



Monthly Notes

August 2025

We have been swamped in dramatic play here. Last month Batman, Paw Patrol, Cinderella and Rapunzel all played here a lot. There must have been other such characters—and there were dinosaurs and monsters. They are going to the castle, the store, the car wash, home. There are a couple of homes. On and off everyone gets involved—time for dramatic play! The group plays together in this nonsensical, delightful way. We overhear “call 911” and other tidbits in conversations called out during play as children seek to understand information we’ve talked about (so great!). We see and hear things that no one knows where they come from, like, after spilling the markers, Ansel called out with his punster wit, “it’s *pendemonium!*”

At the end of this month we will say *see you around town* to two children who have been a part of our community for 2+ years. We understand planned and unexpected changes happen, and share their excitement for changes ahead.

Sybil heads off to her neighborhood preK at Trumansburg Elementary School. Although we’ve always known this would happen, it brings mixed emotions for all—excitement and sadness... Sybil has become such a confident and caring leader with many interests.

We will miss Sybil’s friendliness, and her joyful, kind-hearted spirit!

Kata will be attending the Ithaca Waldorf School three days per week. Kata was our youngest child at WHE2. We have seen her grow from crawling to a fearless speedy runner! She is creative, persistent and inquisitive.

We will miss Kata’s passion for flowers and her playful, bright, energetic spirit.

August Holidays n Dates

8/4-8 Summer Break

8/23 Boating Family Gathering
Ith Farmer’s Mkt 11am



8/29 & 9/1 Labor Day Holiday

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
				1
4	5	6	7	8
11	12	13	14	15
18	19	0	21	22
25	26	27	28	29

Please help us find new families to join West Hill Educare

We hope to enroll three 2.5-4 year-old children by January 2026.

New Emergency Location

Effective immediately, our primary emergency location has changed to **307 Richard Place—Dorothy’s house!**

This revision will be included in our 9/1/2025 Parent Handbook.

"We begin with the hypothesis that any subject can be taught in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. It is a bold hypothesis and an essential one in thinking about the nature of the curriculum."

— Jerome Bruner (1960)



Plays and laughs at reflection, then—*"A flower in a cup!"*



Spiral Curriculum

I learned about the idea of a spiral curriculum when I studied Montessori education, but she is not the person associated with the term. "The term **spiral curriculum** was coined by Jerome Bruner in 1960 to describe a method of curriculum delivery in which major topics and skill areas are revisited with increasing complexity throughout a child's education, connecting prior learning with new learning." This concept is widely applied now. A spiral curriculum

1. Utilizes prior knowledge:
Students prior knowledge and experience are linked to fundamental ideas early—not for mastery, but to lay some familiarity, encouraging continuous progress and cognitive development. Children learn language this way when they learn the meaning of new vocabulary words; i.e. ball is a familiar toy, a familiar word. Learning the word *sphere* extends the child's concrete learning and can be applied to even further learning
2. Is cyclical: Revisit basic ideas repeatedly
Students build on prior knowledge at all ages and stages by revisiting basic ideas and concepts repeatedly over time, again linking prior knowledge with new knowledge. This repeated engagement tends to increase understanding and may increase access to learning for groups of diverse learners.
3. Increases in complexity:
Learning is a process of discovery and construction. Over time, the depth and complexity of information about a topic discussed or presented can be increased to reinforce previous learning deepen knowledge and understanding

Competitiveness in Preschoolers

According to Beth Stockton, three factors contribute to the preschool child's need to be first:

- 1) "They're trying to be doers" - they want to use and refine new skills
- 2) They're still egocentric, making it hard to put others before themselves
- 3) Children do not fully understand time until they are 6 or 7 years old, meaning even a short time can feel like forever for a preschooler

In her article, [*Why preschoolers are obsessed with being first \(and how to deal with it\)*](#), she notes that "for some preschoolers, wanting to be first is rooted in wanting to be better than others" and enjoy the recognition and good feelings that come with being first. Being competitive can make it hard to work as part of a team, making board games and sports challenging.

By providing them opportunity to practice negotiating in small groups, competitive children can develop social skills. With our support and guidance activities that require taking turns and group decision making, such as playing games, choosing a book for the group to read.

In her article, [*Helping Super-Competitive Children Relax*](#), Patty Wipfler notes that the strong need to win may have roots in an early hard time and advocates for leaning in, offering support and listening through the wins and losses that come. An emphasis on play and



Support
Playfulness!

individual growth is echoed by both RIE© and [*Montessori*](#) approaches, and in our program at West Hill Educare.

Play is foundational for development and learning—it is a primary instinct that drives exploration. According to the article, [*Why We Play*](#), by the National Institute for Play, we have play circuits in our brains and the more that very young children are able to act from their "play nature," the better they will develop and reinforce the neural circuits in other parts of their brain — circuits that become neural pathways for many life skills. A lack of play, like when recess is swapped for more classroom time, has been shown to increase rates of depression, inflexibility, depression, lack of empathy and more.

Lots of time in a play state helps children thrive. [*Learn more about supporting your child's interests and their unique play nature*](#) so that they can have maximum joy and meaning in their lives.

Play-created neural pathways bring lifelong benefits such as:

- Making perseverance fun, which helps with focus and leads to mastery
- Generating optimism
- Building confidence
- Increasing empathy



"I'm a silly kid.
These are my earpods."

August Curriculum

At WHE, our curriculum is adapted all the time. Although we offer materials and ideas from the Educaring and Montessori approaches, we are inherently a play-based program with an emergent curriculum.

An emergent curriculum changes and morphs according to the needs and interests of the children in care.

Each month we start with ideas that may extend from last month or may be new. As the days progress we add, take away, tweak.

So much of the summer is about outside play and exploration, much of our day is spent outside as the children are eager to get out asap!

Let's enjoy this last hot month before the fall crispness comes!



Primary Themes

- SUMMER!
- Cooperation
- The Body
- Simple food prep
- Picnic!
- Self help snack
- Continent globe and mapping



Books

- What Pete Ate
 - Mathew and Tilly
 - Me on the Map
 - The City by the Bay
 - The USA: A State by State Guide
 - The Ugly Vegetables
 - My Family Plays Music
 - Clouds
 - In the Fiddle is a Song
- And many "old" faves:
- Fire Chief Fran
 - Too Many Pears
 - Edible Colors
 - Hannah's Tall Order
 - A to Z Sandwich
 - Baller-Ina

Songs

- Head, Head, Ears, Ears
- Hokey Pokey
- Wiggle wiggle
- Sunflower
- The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water
- I Love the Flowers
- Making rain...
- Splishing and Splashing
- Always more...

Activities

- Water: boats, ocean animals, squirters
- Easel painting, oobleck mixed media: glue/paint/color
- Body tracing
- Self portraits
- Garden:
—harvesting, cooking!
and more digging!
- Robot magnets
- Body puzzles
- Bells

