

St. Peter's Preschool Newsletter



November 2020

From the Director's Chair – by Rita Dai Wang

The season for giving thanks is upon us. I am so thankful for our St. Peter's family: teachers, church staff, and you -- our families! I love seeing your children every day. The things they say and how they see the world remind me to be present and enjoy every moment. Thank you for sharing them and entrusting them to us.

Halloween Parade: Thank you so much for making the time to come to our Halloween Parades last week! Who said we can't have fun in the rain? LOL!

Mittens, Hats, and Boots: As long as the temperatures are above freezing after taking into account the wind chill, we plan to go outside every day, even in the rain/snow. Please remember to dress your children accordingly and to send in mittens, hats, and boots (labeled please). Thank you in advance!

Fledgling's Artistic Gifts: We are hard at work on special art projects that you can turn into mugs, mouse pads, trivets, etc. The artwork and order form will come home 11/9-10. Please return both the artwork and order form by 11/17 so we can ensure the products arrive in time for Christmas. If you have other children at home who would like to participate, please let me know, and I can give you extra paper and order forms. These make great grandparent presents, hint hint!

Thanksgiving Travel: As you are no doubt making Thanksgiving plans, I wanted to make you aware of the latest travel guidelines from the Maryland Health Department. Anyone who travels to a state with a test positivity rate over 10% will need to get a COVID test and self-quarantine at home until test results come back. If you are hosting an out of state visitor, the Health Department recommends that they get COVID tested before entering Maryland. The test positivity data tracker site used by the Health Department is the CDC site https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#testing_testsperformed. I have attached the full Thanksgiving and travel guidance below.

As we see increasing cases of COVID-19, it is ever important to remain vigilant in our practices and safety protocols. Mask wearing, social distancing, handwashing, sanitizing, and other practices safeguard our own families and our entire community. I realize this is a challenging time, as Thanksgiving and Christmas are holidays steeped in family tradition. Unfortunately, parties and other large group gatherings can compromise everyone's safety, so let's continue to all do our part to keep everyone in our St. Peter's family safe. Thank you!

COVID newsletters from Emily Oster: I recently stumbled upon a data-backed parenting/COVID blog from Emily Oster, an economist and author at Brown University. <https://emilyoster.net/> Her latest newsletter summarizes the latest scientific studies of coronavirus in children and schools. <https://emilyoster.substack.com/p/new-research-not-by-me-on-kids-babies>

She is also a contributor to COVID Explained, a newsletter put out by a group of researchers and scientists from Brown, Harvard, MIT, Mass General, and other places. <https://covidexplained.substack.com/>

If you are a data nerd like me, you will find all of this fascinating reading!

HOLIDAYS + COVID EXPLAINED

Is it safe to see family for the holidays?
How can I minimize risk while hosting a holiday gathering?
How can I minimize risk while traveling?

explaincovid.org [@covidexplained](https://twitter.com/covidexplained) [@covidexplained](https://www.instagram.com/covidexplained)



Dates to Remember

11/16-17 Fledgling's Artistic Gifts orders due

11/25-11/27 Thanksgiving Break – No School

Outdoor Classroom

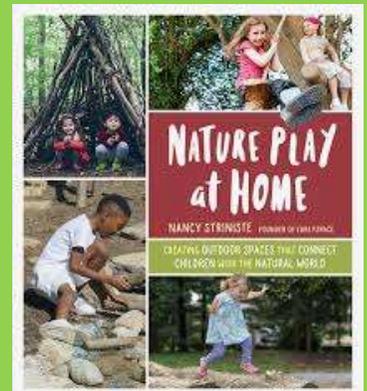
We are in the process of setting up an outdoor classroom in the grassy area across the parking lot from the playground. When finished, it will feature a music wall, mud kitchen, ramps for kids to explore gravity, sandtable, garden, sensory walk, and other exciting ideas. We would love your help. If you have any of the following, please let Ms. Rita know:

- Logs (esp. from hardwoods like red cedar, oak, maple, etc.)
- Old pots/pans
- Bells
- Old tires
- Big/small rocks
- Bamboo stalks
- Pallets

If you are handy with tools, we would love your help with construction as well!



One concern many parents have about outdoor learning is risk, whether it be from insects or falling. Nancy Striniste discusses the difference between risk and hazard in her book "Nature Play at Home." I have attached some of her thoughts below.



The Risks of Eliminating Risks from “Nature Play at Home” by Nancy Striniste

It can be scary to see your child doing something that seems dangerous. However, it is important for parents to realize that kids need opportunities to make choices, take risks, and do things that are challenging and exciting in order to grow into resilient human beings. Having active-play elements in a natural play space communicates to children that we trust them and want them to get to know themselves, to develop confidence in their abilities, and to learn to make good decisions.



As we build adventure into the design of an outdoor space, we give our children the chance to confront and master their fears and to build self-confidence and self-sufficiency. When children confront risk together, they learn to cooperate and develop empathy and caring. The opposite is also true, as a study from Denmark demonstrates. Children who *don't* have the opportunity to participate in adventurous, somewhat risky play may become irrationally fearful and anxious. They may grow up to be less creative and lack confidence.



What is acceptable risk? It is important to think about what is required for a child to manage and overcome risk, and this varies with age and experience. This is sometimes described as the difference between a hazard and a risk. A hazard is a danger a child cannot see or understand, versus a risk, which can be seen and understood.

Risk is everywhere. There is a risk of injury even walking along paved sidewalks. In a natural setting with trees to climb, pointy sticks, slippery rocks, and the unexpected holes in the ground, we worry that “something might happen.” Instead, the scrapes children acquire should be acknowledged proudly as proof that “you tried to *do something*.” At its most basic level, pain is a signal from the environment that leads children to learn how to keep themselves safe. Each bump and bruise is a step in developing resilience. It is through play that children should have the opportunity to test themselves and to learn to respond to the environment.

The job of parents, teachers, and caregivers is not to succumb to every worry, nor to put their anxiety ahead of what is good for children. Parents need to say yes to outdoor play: yes to running, climbing, getting dirty, and staying outside longer, all in order for our children to grow up with healthy bodies and brains. Sometimes parents just need to sit on their hands, look away, and let children try it.



The International School Grounds Alliance (ISGA) has created the *Risk in Play and Learning Declaration*. It states that play spaces should be “as safe as necessary, not as safe as possible.” It can be found at <http://www.internationalschoolgrounds.org/risk>.

Nancy Striniste has also written a blog entry titled “Child’s Right to Risk,” which can be found on her website at <https://earlyspace.com/childs-right-to-risk/>.

THANKSGIVING COVID-19 GUIDANCE & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Howard County Health Department
and CDC Recommends:

Avoid large indoor gatherings, dinners
and parties

Avoid large crowds, wear a mask and
practice physical distancing

Shop online and avoid crowded stores

Get a flu shot and wash hands frequently

Staying home is the best way to protect yourself. Avoid
travel to attend holiday gatherings

Lower risk options for celebrating:

Have a small dinner with only members of your household

Prepare traditional family recipes for family and
neighbors, especially those at higher risk of severe
illness from COVID-19 and plan for contactless delivery

Have an outdoor bonfire in place of a holiday meal,
with physical distancing and mask-wearing

Enjoy apple-picking or pumpkin picking outdoors

For more information, please visit the CDC's website at <https://bit.ly/3ke3FYS>



Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive





**NOTICE - OUT OF STATE TRAVEL AND PUBLIC TRAVEL ADVISORY
(JULY 29, 2020)**

The Maryland Department of Health strongly recommends that all Marylanders refrain from non-essential travel outside of Maryland due to the recent increase in COVID-19 infections in other states. In addition:

1. Any Marylander returning from out-of-state or any out-of-state traveler should either get tested for COVID-19 promptly upon arrival in Maryland or within 72 hours before travel to Maryland. A list of test sites can be found here:
(<https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/symptoms-testing>).

We encourage out-of-state visitors to be tested within 72 hours prior to arrival and to cancel travel if they receive a positive result. Visitors waiting for their test results should stay at home between the time of their test and their arrival in Maryland or to self-quarantine at their hotel.

2. Any Marylander who travels to a state with a COVID-19 test positivity rate above 10% should get tested and self-quarantine at home until the test result is received. The District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Virginia are exempt from this recommendation.

A list of state COVID-19 test positivity rates can be found here:
(<https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html#testing>) (COVID-19 Tests Performed by State - Commercial and Reference, Public Health, and Hospital).

3. Essential workers, as previously referenced in the [Governor's Office of Legal Counsel's COVID-19-04 Interpretative Guidance](#), are exempt from the quarantine recommendation if they are returning or traveling to Maryland to perform essential work, as well as employee commuters who leave/enter the state on a daily basis and have work-based COVID-19 screening procedures.

This Notice is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until the state of emergency has been terminated and the proclamation of the catastrophic health emergency has been rescinded.

Robert R. Neall
Secretary