



A note from the office:

January 2025

Hello and Happy January!

Thank you to everyone who donated to our food drive! It made our hearts happy to see the boxes full of donations for the local food pantry. Also, a big thank you to those of you who donated to the classrooms by buying gifts from the giving tree! The children are so excited to play with the new toys and they loved opening them! Our classrooms are always accepting clothing and diaper donations. So, if your child has grown out of clothing or moved to a new size in diapers and you are looking for a place to donate the previous size, please keep us in mind! We use these items as backup clothes for accidents or for kiddos who run out of diapers and need to use a few until they get more!

Our move-up is scheduled for January 13, 2025. Please check your child's cubby for more information about their new classroom.

Please mark your calendars for February 17, 2025 when Building Blocks will be closed for an all-staff professional development day.

We are wishing you a Happy New Year! May it be filled with new adventures and good fortunes!

Miss Jessica & Miss Jenah

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Lyla

Feyd

Cooper

Mattie

Nirvan

Grey



Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The Backpack Connection Series was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each Backpack Connection handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit ChallengingBehavior.org.

More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, ChallengingBehavior.org.



ChallengingBehavior.org

How to Help Your Child Learn to Trade

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

When a child sees another child playing with a toy she wants, her first instinct is to take it. This behavior can be frustrating to playmates and often leads to an argument. Trading is a solution children can choose as a way to get an object from someone else in a positive way, and is a great first step in learning how to share. Trading is also a skill that must be taught and practiced many times. However, once your child is comfortable trading with others it can make her feel empowered. Knowing how to trade helps children to manage their emotions and confidently solve their own problems without help from an adult. Unlike sharing, where children must wait to use a toy, trading is a solution that allows both people to feel happy with the outcome right away. It takes patience and guidance to teach your child how to negotiate with playmates by herself, but it is a valuable skill that she will use throughout her life.



Try This at Home

- Play with the skill of trading. "I have a blue block. Can I trade for your red one?"
- Begin with objects that mean little to your child or objects that are similar to each other so he can practice how to work his way through the interaction, rather than worry about the object itself and who has it. For example, trade pencils, crackers or blocks rather than a favorite blanket or stuffed animal.
- Puppets, trains, dolls and cars can also practice how to trade. "Oh no! Thomas the train does not like bananas. Can Bertie trade him for the strawberry?" The follow-up to this interaction is also important. "Wow! Now they are both happy and have food they like."
- Trading can be useful when working through disagreements between siblings. "I know how frustrating it can be when your brother takes your special car. Look, here is another one! Tell your brother, 'We can trade!'"
- Use trading as a possible solution for problems. "There are two boys and only one basketball. Would you like to play together or trade for the soccer ball?"

Practice at School

At school, children are taught how to trade through role-play or puppet shows before they are expected to trade by themselves during class. Children are encouraged to use trading as a way to solve problems that come up when they play with peers. Teachers give the children many opportunities to practice the skill during the day. For example, a teacher may intentionally set out two colors of paint at an activity table for two children. After the children use the first paint, the teacher might suggest that the children trade to try a new color. Or, if the children initiate the trade themselves, the teacher can compliment them on successfully using a new skill.

The Bottom Line

Knowing how to trade is the first skill a child can use to work together with others. Trading teaches children how to use their words to engage in conversations with friends and is the first step to learn how to negotiate. Your child will find trading very useful as she becomes interested in the people and things around her and develops opinions about what she likes. Trading teaches a child to value her own desires while balancing the needs and rights of others.



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Weekly Themes:

12/30 - 1/3	Welcome 2025!
1/6 - 1/10	Germs
1/13 - 1/17	Fairy Tales & Nursery Rhymes
1/20 - 1/24	Eating Healthy
1/27 - 1/31	The Wonderful World of Disney

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Teacher Fun Fact

What is your New Year's Resolution?

Miss Jessica: Go to the gym
 Miss Jenah: Read my Bible
 Miss Victoria: Work on myself
 Miss Mckenna: Work on myself
 Miss Eva: Do my best in college & not to stress out
 Miss Olivia: Do better for her
 Miss Tabby: Plan a wedding in less than 6 months

Miss Brittni: Self-improvement
 Miss Kami: Spend less money
 Miss Tiara: Do things that make me happy
 Miss Tori: Spend more time outdoors with family
 Miss Bell: Read every day
 Miss Melanie: Get out of the house more
 Miss Rachael: Spend less money on coffee

Photos of the Month



Health & Fitness Tips:

New Year's Resolutions & Goal Setting for Kids & Families



As parents, we typically think about New Year's resolutions as goals for ourselves, and the common ones that come to mind are generally fitness/health related: "I'm going to lose 20 pounds." "I'm going to go to the gym every day." "I'm going to start eating healthy and go on a diet." Let's rethink how we do resolutions, especially when it comes to our kids.

Resolution setting is a great opportunity to model our experiences with resolutions and goal setting with our kids, and practice these important skills together. A New Year's resolution is really a goal, something we want to achieve and/or instill in ourselves.

For kids, it is a great idea to think about New Year's resolutions in a few ways:

- behaviors you want to become habits
- new opportunities for teamwork as a family
- a fun opportunity to see what your child wants do with the new year

Just like goals, we should make resolutions that are SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. By making resolutions that likely are not achievable, we will not feel the positive reward of success, and in turn won't achieve the goal or will avoid it because of this lack of success. This can lead to future avoidance of similar resolutions/goal-setting.

Checking in and recognizing what the barriers are to achieving our resolutions is key. What is getting in our way? Did we let this go for a bit and maybe it's time to "get back on the horse?" And, forgiving ourselves for letting it go for a bit and recovering smoothly teaches our kids good problem-solving strategies too. This is a great opportunity to revise our thinking and finding new ways to experience success, which may include adjusting our resolution a bit.

Some great ideas for New Year's resolutions for kids include:

- Kindness, one random act of kindness per day.
- As parents, praising our kids every day for something they did well.
- As kids, making sure to thank someone every day for going out of their way.
- Volunteering as a family, choosing a group or charity to support, every month or on a timeline that is feasible for the family.
- Learning a new vocabulary word every day.
- Starting a family activity together (game night, craft, etc.).
- Reframing a negative thought every day.
- Spend less time on electronics, video games, social media, etc.

Try to refrain from making New Year's resolutions something that are really chores or home care. Also, make sure we phrase any goal in a way that is SMART.

Having everyone write out their resolution and posting it in a place that is seen every day is a great idea. Writing our resolutions on the mirror in the bathroom with dry erase markers is a great reminder each day. We can also use jars to keep track of how many times we do our resolutions, by putting a bead or stone in the jar, or put together a family competition of how many days in a row you can stay true to your resolution – when you miss a day, you have to start again, and whoever has the longest streak each month, wins!

But the most important thing is to sit down and discuss this as a family, and to make sure kids are given the opportunity to make their own resolution too. A new year is a new start, and full of much fun and opportunity.

Care-A-Lot

Welcome 2025!

This month we will make art to cover our window for Martin Luther King Jr. Day! We will also sing songs to the kids during play time and care routines. We love to sing *The Wheels on the Bus*, *Five Little Ducks* and *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*. We will also sing number and counting songs and count our fingers and toes to introduce early math concepts.

Marlie already has really strong leg muscles and can stand with support! **Theodore** is able to sit up properly with support!

We are looking forward to another great month!
Miss Eva, Miss Mckenna & Miss Victoria

Disney

Happy New Year!

We are so excited to watch our babies grow! This month we are excited to celebrate **Lyla & Cooper** turning one! We will be working on our gross motor skills. Some of the kiddos are so close to walking and we know they will be on the move soon! We plan to work on our fine motor skills through sensory play this month and by doing handprint art of Mickey and Minnie Mouse. We will sing *The Wheels on the Bus* and do the actions during music and movement time! When we play with blocks we will count them as we stack them. It is always so fun to see the kids figure out how to stack blocks and make towers.

Ocean is new to our crew and is fitting in perfectly! He loves to crawl after his new friends. **Nova** loves to mimic the funny faces that her teachers make and she has a blast during peek-a-boo.

We wish New Year blessings to all of our Disney families!
Miss Brittini, Miss Tabby & Miss Olivia

Ducks

Hello 2025! We are so excited for the new year as we will be getting ready to say hello to some new friends and goodbye to our friends who are moving up! Please check your child's file for information on this transition!

This month, we will be sorting magic beans as a math activity during our fairy tales theme. We will also paint with fairy dust to create our own fairy tale artwork! We will sing *The Wheels on the Bus* and do the actions during music and movement and we will read, "Eat Your Colors" by Amanda Miller during our healthy eating theme week. We will learn about the healthy foods that we should eat to help us grow.

Addie refuses to say Ms. Kami's name and will only say Tiara. Kami enjoys trying to convince her to say Kami and it makes us laugh. **Lillian** is a great helper and always tries to pick up her friend Maxton when it's time to leave the room.

We cannot wait to see what this year brings!
Miss Tiara & Miss Kami

Dragonflies

Bring in the new year with a band in the Dragonfly Room!

This month we will be learning about germs and washing our hands. As we wash our hands, we will count our fingers and practice our numbers 1-5. We will talk about eating healthy to keep our bodies strong and help us grow. We will also have fun while talking about fairy tales and nursery rhymes by doing crafts! During Disney week, we will sing *Let It Go* from Frozen! It's such a catchy tune and we know your kids will sing it to you often!

Dallas is such a caring friend. Dallas checks on any friend who is sad to make sure they are okay. We love the empathy! **Kellyn** is a big helper in the classroom and is making great progress on potty training!

Have a great month!
Miss Tori & Miss Kianna

Turtles

Happy New Year!

This month we will learn about the new year and make noise makers that the kids can use to ring in the new year! During germ week, we will do a pepper germ experiment that teaches the importance of hand washing. We will learn about fairy tales and nursery rhymes by singing *Humpty Dumpty* and doing a curds & whey experiment. We will also read Mother Goose nursery rhymes. A Disney character scavenger hunt will have us exploring the center to find our favorite characters.

Connor is meeting big milestones and we are so proud of all of his hard work! **Quinn** loves to play dress-up and is a great helper when her friends need a hand with a costume.

I am excited for another great month in the Turtle room!

Miss Bell

Frogs

Welcome 2025!

This month we will learn about germs and healthy eating. We will practice washing our hands to get germs off of them and we will talk about what foods will keep us healthy. We will continue to explore through sensory play in our sensory table and discuss our solutions to common classroom problems. We love seeing the children learn to use their words and ask for turns, as well as the independence that comes from these friendship skills. We will learn about the letters S, R and N, and the numbers 6, 7, 8 & 9. It is going to be a great month in the Frog room!

Beck is such a great friend and will share his toys whenever someone asks. He is also a great helper at clean-up time! **Ada** is so kind! She is always offering friends hugs and sharing her toys.

Have a safe and wonderful 2025!

Miss Jenny

Alligators

Welcome 2025!

This month, we are going to start working on writing and spelling our names! I encourage you to practice at home, as well! We will do a matching game with fruit & vegetables in a math activity. We will also read the book "Just Try One Bite", where kids convince their parents to eat healthy foods! Every Wednesday we will do a morning worksheet and at the end of the month I will send home a summary sheet to show progress. This month we will review the letters S, R and N, and then have a review week.

Tysen is so kind to each of the children in the room! **Avaya** is doing great at using a scissors to cut all on her own.

Let's have an awesome new year!

Miss Melanie

Pre-K

Let's ring in the new year!

This month we will introduce patterns. We will practice making our own patterns and extending existing patterns. We will "toast" the new year in a fun art activity and talk about the year 2025! During our germ theme week, we will do a germ experiment to learn about why we should wash our hands and how to stay healthy. We will fix Humpty Dumpty and sing a song about him during fairy tales & nursery rhymes week. Keeping our bodies healthy will be the focus when we do an art project about healthy lungs and we will end the month by making Hank from Finding Dory. This will be a great month of learning!

Please remember that the children are allowed to bring a toy for show and tell each Friday that starts with our letter of the week! We ask that you have children leave their personal toys at home on the other days of the week!

Nolan is the kind kid of the month! He makes our classroom a better place each day. **Cohen** is transitioning great into our classroom. We are so excited to have him!

Let's have a great month!

Miss Rachael

School-Agers

Happy New Year! Check out what our school age friends have going on this month!

We will bring in the new year by using positive social skills, practicing flashcards weekly, celebrating peers' birthdays and celebrating each other's' accomplishments! We plan to practice addition and subtraction with flash cards and to do a fun 2025 themed art activity! It will be a great month in the school age room!

Cole is always eager to help out in the classroom and is a great friend. **Mason** helps his teacher in the classroom and has shown great friendship skills!

2025 is going to be a great time in the school age room!

Miss Mia

Ask us about our:



Refer a
FRIEND
PROGRAM

JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29	30	31	1  Building Blocks is CLOSED	2	3	4
5	6	7 ALLIGATORS Germ Experiment	8 ALLIGATORS Librarian Visit	9	10	11
12	13 Building Blocks Move-Up Day NO SCHOOL Sergeant Bluff Schools	14	15 ALLIGATORS Librarian Visit	16	17 DUCKS Fairy Tale Dress-Up	18
19	20	21	22 ALLIGATORS Librarian Visit	23 Building Blocks PJ Day	24	25
26	27	28 ALLIGATORS Clothespin Matching Game	29 ALLIGATORS Librarian Visit DUCKS Colorful Bubbles	30	31	1