

# Using Our Words

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*After a long, hard winter, many of us hustled and bustled up and down the narrow streets of NYC as quickly as possible to avoid the bitter cold whipping at our faces. Now that we are finally getting a reprieve, it's time to open our windows, air ourselves out, go outside and get dirty again!*

*It's becoming a mantra here at Elliott's Classes to be cognizant of the time we spend on technology. We are entering an unprecedented age where we are dependent upon technology and our children are mimicking our behaviors. While we see this use of technology as an increased ability to keep in touch with one another, it is actually minimizing our ability to communicate and ironically limiting our interpersonal social skills.*

*While we realize that most children interface regularly with technology, our goal should be for it not to be a regular activity. Instead of limiting or taking away screen time as a result of bad behavior, we should allow occasional screen time as a reward for good behavior. For children under 18 months, per the American Academy of Pediatrics, children should not be exposed to screen time. Put down the screens and engage with one another. Oftentimes, parents ask how they can distract their children while they shower or cook. The answer is simple. Do the same thing your parents did – teach them to play independently! Set them up with a book, an art project or blocks. Learning to occupy themselves is a lesson they will take with them for the rest of their lives.*



## LESSONS FROM THE FARM

This time of year is so exciting on the farm as we begin to see the signs of spring emerging. With the long winter finally behind us, we couldn't be more eager to see the farm come alive! Our resident hen recently laid her eggs. Impatiently, my initial thought was to place only two of those eggs beneath her to begin the brooding process and buy chicks that she would believe were her own.

Before I hastily conned the hen in a switched at birth scenario, I remembered the lessons that we teach our students in class every day. We must demonstrate patience and appreciate that anticipation is part of the experience. In our fast moving, high-tech society, it has become our nature to expect immediate satisfaction. We as adults must remember to enjoy the journey and to always, take our children along for the ride! We can't wait to meet the newest babies whenever they arrive, in their own time.

## EXCITING NEWS!

**Playing, Creating, Growing, Grown Up and Me Camp (ages 18 mos. – 3.5 years):** Led by skilled instructors including Elliott, campers enjoy 1.5 or 2.5 hour sessions of creative play, music, art, story time, rooftop water play and gym in both English and Spanish. Caregivers' presence is required, but participation is not, as children are introduced to separation. Program begins June 4<sup>th</sup>.



## ARTIST'S CORNER

**Materials:** Popsicle sticks, tissue paper, construction paper, pipe cleaners, crayons, scissors

With everyone's minds on spring, the focus of our story and art project this season is "The Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle. The children are not only learning about the concept of metamorphosis, but the idea that something is not always as it appears and that as we grow we learn and change.

Create the characters of the book using the images below as your guide and encourage your child to act out the story!



## ACTIVE SUMMER FUN

As spring draws to a close and the chants of "No more homework, no more books..." are heard on the playground, parents are beginning to prep for the summer. The summer offers children more freedom and a break from the somewhat intense schedule of the school year, but with too much free time and a lack of structure, a long haze of boredom may set in. The benefits of a summer camp that offers children enrichment, structured freedom and access to nature are plentiful. When selecting the right camp for your child, look for the following attributes:

1. **Community.** Over the summer, children get a break from their typical community and the social dynamics that are intrinsic to it. Camp offers children the opportunity to navigate new group dynamics, develop self-confidence and build leadership skills.
2. **Active Lifestyle.** Away from the constraints of desks and chairs, a summer camp should provide children with ample opportunity to engage in sports and active outdoor play. With the high rates of childhood obesity linked to an increase in technology and poor diet, the summer is an ideal time to begin implementing healthy habits.
3. **Enrichment.** Look for a camp that integrates STEAM programming within its curriculum. While the summer provides children with a much needed break from the rigors of school, many camps sneak enrichment opportunities within fun, interactive activities.
4. **Nature.** Research shows that children are spending less and less time in the great outdoors as they become more attached to a virtual world of technology. Camp should offer engaging opportunities to remind children about the fun associated with outdoor recreation.
5. **Unplug.** Camp is a time to have fun, play outside and build new friendships and disengage from all devices.

While many parents begin the summer with plans of keeping their child active through home-made activities, these good intentions tend to dissipate as the weeks go on and the temperatures rise. Consider the benefits of some type of camp program to expose your child to enriching, social, outdoor play. At Elliott's Classes, we offer "Playing, Creating, Growing, Grown Up and Me camp" for the not quite ready for camp set. Experienced instructors lead the campers in play-based activities as well as trips to the park, community gardens, and neighborhood walks. Caregivers can enjoy our "Grown-Up Lounge" complete with tables, chairs, coffee, tea, muffins and Wi-Fi access to foster independence as instructors lead the class.

## FOR GIGGLES

**Heather(3)** *walks into class late.*

**Elliott:** Where were you?

**Heather:** This day has gone to hell!

**Heather's mom:** What can I say? I've been saying it all morning!