

# Waterloo Co-operative PRESCHOOL



Growing Together  
April 2019

Spring is finally here, and things are warming up at WCP this month! Be prepared for outdoor play as we explore all the new things popping up this season.

## April highlights

On Monday, April 15 and Tuesday, April 16, we're hosting a Teddy Bear Picnic. Come to class with your favourite stuffed companion and/or wear your pyjamas.

The Preschool classes are heading to St Jacobs for a horse-drawn trolley tour on Wednesday, April 24.

Please note that we're closed Friday, April 19 for Good Friday and Monday, April 22 for Easter Monday.

## Fall 2019 pre-registration

Pre-registration for the 2019-2020 school year is now open to applications from outside our current membership. Spread the word about our preschool to your family, friends and social networks. Forms can be found on our website at [www.waterloopreschool.org](http://www.waterloopreschool.org).

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## A Letter from Teacher Tracey

Welcome spring! April brings new excitement for our children. The changes in weather and nature will be our focus this month. As the warm weather arrives, we will be encouraging nature exploration in our garden centre as we begin some planting. We will engage the children in the wild weather of spring while on a water walk and learning about rainmaker music.

## Dressing for the outdoors in spring

As the warmer weather arrives, we plan to spend as much time as possible outside – please ensure that rubber boots, waterproof splash pants, light mitts and hats come to school each day so we can take full advantage of the outdoors.

## In the classroom this month

Throughout April we will be exploring the letters v, y and x, and the sound sh. We will also review our last set of letters: j, z, w and v. The children will learn new nursery rhymes and read stories like *Jack in the Beanstalk*.

Watch for details about our April activities. We will be hosting a Teddy Bear Picnic for our children. The KinderPrep class may also embark on a nature walk in Waterloo Park and/or a trip to the library.

We've recently updated our website! Check it out at [www.waterloopreschool.org](http://www.waterloopreschool.org).

## Thank you to our student volunteers

A big thank you to the Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College students who have now completed their placements at WCP. We benefit greatly from their time in our classroom. We are also welcoming a new group of volunteers that have started over the last few months. They are a great asset to our classroom!

## Health Care Policy reminder

Please continue to adhere to our health care policy and refrain from attending school when your child is experiencing signs of illness or flu, including fever, vomiting and diarrhea. Please do not return for at least 24 to 48 hours after experiencing these symptoms. A little cough is fine, but if your child is coughing heavily or has significant nasal discharge and is not able to actively participate, please keep them home for the day.

## Donation requests

WCP would greatly benefit from:

- Multicultural dress up clothes and jewelry for our drama center.
- Splash and track pants, size 2 to 4.
- Tires to build up ramps in our playground area.
- Wood stumps for the playground.

## Connecting with other graduating families

We encourage families who are transitioning to kindergarten this fall to connect and share which schools they are attending, so they can support each other and share in the experience together. Please remember that teachers cannot disclose personal information, so if you wish to share, we encourage you to do so amongst yourselves.

It is such an exciting time of the year as children are seen reaching their goals and developing at such a fast pace!

## Teacher Tracey

### Preschool horse-drawn trolley tour



We're excited for our next preschool field trip! On **Wednesday, April 24**, the AM and PM Preschool classes

will get the chance to tour a Mennonite farm on a horse-drawn trolley. We'll learn about different styles of transportation, farming and living.

The **AM Preschool** class will meet the teachers at the trolley stop at St Jacobs Market at 9:30 am. The trolley will return between 11 and 11:15 am.

The **PM Preschool** class will meet the teachers at the trolley stop at St Jacobs Market at 1:00 pm. The trolley will return between 2:30 and 2:45 pm.

Cost will depend on the number of children participating in the trip. Tickets will be a maximum of \$15. Sign up using the sheet outside the classroom by **Monday, April 8** to reserve your child's spot. The final cost will be calculated and payment due by **Wednesday, April 17**. Parents may come along with siblings, if desired. Adults and under twos are free.

Visit [stjacobshorsedrawntours.com](http://stjacobshorsedrawntours.com) for more information.

## Our Annual Train Trip in St Jacobs

Teacher Patty is busy planning our Annual Train Trip, scheduled for **Thursday, May 16**. This is a trip for the whole family – grandparents, siblings and other loved ones are welcome!

Be sure to reserve the date and sign up on the sheet next to the cups bin outside the red classroom door by **Monday, April 1**. Please indicate how many people in your family would like to join us. Adults are \$17, children are \$11 and children under two are free. This is **special pricing for our preschool**, and we need to know who wants to attend by April 1 in order to reserve tickets at this discounted price.

Once we have our final numbers, Teacher Patty will pick up the prepaid tickets. No payment is necessary until the tickets are distributed to you, but please note that **you are responsible to pay for all the tickets you have requested, regardless of illness or change of plans**. Teacher Patty will collect payment when she distributes tickets.

On the day of the trip, we will meet and board the train at the St Jacobs Market Station (beside Value Village, 330



Farmers Market Road). There is plenty of parking in the lot directly next to the station. Please arrive by 9:50 am. The train will leave at 10:10 am and return around 11:40 am. We will be offering a snack and singing songs on the train. Please be sure to bring your own water.

We look forward to this fun-filled family trip with our wonderful membership!

## Spring yard cleanup

In order to ensure that our outdoor play space remains a safe, clean and fun place for our kids, all members who have not paid to opt out are expected to attend one of three yard cleanups.

Our final yard cleanup is scheduled for **Saturday, April 27** from **9 to 11:30 am**. You don't need to sign up to attend this cleanup, but you will need to sign in when you get here, so we can make note that you've participated. Please bring yard tools and work gloves.

If you're unable to help out but still need to fulfill the membership cleaning requirement, we're also looking for help with a variety of odd jobs around the playground that can be completed at another time over the coming weeks. These tasks include:

- Installation of the loose parts bin to the shed.
- Painting no-slip grips on the stairs.
- Installation of safety gates.
- Repairs to the planters.
- Painting the sandbox shelter.

Reach out to Susan, our school improvement officer, at [waterloopreschool.improvement@gmail.com](mailto:waterloopreschool.improvement@gmail.com) for more information. We'll see you in the yard!

### Loose parts play at WCP

Thanks to everyone who donated items to our outdoor loose parts play bin. We will be installing the bin in the yard in the next several weeks. We will continue to accept donations in the box outside the classroom for the remainder of the year.

We'd also like to thank Adam Davis of **True Grit Tree Service** (519-807-3832), a local arborist who has been making and dropping off tree cookies for our bin.

Please contact Jill, our administrative officer, at [waterloopreschool.aa@gmail.com](mailto:waterloopreschool.aa@gmail.com) if you have any questions about this project.

## Where to play indoors

Spring can be stormy. Want ideas of where to play when the weather doesn't let you get outside? Try one of these exciting indoor play options:

- ⇒ **Swimming.** Check out [www.kitchener.ca/en/things-to-do/pools-and-swimming](http://www.kitchener.ca/en/things-to-do/pools-and-swimming) and [www.waterloo.ca/en/things-to-do/swimming](http://www.waterloo.ca/en/things-to-do/swimming).
- ⇒ **Bingemans Fun Worx.** Find them online at [www.bingemans.com/funworx](http://www.bingemans.com/funworx).
- ⇒ **PlayFit (Cambridge).** This indoor playground is suited to ages 5 and under. Visit [www.playfitkids.com](http://www.playfitkids.com).
- ⇒ **Our Place (Ontario Early Years).** Gym is available for activities and play. Learn more at [www.ourplacekw.ca](http://www.ourplacekw.ca).
- ⇒ **SkyZone.** All age groups welcome, from children to adults. Check out [www.skyzone.com/ca/kitchener](http://www.skyzone.com/ca/kitchener).
- ⇒ **Grand River Rocks.** Rock climbing for kids and adults. Visit [grandriverrocks.com](http://grandriverrocks.com).
- ⇒ **Go Bananas.** Kid-focused adventure climbing. Learn more at [go-bananas.ca](http://go-bananas.ca).
- ⇒ **Funvilla.** Indoor playground and trampoline park. Check out [funvilla.ca](http://funvilla.ca).
- ⇒ **Recharge and Play Wellness Café.** Indoor playground. Learn more at [rechargeandplay.com](http://rechargeandplay.com).
- ⇒ **Local library.** See [www.kpl.org](http://www.kpl.org) and [www.wpl.ca](http://www.wpl.ca).
- ⇒ **Creekside Church.** Free indoor playground open Monday to Thursday 9:30 to 11:30 am. Visit [creeksidechurch.ca/playground](http://creeksidechurch.ca/playground).
- ⇒ **Love. Laugh. Play.** Indoor play land. Learn more at [lovelaughplay.ca](http://lovelaughplay.ca).
- ⇒ **PAL card.** This program provides support in leisure programs offered by the City of Kitchener. Information can be found online at [www.kitchener.ca/en/things-to-do/personal-assistance-for-leisure-activities-pal](http://www.kitchener.ca/en/things-to-do/personal-assistance-for-leisure-activities-pal).
- ⇒ **Sports Centre in Bechtel Park.** See [www.waterloo.ca/en/gettingactive/bechtelpark](http://www.waterloo.ca/en/gettingactive/bechtelpark).
- ⇒ **Play group at Parkminster United Church.** Find them online at [www.parkuc.ca](http://www.parkuc.ca).

### Fundraiser with Vesey's Bulbs

Spring is finally here, and what better way to celebrate the season than planning your garden?! We're hosting a fundraiser with Vesey's Bulbs. 50% of all sales will go directly to our beloved preschool!

Catalogues and order forms have been distributed. To place an order, complete the form and separate the white and yellow copies. Keep the yellow copy for your records and enclose the white copy with complete payment in the envelope provided. Be sure to submit orders to the classroom lockbox by **end of day Friday, April 12.**

Reach out to Laura, our operations officer, at [waterloopreschool.operations@gmail.com](mailto:waterloopreschool.operations@gmail.com) with questions or for more information.



## What is Autonomy?



Autonomy is our child's need to perceive that they have choices and that they are the source of their own actions. It is their ability and confidence in making self-directed decisions and choices, especially when the situation is uncertain and not part of the usual routine. Autonomy helps us to feel motivated, engaged and satisfied with our lives and helps us apply energy in the right directions.

There is a universal desire to be active agents in our own lives. The impact of autonomy has been studied in over 80 countries around the world. Regardless of culture, autonomy is consistently linked to better life satisfaction.

The number one well-being benefit we get from autonomy is feeling able to make our own decisions and have control over our path in life. This is not completely independent of the other people in our lives. Maintaining healthy community while having your own direction creates powerful autonomy and is a big part of a well-rounded umbrella.

Adapted from *The Umbrella Project* ([www.umbrellaproject.co](http://www.umbrellaproject.co)).



## What is Autonomy in Early Childhood Education?



Autonomy in relation to early childhood education means letting children know that they have control over themselves and the choices that they make.

From the activities they participate in, to how they play and interact with peers, autonomy plays a role in everything a child does in the classroom. Learning how to be independent is a critical skill for preschoolers to

develop, as it teaches them how to conduct themselves later in life as they take on greater responsibilities.

### Why should autonomy be encouraged?

As children become more independent, they explore the world on their own and discover how to express themselves. They also begin to understand how their choices and actions influence outcomes, and learn what they do and do not have control over. Autonomy must be encouraged in early childhood education to help children develop a sense of self.

The following are a few of the most important ways that autonomy can impact a child:

### Feeling in control

Though children cannot be expected to be in total control of all aspects of their lives, they do need to feel that they have ownership over certain parts to build confidence.

### Boosting self-esteem

When a child feels they are in control and can make their own choices, this builds up their self-esteem. Being able to do something on one's own fosters a sense of achievement.

### Cognitive growth

When a child makes his or her own choices, they are problem solving. Making meaningful choices is an essential part of their cognitive development, which grows as they think through choices that are presented to them.

### How to encourage autonomy

Encouraging autonomy in early childhood education is essential to a child's growth and personal confidence. As educators and parents provide more independence, children are able to learn from their actions, struggles and successes.

Here are just a few ways autonomy is encouraged in the classroom:

#### Offering choices

Allowing children to make their own choices is the first step to encouraging autonomy. When possible, set up an environment where many choices are available. For example, let children decide which activity they want to participate in, and whether they want to do it with a group or play independently.

### Respecting opinions

By listening to children's ideas and opinions, we can help them develop their sense of autonomy. Respecting the opinions of preschoolers demonstrates to them that they do matter and that they have input into the world around them. It also helps them understand that adults recognize and respect their abilities.

### Giving responsibility

Educators offer children real responsibilities that matter. Tasks should be somewhat challenging to help preschoolers develop perseverance. Experiences like cooking from a recipe, organizing files or gardening are excellent tasks to assign to children to help them feel like they are performing an "adult" responsibility.

### Why does autonomy matter?

By embracing children's opinions and allowing them to make independent decisions, educators can help them develop a sense of autonomy, boost self-esteem and encourage cognitive development. Building this independence ultimately helps children take a more active role in the learning process.

*Adapted from "What is Autonomy in Early Childhood Education?", an article published in **HiMama** ([blog.himama.com](http://blog.himama.com)).*



**Early Childhood  
Education Blog**

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Place your Scholastic order online this month at [www.scholastic.ca](http://www.scholastic.ca) and use the coupon code "CLIFFORD" to get a free book (valued at \$6 or less). Orders must be for **\$30 or more** to qualify for this promotion. Place your order by **Thursday, April 25 at noon**.

Your Scholastic order supports the preschool by allowing teachers to order free books for the classroom as well as books to give to the children as gifts. We appreciate your support!

