

St. James Early Learning Center

NEWSLETTER



IMPORTANT DATES

- Feb. 2 | Groundhog's Day / First Day in New Rooms!
- Feb. 4 | Global Play Day
- Feb. 14 | Valentine's Day
- Feb. 17 | President's Day (CENTER CLOSED)
- Feb. 20 | National Love Your Pet Day
- Feb. 11-18 | Fastnacht Week

- Staff Birthday's
 - Miss Lisa (7th), Miss Megs (10th), Miss Angela (14st), Miss Thalia (20th)
- Staff Anniversary's:
 - Miss Amanda: 6 years on 2/12

- **Looking Ahead..** St. Patrick's Day, Read Across America, Easter & Week of the Young Child



CENTER INFO

Center Hours:

The Early Learning Center is open from 6:30AM to 5:30PM. Tuition rates are based on a 10-hour daily enrollment and are monitored through sign-in sheets and Lillio attendance. Please plan accordingly and try to keep your drop off time NO EARLIER and your pick up time NO LATER than what is stated on your new Fee Agreements. We understand that things come up from time to time, and we appreciate families letting us know if/when those situations may arise.

Breakfast:

Breakfast is served every morning from 7:00-8:00AM. If you would like your child to eat breakfast at school, please have them here before 8:00AM, so they have an opportunity to eat before breakfast is put away for the day. We also ask that parents do not bring in additional breakfast or alternative breakfast items. As a center, we provide a variety of foods that are part of our food program options. If you prefer that your child eats items that you provide, please make sure they eat their breakfast with you before being dropped off into their classrooms.



February
2026

Happy Valentine's Day!

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE?

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- Global Play Day
- Valentine's Day Quick Tip
- Fastnacht's
- Black History Month
- Dental Health
- National Love Your Pet Day
- Weather Delays/Closures
 - SJELC
 - GASD/Kids Club
- Outdoor Reminders
- Parking Lot
 - Youth Group
 - Large Vehicles
- Flu Shots
- Flyers
 - Sickness/Illness Policy
 - C.A.R.E.S./Keycard/Call Button

SCHOLASTIC



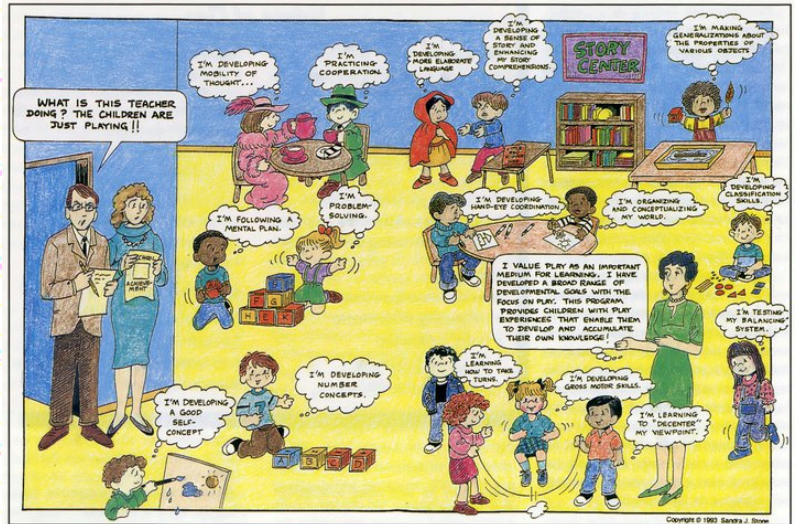
Scholastic book order flyers are available in the hallway by the side door entrance. If you are interested in ordering books, you can order through the scholastic website by searching Gettysburg's zip code (17325) and finding "St James Early Learning Center", or "Ashley Drechsler", OR by our center code: GZT46



GLOBAL PLAY DAY

February 4th is Global Play Day and is celebrated in over 75 countries! Global play day is a day that emphasizes the importance of unstructured screen-free play for children.

Play is an essential part of your child's growth and early development. Our classrooms play every single day! Children have the opportunity to have unstructured free-play and structured-planned play each day they are here with us! Play and learning mutually support one another and how teachers connect learning goals to children's play.



Whether solitary, dramatic, parallel, social, cooperative, onlooker, object, fantasy, physical, constructive, or games with rules... Play, in all of its forms, is a teaching practice that optimally facilitates young children's development and learning. Play fosters creativity, problem-solving skills, and social interactions among children. Children are encouraged to explore their interests and engage in various play activities, such as building, role-playing, and exploring their creativity. Play is essential for developing critical life skills, including communication, negotiation, and emotional intelligence. By maximizing children's choices, promoting wonder and enthusiasm for learning, and creating a fun environment; children learn without even realizing they're learning!

There is so much more to play than just "playing!" How does your family incorporate play day-to-day?



VALENTINE'S DAY QUICK TIP

When preparing Valentine's Day Cards with your kiddos, try this quick hack to help save you time!

Keep all of the "TO: _____" spots blank, and only have your child practice their own names in the "FROM: _____" spots! This saves parents time of trying to remember all their classmates names, how to spell each name, keeps your child from getting impatient from writing so much, AND saves time in the classroom when distributing! When the time comes to hand out cards, your child can just grab a random card (signed from them) and place it into the next bag quickly without having to match the names on the cards with each individual child!

FASTNACHTS

2026 Fastnacht's Season is now upon us! Fasnacht's are \$10 a dozen and can be ordered ahead of time, online! All proceeds benefit the St. James Youth. To order ahead online: visit stjamesgettysburg.org and scroll down to the red box that says "ORDER FASTNACHTS", fill out the form, choose a pick-up time, and submit your order!

This year's pick-up times:
Sunday Feb. 15th 8am-12pm
Monday Feb. 16th 3pm-6pm
Tuesday Feb 17th 5am-10am



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

February is Black History Month. Take time this month to explore stories and accomplishments of African Americans throughout U.S. history! Start at the beginning by discussing what the month honors, how it started, and why it is important.

Picture books are a great way to bring the stories and histories of Black History Month to life for children! Keep it simple, but expose them to the importance of why we honor those of the past.



DENTAL HEALTH



February is National Children's Dental Health Month!

Each February, the American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of early oral health.

Did you know that tooth decay is the number one chronic disease for children but can be prevented and managed with good oral care? Visit the ADA webpage for free useful resources, and a digital brushing calendar. Remember that oral care for your child starts during pregnancy and dental visits for children should start by age one!

Adams County has many great dentists available for your little smiles!

Gettysburg Dental Associates - 717.334.8193
Above & Beyond - 717.334.2223



NATIONAL LOVE YOUR PET DAY

National Love Your Pet Day is a special occasion that encourages pet owners to spend extra time with their furry, feathered, or scaly companions! There are many ways to celebrate with them, including extra quality time spent playing, taking a walk, or cuddling and watching TV! Other ways include extra treats, a new toy, a groom session, outdoor adventures, or a fun photo op!

In honor of the day, we want to give a shoutout to our furry friends of St. James ELC! In Older Toddlers, we have Pip! And in Pre-K, we have Porky! Both are classroom guinea pigs that all the children love to watch play and talk to when they need that extra listening ear!



Pip



Porky



WEATHER DELAYS AND CLOSURES



Inclement Weather-Snow Delay Closures ☁️

If snow impacts our day, we will notify families through Lillio (HiMama) via text or email. We will also post on social media and the St. James Church website (under Early Learning), and it will be listed on WGAL. We do our very best to keep the center open and take many contributing factors into our decision-making, balancing overall safety. Keeping children, families, and our center staff safe during inclement weather is our number one concern.

School Age Families 🙄🙄

If the school district closes for a **snow or remote-learning** day, we will **NOT** have all-day care available. We do not have the flexibility to meet the many different time requests for remote days or school closures.

Delays and Early Closures: We will accommodate these needs to the best of our ability. In the event that a delayed opening for the district results in a closure/remote day, we will keep the school-age children who have already arrived at that point and provide full-day care. However, we are **NOT** responsible for remote work that needs to be completed for their attendance. If the district closes early, we will walk the school-age children back to the center as normal, but please be prepared to pick up your children in the event that we would also close early.



OUTDOOR REMINDERS

Recess (Outdoor) Time & Extra Clothes:

Our goal is to go outside daily if the real-feel temp is 25 degrees or above. Please make sure your child has suitable outdoor clothing. Sweatshirts, coats/jackets, hats, and gloves. Children may also leave a light jacket or sweatshirt in their cubbies for when the classrooms are extra chilly.

Children need to have a sweatshirt/jacket on if the real-feel temp is 50 degrees or below.

Please check with your children's teachers that their "extra clothes" bins also have weather-appropriate clothing (and correct sizes) in case they need a change of clothes here at school.

Lastly, all children must also have **runable closed-toe shoes every day!**



PARKING LOT



Youth Group:

Youth Group is held on **MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS!**

On both days, Youth Group ends at 5:00PM. This will shake up our parking availability around 4:45-5:15 on Monday AND Wednesday evenings as children are being picked up.

Parking:

Reminding all families that St. James ELC parking is located at the back of the building (larger vehicles - please park at the top of the lot closer to the road so other vehicles can still get through and can keep the flow of traffic moving). We are not responsible for tickets, tows, etc. if you are parking elsewhere.

FLU SHOTS



All children aged 6 months to 6 years is required to have a flu vaccination. The flu is known to peak during the months of October through March. If you do not wish to have your child vaccinated this season, please complete and return the exemption form located outside the office.

SICKNESS/ILLNESS POLICY



We do our best to clean and disinfect classrooms, toys and materials used among the children daily. However, if and when your child(ren) get sick - we ask that you honor the 24-hour recuperation policy. **CHILDREN MUST BE SYMPTOM FREE FOR 24 HOURS!** You are not permitted to give your children medication that masks any sickness/illnesses. This includes medication for vomiting, diarrhea, and fevers.

100.4+ Fevers: Temperatures that are 100.4 or higher are considered a fever. Children may return to school when their temperature has been consistently normal for a full 24 hours without fever-reducing medication.

Vomiting: Children may return 24 hours after symptoms are gone and can consume regular foods again, including the consumption of milk.

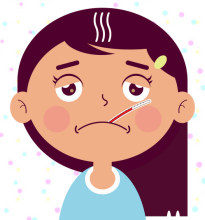
Diarrhea: Children may return to school 24 hours after symptoms are gone and are back to consistently normal bowel movements. Bowel movements must be contained inside the diaper, or (if potty trained) - can make it to the bathroom in time.

Antibiotics: Children must be on an antibiotic for a full 24 hours before returning to the center. This helps prevent the spread of illness and allows parents to monitor their children for any reactions that may occur due to the medication.

We understand the importance of having your children with us, but also how crucial it is to keep other children healthy, and our staff in good health, so we can continue to care for everyone's children collectively.

It is important to know that if your child comes back to school and begins to show reoccurring symptoms halfway through the day, you will be called to pick up your child again and will have to restart the 24-hour recuperation period. Giving your children medication "to get through the day", does not keep other children (or staff) healthy. So please make sure you are doing your part and ensuring that your child is fully back to themselves and can function in day-to-day activities (this includes being able to actively play, take naps as normal, back to regular toileting habits, and the ability to consume all planned meals/drinks throughout the day) before returning them back to school.

Lastly, if your children are on medication for any other reason, we need to know about it in the case of an emergency. The last thing we would want is for your child to be over-medicated if emergency personnel would have to administer life saving medication. Thank you for understanding.



DO NOT OPEN THE DOOR FOR ANYONE YOU DO NOT KNOW!

This is to keep YOUR child safe, AND to keep OTHER CHILDREN safe, at all times.

If you are not sure of someone at the door, please tell them you will get someone to assist them; and then you are to find an administrator to let them know someone is at the door.

It could be a family member of a child here at the center or it could be someone confused on where they should go for assistance.

We can help direct them either way.

EVERY FAMILY SHOULD BE MAKING SURE THEY ARE BRINGING THEIR KEY CARD WITH THEM TO DROP OFF AND PICK UP THEIR CHILDREN EVERY DAY.

The call button next to the door is for individuals who are not part of our program and would need to be let in by an employee. If you no longer have your keycard and need to pay the replacement fee for a new one, please get in touch with a director ASAP.

Thank you for understanding!

C.A.R.E.S.

Gettysburg C.A.R.E.S. (Combined Area Resources for Emergency Shelter) is in and out next door to us. C.A.R.E.S. began on November 1st and will continue through until the spring.

CALL BUTTON VS. SUPERVISION

Each time the call button is used, it is not always guaranteed that an administrator will be available to answer it. When that happens, teachers in the classroom would then need to answer the doorbell, and this takes supervision away from the children in their care. Please use your keycard!