

# January Newsletter

## New Year, New Focus

January is the time when we ask for your feedback. Our PAR surveys will be sent to your email on file the first week of January.

We are requesting five minutes of your time to complete a brief survey about your experience at our school. The information you provide is completely anonymous and will enable us to understand what you feel we are doing right and what we need to work on.

If you have not received your survey by Friday, January 8th, please contact me for assistance.

To ensure that you receive the survey in a timely fashion, please add [schoolsurvey@mghus.com](mailto:schoolsurvey@mghus.com) to your email address book.

Thank you for your honest feedback.

Have a Happy New Year!!!!

Questions or concerns? Please contact us!

Kris and Adriana

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY



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Akira B. 1/4  
Eliana H. 1/5  
Kennedy G. 1/10  
Jordan S. 1/11  
Teagan T. 1/14  
Every C. 1/17  
Ms. Kris 1/17  
Jackson H 1/22  
Ms. Jessica 1/23



**Merryhill School**

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**Links to Learning**

Nobel Learning Preschool Curriculum

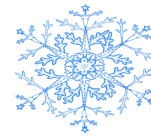
DID YOU KNOW?

January in the Northern Hemisphere is the seasonal equivalent to July in the Southern Hemisphere and vice versa.

January 1st is both the furthest away and closest day to December 31st.

Leap years exempted, January always begins on the same day as October.

In leap years, January always begins on the same day as April and July.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

1/1 New Year's Day—we are closed

1/2 Ms. Mary's anniversary

1/16 Winnie the Pooh Day (bring your favorite bear to school)

1/18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1/23 Winter Open House (FROZEN Theme)

1/28 Ms. Gayle returns for weekly reading time



We are here for you  
If you have any questions or concerns, or simply want to share an idea with us, we are available for you. Pop in the office, call or drop an email. We love to hear from you!

During the month of January, we will be focusing on writing in the classrooms. Our teachers will be training via Lauren Starnes' webinars and then putting their learning into action in the classrooms. Look for an emphasis on writing in your child's classroom

- What is **writing** exactly?
  - Communicating on paper
- At young ages, children do not distinguish between drawing and writing; drawing is writing!



#### Random Scribbling (15 mo. – 2 years)

- Marks for a purpose
- Attempt to fill page



#### Controlled Scribbling (2 years – 3 years)

- Repeated marks on paper
- Often open circles, lines, and loops



#### Mock Writing (3 years)

- Distinction made between drawing and writing
- Close resemblance to some letter forms



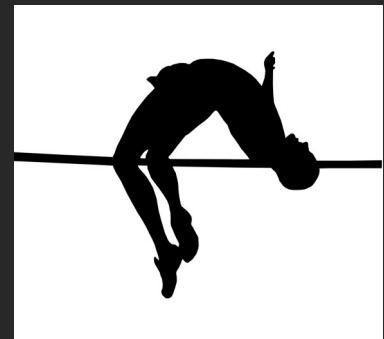
#### Letter writing (4 years – 5 years)

- Picture with attempted coinciding text
- Primarily conventional letters
- Frequent letter and number reversals



#### Word writing (4 years – 6 years)

- Conventional letters together
- Attempt to represent sounds in words
- Inventive spelling expected



## EXCEEDING THE BAR

The State of Colorado requires teachers in a preschool setting receive 15 hours of training each year. With our 2 Professional Development Days, Monthly Staff Meetings, and other Nobel Learning Communities Trainings, Merryhill Schools offer our teachers over 30 hours a year!

# The Value of Visual Art Activities for Your Preschooler

Visual art experiences help children develop skills such as critical thinking, self-expression, problem-solving, communication and collaboration. Our teachers focus on process-based art education, in which the experience of creating art is valued over the end product.

In our classrooms, teachers integrate art into many aspects of our Links to Learning curriculum. After reading a book about polar bears, teachers might ask students to create their own polar bears using sponges, paint, markers and paper. They encourage students to talk about their art, providing a great opportunity to learn new vocabulary, particularly words related to colors, shapes, textures, and emotions.

Our students are also exposed to and inspired by famous artwork. In order to cultivate that fascination, we discuss famous artists and art works and ask students to create replicas of well-known paintings and sculptures. For example, after learning about Michelangelo's painting on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, teachers mimic the activity in the classroom. They tape paper underneath tables, and students practice painting a masterpiece while lying down.

Below are visual art activities you and your child can do at home, as well as recommended reading.

## **At Home:**

Provide your child with finger paint, a large piece of paper and a smock. Let him create a masterpiece. Talk about how the paint feels and what colors and shapes he creates on the paper.

Start a journal with your child. Have him draw a picture of something that happened during the day. Avoid giving direction. Instead of saying "Draw a picture of your teacher and classmates," encourage him to experiment using different colored markers or crayons. If age appropriate, ask your child to write a few words to describe the picture.

Give your child a piece of paper and a box of crayons or markers. Show him how to use the materials to make dots, lines and swirls on the paper. Let him take over and have fun. Encourage conversation about your child's art by saying, "Tell me about what you made" or "I see you used a lot of blue in your picture. Why did you choose that color?"

Ask your child to decorate a sign for his bedroom door using various art materials. Have him write his name on the sign.

## **Recommended Reading:**

*The Dot* by Peter Reynolds

*Beautiful Oops* by Barney Saltzberg

*Art* by Patrick McDonnell

*Not a Box* by Antoinette Portis

*Mix It Up* by Herve Tullet

It is wonderful to share the joy that children naturally take in using art materials. Giving children extra opportunities to connect art to the world around them, contributes to happiness and future success in elementary school and beyond.

- Lauren Starnes, PhD – Director of Early Childhood Education