

# Children of Hope Child Development Center

December 2016



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## Hope Happenings: News from Mrs. H's Office

Lynn Hockenberger  
Preschool Director

**Ready or not, the holiday season is here! We do love this time of year with your children though. It really is magical. Their excitement is infectious. We look forward to seeing a lot of you this month as we enjoy the season together. I wish you all the happiest of Christmases and a wonderful new year!**



## Upcoming Events

- ◆ POLAR EXPRESS DAYS  
December 1 & 2
- ◆ BREAKFAST WITH SANTA  
Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 9-11am
- ◆ AUTHOR VISIT  
December 5
- ◆ CHAPEL  
December 7 & 8
- ◆ ESPERANZA CHRISTMAS PLAY  
December 9-11
- ◆ CofH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM  
Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00pm
- ◆ CLASS GINGERBREAD PARTIES  
December 14 & 15

*Mrs. H*



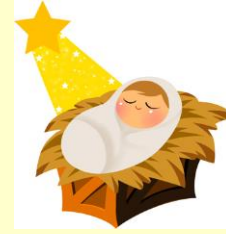
**ALL ABOARD!**

**Thursday, 12/01**

**Friday, 12/02**

**Kids, wear your jammies today!**

## CHAPEL



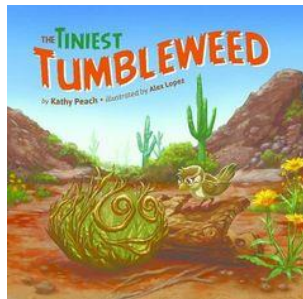
**With Pastor Steve and  
Ms. Kathy**

**Wednesday, 12/07**

**Thursday, 12/08**

**Lesson: The Birth of Baby Jesus**

**Song: Silent Night**



## CHILDREN'S AUTHOR VISIT!

*Kathy Peach*

The Tiniest Tumbleweed is small for her age. So is her Sonoran Desert neighbor, a baby house sparrow. Through the incorporation of proven concepts in helping children believe in themselves and their capabilities, The Tiniest Tumbleweed shows how the desert companions work together and within their limitations to become their best selves.

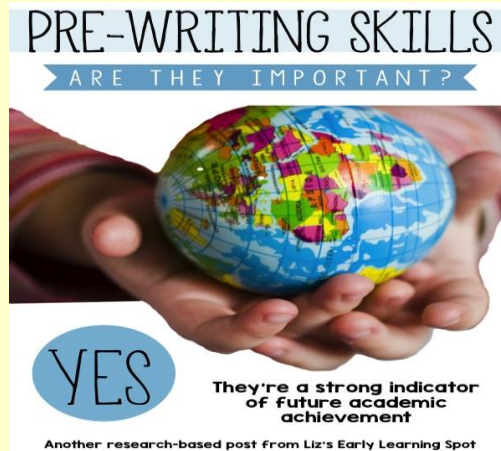
**Monday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**8:30am**

**Join us in the Sanctuary!**

Autographed books will be available for \$10





Most research on early writing has focused on lower primary-aged children which means studies on younger children (from 2-5 years) are a little thin. One of the causes of this was the long-held philosophy that very young children would learn what they needed by merely playing within a print-rich environment.

However, research has since shown that this is not enough. The print-rich environment is still a great idea, but children also need explicit instruction. After all, how many children manage the following activities correctly without guidance?

- holding scissors and cutting
- holding a pencil correctly
- tracing the alphabet
- brushing their teeth

On the one hand we'd love to be able to say to parents, "don't worry, your child will learn everything they need to know once they start Kindergarten." And it's true that the large majority of Kinder teachers do an awesome job helping their little ones transition into school. But it's also true that preparing children for Kinder can be a huge help and confidence booster. After all, learning and skill development is a process and usually a long one. According to recent studies the foundations for writing start well before Kindergarten and play a major role in a child's long-term writing success.

### The prefrontal cortex

Getting the brain working in this area sounds like a good idea since it's responsible for self-regulation and executive functioning (attention, impulse control and working memory).

This has led researchers to suggest that:

- early writing difficulties (if associated with executive functioning) may be an early indicator of broader cognitive concerns
- handwriting, or handwriting readiness, may improve executive functioning










### The building blocks for writing readiness:

- Hand and finger strength: writing is tiring and can discourage children from persevering. Try using play dough, squeezing tweezers and pegs.
- Crossing the midline: being comfortable to reach across to the other side of your body. Does your child switch writing hands or kick a ball with both feet rather than showing one foot/hand dominance? Try: dance moves where arms and legs cross the body or painting at an easel using only one hand.

- Pencil grasp: needs to be correct.
- Hand eye coordination: where your eyes and hands work together to accomplish a task such as catching a ball or jumping to touch bubbles that are being blown.
- Bilateral integration: using two hands together where one hand is the lead and the other helps. For ex, opening a jar, sharpening a pencil or cutting paper.
- Upper body strength and postural control: A child's neck and trunk need to be stable to support the other limbs and prevent fatigue.
- Object manipulation: Children need to be able to effectively use their toothbrush, hair brush, crayons, spoon and fork. Encouraging independence will give kids a lot more practice at using their hands with growing efficiency.
- Visual perception: the brain needs to interpret what our eyes see.
- Hand dominance: the development of a preferred hand for most activities such as drawing or cutting.
- Hand division: this is when children only use their thumb, index and middle fingers to manipulate something, and keep fingers 4 and 5 curled up within the hand. Try sorting marbles, buttons or small shells into groups by color or size. This is clearly a precursor to learning to hold a pencil!
- Spacial and temporal vocabulary: words that are often used when children are learning to write letters, such as top, go up to, go down to, around...

# PRE-WRITING SHAPES

**Children should be able to form these 9 pre-writing strokes before asking them to write.**

			
2 years	2½ years	3 years	3½-4 years
			
4 years	4½ years	4½ years	4 years 11 months
			
			5 years 3 months

**Children who can adequately draw the oblique cross can copy a significantly higher number of letters than little ones who cannot.**

## What's the fuss?

Lots of children develop these skills in their everyday life without thought or intention. More and more children are entering child care / preschool in the years prior to Kindergarten where their teachers make sure children are developing their fine and gross motor skills. Some children move through the development stages easily, but others do not.

Two main reasons come to mind:

1. The child is experiencing developmental delays: which means they need more attention, encouragement and intentional engagement. For them, these foundation steps are critical as they will need more time for mastery and to gain confidence. Consulting a pediatrician and occupational therapist early can make a huge difference towards positive long-term outcomes.
2. The child has not had the opportunity to engage in developing pre-writing skills. Children who arrive on the Kindergarten doorstep who have not developed fine motor control will find school a lot more frustrating and tiring than others. Every time they use scissors, hold a pencil, make a craft or draw a picture will take more focus as their mind and body works to make those connections between brain and hands.

*Often it's easier and quicker for adults to do specific tasks for their children: pulling up zippers, doing up buttons, brushing hair, picking up toys, turning pages, putting on shoes and jackets... there's an endless list of kid-related jobs, isn't there! But most children can be more independent than we realize, they just need time and opportunity. If we are able to slow things down and wait for a child to at least have a good attempt at one button, we will be doing them a great service. Some children don't want to do these tasks themselves because they find them difficult and I'm suggesting that the more a child tries to get out of such a task, the more important it may be that they are encouraged to do it. Of course, start with easier skills first with activities your child enjoys to work on all those building blocks above. After all, a strong foundation is best way to build a house and being 'ready to write' is a great gift to a child.*

## A final word

There are many ways to prepare children for writing but it's good to remember that the research is showing that it's the actual act of putting pencil to paper, writing those strokes and practicing those letters that really gets the brain geared up. For ex, children who largely type letters are much slower at recognizing and writing individual letters than those who largely write them. So while computers can be great for kids, don't neglect that pencil and paper!

The material in this post has largely come from the following sources.

Laura H. Dinehart. (2015). Handwriting in early childhood education: Current research and future implications. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*. Vol 15(1), 97-118. DOI:

10.1177/1468798414522825

<http://www.childdevelopment.com.au/>

What's your favourite 'ready to write' activity? Please share in the comments!

## New Enrichment Class!



**Handwriting and Math without Tears!**

**Join Mrs. Palomaa on Fridays in February, March and/or April and get a leg up on kindergarten.**

**AM Class: 8:30 – 11:30am     \$110 per month**  
**PM Class: 11:30am – 2:00pm     \$85 per month**

## A few Elves Needed!



We are looking for **a few kind parents** who would be willing to assemble small milk cartons and wrap bases for our gingerbread houses. Glue guns needed. This can be a take-home activity or if you can help on **Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>** anytime between **8:30 and 10:30am**, please let Mrs. H know. Coffee and treats will be provided.



## *To Bethlehem!*

Annual Christmas Program

**Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>**

5:00pm

Sae the date! More info coming soon!

# Annual Breakfast with Santa!



Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 9:00-11:00am

Join us for our annual Breakfast with Santa! For only \$8 per person you and your child can enjoy some yummy continental breakfast foods and several Christmas crafts.

Top off the morning when **Mr. & Mrs. Claus** make a visit!

Don't forget your cameras! This environment is just right for your child to visit Santa.

**Please RSVP to Mrs. H in the preschool office by  
Wednesday, November 30th**

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of Guests (ages 2 and up, kids and adults)

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost @ \$8 per person

Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Cash \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_



# Building a Kindergartener

**For Teachers and Parents of Children ages 2-5**

Saturday, January 14, 2017 @ Children of Hope Preschool

9:00am – 3:00pm

\$40 per person, includes breakfast snacks and full lunch



**Morning Session: Boosting Brain Power: 52 Strategies for priming children for learning** with Dr. Jill Stamm, Ph.D Learning and Instructional Technology



**Afternoon Session I: Parenting Styles and Child Development**  
with Dr. Lisa Peck, Ph.D Educational Psychology



**Afternoon Session II: Positive Discipline**  
with Lynn Hockenberger, B.A and Director of Children of Hope Preschool



**Afternoon Session III: Building a Reader**  
with Lisa Krach, M.Ed and Reading Specialist



**Afternoon Session III: For Teachers Only**

**Continuing Education Certificates for 5 Clock Hours will be provided for all Educators.**



# Building a Kindergartener



**For Teachers and Parents of children ages 2-5**

**Saturday, January 14, 2017**

**9:00am – 3:00pm**

**\$40 per person, includes breakfast snacks and full lunch**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a Teacher and my school is \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ I am a Parent and my child is \_\_\_\_\_ years old.

\_\_\_\_\_ My \$40 check made out to Esperanza Lutheran Church is enclosed.

Please detach and return by January 7, 2017 to:

Children of Hope Preschool

2601 E Thunderhill Place

Phoenix, AZ 85048



Please **NO Cell Phones at Drop Off or Pick Up**

**THANKS!**



**ALSO, JOIN OUR PRIVATE GROUP!**

Children of Hope Preschool/  
Child Development Center of Ahwatukee

**Labels for Education**

Clip and send these labels:

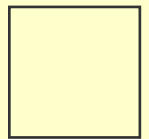


The label template features a dashed border, a pair of scissors icon at the top left, and the text 'CLIP & EARN 1 POINT FOR YOUR SCHOOL! LABELS FOR EDUCATION'. It also includes the website 'LabelsForEducation.com', a barcode, and the number '000000000000'.

Found on any of these products:



A collection of brand logos including Campbell's, PEPPERIDGE FARM, PREGO, SPAGHETTI, Danimals, Dan-o-nino, EMERALD, GLAD, BIC, FRANCO AMERICAN, Post, and V8.



We have used funds from this program to purchase playground equipment and a die cut machine! **Keep those labels coming!**

**This program is ending but labels marked “Labels for Education” will continue to be accepted until they are gone. Check your products! Drop box in Mrs. H’s office. Thank you!**

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