



# FIRST CLASS PRE-K

April 2026

WELCOME TO OUR

## *Early Childhood Mental Health Minute*

Growing, Learning, and Playing Together



April is the **Month of the Young Child**, a time to recognize the importance of early learning, the work of teachers, and the role families play in building a strong foundation for children’s success. Your child’s brain is growing at an incredible pace —every song, snack, art project, and family game is helping them learn new skills they will carry for life. This month, we celebrate **play, creativity, and connection** as powerful learning tools.

### How to Prepare

Your child’s brain and emotions are growing together. Positive experiences —like creating art, cooking together, or singing —don’t just build skills for school. They also help children feel secure, capable, and connected, which is the heart of **early childhood mental health**.

A child's social -emotional well -being is the foundation on which all other learning is built. When children feel safe, secure, and understood, they are better equipped to learn, build friendships, and navigate the world around them.

## What to Expect

This month is a reminder that every child's development is a journey, not a race. We'll be emphasizing the importance of play-based learning and celebrating each child's unique pace and progress. Here are a few of the milestones your child is beginning to display.

**Physically:** they can hop and stand on one -foot, alternate feet when climbing stairs, and can catch a large ball. They are also able to use scissors, draw a person with at least 3 body parts, and can use buttons and zippers while dressing themselves.

**Cognitively** – begin to understand the concept of time, count to 10 or higher, name several colors, they will use imaginative play but sometimes still confuse reality and make -believe.

**Social - Emotionally** – they enjoy playing with others and begin cooperative play, they are learning to calm themselves when upset and communicate how they feel. They also are increasing their independence often wanting to be the helper.

## How to Help

As mentioned repeatedly in our newsletters, children learn best through play. Allow your child a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity a day and a minimum of 30 minutes of free unstructured play. This is a time where they can choose what activity they would like to do that doesn't include screen time.

•**Read, Read, Read!** Reading together is one of the most powerful things you can do to support your child's development. Snuggle up with a new book or revisit an old favorite. Ask questions about the story, the characters, and the pictures. You can even make up your own story together!

•**Get Moving!** Turn on some music and have a dance party. Build an indoor obstacle course with pillows and blankets. Head outside to the park for some running, jumping, and ball-playing. Physical activity is essential for developing gross motor skills and a healthy mind and body.

•**Cook Together:** Involve your child in the kitchen! They can help with age-appropriate tasks like washing fruits, stirring ingredients, or pouring liquids. This is a great way to work on measuring skills, learn new vocabulary, and practice following directions.

•**Talk About Your Day:** At the end of the day, sit down and talk about the things you did. Ask your child what made them happy, what they learned, or what they found interesting. This helps build language and communication skills and strengthens your bond.

## Things to Try

Reading nightly with your child is a great way to wind down from the day, foster a love of reading and provide a special, quiet, one on one time with each other. Look through your favorite books to talk about the feelings and emotions seen.

### **Books to Read** :

- The Book With No Pictures- by B.J. Novak
- The Day the Crayons Quit- by Drew Daywalt
- The Rabbit Listened- by Cori Doerrfeld
- The Grumpy Monkey - By Suzanne Lang

### **Activity to Do** :

Set up an art station with various art supplies like paint, crayons, washable markers, and a variety of types of paper to let your child be creative. This will help build fine motor skills and creativity.