



# Tender Hearts Newsletter



March 2025

## Important dates in March

- Mar 7 No School—  
Professional Dev. Day
- Mar 9 Daylight Savings  
Time (Set clocks  
ahead 1hr before  
going to bed on 3/8)
- Mar 17 Happy St. Patrick's  
Day
- Mar. 18 Happy Birthday to  
Amanda P.
- Mar 20 First Day of Spring  
Happy Birthday to  
Ethan P.
- Mar 22 Happy 5th Birthday  
to Preston B.
- Mar. 24—28 No School—  
Spring Break
- Mar. 29 Happy Birthday to  
Haylee B.

## Topics for March

The topics for March are: Dr. Seuss Week, St. Patrick's Day, Spring, Birds, and Weather.

## What we did last month

A few things we did were: we talked about the post office and made letters for our friends. We made Valentine's for each of our friends. Each child delivered their Valentine's to their friends. Carol stopped by and gave each child a bag of goodies. Thank you Pete and Carol! For the Dental Health week, we role played what it was like going to the dentist. I sat in the rocking chair and pretended to be a dentist. Each child had a turn to climb up, I lowered my arm as to lowering the dentist chair, I turned on the light (the reading light I had nearby), and asked the child to open their mouth. I looked in their mouth and I would describe what the dentist would be doing. Then they were done. Then we played with dental toys where they could pretend to be the dentist. Lastly, we practiced brushing and flossing our own teeth.



## Daylight Savings Time

Remember to set your clocks one hour ahead before going to bed on Saturday, March 8th for Daylight Savings Time. It might be a great idea to also change the batteries in all the smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your homes if they are operated by batteries. It's always better to be safe than sorry.

## Welcome Aboard!

We welcome 1 1/2 year old Graeme and his parents, Josh and Kristin, to our center. Graeme started on March 3rd and will be here full time. Graeme, Josh, and Kristin are a great addition to our childcare family. Welcome aboard!

## Cubbies

Please take a few moments and check the clothes in your child's cubbie to make sure your child has not outgrown the clothes. Please make sure there is also a sweater or sweatshirt in case there are chilly mornings or chilly days. You never know what Wisconsin weather will be like.

# Am I Really My Child's First Teacher?

<https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/families/childs-first-teacher>

By Nicole Taylor



You might be thinking, “I’m a parent, not a teacher.” The great news is, whether you’ve had training or not, you are your child’s first teacher.

Many simple, everyday routines are excellent opportunities for developing your child’s emergent literacy skills. Emergent literacy refers to the point in children’s development before they are able to read on their own or write words that others can read. This concept assumes that literacy learning begins at birth and develops gradually over time. It also suggests that the pre literacy skills children develop at this time are the critical foundation for later reading success. For example, by the time Lucas turns 1, his parents will have spent 8,760 hours providing him with consistent care. When Lucas is ready to start kindergarten at the age of 5, his parents will have accumulated 43,800 hours—over 1,000 days—with him, where growth and development are continuously occurring. This is a crucial period of development when it comes to literacy.

So what can you do? Below are three quick, yet impactful suggestions for quality literacy experiences. These ideas will help you promote literacy in a way that makes sense for you and your family.

## Tell stories

Language develops long before a child speaks actual words. In anticipation, we sing, talk, read, and tell stories to children. Since there is a natural progression of oral language (the ability to speak and understand language) to reading and writing, telling stories is an important step to becoming a reader. You can develop your child’s oral language through storytelling. Use your imagination, and adjust your stories to fit your family’s traditions and culture.

## Look around

Use everyday routines and surroundings to promote a print rich environment, which is an environment that allows children to see print and words in authentic ways. For example, the kitchen is full of literacy learning opportunities: label your appliances, refrigerator drawers, and items in the pantry; follow a recipe with your child; and identify key words on food labels. But the kitchen is not the only place to create a print rich environment! Extend your labeling to other parts of the home, too. This will help your children to learn letters, words, and the purpose and meaning of printed language. Developing this understanding of print will be foundational for children. They begin to understand that words have meaning, which will be important as they begin the process of learning how to read.

## Make books available

In addition to reading, allow your child to physically explore books by making them easily accessible. Children develop emergent literacy skills by showing an interest in books— encourage your child to turn pages and pretend to read. Imitating the behavior of reading will allow your child to explore and begin to grasp the overall concept of reading. You can build on this pre- reading skill as your child will soon begin to develop an awareness for words, pictures, and the purpose for reading.

# Choosing Healthy Snacks for Kids

While meals make up the majority of a child's nutritional intake, most children eat at least one snack per day. While many of the most commonly offered kids' snacks tend to be of lower nutritional value than meals, snacks still can support—or even enhance—your child's overall healthy eating plan. Here's how:



- Use snack times as a way to increase fruits and vegetable intake. Most kids do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Snack times offer a great opportunity to increase access and exposure to these nutrient-dense foods. Consider pairing them up with dairy products or dairy substitutes (such as grapes and cheese) lean proteins (such as celery and peanut butter), or whole-grain cereals and bread (such as banana sandwich on whole grain bread).
- Keep a range of healthy foods handy at home. It is much easier to make easy, healthy snacks when you keep a few key items stocked at home. Ideas include different types of raw vegetables and fruit, yogurt dip, hummus, and cheese sticks.
- Avoid processed foods and added sugars. Processed foods (made in a factory and sold in bags and boxes) do not have many nutrients and often have a lot of added sugar and salt. In addition, children may become hungry faster after eating processed foods.
- Teach your children to eat a rainbow of colors. Arrange your children's foods to show the beauty of fresh, brightly colored foods. Talk about the farms where food comes from and the farmers who help grow it.

## Snack Ideas for Families: Foods to Keep on Hand

Type	Suggestions
<b>Fresh Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apples, bananas, peaches, nectarines, pears</li> <li>• Cherries, grapes, plums (sliced or pitted)</li> <li>• Orange or grapefruit sections</li> <li>• Strawberries, grapes (cut into half for small children)</li> </ul>
<b>Dried Fruits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apples, apricots, peaches, pears (cut up)</li> <li>• Dates, prunes</li> <li>• Raisins, cranberries</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrot sticks, celery sticks</li> <li>• Raw or steamed cauliflower, broccoli</li> <li>• Bell pepper strips—red, yellow, orange, and green</li> <li>• Grape and cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Fresh or frozen corn and peas</li> <li>• Sliced cucumbers</li> <li>• Avocado slices or chunks</li> </ul>
<b>Lean Proteins</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fish (canned tuna, salmon, sardines, whitefish)</li> <li>• Peanut butter or other nut butters (smooth, spread on whole grain bread or crackers)</li> <li>• Edamame beans or chickpeas or hummus spreads</li> <li>• Cooked tofu cubes or tofu dip</li> <li>• Hard boiled eggs</li> </ul>
<b>Dairy Products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese (sliced, grated, or diced)</li> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Low-sugar yogurt</li> <li>• Milk—cow's milk or non-dairy milks</li> </ul>
<b>Breads &amp; Cereals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole wheat bread</li> <li>• Whole grain tortillas or tortilla chips</li> <li>• Whole grain crackers</li> <li>• Whole grain dry cereals</li> <li>• Rice cakes</li> <li>• Whole grain pitas and bagels</li> <li>• Air-popped popcorn</li> </ul>

**Source:** Section on Obesity (Copyright © 2016 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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