

# Early Learning Center

Where Families Connect to Learn, Grow and Play!

Contact us at: [www.bellevuecollege.edu/childcare](http://www.bellevuecollege.edu/childcare) 425-564-2240

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## May 2016



Leanne and daughter, Bostyn

### Dates to Remember



**5/30/16**

**Memorial Day**

**BC CLOSED**

**ELC CLOSED**



**6/2/16**

**ELC Annual**

**Family Potluck**

**Robinswood Park**

**6:00-7:30**

### Dear ELC Families,

I want to publicly thank ELC Student Parents: **Laura Cade, Raquel Carrasco, Christa Pollard, Nathifa Tomb, and Leanne Slavin** for coming to the S&A Fees Committee Budget Hearing and sharing their **prepared, clear and passionate stories**.

A special thanks also to our Early Childhood Student and classroom assistant **Marina Tadachi**, who also came and spoke to the benefit of her experience. **We have been notified of our highest award ever, an almost 20% increase of their allocation to \$250,000 for 2016/2017.**



Student Marina Tadaschi

I am happy to announce that **new teachers** are joining our team! **Ali Beckvold** will be partnering with Annie in T3, and **Lyanne Abe** will join our Preschool team. Inside this newsletter, read more about both of these talented teachers, as well ELC **outdoor learning**, our recent **PreK Family Meeting** discussing **kindergarten readiness and social emotional skills**, and our program's next steps in **Early Achievers**.

Warmly,

*Kelly Davidson*  
Director, ELC

### Focus on Outdoor Learning

As we move into warmer weather, we chose to highlight in this newsletter what kind of activities and learning are going on outside.

#### *Have you made your summer plans?*

We are still waiting to hear if we will be moving forward with repairs on the eaves in each of the playgrounds. This work will require some adjustments of outdoor play spaces over the months of construction.

As you determine what your summer plans for your children are, please let us know. Like last summer, we may close a couple of classrooms for summer quarter to better accommodate the construction process.

## Welcome New Staff

### Introducing New Teacher: Lyanne Abe

*Hello everyone!*

*My name is Lyanne Abe. I am thankful and excited to join the Bellevue College ELC community.*

*I currently live in Bellevue with my younger sister, Alyson. I am originally from Southern California, but moved to Washington 13 years ago. I graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Early Childhood education and I have been teaching in a preschool classroom for the last three years.*

*I love my field and am fascinated by children's ability to think outside of the box. I try to encourage my students to step into their creative problem solving abilities and I enjoy presenting learning through fun and novel experiences.*

*Outside of the classroom, I love food, cooking, drawing, painting, Disney, and spending time with family and friends.*

*I am looking forward to meeting you and can't wait to get started!*



### Introducing New Teacher: Ali Beckvold

*Hello Bellevue College ELC families, my name is Ali Beckvold. I am overjoyed by the opportunity to join in your children's early learning experience.*

*I live in Snoqualmie with my daughters; Malia Isabella, age nine, and Arianna Olivia, age four. I have lived in WA my whole life and enjoy hiking, camping, and taking road trips. I love country music, photography, reading, cooking, and spending time with my family.*

*I have eleven years of experience working with children age birth to twelve years, the majority of this time as a lead teacher with infants and toddlers. I am passionate about speaking foreign languages to children, music in the classroom, language and literacy development, sensory exploration, messy art, getting outside, and the importance of play. I hold a current Child Development Associate credential and am nearing completion of my AA in Early Childhood Education at Bellevue College. I have plans to transfer to UW next year and begin my BA in Family Studies.*

*I look forward to partnering with you to make these formative early years successful.*



Specialist for Toddler Rooms: Vanessa Von Papp

# What's new in the Infant Room?

## Infant Room: Teachers Lisa Ann, Mahboobeh and Bonnie

April was an exciting month in the infant room. The children have been blossoming! Every day we seem to hear and see; new sounds, words or different skills emerging. We have been focusing on language development by repeating the words and sounds the children are using and singing songs with animal sounds like, "Old Mc Donald Had A Farm". We have been thrilled to see new motor skills: Lots of rolling, scooting, crawling, climbing and walking going on! We provided many different opportunities to explore interesting things to; push, climb and pull up upon. The infants have been enjoying our outside play time as well. We are all excited to be able to spend time outside exploring our world. There are so many exciting new things to; see, hear, touch and smell. Pinecones, bark, plants and animals are all so fascinating and wonderful to explore. Seeing and hearing birds continue to be popular. We have enjoyed putting out the bird feeders, playing with toy birds, looking at bird pictures and reading books like, "The Five Busy Ducklings."



Specialist for Infant Room and T1 Rooms: Bonnie MacGregor

## What's happening outdoors for the Young Toddlers?



### T1 Room: Teachers Brian, Bonnie and Yen-Chiu

The outdoor curriculum gives T1 children opportunities for exploration and movement, as well as choices to be in spaces independently or with teachers or with friends.

The younger children gravitate towards exploring the grass, sand, climbers, and push toys while the older children also try out some of the larger tricycles. The children especially enjoy the sand box using shovels for digging, scooping, and pouring into buckets.

Recently the children have been experimenting with walking on the waffle blocks, taking the small elevated steps very carefully. We will be adding some wet sensory experiences, hoping that we still experience nice, sunny days.



Specialist for Infant Room and T1 Rooms: Bonnie MacGregor

## What's happening outdoors for Toddlers?

### T2 Room:

Teachers Liliانا, Rita and Naghmeh

During the last weeks, the T2 children have been very interested in experimenting with water, colors and bubbles. So we extended our activities from the sensory tub indoors to outdoors.

Playing catching bubbles at the playground gives them so much fun at the same time that they exercise their eye-hand coordination, taking turns and gross motor.

We filled spray bottles with water color to spray over a big paper we hung up on the windows. They practiced using their small muscles and took turns—while also enjoying the science and art of their creations!

Many outdoor activities are opportunities to develop social – emotional skills like sharing, playing with and next to others and negotiating ways to cooperate with other children. Playing parachute games is a perfect activity to practice those abilities.

#### Transitions and New Teaching Teams

In May, Teacher Liliانا will begin the transition to working in the infant room again, (we are so excited to have her back!) and Parisa will move over from T3 to partner with Rita in T2.



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## What's happening outdoors for Toddlers?

### T3 Room: Teachers Annie, Parisa and Naghmeh

With the arrival of warmer weather, our children showed a big interest in outdoors and water exploration. So, we decided to take our water table out to the playground. Our children had a great time spinning the water wheels while singing the "The Wheels on the Bus" outside, connecting a sensory and science activity with the motions of the song.

We also have provided water spray bottles for our children to water and to learn how to take care of our plants. In addition to water painting on the window, wet chalks on the sidewalk will also be part of our fun outdoor experiences! The next few months will be full of exploration of the natural world around us as we enjoy the unlimited wonder of the outdoors.

We plan to have more outdoor events, such as exploring a little further on our nature walk to the BC baseball field, have picnic lunches on the playground, and bring out the sprinkler to have "water play days."



#### New Teaching Team

In May, Teacher Parisa will move to T2, and new Teacher Ali will be co-teaching in T3 with Annie.

Ali spent April 25-29th getting oriented to the campus and her role at the ELC, as well as spending time getting to know the T3 children.

After a preplanned family trip, Ali will be full time in T3 starting Tuesday, May 10, 2016.



Specialist for Toddler Rooms: Vanessa Von Papp

## What's happening outdoors for Toddlers?

### T5 Room:

#### Teachers Jackey, Paula and Khazal

We provide a variety of activities and materials outside to meet all children's interests and needs. Most of the kids take advantage of the time to do gross motor activities.

Some of the children love music and dancing. Right now we have the opportunity to learn some new songs from the T3 teachers. Naghmeh introduced us to a song "Jump Up and Down" where all of the kids come dance together, and now they request it from all the teachers!

To encourage exploring dancing we have been bringing out dancing streamers as well as scarves. The kids have been finding creative ways to use them, either by running with them, dancing in place and waving, or even using them on the bicycles.

Working on riding the bicycles is very popular. We have helped the kids to remember wearing their helmets and returning them when they are through. The kids need a little help with the buckling, but love putting it on and taking it off by themselves.



#### What are kids learning from trikes and scooters?

Even as children are learning the steps to mount a riding toy or tricycle they are developing their balance, motor planning, proprioceptive sense (which tells us what our body is doing in relation to itself) and vestibular sense (which tells our body where we are in space). The motion of pedaling is different than walking and so requires the brain to figure out a way to get that information to the legs. Watching children who have so recently moved from crawling to walking be determined to use a tool like a scooter or bike is a wonderful example of their focus, attention, curiosity and drive to take on challenges and learn.

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## What's happening outdoors for Toddlers?

### T6 Room: Teachers Donna, Diane and Khazal

The Children in T6 have really been into pushing the push toys and shopping carts outside, and have been experimenting with various things that can be pushed along ahead of them, such as the large plastic interlocking blocks or balls. The shopping carts have also been holding a variety of things such as baby dolls, pine cones, and numerous sand toys, as well as sand and woodchips. The children have gotten very good at controlling these toys, and are able to stop and start again easily, avoiding run-ins with other people, poles, climbing equipment, etc.



Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

-Fred Rogers



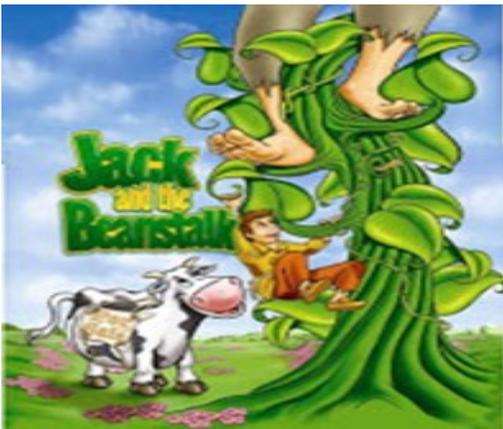
Specialist for Toddler Rooms: Vanessa Von Papp

# What's happening outdoors for Preschoolers?

## P3 Room

Teachers Karen, Iryna and Margarita

Spring is upon us. May is one of the most wonderful months of the year when the weather is warming up, trees are blooming, and the sun is shining brightly. Our outdoor activities will be full of fun and learning experiences for the children.



In April, we had already started the preparation for our outdoor garden, in order to transfer an indoor activity into outdoor.

We started with reading the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, and the preschoolers developed an interest in the idea of a "magic bean". They acted out the story at the story table we created in the corner, and were excited when they learned they would each be given a "magic seed" to plant and care for.

Because children are naturally curious, they had many questions about gardening and planting activities.

How do we make them start growing? Which seeds grow fast? How long will it take?



To explore some of their questions we planted the seeds in different ways: in the dark and in the light. And in the light we also planted in different ways: in the clear cups and in the bags (zip locks). We used math and language skills to measure the soil, count the seeds, and compare their sizes. And every day, during the morning circle, we compare which seeds are growing faster, count leaves and water all of them.

The children know the plan is to plant them outside when the plants are strong enough. We are also planning to plant carrots, tomatoes, squash and some flowers.



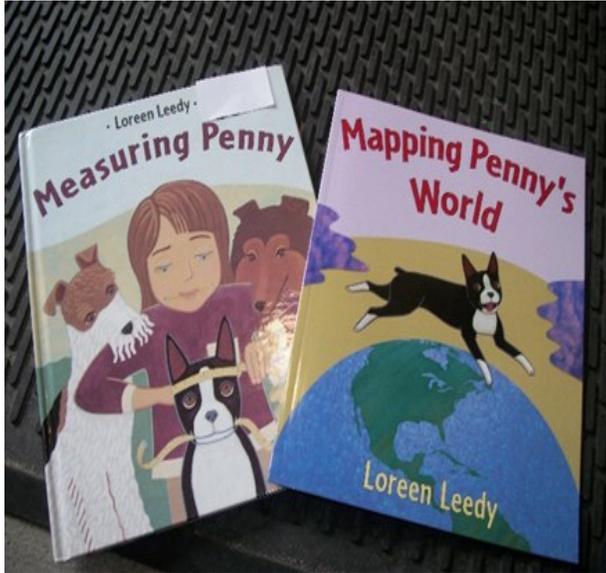
Along with the STEM-related learning, children also develop patience and responsibility as they learn that plants take time to mature and will do much better if given the right amount of light and water, space and soil. We are planning to continue our projects through the summer time so children can gain a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment from caring for something over time. And perhaps a few good snacks too!

Preschool Program Manager: Karen Virta

May 2016

## What's happening outdoors for Preschoolers?

### P4 Room: Teachers Chisaki, Wendy and Margarita



We invite all families to come join us on one of our adventures, whether it is walking with us on a field trip, playing a game during outdoor play time or spending some time with your child at pick up or drop off to check out the plants we are growing. Our classroom has been busy exploring the great outdoors and through the many experiences we have gained new knowledge and skills, as well as learning to work together and discovering the joys of nature around our campus.

We are exploring and expanding books by Loreen Leedy called "Measuring Penny" and "Mapping Penny's World" we are learning about measuring with rulers, tape measures as well as mapping the world around us.

We have carried this through our curriculum by looking at the map of our campus and taking field trips each week to explore the many areas of campus like the library, fountain and taking a walk to soccer fields and climbing the "big" mountain and dancing in the field.

Please check out our "Field Trip Map" where we document our discoveries afterwards. This helps build children's knowledge of maps as tools with symbols that help locate objects, find where we are and decide where we are going.

We have also been busy planting seeds and watching and predicting their growth. To foster the love of watching a plant grow and enjoying the bounty we encourage families to do this at your house whether it be in the yard or on the porch in a pot.

Preschool Program Manager: Karen Virta

May 2016

## What's happening outdoors for the PreK classes?

### PreK1 Room: Teachers Mala, Page and Ghousia

As the saying goes, "more than a seed is planted in a garden." Helping plan, plant and tend a garden can cultivate attributes and life skills such as responsibility, independence, leadership, teamwork and problem solving. Planting seeds and watching them grow helps children learn about the growth process, the environment and the food they eat.

As the sun begins to shine more and nature's watering can is sprinkling, it's time to get our garden ready! The children have begun to prepare our garden bed by weeding. Weeding and watering a garden encourages physical activity and teaches responsibility.

Children typically like to eat vegetables they grow and are proud to offer them to others. Being able to come to the table and say "I grew that lettuce" can be a real boost to a child's self-esteem. We will be planting a variety of vegetables in the garden. Be on the lookout for our pole beans to begin to emerge and cover the arbor that the children ride bikes under. It is thrilling to see the children ride through and grab a bean to snack on later in the garden season! This might be a nice time for you to try growing vegetables with your child at home. You don't need a big space to garden, a simple pot can be enough! Give it a try and see what happens.

Our trip to the Bellevue College library was a big success and showed us all how important it is to get out and explore the campus. Our plan for spring and summer is to explore the campus every Wednesday morning. If you are interested in joining us on our walks we would love to have you and your child would too! The children are always proud to have their parent come and it will give you a chance to see "their world."



Preschool Program Manager: Karen Virta

May 2016

## What's happening outdoors for the PreK classes?



### **PreK2 Room: Teachers Linda, Karen V. and Ghousia**

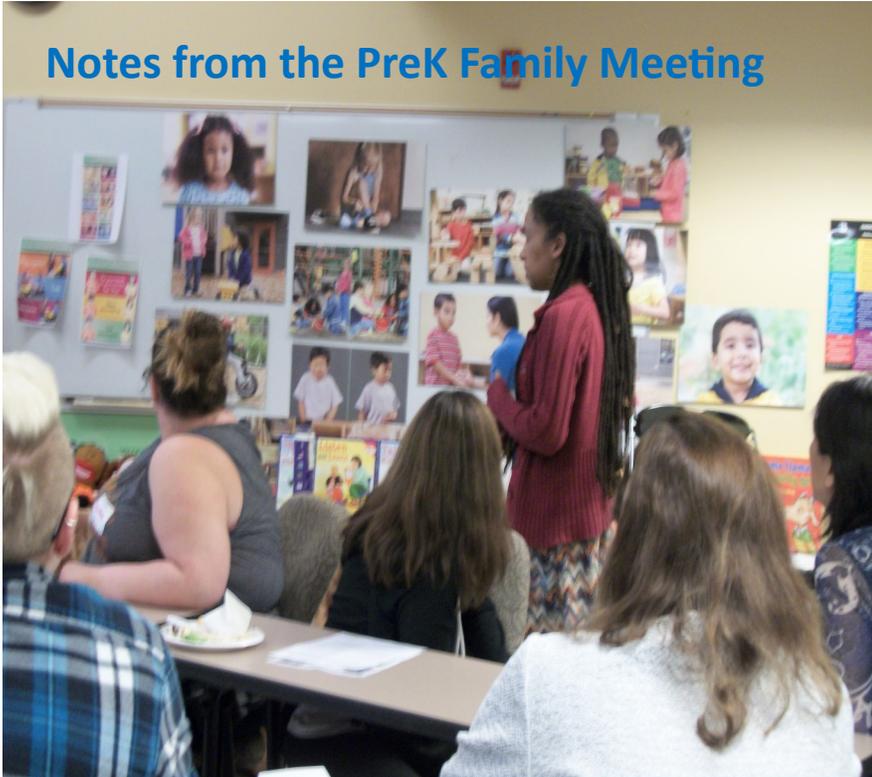
As our weather has warmed the children have especially enjoyed the sand areas. Taking off their shoes and walking in the sand and using their senses, they shared memories “It feels like the beach... like when I walk in the sand”, and also some great science observations “The sand is warm on top and when I put my foot under it the sand is cold.” Spray bottles have also been a favorite outside experience that satisfies the children’s need to explore through their senses, investigate the properties of a natural substance, and use a tool.

On another note, the last few weeks P-2 has been choosing to utilize our (cooler) front yard area more. With this space we look to offer experiences that the children don’t perhaps have in the big yard (i.e. laying in the grass, making a pretend campfire with sticks & pinecones, wearing scarf capes and running around, etc.) Recently classroom friends decided to build forts in the classroom, but there wasn’t enough room for everyone to work. This prompted teachers to invite children to take this play and work outside later in the afternoon. There was much negotiation and problem solving involved in creating and recreating the structures. In the days ahead we will plan to continue this exploration with the children.

Preschool Program Manager: Karen Virta

# PreK Family Meeting

## Notes from the PreK Family Meeting



### Families and teachers shared the qualities they hope their children to develop:

Courageous, genuine, kind, curious, independent, honest, hardworking, not afraid to fail, integrity, easy going, trust, honest, trustworthy, explore, ask for help, adaptable, accepting, perseverance, confidence, passionate, compassionate, open, adventurous, team player, fearless, determined, never give up, expressive

### Families and teachers have been noticing that 4 and 5 year olds are:

- Negotiators,
- Making connections,
- Intensifying sibling rivalry,
- Reporting back their experiences
- Attracted to power,
- Have learned to lie/sneaky,
- Are physically more skilled
- Talk and explain their world
- Test rules and consequences,
- Exploring abstract Concepts,
- Trying on new identities

### Challenges and concerns that families and teachers discussed:

- How do we handle teasing, name-calling and excluding?
- When does it turn into bullying?
- What can I teach children about being a bully, a bystander or a victim?
- How does super hero play affect children's relationships?
- What about video games and other screen time?
- How do we respond when children make comments about gender, race, ability, size?
- How can we help children manage their feelings? And make kind and safe choices?
- What should we do when they make mistakes?
- How can we keep children safe and learning?

### Tools and Strategies teachers use:

- Second Step Curriculum and Activities
- Books, Puppet and Role Plays
- Emotion Coaching
- Collaborative Communication

### What we can do as families and teachers, that will make a difference, now, and as children move into kindergarten and other new environments:

- Recognize this age as a primary window of opportunity for children to learn essential skills and values
- Teach Social skills: Empathy, Assertiveness, Problem Solving, Fair Ways to Play
- Have open discussions before incidents happen, and follow up after every incident, witnessed live or on media
- Consistently Name, Model and Celebrate our Values
- Play games that develop Executive Function: the ability to self regulate, focus, have impulse control, plan and focus

May 2016



## Early Learning Center Progress with Early Achievers

### The Next Chapter in Quality Improvement at the Early Learning Center

The Early Learning Center completed the Early Achievers ratings process in 2013, as a part of the pilot of Washington state quality rating system for early learning programs, and earned the distinction of reaching a Quality Level of Excellence in child care. Our Program will next be reviewed and rated in the Fall of 2016. We have been asking for your feedback and participation as parents to help us prepare for the review, and also for parents who would volunteer to be interviewed by the team from UW who will be rating us.

Over the past year, teachers have been reviewing and enhancing their environments, and reflecting on their interactions with children to ensure we are optimizing their learning. Some of our next steps involve reviewing our curriculum to ensure it is aligned with the Washington State Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELGs), and developing a new action plan based on our Strengthening Families Self-Assessment.

Based on an initial review of our recent class curriculums, and our conversations with families, including the discussion at the PreK Family Night, the ELC staff will be meeting in May to determine how the Early Learning Center curriculum can be better aligned with the ELGs, what our families are saying is important to them, and with Bellevue College's Strategic Plan by also integrating the four core goals of Anti-Bias Education within our curriculum.

### The Four Core Goals of Anti-Bias Education

From: Louise Denman-Sparks & Julie Olsen Edwards, 2010. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children & Ourselves*. Washington DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

- **ABE Goal 1:** Each child will demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
- **ABE Goal 2:** Each child will express comfort and joy with human diversity; accurate language for human differences; and deep, caring human connections.
- **ABE Goal 3:** Each child will increasingly recognize unfairness, have language to describe unfairness, and understand that unfairness hurts.
- **ABE Goal 4:** Each child will demonstrate empowerment and the skills to act, with others or alone, against prejudice and /or discrimination.

These four goals interact and build on each other. They are for children of all ages and backgrounds.

## What can I do to help my child learn to handle big feelings?

Emotions...we all have them. Everything we do and everything we learn is shaped in some way by the way we feel. Feelings are a natural part of who we are. But how do children learn about emotions? How do they learn to understand their sadness or joy? What is appropriate behavior when these feelings are strong? What can a parent do when a child explodes in anger or hides in fear? Parents spend lots of time teaching children important things such as reading or tying shoes. Taking time to help children learn to understand their feelings is important too.

Research shows that children who understand their feelings and learn about their emotions have these advantages:

- They form stronger friendships with other children.
- They calm themselves down more quickly when they get upset.
- They do better in school.
- They handle their moods better and have fewer negative emotions.
- They get sick less often.

### **Becoming an Emotion Coach**

Emotion Coaching is a parenting technique that helps children understand their feelings. When parents Emotion Coach, their children learn how emotions work and how to react to feelings in healthy ways.

Emotion Coaching starts by recognizing your child's feelings. Many parents are able to see the positive emotions a child expresses, but drawing close to a child who is angry or sad can take some practice. While it takes effort to teach your child about feelings and appropriate behaviors, it is time well spent. Your relationship with your child will be stronger and your child will be more prepared for the challenges life can bring.

### **STEP 1: Be aware of emotions. Tune in to your child's feelings and your own.**

- Pay attention to your own emotions, from happiness to sadness to anger.
- Understand that emotions are a natural and valuable part of life.
- Observe, listen, and learn how your child expresses different emotions.

### **STEP 2: Connect with your child. Use emotional moments as opportunities to connect.**

- Pay close attention to a child's emotions.
- Try not to dismiss or avoid them.
- See emotional moments as opportunities for teaching.
- Recognize feelings and encourage your child to talk about his or her emotions.

### **STEP 3: Listen to your child. Respect your child's feelings by taking time to listen carefully.**

- Take your child's emotions seriously.
- Show your child that you understand what he or she is feeling.
- Avoid judging or criticizing your child's emotions.

### **STEP 4: Name emotions. Help your child identify and name emotions.**

- Identify the emotions your child is experiencing instead of telling your child how he or she should feel.
- Naming emotions helps soothe a child.
- Set a good example by naming your own emotions and talking about them.
- Help your child build a vocabulary for different feelings.

### **STEP 5: Find good solutions. Explore solutions to problems together.**

Redirect misbehaving children for what they do, not what they feel.

When children misbehave, help them to identify their feelings and explain why their behavior was inappropriate.

Encourage emotional expression, but set clear limits on behavior.

Help children think through possible solutions.

Don't expect too much too soon.

Be aware of tempting settings and be prepared to help your child through them.

Create situations where your child can explore without hearing lots of "don'ts."

Catch your child doing lots of things right and praise her.