

## The Anatomy of a Blanket Fort

### Dates worth noting!

I recently listened to a radio broadcast that was encouraging parents to “let loose” a little. At one point they mentioned that children today often look to their parents for approval to build their self worth. How, then, does the intrinsic drive for trying things develop?

Also, at arrival the other day, I was encouraging children to use their imagination to come up with a funny sound or word that was the “magic” that opened the door. I gave suggestions like “abracadabra” or “allakazam” but was met primarily with blank stares. I was persistent however, waiting until I had a group of children and finally one child would blurt out something like “kazoop.” Any sound or word (besides the expected “please”) would have worked but many children seemed afraid to say something that might be the “wrong” answer. **Imagination! I kept using the word and encouraging but often to no response. I will do this again every now and then. Hopefully practice will encourage more children to think “outside the box.”**

So what does all this have to do with a blanket fort? The radio show I listened to also talked about how building a fort is one way we used to build our own self esteem. We would feel so proud of what we had made “all by ourselves.” I got to thinking about all the different aspects of fort making. Here are a few. By the way, all of these are valuable in the professional world of adults.

- Self initiative: a child has to come up with the idea and follow through with starting and completing the task
- Brainstorming: looking at different materials, locations, designs etc.
- Planning: gathering materials, asking permission for use of items when needed, recruiting help from siblings or friends
- Interpersonal Skills: Working well with those siblings or friends. Delegating tasks, using each persons skill set, compromising about different ideas, etc.
- Problem Solving: figuring out what to do when the clothes pins or tape **you are using aren't strong enough to keep the blanket in place.**
- Risk Management: deciding how high you can climb to attach items, whether standing on chairs is safe, etc.
- Self Regulation: determining how wild and loud you can be and still be able to keep playing this game.
- Creativity/Imagination: designing unusual items for the fort. What will make the best door for the tent, etc.
- Determination: sticking with it when things are getting difficult.
- Follow through: Working until it is truly a tent—whatever that looks like to them.
- Pride of accomplishment: **inviting others to enjoy the tent they've build,** reading stories or having lunch in the tent . . .

**Isn't it amazing! All these may be intangible skills but so very important.** This, of course, is only one example of an activity like this. How can we, as adults, sit back and relax—letting the children come up with their own ideas. You might just play a supportive or sounding board role. It may even feel like **you're not doing enough as a parent if they are “just playing.”** I encourage you to see beyond the play to all the skills children are developing. Go ahead and embrace the idea. Let the kids play!

**October 25:**  
Yellow Class Parent Day  
(times determined by class)

**October 26:**  
Orange Class Parent Day  
(times determined by class)

**October 31:**  
Open  
(even though Olathe schools are closed)  
Please remember, no treats at School for the holiday. Thanks!

**November 4:**  
Purple Class Parent Day  
(times determined by class)

**November 10:**  
Red Class Parent Day  
(times determined by class)

**November 15:**  
Blue Class Parent Day  
(times determined by class)

**November 18**  
Scholastic book orders due

**November 22**  
Devotion Worship 9:00 and 12:30  
Please join us for us for songs and a short message after arrival

**November 23-25**  
Closed for Thanksgiving holiday





## **The Most Important Preschool Skills**

While greeting preschoolers the other day as they walked into the building, I was both amazed and proud to observe them as they came into the building. Many of them would greet Ms. Cyndi with a cheery, **"Good Morning"** and then proceed to their classes where some who had lunch bunch would place their lunches on the cart, unzip their jacket, hang it by their symbol, wait for the teacher to squirt germ juice, walk into their class, place their backpack in their cubby, and begin their day. Wow! To watch three and four year old children be able to do so many steps independently without teacher prompting was so impressive. Imagine the inner voice they are required to use in order to this! Our children here at Aldersgate have adjusted so well to school and are becoming self-sufficient, responsible children who are going to be so successful once it is time for them to go on to elementary school.

Last Spring, I surveyed kindergarten teachers from twelve local elementary schools in Spring Hill, Blue Valley and Olathe school districts to find out what types of things they want children able to do once they begin kindergarten. While I received a variety of responses, some answers may surprise you. Kindergarten teachers look for their children to be able to do things like: self help skills (use the bathroom, hang backpack, put coats on), social skills (able to ask for help, wait their turn, ask a friend to play), and also being able to sit in a circle and raise their hands. These skills, while seemingly simple, are exactly that: skills. And they require practice. A child will have a tough time being successful in school, or life even, without these types of skills.

**Time magazine further supported this in a recent article, "Preschool Wars." In the article, the author describes the importance of quality preschools by stating, "...preschool's biggest contribution to students' future success comes in the form of so-called soft skills like learning how to pay attention and stay on task."** The article goes on to describe the benefits of children attending preschool by citing research and studies that have found that children who attend high quality preschools do better academically and even later in life. **"Researchers found that at age 40, the participants who attended preschool had attained higher levels of education, earned higher wages, were more likely to own a home and were less likely to have been incarcerated than those who did not attend preschool."**

Fall conferences at the preschool concentrate on these types of skills because we strongly believe that strong social-emotional skills as well as these other so-called **"soft skills" I have mentioned will provide a** strong foundation for future success in school. You can help your child practice these skills at home too. Teaching your child to be independent will not only help them be successful in school, it will build their confidence in themselves as well.

You can support your child at home by:

- Teaching your child to put on his/her own coat and button, zip it.
- Engaging in conversations at dinner where each person has a turn to share about their day.
- Allowing your child to have responsibilities like setting the table, cleaning up from dinner, unloading the dishwasher, folding towels.
- Practicing with your child good words to use when they need help. Have him/her repeat the proper words after you, practice them, role play situations.
- Give your child opportunities to engage in play with others his/her own age.

Shelly Todd

Staff and Curriculum Development Coordinator

*Work cited: Webley/Raleigh, Kayla. "The Preschool Wars." Time Magazine, October 10, 2011: 47-49.*

## Boredom Busters for Fall

- Go on a listening walk and talk about all of the sounds that you hear. What things, animals, people, weather, make those sounds?
- Rake leaves. How big of a pile can you make? Use a child size rake or even just your hands. What good exercise and muscle building!
- Decorate a pumpkin. Use paints, stickers, leaves, whatever things your child chooses. Let them be creative!
- Make a cookie pie: with a graham cracker crust, buy a box of regular chocolate chip cookies (not the soft kind), dip each in milk and layer with cool whip in the pie shell. Top with cool whip and crumbled cookies and let set for a few hours. Enjoy!
- Make a thankful tree. Bring in some branches from outside and put in a vase, Cut out leaves and have each family member talk about things that they thank God for. Hang them on the tree.
- Bake some bread and deliver it to a neighbor.

*A fun finger play to try at home*

### I Can Count

I can count. Want to see?  
**Here's my fingers, 1, 2, 3.** (hold up hands and count fingers)  
Four and five, this hand is done.  
**Now I'll count the other one!**  
Six, seven, eight, and nine. Just **one more, I'm doing fine.** (using other hand to count)  
The last finger is number 10.  
**Now I'll count them all again:**  
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10



### Does your child W-Sit?

The w-sitting position is one that lots of children tend to use. (sitting on bottom with each leg in a V-shape on each side). While this position is comfortable for children who struggle with trunk control, balance, and hip stability, it is not recommended and may lead to future orthopedic problems. Children who sit in a **“W” position are not able to stretch their waist and trunks properly** which can inhibit proper growth of these muscles. If you see this sitting position used by your child, we recommend encouraging them to try **another position: “criss cross applesauce**, lying on their tummies, on their backs with elbows, or kneeling.

### Giggles & Grins

Enjoy actual anecdotes from our Aldersgate kids.

- Child, “We learned about butterflies and raccoons.” (it was actually cocoons or chrysalis)
- Child, “Small, meteor, large.”
- Child to another child, “Who’s God?” The other child responded, “He’s like a great big Jesus.”
- Child to another child at the art table, “That picture is handsome.”

**SMILE**

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he **said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."**

Matthew 9:36-37



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## Mission Statement:

The purpose of establishing a preschool at Aldersgate United Methodist Church is to provide opportunities within a Christian atmosphere to meet the educational and social needs of young children in both the congregation and the community.

## Program Goal:

To provide a safe, nurturing, Christian environment where young children can explore and discover, through age appropriate activities, **the wonders of God's world.**

## Worship at Aldersgate United Methodist Church:

Every person is invited to join our worship and Christian education experiences of Aldersgate United Methodist Church. There are greeters each Sunday morning that will assist you in finding Sunday School classrooms or the Worship Center. Please note the following times and schedules:

- 8:30 am **Worship and a children's activity time for children ages 3 through 10 years.** Nursery care is available.
- 9:45 am Sunday School classes are offered for ages 1 through adult. A greeter will be glad to assist you in finding a class that may interest you and or our children.
- 11:00am Worship and Kidz Worship—a **children's worship** experience.
- 6:30pm Join this more contemporary service. Child care is provided for children ages 2 and under. This is a casual worship experience with tables of activities children can participate in while worshipping with the family.



Our Red class friends are great architects!