

# Preschool Press

AAPS EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2024

## NAAPID CELEBRATIONS AT PRESCHOOL



### IMPORTANT DATES

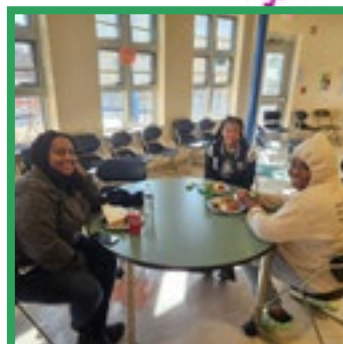
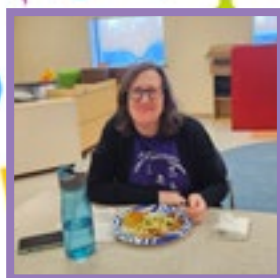
3/1/24 Friday	Preschool In session
3/6/24 Wednesday	Early Release Day (Dismissal: 1pm)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

3/1/24 FRIDAY	Parent -Policy Committee Meeting
8:45am - 10 am	

### ANNOUNCEMENT

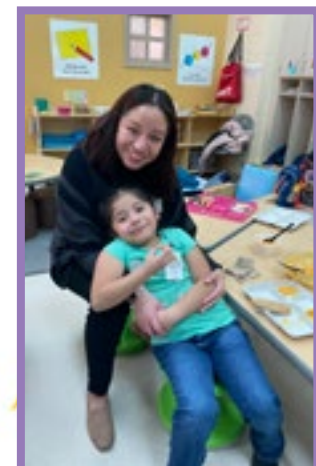
Bus Transportation Form for  
**CHANGE** in Transportation or  
**NEW**  
Transportation is due on  
**Wednesday, March 13 by 12pm**







*We're so glad  
You're here*





# FUN WITH FRIENDS!

Multiple times a week, the kids and teachers from C102 & C103 get together to play in each others classrooms, sing songs, play games, and do special activities!

We love our yellow pod neighbors!



Ooey Gooey Group  
is a fun activity to  
explore new foods  
with all our senses!

SOPHIA



MEGAN



HOLLY &  
BREANA



ELISABETH



# FUN WITH FRIENDS!



Umbrella walks let us play outside when it is too wet to play on the playground!



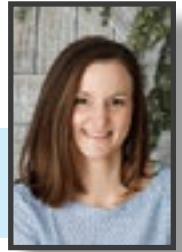
Centrum activities (stomp rocket, balloons and paddles, and parachute) help keep our bodies active, encourage teamwork, and practice turn taking



# ENHANCING FINE MOTOR SKILLS THROUGH PLAYDOUGH

Preschool years are a crucial time for the development of fine motor skills, which are essential for tasks such as writing, drawing, and self-care. Engaging, hands-on activities are the perfect way to help develop these skills. When playing with playdough, preschoolers can strengthen their fingers and hands while having fun. Here are some ideas how you can use playdough with your child at home.

**Katharina Bragalone**  
Occupational Therapist



**1. Playdough Pinching Practice:** *Objective: Develop precision and strength in the pincer grasp.* Encourage children to pinch small amounts of playdough using their thumb and index finger. They can form mini balls or shape simple figures, promoting the development of the pincer grasp – a crucial precursor to holding markers and crayons when drawing.

**2. Roll/ Flatten Playdough and Letter/ Number Play:** *Objective: Strengthen hand muscles and coordination.* Provide rolling pins and ask your child to roll out the playdough into flat sheets. Afterward, they can press alphabet or number cookie cutters into the playdough. This helps them associate shapes with letters and numbers while fostering hand strength and refining fine motor skills.

**3. Threading Beads:** *Objective: Enhance hand-eye coordination and bilateral skills.* Place toothpicks into the playdough and thread beads onto the toothpicks. Stringing beads challenges children to use both hands simultaneously. This activity promotes bilateral coordination, an essential skill for many everyday tasks.

**4. Playdough Sculpture Challenge:** *Objective: Encourage creativity, precision, and imitation skills.* Present children with specific challenges, such as crafting animals or objects using playdough. This not only stimulates creativity but also requires fine motor control, attention to detail, and visual perceptual skills.



**5. Texture Exploration:** *Objective: Provide sensory stimulation for fine motor development.* Mix various textures (sand, rice, little toys, etc.) into playdough. Preschoolers can feel and manipulate the different textures, promoting sensory exploration alongside fine motor skill development.



**6. Playdough Tools and Utensils:** *Objective: Introduce tool use for fine motor refinement.* Offer plastic knives, rolling pins, scissors and other safe tools. Preschoolers can cut, roll, and shape playdough, enhancing fine motor skills through tool manipulation.

**7. Playdough Squeezing Exercise:** *Objective: Strengthen hand muscles.* Encourage children to squeeze playdough with their entire hand or mix two colors together to make a new color. This activity helps build hand strength, which is needed for all types of daily tasks (opening containers or marker caps, manipulating toys, etc.)

Incorporating some of these playdough activities at home not only sparks creativity, but also serves as a purposeful means to boost fine motor skills. If you are interested in making your own playdough at home with just a few ingredients that you may already have in your kitchen, follow this easy recipe: <https://www.iheartnaptime.net/play-dough-recipe/>





# Bryant Preschool is learning about Fire Safety



Ms. Carolyn  
Teacher



Ms. Teresa  
Co-Teacher

We are  
thankful  
for a fun and  
interactive  
visit from  
the Ann  
Arbor Fire  
Department!



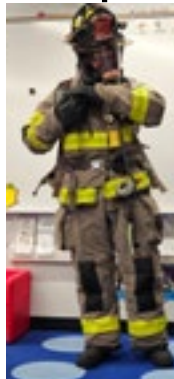
We learned in an emergency...



Know where to meet up



Call for help



**STOP, DROP & ROLL**

I can stop.



I can drop.

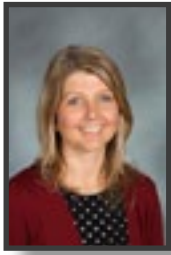


I can roll.





## FEBRUARY IS HEART MONTH!



**Kathy Gaines**  
Physical Therapist

Research has shown that childhood obesity has tripled in the last 30 years. Sixty percent of overweight children ages 5-17 have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease, and kids with weight issues are more likely to struggle with weight as adults. This all means that preschool is the perfect time to start healthy habits to last a lifetime. Set your child on the right path with a healthy diet and lots of activity!

- Preschoolers don't always choose a wide variety of foods, so making sure their bread and cereal products are whole-grain and high in fiber, canned vegetables

are low-sodium or "no salt added", and canned fruits are in water or their own juice are all steps in the right direction. Don't give up on offering a variety of healthy choices since tastes can change quickly!

- Daily physical activity of at least 60 minutes per day is the recommended amount for children, and since leading by example is the best way to motivate kids, getting the whole family moving is a great idea! Taking walks, playing outside, and dancing to music are all fun options. The internet is full of dance and exercise ideas for kids, such as [www.gonoodle.com](http://www.gonoodle.com). Or check out [internet sites like this for indoor movement game ideas](#).

- For more ideas and facts about keeping your child, and YOU, heart-healthy, search under "Healthy Living" at [www.heart.org](http://www.heart.org).

## READING IS FUNDAMENTAL!

Reading books with your child is one of the best ways to help them love books, and loving books is one of the most important keys to your child's success in school. In addition, reading books to your child is a great way to help them understand their emotions and develop empathy for others. Sharing that time to explore how characters feel teaches your child to express their feelings in a safe space where they can come and talk to you later. Here are some questions you can ask them as you read that will help them as they identify their feelings in themselves and others.

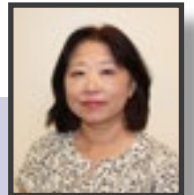
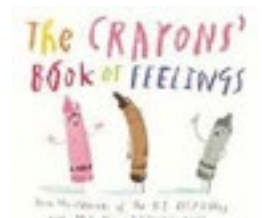
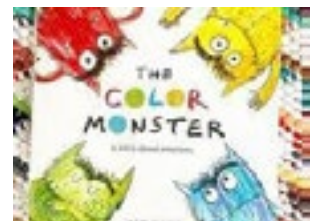
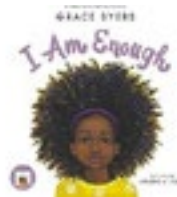
As you read, stop and ask these questions:  
What do you think is happening on this page?  
How is this character feeling?  
How can you tell?  
Have you ever felt that way?  
What do you think is going to happen?



Help your child find names for the feelings shown in the pictures. Help your child connect the events in the book to his or her own life. It is not even necessary to read the words in the book. Just talking about the pictures in your own words can still help build a long lasting bond where they know they can share with you how they feel.

Here are some recommended books to get the conversation started:

- "The Color Monster" by Anna Llenas
- "The Crayons' Book of Feelings" by Drew DeWalt
- "Today I Feel: An Alphabet of Feelings." by Madalena Mo
- "Glad Monster, Sad Monster" by Ed Emberley
- "I am Enough" by Grace Byers

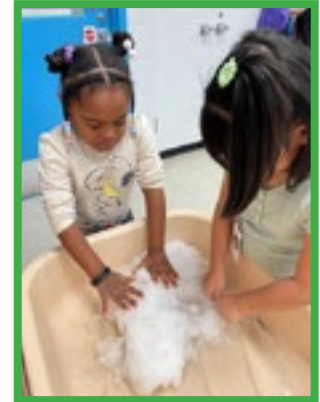


**Yung Hwang**  
Social Worker



# LAKEWOOD PRESCHOOL ENJOYING THE SNOW

January has been icy cold! Here at Lakewood, we have been learning about ice and snow. Children were able to play and explore snow outside, but we also brought the snow into the classroom for some more exploration. We were scientists and made predictions about what would melt faster: snow or ice. We tested out our hypotheses during small group time. We also used two different water colors to see what would happen to the ice and snow if we added colored water. The children saw that the blue and yellow water made green snow. We left the ice, snow and water in our sensory table for more investigation during work time. We are staying warm over here at Lakewood. We hope all our friends are, too!







**Abbie Miller**  
*Teacher*



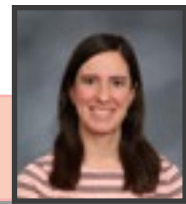
**Annette Smith**  
*Paraprofessional*



# BRINGING THE MAGIC OF SNOWY PLAY INDOORS

Bringing the magic of snowy play indoors can be just as thrilling for preschoolers, offering a sensory-rich experience while staying cozy and warm. Here are some creative and engaging sensory snow play activity ideas for preschoolers indoors:

**Michelle MacRae,**  
*Occupational Therapist*



## **Snowy Sensory Bin:**

- Create a sensory bin filled with white cotton balls or shredded paper to mimic snow.
- Add in small winter-themed toys such as miniature snowmen, animals, or trees for imaginative play.

## **Snowflake Art:**

- Cut out various sizes and shapes of snowflakes from white paper.
- Provide glue, glitter, and various craft materials for the children to decorate their snowflakes.

## **Snowy Footprints:**

- Place large sheets of white paper on the floor.
- Dip the children's shoes or boots in white paint and encourage them to make footprints on the paper, creating a snowy path.

## **Snowy Sensory Bags:**

- Fill ziplock bags with a mixture of hair gel and clear glue, adding silver glitter for a snowy effect.
- Seal the bags tightly and let the children squish and move the "snow" around with their fingers.

## **Snowy Playdough Creations:**

- Make white playdough and set out various snow-themed accessories like plastic snowflakes, miniature snowmen, and small toy animals.
- Encourage the children to create their own snowy scenes using the playdough and accessories.

## **Winter Wonderland Puppet Show:**

- Provide white socks or paper bags as puppet bases.
- Supply materials like googly eyes, buttons, and fabric scraps for the children to create their own winter-themed puppets and put on a snowy puppet show.

## **Ice and Salt Painting:**

- Mix watercolors with salt and freeze the mixture in ice cube trays.
- Provide the children with white paper and let them paint with the ice cubes, watching as the salt creates a snowy, textured effect.

## **Snowy Sensory Shaving Cream:**

- Cover a table with a layer of shaving cream to represent snow.
- Let the children explore and play in the "snow" using their hands or small toys.

## **Snowy Storytime:**

- Set up a cozy reading corner with winter-themed books.
- Invite the children to sit on soft blankets and pillows as you read stories related to snow, winter, and snowy adventures.

## **Snowy Obstacle Course:**

- Arrange an indoor obstacle course with "snowy" challenges, such as hopping from one snowflake shape to another or crawling under a snowy tunnel made from blankets.

Remember to adapt these activities based on the age and developmental levels of the preschoolers, and always prioritize safety during indoor play. Enjoy the winter wonderland right in your home!



# THE SENSORY-MOTOR PYRAMID: BUILDING THE BRAIN-BODY CONNECTIONS FOR LEARNING



**Emily Warner**  
ECSE Teacher

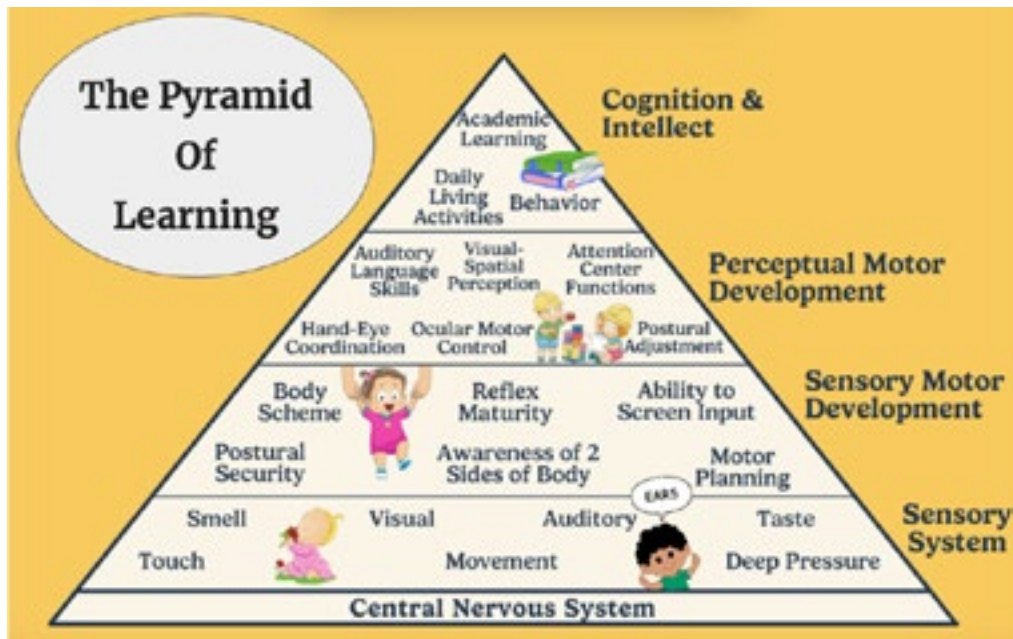
## What is the Sensory Motor Pyramid?

Most people have heard of the Food Pyramid, but have you heard of the Sensory-Motor Pyramid?

The Sensory-Motor Pyramid outlines sensory and motor and skills that are the basis for building brain-body connection to help an individual grow, learn and navigate the world.

We often think of school, even preschool learning, as academic learning such as letters, numbers, and learning to write. These are all important parts of learning for preschoolers, but we should not forget that underlying Brain-Body connections and coordination are needed to support this academic learning. And, these connections are built by engaging in sensory-motor activities

## Parts of the Sensory-Motor Pyramid:



Level 1- The foundation of the Sensory-Motor Pyramid is the **Central Nervous System**. This is the brain and spinal column along with the nerve networks. Eating healthy food, exercise, getting sunlight during the day to support the body's circadian rhythm (or sleep-wake cycle), and a full night's sleep will help nourish the nervous system.

Level 2- Level 2 is the **Sensory System**. This includes the 5 senses that are commonly talked about: sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste. It also includes a few more senses that are not as well known. These senses are:

- a) Vestibular sense- The vestibular sense is our sense of balance. Receptors in our inner ear detect motion and position.
- b) Proprioception- Proprioception is the body's ability to sense movement, action, and location. The body gets input from receptors in muscles and joints.
- c) Interoception- Interoception is the internal sense of one's body. It is how a person knows if he or she is hungry or needs to go to the toilet.



### Level 3- Level 3 combines use of both sensory skills and motor skills for **Sensory- Motor Development**

Motor skills include both gross motor (whole body or large muscle movement) and fine motor (movement using the small muscles in the hands and wrists). Motor skill development includes the learning to coordinate both sides of the body (bilateral coordination), regulating muscle strength and tone, using vestibular balance and posture, visual tracking and coordination, rhythm and timing, and development of hand dominance (being right or left-handed).

We can see that sensory-motor development includes a lot of skills! And, there are so many activities that will help these skills develop, such as:



*Playing with playdough*



*Rocking a baby doll*



*Crawling like a kitty cat*



*Digging in the sand*

Level 4- Level 4 is **Perceptual-Motor Development**. Perceptual-Motor Development includes motor skills being used together at higher coordinated levels with our visual, balance, and attentional systems. Once again, there are so many activities that will help these skills develop, such as:



*Throwing a bean bag or kicking a ball.*



*Building a block tower from a model*



*Drawing*



*Swinging .*



*Paying attention in a group game .*

Level 5- The 5th level (and top of the Sensory-Motor Pyramid) is the development of **Cognition and Intellect**. Cognition and intellect includes academic learning (including the ABC's and the 123's of preschool), daily living activities, and controlling (or regulating) one's behavior. Cognition and intellect also allow for flexibility, higher level thinking and planning, and problem solving.

### **Using the Sensory-Motor Pyramid-**

So, during these preschool years (and beyond!), remember that developing sensory-motor skills at the lower levels of the pyramid are just as important as learning academic skills such as the ABC's. In fact, sensory-motor skills are foundational to learning academic skills.

As children move from infants to toddlers to preschoolers (and beyond), each stage of development begins with both sensory and physical skills that are mastered step by step. If, for some reason this foundation learning is not solid, development at the higher levels can falter. The Sensory-Motor Pyramid reminds us to make time for sensory and motor/movement activities. These activities are not simply fun, they are also educational activities that support children's learning and development from the bottom up!



- ☑ **SHOP**
- ☑ **DONATE**
- ☑ **SUPPORT**

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**2280 S. Industrial Hwy. ♦ [a2ptothriftshop.org](http://a2ptothriftshop.org)**

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***Celebrating 30 Years of Serving  
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- 1994 -** A group of parents hold the first sale in the cafeteria of Tappan Middle School and raise \$5000.
- 2006 -** Relocated to our current home at 2280 S. Industrial Hwy., occupying 22,000 sq. ft. of sales and processing space. *(ATA Bus Routes #6 and #24)*
- 2016 -** The **Showcase**, featuring unique treasures, opens at 2284A S. Industrial - next door to the original shop.
- 2023 -** The **Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop** looks forward to many more years serving AAPS and the community!

***Thanks for all the support!***



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