

# GSPK

## Happy Gram

**Welcome, GSPK Families to the FIRST ISSUE of the GSPK Happy Gram!**

We are sending you this little newsletter to give you helpful hints, creative solutions and online links to extend your child's preschool experience into the home while we are all trying to adapt to a new way of living and learning. We miss you and your children SO MUCH, and want you to know how important you are to us. Our hearts are full of love and concern for everyone in our sweet little school family. We hope that with this weekly publication we can bring a little ray of sunshine into your homes.

**Sending you all love, hugs and big smiles.**

**XOXO,**

**The GSPK Teachers and Staff**





## How Are You? You are Doing a Great Job!

**We've made it through our first week of life without school. We want you to know that you are doing a great job. We are so proud of you. We are here to remind you that though this is a big change in everyone's routines, it is a short hiccup in your child's educational development, so whatever you are doing, as long as you are together, it is OK. Better than OK, this is a special opportunity for your family. The bonds and memories you form in this time together will last a lifetime.**

**That said, we know that this time is not without its hurdles and challenges.**

Establishing daily routines, dealing with anxiety, talking about big issues with young children and the uncertainties of what we will face down the road can feel overwhelming. Following are a few resources to help with some of these issues. Know that your classroom teachers are available to counsel you in any areas where you feel you need help. While we may be separated, you are not alone. Take care of yourselves, and remember what Mrs. Ingold always says, "We did the best we could do today."

### General Information:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/children.html>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/2019-Novel-Coronavirus.aspx>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/freedom-learn/202003/coronavirus-school-closures-educational-opportunity>

### Establishing Routines:

<https://busytoddler.com/2020/03/daily-schedule-covid-19/>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/chest-lungs/Pages/Working-and-Learning-from-Home-During-the-COVID-19-Outbreak.aspx>

<http://teachertomsblog.blogspot.com/2020/03/there-are-plenty-of-things-to-worry.html>

### Talking to Children About Crisis:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/talking-with-children.html>

[Fred Rogers talks about the tragic events in the news](#)

[Sesame Street Communities: Exploring Emotions](#)

[Sesame Street Communities: Staying Healthy](#)





## Activities and Suggestions for Learning at Home

### ★ The Importance of Unstructured Play

As much as we are working to provide our children with novel enriching learning experiences to further their academic education, there is nothing more important than the opportunity for unstructured play. According to the article, *The Decline of Unstructured Play* by Michael Platte, PhD unstructured play is

*“a set of activities that children dream up on their own without adult intervention. This type of play rarely has predetermined goals or objectives but instead allows children to create their own rules and establish their own limits.”*

The benefits, including but not limited to social/emotional development, self-esteem, self-regulation, creativity and problem-solving, have long-lasting positive effects and build well-rounded individuals that are more prepared for life's challenges. We can still help. Our job as facilitators is to:

- Leave ample room for unstructured play time. The previous article recommends twice as much unstructured play as structured activity.
- Ensure there are plenty of props and materials available (some teachers call them “loose parts”.) They can be ANYTHING – cardboard boxes, sticks, rocks, pipe cleaners, boards, bottles, brooms, scarves, blankets, anything around the home that can spur the imagination.

<https://www.thegeniusofplay.org/genius/expert-advice/articles/the-decline-of-unstructured-play.aspx#.XnfWlohKiUk>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/nurturing-resilience/201206/let-kids-be-bored-occasionally>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2016/08/in-defense-of-play/495545/>

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/family-life/parent-child/how-to-encourage-free-play.html>

### ★ Keep Reading to Your Children

The best way to build early reading skills in your child is to read to them. And set a good example by letting them see you read as well. If you are running out new things to read, here are a few resources for free books and audiobooks online.

<https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

<https://classroommagazines.scholastic.com/support/learnathome/grades-prek-k.html>

<https://durhamcountylibrary.org/kidsteens/kids/>

<https://www.orangecountync.gov/1320/Kids>



## ★ Play Your Favorite Board Games

Board games bring families together and build lasting memories. If they are not already a part of your family's quality time, now is a great opportunity to start. As a bonus, your preschooler will be cultivating precious social skills that will help greatly in his/her school experience. Dust off your childhood favorites and introduce them to a new generation. Some favorites:

Go Fish	Hearts	Old Maid	War	Candyland	Checkers
Tic-Tac-Toe	Mancala	Chutes and Ladders	Parcheesi	Bingo	
Matching	Jacks	Pick Up Sticks	Zingo	Dominos	
Lotto	UNO	Snail's Pace	I Spy	Spot It	

<https://www.scholastic.com/parents/kids-activities-and-printables/activities-for-kids/arts-and-craft-ideas/benefits-board-games.html>

<https://medium.com/@ShawnDavison1/top-6-benefits-of-board-games-for-kids-111db7659ba7>

<https://www.weareteachers.com/best-board-games-for-preschoolers/>

## ★ Little Jobs Make a Big Difference

Time for Spring Cleaning? Let your children help! Children benefit in so many ways from having small jobs and chores to do. Our little helpers have been meteorologists, custodians, gardeners and leaders in the classroom, and are so proud of the jobs they do. They are capable and eager when given responsibilities, plus your house will sparkle! They can:

**-Bake and Cook in the Kitchen   -Unload the Dishwasher   -Sweep  
-Clean Baseboards, Door Handles, Trashcan Lids   -Sort and Fold Laundry  
-Water Plants   -Feed Pets   -Dust   -Rake Leaves   -Pick Up Sticks**  
Just keep expectations realistic and offer plenty of praise!

<https://www.webmd.com/parenting/features/chores-for-children#1>

<https://everyday-reading.com/20-chores-for-preschoolers/>

<https://www.parents.com/toddlers-preschoolers/development/behavioral/chores-for-toddlers/>

## ★ Get Outside

Happy Spring! The world may seem upside down, but the wonders of the natural world are on full display right now. Everyone can use a long walk and a breath of fresh air (even if it is full of pollen!) Have a picnic in the backyard. Fly a kite. Throw a ball. Blow bubbles. Lay in the grass and look at the sky. Put the worries aside for just a moment and embrace this time together. Remember to breathe, and know that your GSPK family holds you in our hearts until we can play together again. XOXO

