



KCSC Family News

Kennedy Child Study Center: Where Every Child Matters | March 2017



Look What's Happening at KCSC!

Each year the Kennedy Child Study Center schedules exciting and enriching programs to supplement the classroom experience. This year, we have yoga, music, therapy animals, and an expanded art program. Keep reading to learn more about these great programs!

Who Let the Dogs in?

Our Therapy Dog program is in full swing at KCSC Manhattan!

Twice a week, KCSC students have two very special visitors: Bernie and Mumford, two therapy dogs from New York Therapy Animals. Using therapy animals in the classroom brings joy to our students and provides many opportunities for learning.

In addition to learning how to safely approach the animals, students practice conversation skills by asking and answering questions about the dogs and learning how to pet them. Fine motor skills are engaged by clipping and unclipping the dog's leash and collar. Students, accompanied by their teacher and the dog's handler, take turns walking the dogs, which helps them learn to give and follow commands while increasing their confidence. Working with the dogs helps students learn to recognize feelings through body language, while teaching them to treat other creatures with care and compassion.



Music Enrichment at KCSC

A certified Music Therapist from Center for All Abilities comes to our school several times per month to provide enriching music activities. Students **sing, move, dance,** and **learn** about musical instruments.



Music ignites all areas of development: it stimulates the mind; encourages children to practice their social skills by engaging with each other and their teachers; hones motor skills through movement and dancing; and improves social-emotional health by releasing stress and allowing children to practice self-expression. These music sessions are a fun and creative way to bring the body and mind together and help our students grow. Let the music play!

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KCSC's Yoga Program

KCSC has two certified yoga instructors who come to our schools once a week to provide yoga sessions for our classrooms. Students and staff engage in the yoga sessions to bring an awareness of body movement, self-regulation and breathing.

Why is Yoga Important for Young Children?

- Practicing breathing exercises helps **calm** children, improves **self-control**, and **relieves anxiety**, anger and stress.
- Controlled breathing increases the flow of **oxygen** throughout the body – and oxygen is a brain food that will help your child feel smarter and calmer!
- Yoga helps children identify their **body parts** and practice different **movements** and **balance**.



Try It at Home: Tree Pose

The tree pose brings **calm** while improving **concentration** and **balance**. Have the whole family try it!

1. Stand up straight and tall. Imagine long roots coming out of your feet and going deep into the floor, like a tree.
2. Slowly lift one foot, bend your knee and place the foot gently on the ankle or calf. If you can, lift your hands straight up into the sky.
3. Breathe in and out; try to hold this pose for 10 seconds. Imagine that you are a tree covered in leaves. Talk about how trees change throughout the seasons.
4. Now try the other side!



Set up a daily routine and you will be amazed by your child's improved concentration, boost in confidence and ability to follow directions!

The Value of Open Ended Art for Preschoolers

Once a week, one of our talented staff members works with students at each site on **open ended art projects**. Open ended art provides students with an opportunity to explore art materials and create art that fosters self-expression and creativity. Children choose the materials they want to use, how they want to use them, and what they will make. While open ended art may not “look like” a traditional art project, art made in this way challenges and stimulates students, building confidence and engaging the imagination. Rather than telling children what to do and how to do it, open ended artwork allows children the freedom to be creative.

Try it at Home!

- Take two sponges and cut them into different shapes, like squares, triangles or stars. Let your child dip them in washable paint and press them on paper.
- Give your child a water color paint strip, brushes or Q-tips, and water.
- See what they create!



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