

THE TAN BARK TIMES

December, 2020

As we all know, this can be a crazy time of year; with the crowded malls, equally fun and stressful family events, and last minute touches toward making this a perfect holiday season. This year has a very different feeling. We naturally have more time to relax- light a fire in the fireplace, make some hot chocolate, put on some music or a movie and just hang out with the kids. Isn't that what it's all about anyway? Enjoy the cuddles amidst the online shopping and last minute gift wrapping. Remember that kids don't want perfect, they just want you, and your effort is more than enough.

Kids say the darndest things...

Every year during the holidays we hear a variety of ideas from the children (especially the Ruff Dogs) regarding personal beliefs. The staff listens to what they have to say and encourages them to share ideas, but does not influence the children with our individual beliefs. This is a great time of year to share and learn about others. This month the children will be learning about children from around the world, and many of their cultural foods and traditions. If there are any customs or traditions you would like to share with the children, please let us know. Your input is always welcome!

Holiday Toy Drive

Our Edgewood drive is underway! Cards are posted outside the front door, please feel free to take one and try to include your child in picking out the gift!

Keeping art creative!

You may notice a lack of "holiday art projects" and decorations on the walls. Kid Time's art policy revolves around what the children want to create with their own artistic vision. This means that if a child wished to make a Santa to hang up, we will provide them with the materials to do so, but we will not ask the children to create "product art" because we want decorations. We want to allow them the freedom with their art to do what they truly want to do. Sometimes children will choose to make a particular thing but often the process is what they enjoy. Taking the product out of art also takes pressure off of the child to adhere to a certain standard, allowing

them to just create and more importantly not to be afraid to create. No child should feel that their art is wrong or that they can't do it right. Art is free. At least at Kid Time. :)

Holiday Party Info

Obviously our typical Holiday Party is out for this year, but we are working on getting something scheduled with Santa to do one on ones with the kids over Zoom. We'll do a sign up sheet soon online, and time slots will be short and precise. ;) We look forward to celebrating in person again soon!

School Closures

Dec 24, 25, 28, 31 and Jan 1 we will be closed. We will be open all other days during the holiday season. We strive to be open for you since we know time off is limited, but we also ask for your communication so we do not over staff and can allow people their maximum time off as well. We appreciate it!

The Tough Lessons...

Children need to be taught everything in life, from tying their shoes, to blowing their nose, to using the toilet instead of a diaper. What we often forget as adults is that they also need to be taught about their feelings and emotions, what they mean, how they work, and how to deal with them. It is important that we as parents and teachers allow our children to learn about being sad, and how to make themselves happy. If everything is fixed for them, or every hoop is jumped through to avoid crying, how will they be able to really deal with sadness? Or anger? Or frustration?

We once held a seminar for Parents and Teachers about this very topic. The speaker, Ronald Mah, MFT discussed the importance of allowing children to experience suffering in order to help them to deal with life's ups and downs. To an adult, suffering may be caused by the loss of a loved one, a life changing decision, or an ailing child or parent. To a child, a relative amount of suffering may be caused by being out of cookies, seeing a toy break, or being picked up by grandma instead of mom after school. These things happen in life, and the way children learn to handle them now will dictate how they deal with the real difficulties they will face later in life.

"No" is an answer that children need to hear periodically, as they will in life! It is our responsibility as the adults in their lives to prepare them for life, and to not just make them happy in every present moment. This is one

of the most difficult things for us as teachers, and no doubt is the hardest thing you will face as parents. I often talk to the children in very frank terms... “I see you are upset. How can you make this better for yourself?” or “Screaming doesn’t seem to be making this better. If you want to try using words, I can help you to fix your problem!” Children’s emotions are often right at the surface- sometimes it is necessary to allow them time to express themselves, however out of control it may seem, and then follow up with some realistic problem solving.

It may come off as insensitive to some, but those who understand the importance of suffering realize that we are helping them to grow and learn about their world. It’s not always happy, and life does not always go as planned. With love, caring and a commitment to as much honesty as is appropriate, we can teach children how to weather the storms of life. If you have any questions or feedback, it is always welcome!

Thank you as always for reading the newsletter with an open mind. On behalf of the whole staff, we wish you an incredible and relaxing holiday season. Lets have a great 2021, or at least get the heck out of 2020!

The Kid Time Staff