



#### MARCH BIRTHDAYS:

2nd -- Avery J.  
3rd -- Colin C.  
5th -- Calvin H.  
6th -- Will P.  
8th -- Landon D.  
10th -- Lachlan D.  
16th -- Miss Donna K.  
18th -- Alexis F.  
19th -- Miss Bailey  
20th -- Jack B.  
22nd -- Kellyn S.  
24th -- Keira T.  
26th -- Miss Rachel  
29th -- Dakota M.



## Things You Should Know About Play

Kid Country is a strong proponent of play-based curriculum in early childhood education. The curriculum we follow, Creative Curriculum, supports our beliefs and helps guide our teachers on how to broaden children's learning during their own play. Another strong proponent of play-based early childhood education is the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This association has been the "benchmark" for quality early childhood education as long as Kid Country has been open! They are a great resource for our teachers, and this month I thought I would share parts of an article I came across that is directed to parents. The article is written by Laurel Bongiorno and is entitled "Things Every Parent Should Know About Play."

First and foremost, Ms. Bongiorno reminds us that "**children learn through their play.** Don't underestimate the value of play. Children learn and develop: cognitive skills – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store; physical abilities – like balancing blocks and running on the playground; new vocabulary – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs; social skills – like playing together in a pretend car wash; and literacy skills – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant."

**"Play is healthy and helps reduce stress!** Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today. Play can also help your children grow emotionally. It is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

**Play is more than meets the eye.** Play is simple and complex. There are many types of play: symbolic, sociodramatic,

functional, and games with rules—to name just a few. Researchers study play's many aspects: how children learn through play, how outdoor play impacts children's health, the effects of screen time on play, to the need for recess in the school day."

As a parent, Ms. Bongiorno reminds you to **make time for play.** "As parents, you are the biggest supporters of your children's learning. You can make sure they have as much time to play as possible during the day to promote cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development."

She also reminds us that **play and learning go hand-in-hand.** "They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child's lab."

Lastly, "remember that **play is a child's context for learning.** Children practice and reinforce their learning in multiple areas during play. It gives them a place and a time for learning that cannot be achieved through completing a worksheet. For example, in playing restaurant, children write and draw menus, set prices, take orders, and make out checks. Play provides rich learning opportunities and leads to children's success and self-esteem."

My advice to you is to take time to **JOIN** your child in play – extend their learning by asking open ended questions such as "what do you think will happen if you add another block to your tower?" or "what will happen if we roll the ball up the hill?". Who knows, maybe engaging in play with your child will help reduce your stress as well!

*Donna*

# Blue Gills

This month the Blue Gill children picked the best study ever. They wanted to learn about their favorite books and nursery rhyme stories. Through repeated exposure of stories, children begin to recognize letters and sounds, develop the ability to pick out simple sight words, and learn left to right progression. Because children benefit most by becoming actively involved with the stories that are read, we used multiple avenues to enhance their learning.

After each story we read, we incorporated a discussion group of questions to promote higher level thinking and reading comprehension skills. Our favorite books were predictable rhyming books. The children were able to figure out and help read the stories because of the way the text was written.

We also had a great time in the beginning of the month as we made predictions on whether Punxsutawney Phil would see his shadow or not. We were all rooting for an early spring, but this year Phil disappointed us! Although you wouldn't be able to tell with the warmer weather we are experiencing, but that is what transpired.

Valentine's Day brought out the love and friendship in the Gills room more than usual. We made a circle of friends, traced hearts, passed out Valentine's to our friends, and took time to tell a friend what makes them special at circle time.

The best part of the whole month was our trip to Laraway Lanes. Being able to work our large muscles after being stuck inside all winter was a treat! We had a lot of fun working on our balance and upper torso muscles as we rolled our way to strikes, splits,

and spares!

As our month came to an end, we started a new study of Ocean Life. The children dove right in and things are going swimmingly as we find out about the mysteries of the deep. We are so very excited about all we are learning right now! Ms. Rhonda, Ms. Jenna, and Ms. Wendy

## Kid Calendar



Saturday, 3/3  
Monday, 3/5  
Thursday, 3/8  
Monday, 3/19  
Week of 3/26

Manhattan's Irish Fest  
**CLOSED** Inservice Day  
Hearing & Vision Screening  
Library Day  
Blue Gills Program Closed  
Manhattan School Spring Break

# PURPLE PARROTS

Things have changed a lot this month in the Purple Parrot's classroom as many of the children are beginning to engage in

meaningful role play. During the day the children can be found participating in activities like kitchen or building blocks. As children develop, they advance from 25 to 30 second exploration to engaging in longer more complex play, often ranging between 2 to 5 minutes.

The Parrots tend to start their free play off in the dramatic play area. It

is here that they enjoy putting a pot of noodles on the stove top or setting the table to feed their friends and teachers. The children also take full advantage of the variety of dress up clothes available to them. By participating in this type of play, children are gaining social skills, practicing both fine and gross motor skills, problem solving, and gaining strength in self-help skills.

Another area that the children are spending more time in is the block area. The children have expanded their imaginations past just building towers and have now created more complex buildings like garages and barns. As the children build these

different structures, they are beginning to make different connections and add toy animals to the barns or toy cars to the garages. Making these connections marks off another great milestone for the toddlers. During this type of play, the children are strengthening the muscles in their fingers and hands, working together, and strengthening hand eye coordination. While advancing developmentally, they are also beginning to engage with one another. Many children have begun to seek out preferred playmates and sustain several back and forth conversations. This is also a huge milestone

for the children in the Purple Parrots Room. We have grown so much this month and will continue to learn and grow next month! Miss Kim, Miss Pam, Miss Kathy, Miss Marisa and Miss Danni



# GREEN FROGS

As February approached us, the Green Frogs began their exotic imaginary adventure as we ventured off into the depths of the warm jungle! We began our circle time discussions by incorporating group partnerships as we absorbed the information about the jungle's habitat and vegetation. The classroom jungle began to grow with large paper trees that were created by teams of students. They worked together by twisting, scissoring and scrunching paper with their hands to form the trees themselves. More fine motor scissoring was exercised as everyone cut many green strips and abstract leaves out of paper to create the greenery of the trees.

As more knowledge of facts were discussed during circle time, the more our imaginations seemed to soar as we wanted to learn more and in-depth of what else the jungle had to offer. We used our creativity and decision making skills as we completed some of the many beautiful flowers and foliage. By choosing a color along with shape and size, each student created their own colorful flower out of different paper and art materials. These were all placed inside our classroom jungle grounds. The next information we were very eager to obtain, was the animal the gorilla. We were introduced to a multistep activity that had many parts involved to create own paper gorilla. Shapes were traced, cut out and assembled by the students to create their own gorilla. Final embellishments were added, such as small pieces of tissue paper, accordion folded paper arms and legs, and a writing utensil to complete the gorilla's face!

A new artistic concept was introduced to the classroom as we created colorful butterflies. We discussed and demonstrated the visual of symmetry. By painting one half of a butterfly's body, then folding it in half,

we were able to reveal the cause of effect of symmetry. Some of us attempted to create symmetry by using tissue paper and placing each piece onto our butterflies using a one-on-one correspondence.

As February came and went like a flash, we are very excited and eager to see what March will bring us. We plan continue to explore our imaginary jungle and expand its colorful brilliance!

Miss Fran, Miss Jessica, Miss Courtney and Miss Wendy

# Blue Dolphins

The Blue Dolphins have been working on indoor games such as trivia, hangman and 21 questions. The children continue experimenting with some team challenge games. For one challenge, we used puzzles and for another we used spaghetti noodles, marshmallows and some masking tape to create a tower. It was definitely a challenge, but they children agreed it was a fun idea and they enjoyed working together.

For Valentine's Day the Dolphins had a special afternoon snack – delicious ice cream sundaes! It was nice spending some social time with many of our friends and chatting a bit about caring, sharing, friendships and our day.

Looking forward to some warmer weather soon and the arrival of spring. Miss Donna, Miss Rhonda, Miss Wendy and Miss Jenna



# YELLOW DUCKS

The Yellow Ducks classroom was filled with copious amounts of love this month! The babies enjoyed a variety of festive Valentine's Day decorations around the classroom and also plenty of Valentine's Day crafts! The babies created many pieces of heart shaped artwork that was hung throughout the classroom. These crafts included coffee filter hearts, mugs with "love bugs" on them, and heart cutout paintings that were hung proudly in the hallway.

All of the activities that the babies participated in and created strengthened their fine motor skills as well as improved their hand-eye coordination. Hand-eye coordination is the coordinated control of eye movement with hand movement. When the teachers work on this type of coordination in the Yellow Ducks room, they focus primarily on reaching and grasping and the manipulation of certain objects. The ducks teachers will set up a variety of different objects such as markers, blocks, balls, books and much more for the babies to grab with their hands and manipulate with both their hands and mouth. During the first year of life, babies discover objects with their mouth. This is an important role in their development as they explore the world and discover it as well.

All in the all, the month of February kept the babies busy with love filled activities and plenty of development with their hand-eye coordination. As the months progress, we will continue to fill the room with many colors and artwork for the babies to view.

Miss Krista, Miss Hailey and Miss Nyjha

# ORANGE RED ROBINS OWLS

Though February was short, it was full of much excitement! We began the month with a trek to the African Planes. With this we were able to explore not only the various wildlife and terrain but the inhabitants and their culture.

Our favorite project associated with this study was when we created our Maasai necklaces. We were able to use vivid colors and patterns to match the different tribes all while learning what each color represents. Just as we see different color combinations and meanings in our culture, we can see similarities throughout theirs as well. Such as blue for the sky and water, green for the grass and crops, and yellow for happiness and friendship. As a class, we learned a new African Board Game that taught us how simple can be fun and how even though there may not be many resources around, we can always find a way to come together.

After celebrating Valentine's day filled with friendship and comradery, we then blasted off into Outer Space! The Owls really took a liking to this as we discussed why astronauts and scientist are important, what gravity is and how it is different in space, and of course all about the planets! While some of us are rather partial to Earth, some of the Owls were having second thoughts about what their favorite planet was after hearing all the out of this world facts about our Solar System! We are not quite done with our space journey yet, as we will continue to fly deeper into the galaxy! Miss Bailey, Miss Rachel, Miss Melissa and Miss Madison



The month of February brought lots of new things to the Red Robin Room. We started off the month by talking about Groundhogs Day. We talked about our shadows and went on a shadow hunt. We



made our own groundhogs and tried to predict if the groundhog will see his shadow. After Groundhogs Day we started gearing up for Valentine's Day. The teachers in the Red Robins

room decided that it would be a great time to start name recognition and we did a heart name scramble. Each child was given his/her name written on hearts. Then the teachers walked the child through each letter in their name, then the children were able to put the hearts on the paper in any order they wanted. The objective of this activity was to get each child to recognize at least the first letter of their name. The Red Robins loved it and their artwork came out very cute.

We also explored different ways to create artwork by making our own lovebugs and using pipe cleaners for the legs. The Red Robin children came up with some very creative lovebugs and had a blast

using pipe cleaners to help their creatures come to life on the page. This month the Red Robin class also started some self-help skills

during meal times. The children are starting to get their own portions of the easier to scoop snacks like pretzels and fruit. We hope to keep expanding on this skill and have the Red Robins able to serve themselves without using their fingers or other hands. Any practice at home will greatly increase our chances of success at mastering this new skill!

The Red Robins are super excited to start our next study on the book "Chicka Chicka Boom Boom." During the month of March, you will see the Red Robin classroom and the artwork that the children are doing will coincide with the book and learning what letters look like.

As the weather warms up the Red Robins will go outside any chance we get.



This past month we managed to get outside once and enjoy a snowy walk. The Red Robins will go outside any day the weather cooperates, so please make sure that

your children are dressed appropriately every day. The Red Robins had a blast in February and we can't wait to see what fun March will bring! Miss Emily, Miss Holly, Miss Leslie, and Miss Madison

