



**The Alliance**  
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



**EARLY CHILDHOOD** The Newsletter of The Alliance for Early Childhood

FALL/WINTER 2015

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**Making Sense of Math:  
Preparing our Children to Love Mathematics!**

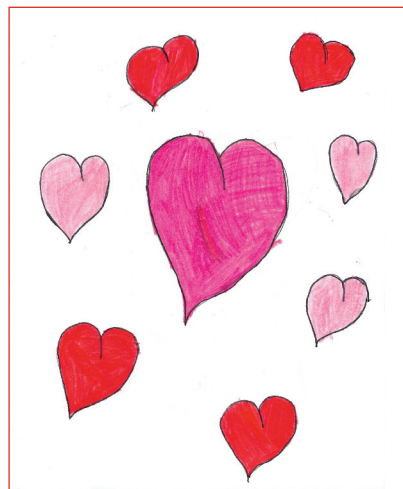
BY JENNIFER S. MCCRAY, PH.D

*Jennifer McCray, Ph.D., is an assistant research scientist and the director of the Early Math Collaborative at Erikson Institute, a graduate school in child development. The Collaborative provides professional development in mathematics to PreK-3rd grade teachers nationally, conducts research on the teaching and learning of early math, and was recently awarded a prestigious National Science Foundation grant to develop an intervention for Head Start centers.*

Most of us probably have a good idea what to do to help prepare our young children to become literate. Making sure children's books are available (at home, at the library), reading books to our children and talking with them about those books, and encouraging our children to "read" on their own (whatever their current ability level) are excellent ways to help develop an identity as a "reader." By focusing our interactions on the usefulness and pleasure of reading, we send a clear message about the importance of reading in our own lives, and help motivate our children when the time comes to develop and apply more complex skills. But is there a similar role for parents when it comes to mathematics? The answer is an emphatic yes.

There are many things we can do to help prepare our young children to enjoy mathematics, though unfortunately, they are not as obvious. Perhaps because some of us adults think of math as writing equations and getting right answers, we don't consider it a developmentally appropriate activity for preschool children. There is also a competing notion that the only math inputs young children need are blocks, beads, and other manipulatives.

Unfortunately, both these erroneous ideas suggest there is no useful role for adults in the math-related learning of their young children.



So before we can talk about what it is that we can and should do to help our children be ready for math in school, we need to come to an adjusted understanding of what math learning for young children really is. Accordingly, this article begins by doing some "myth-busting." By re-imagining math, just a little, it may become easier for us to help our young children become excited and joyful students of mathematics.

**Myths and Realities of Mathematics**


**MYTH #1:** Math is all around us, and so young children learn math from interacting with the environment.


**REALITY #1:** Math can be seen in the world around us, but it is a cultural invention that took humans thousands of years to develop, so young children need assistance to understand it.


# ALLIANCE 2015 – 2016 EVENTS

Symbol Key: Parent  Educator  Family  Parent & Educator 


## NOVEMBER 2015


 **Preschool Directors Roundtable.**  
Thursday, November 5, 9:30-11:30am, Winnetka Covenant Preschool, Winnetka. Preschool directors of The Alliance's member schools convene seven times annually in order to talk with one another about matters of common concern, tour others' schools, and discuss different early childhood philosophies.


 **American Red Cross Babysitting Course.**  
Friday, November 6, 9:00am-3:30pm.  
Junior high students learn how to be effective and competent babysitters through this course, facilitated by Stephanie Figlioli, PT.


 **Sensory Needs in Preschool and the Early Elementary Years.**  
Tuesday, November 10, 8:00-9:00pm, Live Webinar.  
Challenges with sensory processing can cause a variety of issues for young children both in and out of the school setting. This webinar for parents and educators will explain the main areas of sensory processing, how challenges in these areas can manifest day-to-day and solutions for meeting the sensory needs of the child.

## JANUARY 2016

 **American Red Cross Babysitting Course.**  
Monday, January 18, 9:00am-3:30pm.


 **ScreenBreak Drawing Contest Entries Due.**  
Monday, January 18.  
Children in 8th grade and under are invited to submit drawings to The Alliance's annual ScreenBreak Drawing Contest. All winners are honored at the ScreenBreak Kick-Off Event and all entries will be displayed during ScreenBreak Week at the Winnetka Public Library.

 **26th Annual Networking Dinner.**  
Thursday, January 21, 5-7:30pm, Church of the Holy Comforter, Kenilworth.  
Administrators, teachers, and other professionals who work with young children are invited to dine and listen to Dr. Marcy Guddemi, Executive Director of the Gesell Institute of Child Development.

 **Parenting in the 21st Century: What Current Research Tells Us Is Most Important.** Friday, January 22, 9:30-11am, Church of the Holy Comforter, Kenilworth.  
Dr. Marcy Guddemi, Executive Director of Yale's Gesell Institute of Child Development, will share the latest research on how children develop and how this informs today's parenting.

 **Preschool Directors Roundtable.** Thursday, January 28, 12:30-2:30pm, Winnetka Public School Nursery, Winnetka.


## FEBRUARY 2016


 **Preschool-Kindergarten Summit.** Thursday, February 11, 9am-2:30pm, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe.  
Preschool and kindergarten teachers and administrators in New Trier Township are invited to this first annual event to learn

about the latest research relevant to young children and to facilitate positive transitions from preschool to kindergarten.


 **Preschool Directors Roundtable.** Thursday, February 18, 9:30-11:30am, Harkness House for Children, Winnetka.

## MARCH 2016

 **22nd Annual ScreenBreak.**  
Sunday, March 6 through Saturday, March 12.  
Children and their families are encouraged to turn off all screens for a week, and enjoy alternative activities at home or at events coordinated throughout the community.

 **ScreenBreak Kick-Off Event.**  
Sunday, March 6.  
Come celebrate the kick-off of ScreenBreak Week with a special program geared to families hosted by The Alliance.

 **Preschool Directors Roundtable.** Thursday, March 17, 12:30-2:30pm, Glencoe Park District, Glencoe.


 **Biennial Preschool Survey Results Published.**  
Thursday, March 17.  
Alliance member schools are eligible to participate in and receive results from the biennial preschool survey that investigates salaries, benefits, registration procedures, and more.

## APRIL 2016


 **Early Childhood Newsletter.**  
Distributed the week of Monday, April 18.

 **Preschool Directors Roundtable.**  
Friday, April 22, 9:30-11:30am, French School, Winnetka.

 **American Red Cross Babysitting Course.**  
Friday, April 22, 9:00am-3:30pm.

 **Transition to Kindergarten Meeting.**  
Thursday, April 28, 9:30-10:30am, Skokie School, Winnetka.  
Parents of incoming kindergarten students and families who are new to District 36 learn about the District's history and philosophy, as well as what to expect during the kindergarten year.

## MAY 2016

 **Inspiring Nature Play Conference.**  
Wednesday, May 4, 9:00am-3:30pm, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe.

Join this unique professional development event to gain new ideas for nature play for young children at hands-on activity stations and workshops. Organized by The Alliance and the Chicago Botanic Garden.



# Don't Leave Me!

## Easing Normal Separation Anxiety in Young Children

BY LAURA PELESCHAK, M.S.

*Laura Peleschak is a freelance educator and consultant with a M.S. in Early Childhood Development from the Erikson Institute. She consults for Simple Solutions Educational Services regarding social and emotional development and challenging behavior for early care and education organizations. Previously, she taught young children in museums, preschool, and daycare. She is the mother of a toddler and a newborn.*

Separation anxiety, a young child's distress at being apart from a parent, is a normal part of early childhood. It indicates the child recognizes a parent as an important person who provides comfort, protection, and general care. In the most primitive sense, it is the child's instinctual need to stay close to a parent to avoid danger and ensure survival. Around 7-9 months, the first inklings of separation anxiety

emerge as infants begin to understand their caregiver as a physically separate body. It is no accident that this occurs once infants move (i.e., rolling, sitting up, crawling), and thus they need reassurance while exploring the world on their

own. Around 12-18 months, separation anxiety often intensifies with the advent of walking. Between 3-5 years old, many children enter formalized education programs without their parent; children who attended early care may transition to a new classroom or school. Children must learn new faces and routines, making the world seem unpredictable and triggering separation anxiety. During 5-8 years old, significant experiences include formalized schooling, friendships, and more responsibilities with higher expectations. Separation anxiety may stem from these heightened expectations, such as making friends, completing homework and chores, and participating in extracurricular activities and competition.

Separation anxiety allows young children to practice coping strategies, which are a lifelong tool. It is an internal conflict between reliance and independence that the child must overcome with the help of a caregiver. There is a tendency to think something is wrong with children who experience difficult separations. On the contrary, often children need different supports from their caregiver and environment to manage this normal developmental experience. So what can be done about it?

### Strategies for Caregivers

- Reflection: Reflect on your response to your child's anxiety.

How do you feel when your child is anxious, and why? What are your beliefs about separation between caregivers and children, and why? Children observe caregivers' expressions for cues as to whether they will be okay. A calm approach may alleviate anxiety more effectively than being upset about

your child's behavior. Understanding your own emotions helps better control them.

- Routines: Establish consistent routines, which allow children to anticipate when separations may occur, thus providing a sense of control where they may feel none. Offer verbal

reminders such as, "After breakfast, we'll drive to school and hug goodbye." Visual reminders may be useful (especially for younger children's limited memory skills), such as a picture checklist of events before separation. Consider a separation and reunification routine (i.e., separate with a hug and three kisses; reunite with a hug and high-five). This gives a start and end point for separations, and may satisfy the need to anticipate.

- Plan ahead: This depends upon your specific routines and when separation anxiety emerges. Is leaving home difficult because your child knows you will separate soon? Consider prepping long before the separation (i.e., pack lunches the night before). Involve your children in preparations to the best of their abilities. Then spend the extra time being close together before the separation, doing whatever helps your child feel connected to you, which may foster a sense of security.

- Fulfill basic needs: Separation anxiety is heightened when young children are tired, hungry or not otherwise feeling well (i.e., teething). Prepare best you can by ensuring your child is rested, fed, and in good health. If you are unable to meet these needs (i.e., your sick child must stay with a sitter



*Paul Sweetow is a licensed psychotherapist with a practice in Winnetka. In addition to his psychotherapy work, Paul is a world karate champion and blends karate and therapy at his school in Winnetka. More information is available at [www.PaulSweetow.com](http://www.PaulSweetow.com).*

Question

Our children are in preschool, with one entering kindergarten next year. We strongly believe they need to move and learn through play at this age, and we work to give them those opportunities. With real school on the horizon, my husband and I are starting to talk about whether we need to establish a basic schedule of “school-work” before playtime. We do some at-home “schoolwork,” but I have never regimented about when and how long they “work” on these educational activities. We know kindergarten in our District has homework and projects, so should we begin now to help her establish the pattern and be comfortable with work before play? And if so, what is an appropriate expectation for us as parents?

- Reluctant Time Cops

Answer

Dear Reluctant Time Cops:  
I absolutely love your question and wish all parents would consider this issue for their young children. When my son was about that age, I too wanted to help him balance academic success with a healthy life. I did not, however, want to create a homework schedule that I would constantly have to enforce. The first thing that I did was to begin with the end in mind. That is, what did I want for him at the end of high school as I send him off to an independent life in college? My answer was simple and obvious: I wanted him to have an autonomous and confident life as a student. I wanted Jacob to feel that he could sit in any class and learn the material.

I’ll skip ahead about ten years as he enters his senior year in high school. Regarding academics, he is very successful, and, looking back, the most

productive thing that I did was to get out of his way. I may have used an unconventional parenting strategy, but it worked, and it has also worked with most of the families that I counsel regarding this issue.

Here was the conversation that I had with him: “Jacob, would you like me to tell you when you need to do your homework every day?” “No, Dad.”

“Jacob, would you like me to tell you when to turn off the screen and get to work?” “No, Dad.”

“Okay, great. So here is the deal. If you promise to do your very best in school, I promise to let you set your own schedule. How does that sound?” “Great, Dad.”

“And, if you choose not to do your homework then all you need to do is go to school and tell your teacher that you chose not to do it.” “Really, Dad?”

“If you ever need help from me or your mom, all you need to do is ask.” “Okay, Dad.”

“I’ll let you be independent, just like a grown up. You get to choose what kind of student you want to be. You may find that some days will take a lot of work and others will take less. So do we have a deal?” “For sure, Dad!”

And that was essentially our conversation. From my end, I had to stick with the agreement on the days that he seemed lazy or did not want to work. I gave him independence at an early age and fostered the belief that he can drive his own success and make necessary adjustments when needed. Finally, I

got out of his way, not only when he was successful, but also when he made mistakes and missed assignments.

Many parents worry about their child’s learning challenges and feel that if they leave their child alone, he will unravel and fail. Even in these situations, I still strongly encourage parents to begin with the end in mind and foster independence.

Is there ever a time when a parent needs to hover, review homework, set strict limits on screens, hire tutors and so on? Yes, if your child is only focused on immediate gratification, has no long-term vision, or has learning issues, then you should. Remember that your parenting goal is help your child develop his ability to succeed academically on his own to best navigate to college.

Question

I have heard of the idea of family meetings. Can you give ideas on how to facilitate these conversations?

- Wondering in Wilmette

Answer

Dear Wondering in Wilmette:  
Family meetings are wonderful for addressing important family issues and to facilitate an uninterrupted time for communication. They also become another way to connect your family and build a lasting tradition. A family meeting is structured like this:

- Have a consistent, weekly specific time and place.
- Start every meeting with an opening ritual. You can read the family mission

Have a question you would like addressed? Submit it to [lsullivan@TheAllianceForEC.org](mailto:lsullivan@TheAllianceForEC.org).



# Sign Me Up! Or Not: Making Choices for Children's Time

BY ALLISON GREER, M.A.

*Allison Greer holds a M.A. in Educational Psychology from the University of Colorado at Denver. She has taught in the Winnetka Public Schools for ten years. Allison has supervised early childhood student teachers at National Louis University and served as a teacher-in-residence at the Center for Elementary Math and Science Education at the University of Chicago. She is currently a math facilitator at Crow Island School. Allison lives in Evanston, IL with her two daughters, ages 9 and 6.*

It was 9:05 on Saturday morning and my three-year-old daughter was humming Tchaikovsky's *The Waltz of the Flowers* and nibbling Cheerios while I stuffed her wiggly toes into pink ballet tights. I gave a final tug to her leotard and asked her to put on her shoes quickly while I found my keys. She mindlessly lifted one shoe, set it down again, and began to quiz me about the finer plot points of *The Nutcracker* ballet.

"Not, now," I said, watching the clock edge closer to the start time of her 9:15 class. "We're going to be late for ballet." She put one toe in her shoe and started in on a question about the *Mouse King*. "Let's go!" I urged, scooping up both her and her shoes.

As I hurried out the door, my husband, eager for the slower pace of a weekend morning, called from behind me, "Why are we doing this anyway?" "Because," I shouted back, "She needs to take ballet! And there's a recital!"

Taking ballet started because of my daughter's obsession with *The Nutcracker*. When we played the music, she leapt around the living room and asked her dad to lift her over his head. She acted out the story, created her own costumes and props, and invited others to join her. I felt we should help her follow her passion. Who knew? Maybe dance would be her "thing." She'd be athletic and artistic, and think of how many doors that would open?

After struggling to buckle the car seat, I took a few deep breaths. Then I wondered why I had created this Saturday morning rush, when what my daughter needed was already happening at home.

## What Children Really Need

As an early childhood teacher, I recalled that my daughter was working on the most fundamental aspects of her development without leaving the house: exploring a topic in-depth, communicating her thinking, formulating questions, sequencing events, expressing herself through art, developing creativity, connecting

socially, and fostering self-efficacy (by putting on her own shoes... if I had let her). I knew these skills were central to all other learning she would do in life. Ballet class was not devoid of some of this same learning, but it also wasn't necessary.



Despite knowing this, I had fallen victim to a common trap of modern parenting: the belief that young children need formal experiences for long-term success.

In no other time in history, have there been so many opportunities for young children. From academic apps for babies to an exhaustive list of classes and activities for preschoolers, it is easy to believe that we can set our children up for success

through our choices for them. However, often these formal experiences are counter-productive to what young children need most. In fact, our over-scheduled children are experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression (Mason, 2015).

We are confronted with so many choices for our children. Here are some factors to keep in mind when planning their time.

## Boredom

Many parents feel inclined to choose structured activities over free time in an effort to keep their children safe and stimulated. Boredom can be uncomfortable for parents and children, so parents work to avoid it. However, when children decide how they will spend their time they develop coping skills, competence, a sense of what they enjoy doing (Ginsberg, 2011, p. 51). Research further suggests that children who plan their own experiences show greater long-term gains in the form of non-cognitive skills (Schweinhart, et al., 2005, Tough, P., 2012). Beyond that, boredom is a precursor to creative learning (Payne, 2010, p. 142).

- Try to preserve long blocks of time in your child's day and week when nothing is scheduled for them or seek childcare situations within which children direct much of their own time.

Continued on page 11

## Early Childhood Community Calendar

There is a great deal going on in our community for parents and educators of young children! For full descriptions of many of these activities and events, as well as additional listings, please visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org/earlychildhoodcalendar.php](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org/earlychildhoodcalendar.php).

### ONGOING

**Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminars in Chicago, Evanston, Lake Bluff, Naperville and Palatine. Saturdays in fall 2015, winter and spring 2016. For more information, visit [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**French School Admissions.** The French School is a total French immersion preschool/kindergarten. Application deadline for the 2016-17 school year is December 1st, 2015.

**Northfield Park District.** Outdoor Ice at Clarkson Park. [www.northfieldparkdistrict.org](http://www.northfieldparkdistrict.org)

**Ronald Knox Montessori School (RKMS).** Ongoing registration. Visit [www.ronaldknox.org](http://www.ronaldknox.org) or contact Anita McGing at [anita\\_mcging@ronaldknox.org](mailto:anita_mcging@ronaldknox.org) or (847) 256-2922, ext. 19.

**The Volunteer Center.** Openings now! Contact The Volunteer Center if you're interested in pursuing membership on the VC's board of directors. Barb Tubekis, [info@volunteercenter-helps.org](mailto:info@volunteercenter-helps.org).

**Willow Wood Preschool.** Registration for the 2016-17 school year will begin in January 2016. Visit [willowwood-preschool.org](http://willowwood-preschool.org) or contact registrar at (847) 441-6393 or [willowwoodregistrar@gmail.com](mailto:willowwoodregistrar@gmail.com).

**Winnetka Community House.** The Ceramics Studio has many classes for children ages 3 and up. Classes run year round! Register online at [www.winnetkacommunityhouse.org](http://www.winnetkacommunityhouse.org).

**Winnetka Community House.** Showcase Events - Family Friendly Entertainment on various "No School" days throughout the year. 1/18/16 & 2/15/16 at 10am. \$7/person.

**Winnetka Covenant Preschool.** Ongoing registration for the 2015-16 & 2016-17 school years. Contact Mary Sue Reese at [wccpdirector@gmail.com](mailto:wccpdirector@gmail.com) or [winnetkacovenant-preschool.com](http://winnetkacovenant-preschool.com).

**Winnetka Covenant Preschool Baby & Toddler Playgroup.** Drop-in Thursdays, 9-11:30am. Visit [www.winnetkacovenantpreschool.com/babyand-toddler-playgroup.html](http://www.winnetkacovenantpreschool.com/babyand-toddler-playgroup.html).

### OCTOBER 2015

**23 Northfield Park District.** Boo Bash. 6-7:30pm. Northfield Community Center.

**23 Winnetka Park District.** Pumpkins on the Beach. 5-7:30pm. Registration: (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**24 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Parent Discussion Group. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**24 The Volunteer Center.** Make a Difference Day. 9am-noon. Visit [www.VolunteerCenter-Helps.org](http://www.VolunteerCenter-Helps.org) or [info@VolunteerCenterHelps.org](mailto:info@VolunteerCenterHelps.org).

**24 Winnetka Park District.** Pumpkin Carving. 10am or 1pm. (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**30 Winnetka Community House.** 100th Annual Haunted House. 7-9pm. \$5/person single visit.

**30 Winnetka Community House.** "Not So Scary" Haunted House. 10am-2pm. 10 and under.

**30 Winnetka Community House.** Halloween Party. 6-8pm. \$5/person.

**31 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

### NOVEMBER 2015

**1 All Things Bright & Beautiful.** Registration forms available for the 2016-17 school year & Kindergarten Drama Class. Contact Mary Johnson, [mrjohnson@holyccomforter.org](mailto:mrjohnson@holyccomforter.org) or [www.holyccomforter.org](http://www.holyccomforter.org).

**4 North Shore Country Day School.** Mini Open House. 10am. Call (847) 441-3313.

**4 Sacred Heart School.** Open House. 9:30am.

**5 Sacred Heart School.** Open House. 7pm.



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**6 The Alliance for Early Childhood.** American Red Cross Babysitting Course. 9 am-3:30 pm. Call Stephanie Figlioli, PT. at (847) 784-5036

**6 Winnetka Park District.** Family Campfire. 6:15-7:45pm, Crow Island Woods. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**7 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Parenting Twice-Exceptional Children. 9:30am & 12:30pm. Visit [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**7 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Apply Yourself: Admissions at the IL Math & Science Academy. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**7 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Northwestern University Midwest Academic Talent Search (NUMATS). 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**7 Ronald Knox Montessori School.** Parent Education Workshop. 9am-12:30pm. Contact Jacqueline Reuwer, [Jacqueline\\_reuwer@ronaldknox.org](mailto:Jacqueline_reuwer@ronaldknox.org).

**7 Wilmette Public Library.** Fun with Science! 10-11:30am. Ages 3-6 with adult. Community Recreation Center, Rm. 106, 3000 Glenview Road, Wilmette.

**10 The Alliance for Early Childhood: Sensory Needs in Preschool and the Early Elementary Years.** 8-9pm, Live Webinar. Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org).

**11 St. Francis Xavier.** Open House. 7pm. 808 Linden Avenue, Wilmette.

**14 Baker Demonstration School.** Fall Family Open House. 2-4 pm. [admissions@bakerdemschool.org](mailto:admissions@bakerdemschool.org).

**14 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Parenting Twice-Exceptional Children 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**14 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Raising Resilient & Grateful Children. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**14 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: Social-Emotional Development of the Gifted Child. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**14 Center for Talent Development.** Free Parent Seminar: STEM TO STEAM: Teaching Innovation through the Arts. 9:30am. [www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/parent-seminars).

**14 Winnetka Park District.** Tiny Tot Olympics. 10-11am. 3-5 year olds. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**6 Winnetka Community House.** Member Winter/Spring 2016 registration opens.

**20 North Shore Country Day School.** Mini Open House. 10am. Contact (847) 441-3313.

**23 Winnetka Community House.** Non-member Winter/Spring 2016 registration opens.

**25 Winnetka Park District.** Santa's Mailbox. Until December 21st. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**26 The Volunteer Center.** Thanksgiving morning, Share Your Bounty. [www.VolunteerCenter-Helps.org](http://www.VolunteerCenter-Helps.org).

**30 Sacred Heart School.** Preschool, JK, and Kindergarten registration begins at 8am.

## DECEMBER 2015

**3 Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce.** Northfield Tree Lighting. 4:45pm.

**4 North Shore Country Day School.** JK-1st Grade Application Deadline. Call (847) 441-3313.

  
**All Things Bright and Beautiful**  
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**4 Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce.** Winnetka Tree Lighting. 5:45pm.

**5 North Shore Country Day School.** JK/SK Screenings. Call (847) 441-3313.

**5 Northfield Park District.** Holiday Winter Fest. 11am-1pm. northfieldparkdistrict.org.

**5 St. Francis Xavier.** Breakfast with Santa. 9am. Call (847) 256-0644.

**5 Winnetka Community House.** Breakfast with Santa. 8:30-11:30am. \$25 per person.

**5 & 6 Winnetka Community House.** A Christmas Carol. 3pm & 7pm. www.winnetkacommunityhouse.org.

**7 Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce.** Red Invitation Sunday Sale.

**8 Winnetka Park District.** Magic! 5-5:55pm. Contact (847) 501-2040 or www.winpark.org.

**9 St. Francis Xavier.** Open House. 9-11am.

**11 North Shore Country Day School.** Mini Open House. 10am. Call (847) 441-3313.

**12 Winnetka Park District.** Santa Claus is Coming... to Winnetka! 10am-noon. Contact (847) 501-2040 or www.winpark.org.

**15 & 16 Winnetka Park District.** Gingerbread House Workshop. 5-6 pm. 4-9 year olds. Contact (847) 501-2040 or www.winpark.org.

**17 Sacred Heart School.** Candles and Carols. 7pm.

**21 Winnetka Park District.** Winter Break Camp (Dec. 21-Jan. 31). 4-8 year olds. Contact (847) 501-2040 or www.winpark.org.

**24 Winnetka Park District.** Holiday Sing. 6pm. Contact (847) 501-2040 or www.winpark.org.

## JANUARY 2016

**The Joseph Sears School.** Junior Kindergarten Registration opens for the 2016-17 school year. (847) 256-5006 or www.kenilworth38.org

**9 Northfield Community Nursery School.** Saturday Splat! 9:30-11 am. Call (847) 446-1116.

**9 St. Francis Xavier.** Open Gym for Little Ones. 9-11am.

**14 Baker Demonstration School.** Kindergarten Informational Meeting. 8-9am. admissions@bakerdemschool.org.

**14 Middlefork School.** Kindergarten Registration. 2-4pm & 6-7pm.

**15 North Shore Country Day School.** Mini Open House. 10am. Call (847) 441-3313.

**18 The Alliance for Early Childhood.** American Red Cross Babysitting Course. 9am-3:30pm. Call Stephanie Figlioli, PT at (847) 784-5036.

**18 The Alliance for Early Childhood.** Screen-Break Drawing Contest Entries Due. Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org).

**18 Volunteer Center.** Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service. [www.VolunteerCenterHelps.org](http://www.VolunteerCenterHelps.org).

**21 The Alliance for Early Childhood.** 26th Annual Networking Dinner. 5 - 7:30pm. Keynote: Dr. Marcy Guddemi. Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org).

**21 The Joseph Sears School.** Kindergarten Registration Day. 12-4pm. Contact [www.kenilworth38.org](http://www.kenilworth38.org) or (847) 256-5006.

**22 The Alliance for Early Childhood.** Parenting in the 21st Century: What Current Research Tells Us Is Most Important. 9:30-11am. Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org).

## JANUARY 2016

**22 Baker Demonstration School.** Mini Open House. 9-10:30am. admissions@bakerdemschool.org.

**23 St. Francis Xavier.** Open Gym for Little Ones. 9-11am.



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**30 Sacred Heart School.** Snowflake Festival. 9:30-11am. Pre-school-2nd graders. Open to the public.

**31 St. Francis Xavier.** Open House. 10:30am-noon. Winnetka Park District: Winter Carnival (Date TBA). Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

#### **FEBRUARY 2016**

**North Shore Country Day School.** 2nd-5th Grade Application Deadline. Call (847) 441-3313.

**2 North Cook Area Spelling Bee.** 7pm. The Joseph Sears School. Call (847) 853-3801 or [www.kenilworth38.org](http://www.kenilworth38.org).

**3 Sacred Heart School.** Open House. 9:30am.

**4 Sacred Heart School.** Open House. 7pm.

**4 Winnetka Park District.** Daddy/Daughter Date Night. 6-8:15pm. 4-10 year olds. \$65 per couple. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**6 St. Francis Xavier.** Open Gym for Little Ones. 9-11am.

**11 Alliance for Early Childhood's Preschool-Kindergarten Summit.** 9am-2:30pm. Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe. Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org/PreschoolKSummit.php](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org/PreschoolKSummit.php).

**20 St. Francis Xavier.** Open Gym for Little Ones. 9-11am.

#### **MARCH 2016**

**Winnetka Park District.** Winnetka's Got Talent (Date TBA). 12:00pm. All ages. \$20 per entry. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**5 Sacred Heart School.** St. Patrick's Day Party. 5pm.

**6-12 Alliance for Early Childhood's 22nd Annual ScreenBreak.** Visit [www.TheAllianceForEC.org/ScreenBreak.php](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org/ScreenBreak.php).

**6 ScreenBreak Kick-Off Event.** Come celebrate the kick-off of ScreenBreak Week. [www.TheAllianceForEC.org/Screen-Break.php](http://www.TheAllianceForEC.org/Screen-Break.php)

**10 Winnetka Park District.** Mother/Son Date Night. 6-8:15pm. 4-10 year olds. \$65 per couple. Contact (847) 501-2040 or [www.winpark.org](http://www.winpark.org).

**12 The Volunteer Center.** Kids Against Hunger. More info [www.VolunteerCenterHelps.org](http://www.VolunteerCenterHelps.org).

**12 Winnetka Public School Nursery.** The Wonder of Discovery. 9-11am. Call (847) 446-5153.

**14 Winnetka Community House.** Member registration for Spring/Summer 2016 opens.

**18 Baker Demonstration School.** Mini Open House. 9-10:30am. RSVP to [admissions@bakerdemschool.org](mailto:admissions@bakerdemschool.org).

**21 Winnetka Community House.** Non-member registration for Spring/Summer 2016 opens.

#### **APRIL 2016**

**16 Winnetka-Northfield Chamber of Commerce.** Recognition Lunch. 11am. Winnetka Community House.

**22 All Things Bright & Beautiful Benefit.** [www.holycomforter.org](http://www.holycomforter.org).



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## Don't Leave Me! Continued from page 3

while you work), consider modifying your routine, such as spending additional time together before the separation, or adding extra hugs and assurances at the time of separation.

- Trust yourself: You know your child best! Trust your intimate knowledge of your child's needs and preferences, and your expertise in how to meet those needs and use those preferences to ease separation anxiety. Every child and adult is different; strategies should be adapted to suit your needs.

### Strategies for Children

- Respect: Value your child's need to be near you. When your crawling infant wants to be picked up and immediately requests to be put down, oblige them. This is repeated, necessary practice with separation.
- Practice: For younger children, peek-a-boo or hiding games (i.e., cover yourself with a blanket) offer separation and reunification practice in a safe context where the caregiver is not actually going anywhere. Hide-and-seek games offer similar practice for older children.
- Work gradually: Try several short separations before longer separations. Leave your child with familiar faces at first (i.e., a relative) and slowly introduce a new face (i.e., a babysitter).
- Play: Recreate separation experiences through role play, using favorite toys, puppets, or yourselves. Try role reversal, where you pretend to be your child and your child pretends

to leave; this can afford a sense of control over real separations.

- Read together: Create a scripted story (a homemade book that explains experiences). Take photos of your child acting out key moments in a typical separation. Arrange the photos in an electronic document or manually paste them on paper; include simple, positive sentences from your child's perspective, and bind together with staples or hole punches and string. Read it together regularly.

### References & Further Reading

- \* CSEFEL (n.d.). Scripted stories for social situations. Retrieved from <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#scriptedstories>
- \* Lieberman, A. F. (1993). *The emotional life of the toddler*. NY: Free Press.
- \* Peller, L. (1947). The child's need to anticipate. *Childhood Education*, 23(7), 338-343. doi: 10.1080/00094056.1947.10724786
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*Alexandra (age 3): "Mom, why does the little boy take everything from the 'Giving Tree'?"*

*Mom: "Because he loves the little boy so much he is willing to give him everything."*

*Alexandra: "Hm. Ok. Well you love me so much, so can I have your long hair?"*

## Your Holiday Family Photo Benefits The Alliance, Too!

The Alliance for Early Childhood invites you to have memorable fall family photos taken by Tao Zhang and Lenswork Studio in Winnetka... and benefit The Alliance at the same time!

For a \$150 tax-deductible donation to The Alliance, Lenswork will provide a holiday portrait session between October 20 and November 5th, and a complimentary 8x10 custom print.

Lenswork Studio in Winnetka is a boutique studio specializing in timeless portraiture and candid wedding documentary. Its work frequently has been published in several North Shore magazines and social media outlets. Tao Zhang, a Winnetka resident of more than 20 years, is the chief photographer of the studio. His passion for creating unforgettable images is evident in his portfolio at [www.lensworkstudio.com](http://www.lensworkstudio.com).

This offer is for a limited time only. To take advantage and to help The Alliance, too, please contact Tao at [847.784.0203](tel:847.784.0203) or go to [www.lenswork-studio.com](http://www.lenswork-studio.com) to arrange for your session today.







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**Sign Me Up! Or Not.** Continued from page 5

**Play**

In an attempt to “enrich” our children’s learning through organized activities, children’s play can be minimized to an afterthought. Through open-ended play with flexible materials, children develop creativity, connection, and confidence (Ginsberg, 2011, p. 49). They naturally take risks, try on identities, test and revise their theories about the world, and develop social competencies. In addition, play develops crucial language and numeracy skills as well as deep and creative thinking (for a summary, see White, 2012).

- Try to provide your children flexible space, time, and materials to create their own play scenarios. Blocks, scarves, cardboard boxes, and materials from nature can be the most powerful “toys” because children figure out their own ways to use them.

**Respect for Childhood**

With myriad experiences available for young children, parents may believe that early learning of formal skills leads to long-term gains. However, children develop on a continuum, typically reaching milestones within a normal range through normal daily experiences. Additionally, teaching children skills, such as reading, before they are physically, cognitively, or emotionally ready can backfire or simply prolong the time it takes them to learn (Carlsson-Paige, McLaughlin, Almon, 2015).

- Work to understand what is appropriate for ages of develop-

ment (Woods, 2007). For example, for most children under age 6 or 7, reading to them is more important than teaching them to sound out words, and exploring numbers and shapes as part of daily life is more important than playing apps on a tablet or memorizing math facts.

**Balance**

Families need a balance of structured activities and downtime. Be sure to evaluate your schedule on a regular basis, recognizing that children’s interests can and should change. My daughter moved on from *The Nutcracker* before she even reached her ballet recital.

When in doubt, err on the side of too little structure while your children are young. Your child can always sign up for an activity at a later age, but you cannot recoup the wonders of childhood.

**References:**

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- Tough, P. (2012). *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
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There is no doubt that young children benefit from hands-on learning opportunities. Further, our number system originally developed from a human need to quantify things. For this reason, it is important for children to develop an understanding of number that is very closely linked to their experience of quantities. Lots of time with sets of three, four, and five objects—making, organizing, dividing, and putting these sets away—helps greatly to solidify a meaningful understanding of number. Number, *per se*, doesn't really enter the picture, however, until a more knowledgeable partner introduces it. It is generally an adult who says "How many do you have? Let's count: one, two three. Three beads. If I give you one more, then we will each have four." The quantitative experience *becomes* mathematical through the input of a parent, grandparent, or more knowledgeable friend or sibling who connects it to the conventional words and ideas of mathematics (McCray, 2014; Clements, 2004).



**MYTH #2:** Math is written equations with numbers and symbols.

**REALITY#2:** Math is a way to represent, manipulate, and understand quantities, spaces, and relationships between them and talking about math is a great way to "do" it.

Written numerals and symbols that represent operations and relations between numbers are incredibly powerful. As the visual evidence of mathematical thinking, in our culture they sometimes are used to represent the entire subject. Yet mathematics is not about these artifacts, but about the thinking and understanding they capture. This distinction helps make clear how mathematics can be developmentally appropriate. While very young children

may not be ready to write the answer to a number problem, they are very ready to think and talk about what happens to a set when it is decreased by one (Baroody & Dowker, 2003). Just as young children have several years of practice speaking before they ever learn to write speech down, so they need time thinking and

talking about quantities and shapes before they are asked to translate that understanding into a visual form. The understanding of "three-ness"—it is one more than two, one less than four—if I hold only one in each hand, I will have one left over—must necessarily precede an understanding of what the numeral 3 means, and children learn to understand "three" by talking about it a lot with others who understand it.

**MYTH #3:** Doing math means using a memorized fact or a set procedure to get a correct answer.

**REALITY #3:** Doing math means imagining, analyzing, thinking strategically, and persevering.

Over the millennia, humans have struggled to find ways to become more efficient in using mathematics. At some point, people first understood that "knowing"  $3 + 5 = 8$  was an advantage over recalculating it every time. Similarly, we developed procedures called algorithms that take advantage of the structure of the number system to allow quicker calculation. While algorithms and memorized facts create efficiency, they also are several steps removed from a meaningful understanding of how numbers relate to one another. That is, there is nothing in the knowledge that one should "invert and multiply" that explains what it might mean to separate a fraction into fractional parts (Kamii, 1999). Memorized facts and algorithms provide speed, but they are prone to error, and because they are divorced from meaningful understanding, they do not help learners build new knowledge or make generalizations. The mathematics these facts and procedures reflect, however, is rich and can provoke deep and complicated thought. The fact that adding five to three things provides the same total number as adding three to five things, for example, is a profound un-

derstanding, and generative of new ideas. This kind of mathematical thinking may explain why children's understanding of number when they enter kindergarten has been shown to predict not only their later mathematics, but also their achievement in other subjects (Duncan, et al., 2007). Thinking about meaningful math in ways that make sense is good preparation for later thinking in many different subjects.

### What Should You Do?

Given the "adjusted" vision of mathematics presented above, we need to find a happy medium, neither assuming preschoolers will be prepared just by interacting with the world of things around them, nor pushing kids to structured worksheets and "right answers". We need ways to introduce some of the most





basic words and ideas of math, yet keep kids meaningfully connected to things they care about. We need to shift the emphasis from “quick fixes” and right answers to the process of thinking a problem through and understanding how it works. And finally, we need to convey our own pleasure in feeling mathematically competent, encouraging children to see themselves as capable math thinkers. Below are some simple actions you can take toward these goals.

**Help Children See the Math in Everyday Events:** Look for opportunities to talk about quantities, shapes, and space with your young child as you move through your day together. You can ask a question to get things going: “How many stairs is it to our apartment door, I wonder?” “Do you see any rectangles on the wall?” “Yes, that tree is bigger than the one in our yard. Is it taller or wider?” Once you suggest such topics, your child is likely to begin talking with you about such things as a matter of course. Grocery shopping, meal times, doing laundry, straightening the house, taking a bath—each of these situations offers opportunities to count, make comparisons, and connect the world to mathematical ideas.

**Talk Out Loud about Math Thinking, Focusing on Strategy Generation:** As children encounter formal schooling, they will have to struggle a bit sometimes in order to learn, and you may be in the position of trying to help with homework. In these situations, rather than doing the problem for them, or showing them how to do it, try to elicit and support their thinking process. Talking through the problem can help: What is known? What is not known? What strategy has worked in the past? If children are going to move past a right-answer focus toward a thinking focus in math learning, then parents have to develop a stronger stomach for some temporary

frustration. In time, children will develop capacity to realize they don’t know what to do and calmly re-evaluate—a crucial problem-solving skill that math teaches particularly well.

**Play Math-Related Games with Kids:** Finally, the easiest advice: play games!! There are so many wonderful math-related games that help children get familiar with number and develop logical, strategic thinking. Simple card games, such as Top-it (or War for an older generation) and Concentration offer many opportunities for thinking and talking together about number. Path-based board games like Parcheesi or Chutes and Ladders in which children use dice or spinners to move along spaces are great for developing a sense of magnitude. Strategy games like Connect Four and Mancala help children begin to plan their problem-solving, thinking a step ahead. Time spent playing math-related games with parents and family members is a powerful way for young children to see math as fun—an important message for them to take with them to school.

References:

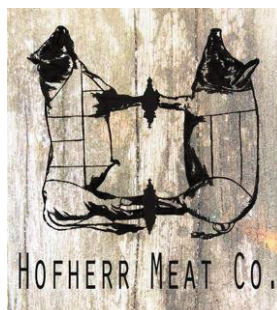
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## We need your help!

*Those of us who live on the North Shore often report that we moved here for the schools, but, what exactly makes our schools stand out? Most would agree that excellent schools mean more than high test scores. What do our schools do especially well? Are there aspects of other school systems that we can learn from?*

*We decided to find out by conducting a survey for families who had experienced both the schools on the North Shore and other school systems, too. Do you have a story about your family’s experiences in another school system, as compared with schools on the North Shore? If so, please tell us by completing our survey at:*

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/bundysurvey>



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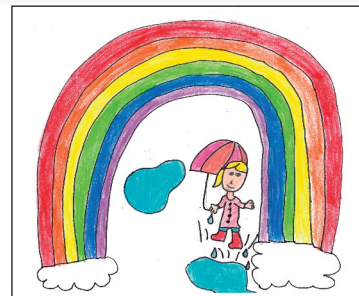
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# PARENTING Q&A

Continued from page 4

*Staring out the window and waiting for the rain to stop, a three-year-old girl casually said, "Mom, I really love rainbows." When asked why, she replied, "They mean happiness: no more rain, only time to play."*



statement or have a prayer if you are religious.

- Next, review the calendar for the week, and make sure everyone knows the agenda.
- Then review the past week for the family. What went well in our family? What problems did we have? What were the solutions to the problems that we had?
- Lesson discussion. Pick a value that you'd like to discuss such as honesty, courage, resilience, budgets, gratitude, etc. You can start with teaching what that value is by using a passage from a book, a poem, newspaper article, personal story, etc. Ask each person: What does this value mean to you? Do you want to develop it to a higher level? This can be the best part of the meeting.
- Keep the meeting concise, about 15 minutes for younger children, and longer as they get older.
- Have fun. Although you'll need to address problems, don't make this a complaining session because you will have reluctant attendees.
- End the meeting with a closing ritual that is positive. Again, a poem, prayer, or just a big family hug.
- Finally, when the meeting is over, have a family activity, such as bake cookies, have dinner, go for a walk, play a board game, or have other interactive time.

## Question

What is the best way to respond when my child is having a tantrum? - Concerned Mom

## Answer

Dear Concerned Mom:

Thank you for bringing light to this very difficult scenario that many parents have faced. Often we disagree with our child's reason for becoming so angry, or we understand the cause for his/her upset but not the extreme intensity of emotion. Even though tantrums disrupt our own lives, it is still essential to address them in a healthy manner.

### As a parent we need to:

- Understand why our child is having a temper tantrum. It's not necessary that you agree with the reason, but it is important that you understand it. Your child needs to know that you know why he or she is upset. For example: "Sally, it seems that you are angry because I said that you can't have ice cream for breakfast, is that right?"

- Acknowledge that it's upsetting when we don't get our way, but that it's part of life and only a "small problem" not a "big problem." Help your child begin to understand the relative scale of life's problems. Big problems often require a trip to the hospital because our health is affected. Small problems often either go away with time or are relatively easy to live with. Frequently using the phrases "big problem" and "little problem" around the house can help to ingrain this concept in your child's mind and prevent future tantrums.
- Keep your own cool and model the behavior you want from your child. Is it a big problem or a small problem for you that your child is having tantrums? Can you tolerate it, even if it's annoying?
- Make it a predictable rule that when your child has a tantrum that all discussion is over and he or she needs to have time and distance to cool-off. That could be a formal time out, or better yet, a voluntary cool-off period.

Welcome these tantrums as teachable moments. How can your children's problems be solved? How can they accept what they don't like? These are the times when children learn to have toleration for difficulties and build resilience, and that is crucial for happiness.

Finally, have a long view for improvement. Your three-year-old will benefit from the above strategies over time. Some lessons will get absorbed quickly and others will take years. You have children to love and guide through life, and since life can be frustrating, we understand why a child might have a tantrum. Use your compassion and lead by example.

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October 18, 2015	2 p.m.
November 4, 2015	10 a.m.
November 20, 2015	10 a.m.
December 11, 2015	10 a.m.
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## 2015 Teacher Tributes

The following educators have been honored with an Alliance for Early Childhood Teacher Tribute, received between October 1, 2014 and October 1, 2015. Congratulations to all!

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