

St. Peter's Preschool Newsletter

January 2025



From the Director's Chair – by Rita Dai Wang

Welcome back! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday!

Registration: Before Christmas break, I sent home Registration information the 2025-2026 school year. If you would like a set and did not receive one, please let me know, and I will get one to you immediately. Here are the dates registration opens:

- 1/6 St. Peter's Church parishioners
- 1/13 Current families
- 1/20 Former families
- 1/27 General public

Our classes tend to fill up quickly, so I would encourage you to turn in your registration information before registration opens to the general public.

Referral bonus: The highest compliment our parents can pay us is the referral of family or friends. The trust that you place in us means a great deal. In appreciation, you will receive a \$50 credit off one month's tuition for every new enrollment as a result of your referral.

Developmental Assessments and Parent Conferences: The teachers will be sending home assessments for the 2's and 3's classes this coming week. The 3's will hold Parent Conferences on 1/13, and the 2's will hold Parent Conferences on 1/14. Keep an eye out for a Signup Genius coming soon. There will be no school on 1/13 for the 3's or 1/14 for the 2's. The 4's will have class both days. There will be no Extended Day on 1/13.

Road to Kindergarten: If your child is going off to kindergarten next year, check out these resources from HCPSS and Howard County Library. HCPSS also offers a Road to Kindergarten workshop that may be useful. They will be held on the following dates (see attached flyer):

- Jan 21, 2025, Hammond HS
- Jan 23, 2025, Centennial HS
- Jan 28, 2025, Wilde Lake HS
- SNOW DATE: Feb 4, 2025, Hammond HS

You may find the following resources useful as well, even though some of them have not been updated to reflect to 2025-2026 school year yet.

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/2023-road-to-kindergarten-slideshow.pdf>

<https://www.hcpss.org/enroll/kindergarten/>

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/off-to-kindergarten-guide-kids-families.pdf>

<https://www.hcpss.org/f/schools/kindergarten/off-to-kindergarten-booklet.pdf>

Dates to Remember

- 1/6 School resumes
- 1/9 Jump Bunch -4's (in school field trip)
- 1/10 Pajama Day!
- 1/13 Registration for 2025-2026 school yr opens to current families
- 1/13 3's Parent Conferences – no school for 3's, regular school for 4's
- 1/13 No Extended Day due to Parent Conferences
- 1/14 2's Parent Conferences – no school for 2's, regular school for 4's
- 1/20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – no school
- 1/24 Charcuterie Night w/Ms. Annie Fundraiser
- 1/27 Science Guys – 3's/4's (in school field trip)
- 1/28 Echoes of Nature – 2's (in school field trip)

Happy Birthday!



- 1/25 Ms. Rita
- 1/28 Blake
- 1/31 Birdie

THE BENEFITS OF BOREDOM

I've attached an article below on how being bored is actually a gift for children (even though the initial whining can feel like anything but!). It helps develop creativity, problem solving, and emotional-regulation – all skills we want kids to have as adults. The article starts off talking about summer vacation, but it is relevant all year round.

Memory Jar



A New Year Family Tradition
www.kidspostcard.com

Try this at home... The New Year is a perfect time to make new traditions and memories. Remember, it's the little things that mean the most to kids and the ones they will remember. **Make a Memory Jar:** Obtain a jar and set it in a prominent place in your home. As the year goes by, fill the jar with things you have done together (movie tickets, napkin from a wedding, brochures from places you went, etc.), and write down special events that took place (Johnny took his first steps, Susie made everyone breakfast on her own, the time milk came out of Peter's nose when he laughed so hard, etc.). Fill the jar through the year without peeking. When the year ends, sit down as a family and review these fun events.



Road to Kindergarten

Do you have a child who will be 5 years old by September 1, 2025?

Please join us for an information session about Kindergarten †
in the Howard County Public School System.

At this session you will learn:

- Expectations for school readiness (and receive a *Ready for Kindergarten* toolkit).
- Details about the HCPSS kindergarten program, website and kindergarten registration process.
- Ways that families and children can be supported during the transition to kindergarten.

**Choose a session that is convenient for you.
No registration required.**

Child care is available at each session for children ages 2 and older; the session is designed for adults only.

Large crowd anticipated; please allow ample time for parking, childcare dropoff, and check in. Doors open at 6 p.m.



**If Howard County public schools are closed for inclement weather, the session is canceled.
All sessions will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.**

Tues., January 21, 2025 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Hammond High School* 8800 Guilford Road, Columbia, 21046
Thurs., January 23, 2025 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Centennial High School** 4300 Centennial Lane, Ellicott City, 21042
Tues., January 28, 2025 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Wilde Lake High School* 5460 Trumpeter Road, Columbia, 21044
SNOW DATE** Tues., February 4, 2025 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.	Hammond High School** 8800 Guilford Road, Columbia, 21046
Snow date will only be held if one of the above sessions is canceled.	

* Spanish interpreter will be present at these sites.

** Korean, Chinese, and Spanish interpreters will be present at these sites.

† Please note, the session will include information regarding Kindergarten readiness, program components, and registration that is applicable to all HCPSS schools; specific school information and events will be shared by schools after registration is finalized.

For more information visit ...
www.hcpss.org/enroll/kindergarten/



www.facebook.com/HoCo-Schools/



@HCPSS

Or call 410-313-5693



The Benefits of Boredom

What kids can learn from handling more free time

Writer: [Gia Miller](#)

Clinical Experts: [Stephanie A. Lee, PsyD](#), [Jodi Musoff, MA, MEd](#)

From the Child Mind Institute, <https://childmind.org/article/the-benefits-of-boredom/>



By week two of summer vacation, “I’m bored” often becomes our kids’ constant refrain. Figuring out how to keep your child entertained over the summer can be a challenge. And it doesn’t help when social media makes it look like every day should resemble a Pinterest board.

But the truth is that it’s okay for kids to be bored. In fact, boredom helps kids develop valuable skills, says clinical psychologist [Stephanie Lee](#), PsyD. For starters, it helps kids build tolerance of less-than-ideal experiences. “Boredom might not be super distressing,” she explains, “but it’s not fun. Life requires us to manage our frustrations and regulate our emotions when things aren’t going our way, and boredom is a great way to teach that skill.”

Boredom also helps children develop planning strategies, problem-solving skills, flexibility and organizational skills — key abilities that children whose lives are usually highly structured may lack, adds [Jodi Musoff](#), MA, MEd, an educational specialist at the Child Mind Institute.

It’s not the boredom itself that helps children acquire these skills — it’s what they *do* with the boredom. “Typically, kids don’t plan their days, but when they work on a project to fill their time, they have to create a plan, organize their materials, and solve problems,” Musoff explains. “Developing these skills helps children better manage a variety of academic tasks, such as planning for long term assignments, and flexibility when working on group projects and social skills.”

Additionally, boredom fosters creativity, self-esteem, and original thinking. “The key is to help kids learn how to manage their boredom so they can develop independence and feel agency over their own happiness and well-being,” Dr. Lee advises.

But how can parents do that?

Tackle boredom proactively

When a child says, “I’m bored,” it could be code for a number of different things. They might be hungry, seeking attention, curious about what you’re doing, or looking for something to occupy their time.

While it’s important to consider what they’re really complaining about (and feed them if they’re hungry!), be careful about your immediate reaction. If you drop everything because they need attention, then they won’t learn how to entertain themselves. Or, if you spend time thinking of activities every time they ask, they won’t have a chance to come up with their own new ideas. “Instead of being reactive, it’s better to be proactive with your kids about their options,” notes Dr. Lee.

To get ahead of the complaints, Dr. Lee suggests setting aside some time with your child to create a list of activities they enjoy and some fun-sounding challenges or longer-term projects. Ideally, this will be a mix of your ideas and your child’s — to get the ball rolling, you can discuss what they’ve enjoyed in the past, new things they’re interested in learning and ways to use things you already have around the house. Use the list to create an activity chart (with pictures for younger children) that your child can refer to when they’re bored, instead of coming to you.

“Use this chart along with a daily schedule,” Musoff recommends. “Open-ended time is uncomfortable for many kids, so let them know the daily plans and the length of time they’re expected to engage with one of the activities on their menu. It will assure them that they’re not endlessly on their own, help them stay on task and provide them with an example of how to structure their time so that they can eventually do it independently.”

For younger children, an activity chart could include:

- Teddy bear breakfast or picnic
- Bug or nature hunt
- Build and play in a fort
- Legos or other building toys
- Puzzles
- Coloring or craft project
- Call a relative

For older children and teens, consider:

- Board games
- Drawing or other art projects
- Read a book from a favorite series
- Start a garden or another outdoor project
- Create a podcast or website
- Learn a TikTok dance
- Work on sports skills

By doing the work in advance, you can break the cycle of spending time problem-solving when your child has free time. “When they tell you they’re bored, redirect them to the menu,” says Dr. Lee. “Over time, you’ll be able to remove yourself from the process and begin to reward and praise your kids when they find something to do independently.”

Beware attention-seeking

Often, when children refuse every idea, it isn’t because they don’t like their options — it’s because they want your attention. The longer they can engage you in a discussion about what to do, the longer they have your attention. Giving your child attention often functions as a reward, so having the long discussion encourages your child *not* to deal with their own boredom — the opposite of what you’re going for.

If your child resists picking an activity on their own, you might need to spend a bit more time redirecting them, but Dr. Lee recommends keeping that conversation short and to the point. “Give them two choices and ask them to pick one,” she suggests. “And if they don’t like either of those, suggest they pick something different. But, if they don’t pick something different within the next five minutes, then you’ll pick for them. Then clarify when you will be available to give them attention and stop responding their request for a never-ending list of options.”

Encourage creativity

Thinking creatively is key to beating boredom, but the inability to plan and follow through sometimes gets in the way. For example, while a cardboard box can inspire creativity at any age, Musoff says some kids might not even know where to begin. If that’s the case, you’ll need to teach them how to plan out each step and help them develop problem-solving skills. Ask them what they’re going to do first, what materials they’ll need and what steps they’re going to take. Other kids may need a little push to start thinking outside the box.

For young children who are stuck playing with their toys the same way each time, you might spend some time showing them how to think differently. Instead of building the same tower, you could pull out the farm animals. Ask them to build a zoo with an area for each animal. Do some animals need bigger spaces? Could certain animals live together? You can do the same thing with craft supplies or dress-up clothes. Mixing up supplies that don’t usually go together is often a great way to jumpstart creativity.

For older children, give them open-ended tasks (projects that can be done in multiple ways and have more than one possible outcome) to help them build problem-solving skills. For example, creating a scavenger hunt involves developing a theme, planning a route, hiding items, writing clues and determining a prize. Tech-savvy kids can dig into the many different steps of building their own website or podcast. Or, hand them a box filled with old clothing, leftover materials from DIY projects, or broken electronics. Challenge them to create a story using the items, build something useful, repurpose each piece, etc. They may stumble upon a new passion or build self-esteem by solving problems that seemed impossible.

You can also encourage kids to get creative with friends whom they might not be able to see in person. Maybe they can trade off writing pages of a story through a Google Doc, or have a video call while they work on a craft or cooking project at the same time.

Be realistic

No matter how proactive you are, your activity menu won't fill your child's time for the entire day. To figure out how long you can expect them to play independently, think about how long your child can sit still in a classroom — circle time in preschool is about 15 minutes, while a middle school class is 50 minutes — and their usual activity level. Very active children may need a break every 20 minutes to run around outside, while others have no trouble sitting still for two hours.

"It's harder for children with ADHD to occupy themselves for long periods of time because their attention and focus are compromised," Dr. Lee explains. "Plus, activities quickly lose their novelty, so their enthusiasm for an activity menu won't last too long."

You'll eventually learn how long your child is able to keep busy on their own. Check in before that time is up and reward good behavior so they feel proud of accomplishing something on their own. Rewards could include praise, earning points towards a fun activity together, having a water gun fight, or even time on electronics.

Embrace failure

You'll also need to help your child embrace failure — another benefit of boredom. Inevitably, a project won't go as planned, but failing and then taking a different approach is extremely important. "Failure builds frustration tolerance, perseverance, and grit," Musoff says. "We need to help them destigmatize failure as something terrible."

You can put a positive spin on it by asking them what worked and what didn't. If your child needs to learn how to stick with something, encourage them to keep trying. If they need to learn how to be more flexible, help them create a different project with their materials.

Respond to boredom with excitement

Helping your children view boredom as an opportunity to *do* something will benefit both of you. They'll try new activities, develop better frustration tolerance, learn how to take initiative and entertain themselves, acquire planning strategies and problem-solving skills, build perseverance, increase confidence and get to know themselves better. Plus, you'll hear fewer complaints and have more time to yourself. The next time your child says, "I'm bored," respond with, "That's great! I can't wait to see what you'll do!"

Winter Scavenger Hunt

To Find



Twig



Pine Needle



Pine Cone



Moss

To Look For



Animal Tracks



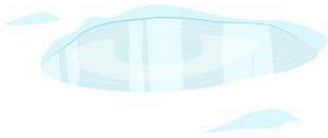
A Bird Flying



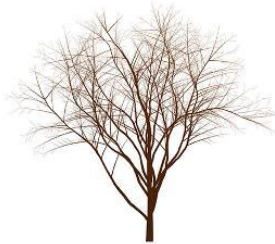
Clouds



Berries



A Frozen Puddle



A Tree That Has
Lost Its Leaves



An Evergreen
Tree



An Icicle



Winter Scavenger Hunt

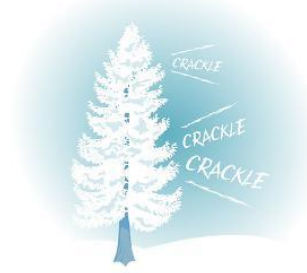
To Listen For



Birds Chirping



The Wind



A Frozen Tree
Crackling



Water Dripping
From A Branch

To Smell



Bark



Cedar



Snow



Pine

To Feel



Chilly Cheeks



Tree Bark



Ice



Snowflakes On
Your Face