardening
- What Plants Need
- Bugs
- Worms
- Measuring
- Self Identity
- What is work?
- Grace and courtesy
- Peace
- Gratitude

## Songs

- Inch by Inch
- The Bean Song
- Oats, Peas, Beans and Barley
- Robin, Red Breast
- Kookaburra
- Five Green and Speckled Frogs





## Contact Information

### West Hill Educare

Cell Phone: **831.465.4518**, texting ok  
*Please use this number to contact us as soon as you know if your child will be absent, as child absences may affect staffing needs.*

[westhilleducare@gmail.com](mailto:westhilleducare@gmail.com)

310 Richard Place, Ithaca, NY 14850

*In case of emergency, KC can be reached at 831.331.6929*

## Class List

(04/22/2024)



Child's Name	D.O.B.	Parents	Address	Phone	E-mail
Ansel Karim-Smith	12/19/2021	Sabrina Karim-Smith & Josh Smith	Ithaca, NY 14850	970-310-4793 470-585-5818	smk349@cornell.edu jes546@cornell.edu
Austin Gaige	12/7/2021	Maria & Brandon Gaige	3726 County Rte 6 Alpine, NY 14805	917-331-2240 607-483-9815	mvf629@gmail.com
Evangeline (Evvie) Miller-Back	8/30/2021	Christine Miller & Eli Back	Ithaca, NY 14850	202-657-9847 607-793-0226	christinelinmil@gmail.com elibraffback@gmail.com
Griffin Lewis	06/27/2021	Megan Vidler & Rob Lewis	132 Fayette St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-280-4420 423-838-3547	megan@homegreenhome.com robertaaronlewis@gmail.com
Katarina (Kata) Peisahovitch	02/05/2022	Herianna Valenzuela & Jason Peisahovitch	Ithaca, NY 14850	Herianna 520-440-0043	heriannavalenzuela@gmail.com
Eleanora (Norie) Balog-Way	09/12/2021	Simone & Dominic Balog-Way	227 S. Albany St. Ithaca, NY 14850	303-579-3550 202-855-4202	s.balogway@gmail.com
Oliver Guidault	05/24/2021	Whitney Elrod & Edmond Guidault	4290 Sanctuary Lane Alpine, NY 14805	607-351-5434 607-223-4088	w.e.elrod@gmail.com edmond.guidault@gmail.com
Sybil Lynch	06/16/2021	Rachael & Jimmy Lynch	37 Whig St. Trumansburg, NY 14886	607-339-8837 845-270-1175	Rkoppel5@gmail.com James.lynch.23@gmail.com
Zephyr (Zeffie) McCCasey	01/15/2022	Lauretta Dolch & Indi McCCasey	500 Elm St. Ithaca, NY 14850	607-342-1213 510-770-4237	ljd62@cornell.edu indiflyer@gmail.com