



# blue valley early childhood PTA

Newsletter

February 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

UPCOMING EVENTS	2
VOLUNTEER REQUEST	2
ACTIVITIES	3
BOOKS	5
BLOCK PLAY INFORMATION	6

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[www.bvecpta.com](http://www.bvecpta.com)

## Art Day Celebration!

Please join the PTA for our 2<sup>nd</sup> Art Day Celebration! Bring your kid(s) to Hilltop on February 25<sup>th</sup> or 26<sup>th</sup> to use paint, stickers, and stencils to create a nature themed painting. The PTA will be offering the option to have the painting printed on cards - \$10/10 cards.

Art Day hours:

**February 25<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm**

**February 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-11am**



We are in need of volunteers to help – please email Jessica Wiedmaier ([jessica.wiedmaier@gmail.com](mailto:jessica.wiedmaier@gmail.com)) if you are available.

## Donations for Children's Mercy

Please bring new boxes of Glad Press 'n Seal Wrap to Hilltop Learning Center (7700 W 143rd St) the week of February 22nd - February 26th. The Press 'n Seal will be donated to Children's Mercy Hospital Clinics to use with children (to cover wounds and ports). Thank you in advance for your help with this wonderful community service project!



## Upcoming Events:

February 22<sup>nd</sup> -26<sup>th</sup> bring Glad Press 'n Seal Wrap to Hilltop

Art Day –

February 25<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm at Hilltop

February 26<sup>th</sup> from 9-11am at Hilltop

Thursday, February 25<sup>th</sup> at 4pm Playgroup with Educator Sarah Unrein

Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm – PTA Meeting at Hilltop Learning Center

Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 10am Playgroup with Educator Diane Schmidt

Tuesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am Playgroup with Educator Diane Schmidt



## Volunteers Still Needed

The Blue Valley Early Childhood PTA is in need of volunteers for the different positions on the board and to help organize various events held throughout the year. Please consider becoming more involved with this wonderful organization. Currently, we are in need of a membership coordinator, event coordinator, and committee members to help plan an event in the April/May to celebrate being awarded a National School of Excellence. If you are interested, please email Arika Ledom at [bvearlychildhoodpta@gmail.com](mailto:bvearlychildhoodpta@gmail.com). Thank you!



## Activities & Ideas: FOUR FOAM BLOCK BUILDING IDEAS

### Floating Structures

All you need is water, foam blocks and bubbles if desired! Experiment on this unstable surface and children will find out how different balancing works on water. Most children start out using blocks for the sole purpose of knocking them down when they are babies and toddlers, so add a blaster, and kids will use the water pressure as a way to knock down their structures. Take turns building and trying to knock each other's creations down. Knocking stuff down is still fun no matter how old you are!



### Sticky Buildings

Contact paper's sticky surface is strong enough to hold lightweight blocks, and can stand up to many changes in building plans. Use painter's tape to tape down all sides of your contact paper sticky side up on the floor, or a wall and let the building begin!



## Tracing Layouts and Letters

Instead of building vertically, build horizontally on your driveway and add chalk. Trace and color different layouts, name the "towns" you create, and then use the blocks to form letters to trace out names. The same can be done on large paper with marker, crayons, or paint!



## Shaving Cream Layering



For this particular activity, it helps to encourage your children to think like a brick layer. Offer a variety of spreading tools from your kitchen, add a bowl or pile of shaving cream, and start layering. Shaving cream creates a bond and makes the blocks stick together. Have fun exploring new territory with your building. Wouldn't your future carpenters, engineers, or architects enjoy a new sensory experience with blocks?



# THINK SPRING!

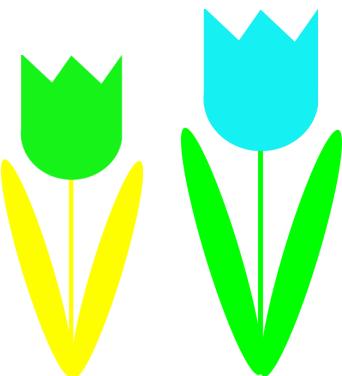


## The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle

In autumn, a strong wind blows flower seeds high in the air and carries them far across the land. One by one, many of the seeds are lost -- burned by the sun, fallen into the ocean, eaten by a bird. But some survive the long winter and, come spring, sprout into plants, facing new dangers -- trampled by playing children, picked as a gift for a friend. Soon only the tiniest seed remains, growing into a giant flower and, when autumn returns, sending its own seeds into the wind to start the process over again.

## And Then It's Spring by Julie Fogliano and Erin E. Stead

Following a snow-filled winter, a young boy and his dog decide that they've had enough of all that brown and resolve to plant a garden. They dig, they plant, they play, they wait . . . and wait . . . until at last, the brown becomes a more hopeful shade of brown, a sign that spring may finally be on its way.



**For more great book ideas check out our  
Pinterest page by clicking [HERE!](#)**

# Learning With Blocks at Home

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Building with blocks can be a great, fun learning experience for your child. Block play can help prepare your child for future success in math and science.

When children play with blocks, they engage in play that builds understanding of math and science concepts and are developing numeracy –the understanding of numbers in everyday life, just like literacy is the understanding of letters and words!

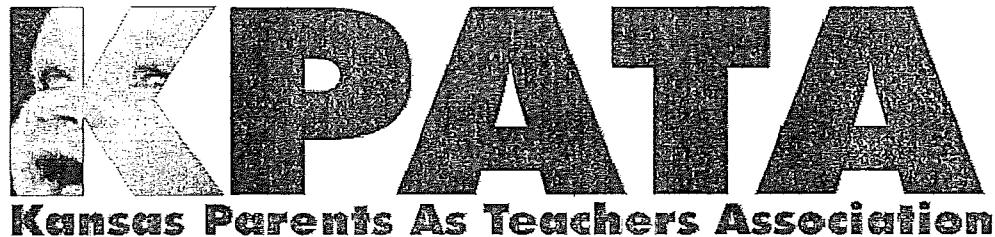
Math words that you can use with your child as he/she plays with blocks include:

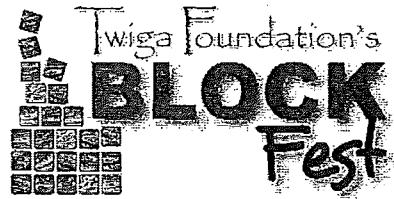
Long, tall, narrow, order, top, square, less, curve, add, count, outside, triangle, lines, patterns, big, little, rectangle, more

Science words that you can use with your child as he/she plays with blocks include:

Rough, smallest, heavy, whole, bigger, after, first, next, balance, light, weight, gravity, system

There are HUNDREDS of words that can be used. See if you can think of some others!





## Open Ended Questions for Block Play

- ✓ I wonder if...?
- ✓ What's another way to ...?
- ✓ How many more blocks ...?
- ✓ I wonder how ...?
- ✓ What would happen if...?
- ✓ What's another way to ...?
- ✓ How is this building like ...?
- ✓ Can you find another ...?

## Or Try These...

- ✓ I wonder if you can balance the largest block?
- ✓ How can you connect these two blocks?
- ✓ What do you need for your plan?
- ✓ How many more would you need to get this high?
- ✓ Can you find a block the same size as this one?
- ✓ What would happen if you used this block next?
- ✓ What if you only had these two shapes?
- ✓ I wonder which is the biggest one?
- ✓ I wonder how many small blocks would equal this big one?



# Your Child Loves to Play With Blocks

Playing with blocks has delighted children through the ages. Your modern-day child is no exception! Blocks should be part of her play experiences early and often.

When babies begin to play with blocks, they are mostly interested in discovering these solid, square objects. They may throw them, pick them up to see how heavy they are, or try to hold more than one in a hand.

Soon your toddler will make an exciting discovery: She can knock down a tower built by her dad! What a feeling of power! Your child is really learning about building from discovering how structures fall down. She may also stack low towers of two or three blocks.

Around age 2, your child may be interested in stacking higher towers. Not only will she stack, but she may also line the blocks up end-to-end. She is investigating the properties of straight lines.

Next your child may make turns and angles in her line of blocks. Lining up blocks or toys is an important pre-reading task. It helps her understand that printed letters and words are arranged in a line. Her reading readiness skills are enhanced through what's called visual discrimination, which takes place as she chooses what blocks to use based on what she has already built.

As she nears her third birthday, your child may use her blocks to represent other things. She may fill a bowl with blocks and pretend to cook the "food." She may push one along the floor as if she's driving a car. Her intellectual development allows her to pretend that a block is something else.

Older 2-year-olds build structures that are sturdier, more balanced, and more complex. They learn to stack smaller blocks on top of larger ones. Your child will experiment with stacking all kinds of mismatched objects. Sometimes her efforts come crashing down! This kind of experimentation teaches her what will and will not work.

Block play helps her develop visual-spatial skills, such as figuring out the relationship between objects in space and noticing patterns in block structures. She may also begin to name her buildings, showing that she is building with a purpose.

At any age, your child is building confidence and creativity through block building. From creating a simple tower of blocks to constructing an entire city, your child gains a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of being in control.

## Tips for encouraging building

As you support your child's learning, you can join in her building and offer some hints that will lead her to discover the important elements of construction.

- **Provide materials.** Plain wooden or plastic blocks (not interlocking) are best. Your child will also like to build with things she finds around your home, like canned goods, cardboard, or large and small boxes.
- **Give your child time and space.** Two-year-olds may spend only 10 minutes building but may return to their blocks after a short while. If possible, allow the blocks to remain out on the floor.
- **Follow your child's lead.** Offer suggestions to get her over the rough spots, but don't direct what or how she builds.
- **Have fun!** Building is an activity that your child will enjoy for years to come. You may still enjoy it today. Experimenting with blocks teaches your child the spatial relationships she will use in math, reasoning, and reading.

# Stages of Block Play

Children go through various stages of block play. As they work through the learning of one stage they are ready to move onto the next stage of play. As skills advance, it is typical for children to combine several stages. These stages are developmental-each one building on the last-but children advance at their own rate regardless of their age.

Stage 1 Discovering Blocks- a child will explore individual blocks and their physical qualities by carrying, pushing, and feeling, tasting, holding and dropping them.

Stage 2 Stacking Blocks- a child will stack 1-3 blocks. Children can stack them vertically or place them in a horizontal line. Beginning block builders often use a combination of stacking.

Stage 3 Complex Stacking- A child will combine vertical and horizontal stacks to create more complex patterns. They may make a 3-dimensional structure with no interior space.

Stage 4 Making Enclosures- a child will make enclosures flat on the floor. A child begins to name the construction while building or when it is completed.

Stage 5 Creating Bridges Or Arches- a child will place a block that spans the space between 2 supporting blocks.

Stage 6 Combining Enclosures and Bridges- a child will make more complex buildings and use them as settings for dramatic play. They also begin to share ideas and build cooperatively with others.

Stage 7 Building With Patterns and Symmetry- a child will plan structures that have patterns and symmetry with details such as ramps and doors. They may do this cooperatively with other children.

Stage 8 Building Block Structures That Represent Objects For Pretend Play- a child will plan and create structures in blocks and use them in role play situations. Buildings are often kept standing for several days.



## Developmental Stages of Block Play

