

Sandcastle Child Care Newsletter





February News

Dear Parents:

We have a few reminders for you this month:

- Thank you for taking the time to fill out the parent surveys. We use the surveys to help better our program.
- We will be closed on Monday, February 19th for staff training and in-service.
- Be careful in our parking lot! Not only do we have a lot of traffic in and out of the parking lot all day long, but it tends to be icy in spots despite our best efforts to salt. Please drive slowly when you are entering or leaving; our traffic includes tiny pedestrians!
- Sit down conferences will take place between February 20th and February 23th. Sign-up sheets will be posted the week of February 5th. We encourage all of you to schedule a time to meet with your child's teachers.
- Early Childhood Screening is scheduled to take place on Thursday, February 8th. If you received a screening packet, please complete it and return it to Sandcastle by February 8th.
- Please check your child's file every day! Daily communication from the office and from your child's teachers will be here!
- Parents please don't use the children's bathroom. We have staff in and out of the children's bathrooms helping the children who need to use the restroom. You are more than welcome to use the staff bathroom.

We hope you enjoy the writings that we have included on the following pages.

Have a beautiful month filled with love, laughter, and joy.

Jennifer, Lisa, Wendy, and Rachael

“To My Child”

Just for this morning, I am going to smile when I see your face
and laugh when I feel like crying.

Just for this morning, I will let you choose what you want to wear,
and smile and say how perfect it is.

Just for this morning, I am going to step over the laundry,
and pick you up and take you to the park to play.

Just for this morning, I will leave the dishes in the sink,
and let you teach me how to put that puzzle of yours together.

Just for this afternoon, I will unplug the telephone and keep the computer off,
and sit with you in the backyard and blow bubbles.

Just for this afternoon, I will not yell once, not even a tiny grumble when you scream
and whine for the ice cream truck, and I will buy you one if he comes by.

Just for this afternoon, I won't worry about what you are going to be when you grow up,
or second guess every decision I have made where you are concerned.

Just for this afternoon, I will let you help me bake cookies,
and I won't stand over you trying to fix them.

Just for this afternoon, I will take us to McDonald's
and buy us both a Happy Meal so you can have both toys.

Just for this evening, I will hold you in my arms and tell you a story
about how you were born and how much I love you.

Just for this evening, I will let you splash in the tub and not get angry.

Just for this evening, I will let you stay up late while we sit on the porch
and count all the stars.

Just for this evening, I will snuggle beside you for hours, and miss my favorite TV shows.

Just for this evening when I run my finger through your hair as you pray,

I will simply be grateful that God has given me the greatest gift ever given.

I will think about the mothers and fathers who are searching for their missing children, the mothers and fathers who are visiting their children's graves instead of their bedrooms, and mothers and fathers who are in hospital rooms watching their children suffer senselessly, and screaming inside that they can't handle it anymore.

And when I kiss you good night I will hold you a little tighter, a little longer.

Origins of Black History Month

What we now call Black History Month originated in 1926, founded by Carter G. Woodson as Negro History Week. The month of February was selected out of respect for Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln who were both born in that month.

The son of a slave, Carter G Woodson was born in New Canton, Virginia on December 19, 1875. He began high school at the age of 20 and then proceeded to study at Berea College, the University of Chicago, the Sorbonne, and Harvard University, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1912.

Carter G Woodson founded the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in 1915 to train Black historians and to collect, preserve, and publish documents on Black life and Black people. He also founded the Journal of Negro History (1916), Associated Publishers (1922), and the Negro Bulletin (1937). Woodson spent his life working to educate all people about the vast contributions made by Black men and women throughout history. Mr. Woodson died on April 3, 1950 and Black History Month is his legacy.

Favorite Books for Black History Month

The following are some of our favorite books for Black History Month (and anytime!). Some describe our different histories while others show the joys and challenges that are shared by children of all colors as they learn and grow.

A Chair for My Mother By: Vera Williams (Age Level: 3-6)

After a fire destroys their home and possessions, Rosa, her mother, and her grandmother save their money to buy a big comfortable chair. Suffused with warmth and tenderness, *A Chair for My Mother* celebrates family love and determination.

Amazing Grace By: Mary Hoffman, Caroline Binch (Age Level: 3-6)

Grace loves to act, but one day some kids tell her she can't play the part of Peter Pan because of the way she looks. Grace's grandmother helps this young girl realize that with effort anything can be achieved.

Anansi The Spider: A Tale From the Ashanti By: Gerald McDermott (Age Level: 3-6)

Have you ever wondered how the moon got where it is? According to this Ashanti tale, Nyame, the god of all things, put it there when Anansi could not decide which of his sons deserved it. Brilliant illustrations accompany this classic retelling of a traditional tale.

Bigmama's By: Donald Crews (Age Level: 3-6)

Every year the narrator and his family take a trip down to Cottondale, Florida, to visit his grandmother, Bigmama. This autobiographical story recalls the joys of summer and the contrast between the author's life in the city and Bigmama's lush, rural home. While the illustrations suggest it was a period of segregation, this thought never overpowers the carefree summer celebration.

Bright Eyes, Brown Skin By: Cheryl Hudson, Bernette Ford, and George Cephas Ford (Age Level: 3-6)

Four African American children interact with one another in a preschool environment, exploring their facial features, skin tones, what they wear, what they do, and how they learn from and enjoy each other.

My Daddy and I By: Eloise Greenfield, Jan Spivey Gilchrest (Age Level: 0-3)

A boy and his father, shown as African Americans in warmly hued illustrations, enjoy doing everyday activities together, from laundry to sharing a book and more. The simple pleasures of family life are conveyed affectionately through easy but flowing language and realistic paintings in a sturdy format.

Nina Bonita By: Ana Machado, Rosana Faria (Age Level: 3-6)

This delightful book is set on a Caribbean island and features a little white rabbit who admires a beautiful black girl. He asks her what her secret is and she tells him to drink lots of black coffee and to eat lots of black beans. He doesn't give up though and in the end finds what change he can make.

Something Beautiful By: Sharon Wyeth, Chris K. Soentpiet (Age Level: 3-6)

A young girl learns to find beauty in her sometimes gritty urban neighborhood, showing how the way one sees makes a difference that affects others. Luminous watercolors detail the child, her neighborhood, and suggest what she sees around her.

The Quilt By: Ann Jonas (Age Level: 0-3)

Publishers Weekly called this delightful book a "landmark in children's literature." Made from her old pajamas and curtains, a young girl's new quilt inspires a dream adventure. The squares of the quilt become part of a dreamscape she enters into in order to find her lost stuffed dog. An ALA Notable Children's Book.

Uncle Remus: The Complete Tales By: Julius Lester (Age Level: 3-6)

One of the most well known of African American folktales are the Uncle Remus tales, originally written down by Joel Chandler Harris over a hundred years ago. This four-book series drops the heavy and difficult dialect of the original tales and adds contemporary language and references to Brer Rabbit's fun.

Welcome, Precious By: Nikki Grimes (Age Level: 0-3)

A mother and father welcome their "precious" newborn child to the joys of the five senses in his world.

Please, Baby, Please By: Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee (Age Level: 1-3)

Parents implore their toddler to behave nicely, but Baby has a mind of her own.

Baby Dance By: Ann Taylor (Age Level: 1-3)

While Mama rests on the couch, Dad dances with his little girl, swinging her to and fro, up and down, and round and round in this rhythmic and rollicking board book.

Jazz Baby By: Lisa Wheeler (Age Level: 2-5)

With a clap-clap-clap and a rat-tat-tat and Granny singing scat, Baby and family make some snappy jazz music.

This Jazz Man By: Karen Ehrhardt (Age Level: 3-6)

This adaptation of "This Old Man" alludes to ten great jazz musicians: Charlie Parker, who "Plays five... plays jive, with a Beedle-dibop! Bebop!;" Mingus, who plays 9 with a "Thimp-thump! Duple-thump!" and so on.

The Color of Us By: Karen Katz (Age Level: 4-6)

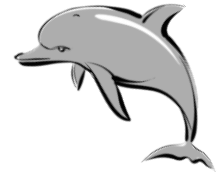
A young girl and her mother observe the variations in the color of their friends' skin in this vibrant picture book.

What a Wonderful World By: George David Weiss and Bob Thiele (Age Level: 4-8)

A puppet show hosted by children illustrates the lyrics of the song made famous by Louis Armstrong, who is featured among the puppets.

“Infant Information”

Dolphins: (Jackie, Danette, Carol, and Rose)



There is no one right way to deal with a fussy baby. Sometimes a simple “Go to sleep.” is sufficient and other times you may have to pick them up to let them know that you are still around. Let your child learn to put themselves to sleep while you check on them at increasingly infrequent intervals. Stick to bedtime routines regardless of protests. Give them a bath and massage, followed by quiet activities. Turn off lights within 30 minutes of bath, and then put them down as normal.

Babies who are nursed to sleep may have a tendency to experience sleep issues; they may become dependent on the breast to soothe themselves back to sleep. If your baby falls asleep during a nighttime feeding, rouse them to be sure that they are really awake when you put them back down.

Putting your baby down later so they will sleep in later will likely make those night waking worse, not better. That’s because, thanks to their circadian rhythms, their programmed to feel drowsy and fall asleep early - between 5:30 and 6:00 PM. If you miss the drowsy window, the body fights the fatigue by producing stimulating chemicals. Your baby becomes wired and has a harder time falling and staying asleep. Sleep sacks work well because they keep your baby warm and don’t bunch up to interfere with your baby’s breathing.

Seahorses: (Becca, Isabel, Jody, Angie, Samantha, and Jessica)



We truly hope everyone has been keeping warm with these cold snaps and extra cuddles. We have a very vocal classroom (lots of baby “talk”) who love to play with music. They love to clap and hear their names in a song. The 80’s song “Mickey” is perfect to clap to and change the lyrics a bit: “Hey (child’s name), you’re so sweet. I see you dancing to the beat, Hey (child’s name).”

The game of the month is “I can communicate.” Imitate my attempts to communicate with you. Repeat the sounds I make back at me. Let’s have a fun “conversation.” It’s very important for my brain to know that I can interact with you even without using words. I learn a lot about communicating when you give me a turn to “talk” and you respond to me.

February is all about friends and family. If you haven’t brought in a family photo, we encourage you to do so. We love to point out all those close to us, even when we aren’t together. Extra hugs this month!

Clownfish: (Malorie, Deanna, Chelsea, and Emory)

What a fun winter it’s been so far. This month our little clownfish will be exploring things fun in winter! We will celebrate Groundhog’s Day with a shadow party (wear the St. Paul Winter Carnival, and we will celebrate friendship on Valentine’s Day!



all
black),

Please remember to label your child’s belongings and bring outdoor gear daily, as we try to get outside on those nice days!

“Totally Toddlers”

Sea Lions: (Debbie, Deanna, and Brittany)



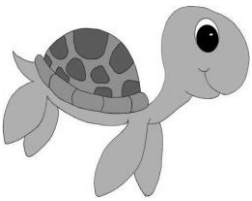
January was a fun filled month where we learned all about winter. We did lots of snow filled activities and had fun with snowballs in dramatic play. In February, we will be talking about “going to the doctor.” We will talk about what a doctor is and who you see at the doctor’s office. We will also have fun dressing up as Doctor.

We are sad to see a couple of our friends move up to Penguins (Ella & Audrina) but we are excited to meet our new friends (Vivienne & Carter). We have a lot of fun activities planned this month so please watch the calendar and thanks for your continued participation every week.

At home we encourage you to read books about doctors or shows with your favorite characters going to the doctor.

Have a great month!

Sea Turtles: (Rachel, Brittney, and Sarah)



January has been a warm and cold month. It’s sad to say but we are happy January is done and over ‘til next year. We are one month closer to spring. In January we had tons of fun with our winter pals. We got to go fishing on the ice, made igloos, made campfires, and we even camped out in the cold under the stars. We also had fun learning about the stars. Our shape of the month was a star. We started to find other stars in our room. They we were really interested in stars. We hope to continue the excitement to learn about February’s shape: a heart.

February will be filled up with love. In February we will be learning about mail. We will be mailing letters home to our loved ones. Also, in February we will be celebrating Valentine’s Day. We are going to talk about who we love and how to show our love. We will be having lots of fun sharing our love. We hope all of you can help your Turtle share the love. Please remember to check your Turtles file on a regular basis.

Things to try at home:

- Mail letters to grandparents
- Make a special card for your mail man/women
- Read books about Valentine’s Day or mail
- Find hearts in our house or around town

Stay Warm

Brittney, Rachel, and Sarah

Sea Crabs: (Laura, Myesha, and Marcianna)



February is here, and we have so many fun things planned this month! Last month we learned all about transportation. We made license plates, painted with cars, and even made stoplight treats. We put frosting on a graham cracker and put red, yellow, and green m&m’s on them to make them a stoplight.

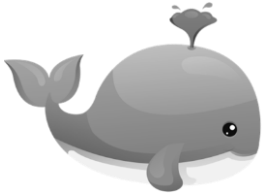
This month our theme will be Bakery Shop. We will be learning all about baking tools and yummy treats. We will be fingering painting with icing, painting with baking tools, and will be making mini raspberry pies. Our color of the month is pink, and our shape is Heart.

Things to do at home:

- Bake a cake together
- Finger paint with frosting
- Make homemade chef hats with construction paper and tissue paper

“Preschool Players”

Whales: (Megan, Patti, and Sreymao)



This February, the Whale class will be exploring life “At Sea”! Our dramatic play center will have a boat, fishing materials and an ‘ocean’. Our sensory table will include water play this month. The class can explore their different senses in the “ocean!” We will also be doing some art projects that will include painting with strawberries and toothbrushes. Valentine’s Day is coming up and we will be having a fun party to celebrate. Keep an eye out for a letter as the date approaches.

At Home:

- We are all working on independence! The class is working on putting on their own shoes and clothes, and asking for help when it is needed. Working on this at home would be an excellent way to help your child achieve some autonomy.
- To extend our theme, you could read books about sea life and take an adventure in the bathtub or sink. There your child can pretend he / she is exploring the sea.

Penguins: (Allison and Tiffany)

In January the Penguins had so much fun being “Winter Waddlers.” One thing the children really enjoyed was our snow paint. We filled spray bottles with water and food coloring and they were able to paint the snow!



learn

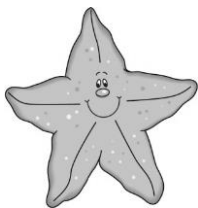
Our theme for the month of February will be “Let’s Bake Together.” The children will learn about measuring, baking, and how to use baking tools. During this unit:

- We will paint with cherries for National Cherry Month
- Dramatic play will be change into a bakery/ kitchen
- Sensory will have baking goods such as flour and cinnamon

At Home:

- Bake with the children at home
- Show your child how to use baking tools
- Set up a sensory/play area with baking goods/items

Sea Stars: (Jill, Brianna, and Giovanna)



This past month we had so much fun learning all about transportation: vehicles, road signs and safety, through art projects such as painting with cars and painting taxis, our 5-day read out loud and free play with theme toys and books. We also had fun making bird houses, sharing friendship snack and making puppets.

We said goodbye to our dear friend and teacher Aimee which was very hard for us, but we wish her the best of luck on her new adventures!

This next month’s theme is Build It Big. We will be learning about construction through free play, books, our 5-day read aloud, and art projects! We will learn about the different tools, construction vehicles, and different things construction workers can build. You can continue the theme at home by reading books, watching Bob the Builder or going to a construction site and watching the activity.

Check out our calendar for more fun activities this month!

“Pre-K Performers”

Jellyfish I: (Val and Q)



For the month of February, the theme will be Tabby Tiger’s Diner. Our dramatic play area will feature a restaurant. There the children can decide to play the different roles of people who work at restaurants. They can learn about different foods, pretend to be a cook, waiter, waitress, or cashier.

February is Black History Month. We will be learning about different cultures and being respectful to others. We will use books and music in these endeavors. The teachers encourage you to talk with your child about different cultures at home.

To further this theme at home, talk with your child about planned February activities. Talk to them about healthy foods that may be found in restaurants or at the grocery store. Also talk to them about being respectful to others. Look at the calendar for the fun activities we have planned throughout the month.

Jellyfish II: (Molly and Kathi)

In the month of February, we will be learning about the Olympics. We will be teaching the Jellyfish about how the Olympics first started, the different sports, the countries that participate, and activities that take place in the Olympics. We will also be discussing and learning about being a team player, sportsmanship, turn taking, and that it is okay to not be the first or always winning. We encourage you to watch some of the Olympics with your Jellyfish.



With February being Black History Month, we will also be learning about different Black/ African American people that have had major influence on our American culture.

February 17th is National Random Act of Kindness Day. We encourage you to help your Jellyfish to do a Random Act of Kindness and take a picture of it or write a short summary about what you all did, and we will present it to the class.

Stingrays: (Stacey, Margaret, and Ashley)

We celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day by making friendship snacks to share. In our small groups we continue to work on letter recognition, alliteration, and rhyming skills. We talked about our favorite foods, we worked on a recipe for our favorite soup and we made personal pizzas.



Next month, we will be reading and talking about various fairy tales, such as ‘The Three Little Pigs,’ ‘The Three Billy Goats Gruff,’ and ‘The Gingerbread Man.’ In the dramatic play area, the children will get to build the three different houses from the story of ‘The Three Little Pigs.’”

Please remember to bring in snow pants, boots, coat, mittens, and a hat every day for your child. We do go outside daily unless it is extremely cold outside. Please make sure that your child has a complete set of extra clothes in their basket. If your child has gone home in extra clothes, please return them.

Puffer Fish: (Becky and Mia)



January was filled with so much fun! The children enjoyed a lot of time playing outside after all of our snowfalls! Now that we are transitioning into February, we will begin our transportation/vehicle theme! A large and amazing project we will be doing towards the end of the month is a box car build. Every child will make their own car and will be able to use/sit in them during our “Drive-in” movie day!

Along with February comes Valentine’s Day! We will be having a party in our classroom. When it gets closer to that time, you will receive a note in your child’s file with all the details.

We hope to continue learning so much and have a lot of fun as a group entering our second month of 2018!

P.S. For the next couple of weeks, we will be asking for box donations for our car build. Any box that a child could comfortably sit in would be greatly appreciated. Thanks.