

Summer at My Place: Family Newsletter

A Note from the Executive Director



Dear My Place Families, Staff, and Community,

As we enter the summer season, I want to take a moment to share my gratitude, excitement, and appreciation for the direction My Place is headed. It has been about seven months since I stepped into my role as Executive Director, and I can honestly say it has been transformational. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to help lead this organization forward, with a strong focus on long-term sustainability, continued program growth, and ensuring that the quality of our programs continues to increase for the children and families we serve.

This year has already been filled with meaningful progress, successful fundraising efforts, and incredible community support. From our events to our ongoing fundraising initiatives, we have been reminded again and again how fortunate we are to have such generous donors, dedicated volunteers, supportive families, and hardworking staff. None of these efforts would be possible without the people who show up, give their time, share their resources, and believe in the mission of My Place. Thank you for helping us continue to grow.

We are also excited to celebrate Month of the Young Child in July, beginning with our 2nd Annual Carnival & Block Party as our kickoff event. This event is designed not only as a low-cost fundraising opportunity for our organization, but also as a way to give back to our community. We are proud to offer many free activities and opportunities for families to come together, celebrate children, and enjoy a fun evening at My Place. All are welcome!

As part of our Month of the Young Child fundraising, we will also be selling raffle tickets for a brand-new kayak, which was graciously donated to us by Walmart. We are so thankful for their support and excited to offer such a fun raffle opportunity to our families and community.

We also have exciting news to share regarding our program quality work. My Place recently moved from a 1-star rating to a 3-star rating through QUALITYstarsNY, and we are so proud of this progress. We are now working with a new QUALITYstarsNY coach as we continue to focus on improving our environments, strengthening our practices, and increasing the overall quality of care and education within our programs.

Another major piece of our organizational growth has been the impact of the LEAPS grant. LEAPS has been incredibly beneficial not only for our school-age program, but for our entire organization. It has allowed us to strengthen programming, expand opportunities for children, support staff development, and continue building a more intentional, engaging, and supportive environment for the children in our care.

On a personal note, I will be going out on maternity leave in August as my family prepares to welcome our baby boy. We are very excited that he will officially join the My Place family in November. While I am out, any program needs can be directed to our Program Directors, Noel Wheaton and Taylor Henry, or Supervisors, Breanna Astacio (opening), Sam Corbitt (closing), or Kaitlyn McWhorter (School-age), who will continue supporting families, staff, and daily program operations.

Thank you again for being part of the My Place community. I am so grateful for the momentum we are building together and excited for all that is ahead.

With appreciation,
Cassondra Ball
Executive Director
My Place: A Play & Learning Center

A Note from the Center Program Director



As we head into the summer months, I want to take a moment to thank all of our families for your continued support and partnership. Summer is such a special time for children to grow, explore, and create lasting memories.

At My Place, we believe summer learning is just as important as learning during the school year. Continuing to build literacy skills through reading stories, singing songs, practicing letters, and engaging in conversations helps children stay confident and prepared for the future. Even a few minutes of reading together each day can make a huge impact!

We also encourage plenty of outdoor play and hands-on exploration. Outdoor experiences help children strengthen their social skills, creativity, problem-solving abilities, and physical development while allowing them to enjoy and learn from the world around them.

Another important focus for us is social-emotional learning. Helping children learn how to express emotions, build relationships, solve problems, and develop confidence are skills that will support them for years to come. At My Place, we utilize the Pyramid Model framework to help foster nurturing relationships and create supportive environments where children can thrive emotionally, socially, and academically.

I am proud to share that our staff are either fully trained or actively working toward becoming trained in the Pyramid Model. This ongoing professional development helps ensure that we continue providing high-quality care and support while helping children develop important lifelong skills.

Open communication between families and staff is extremely important to us. We encourage families to share any changes at home, new routines, family transitions, sleep changes, or anything in between. Oftentimes even the littlest change can affect our kiddos throughout their day, and this communication helps us better support them both emotionally and developmentally.

To help us maintain strong communication, please be sure your ProCare notifications are turned on, especially for messages. ProCare is our main form of communication with families for updates, reminders, and classroom information.

We would also like to remind families that everyone must sign their child in and out each day using ProCare. Please do not sign your child in until they are physically in the hands of their teacher at drop-off, and do not sign them out until they are physically in your care at pick-up. This is extremely important to ensure we remain in compliance with OCFS regulations and maintain accurate attendance records at all times.

Family conferences will take place twice each year in January and June. These conferences are a wonderful opportunity for us to work together, discuss your child's growth and development, and continue building strong partnerships between home and school.

Lastly, I wanted to share that I will be on vacation from August 31st through September 7th. During that time, our team will continue working together to ensure the center runs smoothly and that all children and families continue to receive the care and support they deserve.

We are looking forward to a fun-filled summer with all of our amazing children and families!

Warmly,
Noel Wheaton
Center Program Director
Noel.Wheaton@myplace-aplc.org

A Note from our School Age Director



As we head into the final weeks of the school year, SACC program has been full of excitement, laughter, and so many smiles as we wrap up another wonderful year together! It has been amazing watching the children learn, grow, and create memories throughout the year. We are also excited to welcome the warmer weather and all the fun, outdoor experiences that come with it as we prepare for summer adventures ahead.

As a reminder, **the last day of our afterschool program will be June 18th.** The center will be **closed on June 19th in observance of the holiday,** and we will also be **closed the week of 22nd-26th, as our team transitions and prepares for Summer Program.** We appreciate your support during this transition period as we get everything ready for an exciting summer filled with fun, learning, and new experiences!

Below you will find important **Summer Program information,** along with details for one of our favorite events of the year, our **2nd Annual Month of the Child Kickoff Carnival!** We cannot wait to celebrate with our families and kick off the season together with games, activities, and lots of fun.

Thank you for being such an important part of our center community. We are looking forward to finishing the school year strong and beginning an amazing summer together! *☺☺

Miss. Taylor

A Note from our Infant Team

Lead Teacher - Miss Brea
Assistant Teacher - Miss Sam



The Infant Room is excited for a fun-filled June! This month, we will explore themes including 4th of July, Under the Sea, Creepy Crawlies, and Space through sensory play, art, music, and stories. We are welcoming new friends to our classroom while supporting our older infants as they continue reaching important developmental milestones.

We are also happy to welcome back staff members returning from college and maternity leave. Summer activities will include water play, story time at the lake, tie-dye projects, and a field trip to Clute Park at the end of the month. We can't wait to make memories, build relationships, and enjoy all the fun that summer has to offer!

Warmly,
Ms.Brea

A Note from the Waddler Team

Lead Teacher - Miss Ashley
Teacher Aide - Miss Angela
Assistant Teacher - Miss Kim



Let's Welcome Summer back! We are super excited to get back into water play and do some fun summer activities! We will be dabbling in some tie dye crafts as well as potentially planning some trips to the park. We are also going to be having some new friends join us this summer and our older friends are looking forward to that as well. This season we will also be introducing some new routes around town for some short trips and handing out slips prior just so that all parents are aware of our location while we are out those specific dates. Continuing the topic of water play, if you have not already please send in your child's swimsuit and towel labeled with their name as well as swim diapers so we are prepared when the sun starts to shine! Moving forward, we are also getting ready to have our Bi annual Parent teacher conferences so make sure you take a moment during drop off or pickup to sign up for that. In closing, I hope everyone has a wonderful summer!

A Note from the Tiny Sprouts Team

Lead Teacher - Miss Kelly
Assistant Teacher - Miss Destiny



Summer Fun and Activities planned for Tiny Sprouts

Summer is the perfect time for Tiny Sprouts to explore, learn, and have fun. Engaging in a variety of activities helps stimulate their creativity, improve their motor skills, and encourage social interactions. Below is a list of exciting activities we have planned for the children to enjoy during the sunny months.

Outdoor Activities

1. Water Play

- **Sprinkler Fun:** Setting up a sprinkler in the play yard and letting the children run through it. This is a great way for them to cool off and get some exercise.
- **Water Table:** Filling a water table with toys, cups, and funnels. It's an excellent sensory play activity that encourages experimentation with pouring and measuring.
- **Chalk Art**

Colorful chalk and let them create masterpieces on the sidewalk or brick walls. This activity enhances their creativity and fine motor skills.

Indoor Activities

1. Crafting

- **Paper Crafts:** Using, sponges, doobers and paper to create masks, animals, or sun catchers. Providing paint, markers, and glue for decorating.
- **Playdough Creations:** Encouraging children to use playdough to sculpt shapes, animals, or food items. This activity promotes creativity and dexterity.
- **2. Story Time Adventures**
- Creating an interactive story time by reading books that involve movement or sound effects. This can encourage children to act out parts of the story or make animal sounds.

Educational Activities

1. Counting Games

- We plan to use everyday items like buttons, blocks, or counters to teach simple counting. Setting up a counting station where children can sort and count items into groups.

2. Alphabet Hunt

- Hide alphabet letters that begin with the child's name around the class. Have children search for them and match them to their circle time name tags. This activity reinforces letter recognition.

By incorporating these fun and educational activities into their summer routine, our tiny sprouts class can enjoy a vibrant and enriching season that supports their growth and development.

-Miss Kelly

A Note from the Toddler Team

Lead Teacher - Miss Bre
Teacher Aide - Miss Jaidyn
Assistant Teacher - Miss Ammanda



Our toddlers are so excited for the summer to be here! This summer we are going to be diving into fun learning themes that cover so much! Those themes will include learning topics such as the environment, nature, summertime fun, and our community! We will be learning about these themes this summer through sensory play, engaging circle times, center and dramatic play, story times, fine and gross motor play, as well as hands-on crafts and activities! This summer we will be planning a lot of walks and buggy rides around town seeing everything there is to see. During our playground time we are very excited to jump into water play and use the playground sprinklers! Reminder, if you haven't sent in a bathing suit for your child yet, please make sure you do so. We don't want to miss out on the water play fun! Our toddler friends can't wait to start making fun summer memories and enjoy all that summer has to offer!

-The Toddler Room

A Note from the Preschool Team

Lead Teacher - Miss Mikayla
 Teacher Aide - Miss Bri
 Assistant Teacher - Miss Maddy
 Teacher Aide - Miss Rhonda



Summer is such a special time in our preschool classroom, and we are excited to make the most of every moment together. We look forward to walks to the lake, water play, outdoor adventures, and creating lasting memories with our preschool friends. As we have fun exploring and learning, we will continue strengthening gross motor skills through active play and outdoor experiences, fine motor skills through hands-on activities and creative projects, and social-emotional skills by helping children express their feelings with words, build friendships, and develop problem-solving skills during everyday interactions. As we enjoy these special summer months together, we are also mindful that this season brings important transitions. At the end of the summer, we will be saying goodbye to some of our preschool friends as they move on to exciting new adventures. While it is always bittersweet to see them go, we are so proud of all they have accomplished and know they are ready for the next step in their journey. We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to all of our families for sharing your children with us each day. It has been a true privilege to watch them grow over the years. The laughter, milestones, friendships, and memories we have shared together are something we will never forget! Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's story, we have loved every moment of this incredible year.

-Miss Mikayla

Pyramid Model Corner: Keeping Summer Fun with Predictable Routines

Summer often brings vacations, family gatherings, later bedtimes, and changes to daily schedules. While these special activities are exciting, children thrive when they know what to expect.

One way to support your child's social-emotional development this summer is by maintaining a few predictable routines each day. Simple routines such as consistent meal times, bedtime routines, or a regular morning schedule help children feel safe, secure, and confident.

When routines need to change, try preparing your child ahead of time by talking about what will be different. For example, "Today we're going to Grandma's house after lunch instead of coming home." Knowing what to expect can help reduce frustration and make transitions easier.

Pyramid Model Tip: Children feel more confident and successful when they have predictable routines and know what comes next. A little preparation can go a long way toward helping children enjoy all the fun that summer has to offer!

New Faces

Interns & Shadow Students at My Place

At My Place, we value supporting the next generation of early childhood professionals. Throughout the year, you may see interns or shadow students in our classrooms. These individuals may be local high school students, college students, or individuals completing required hours for certification programs such as the CDA.

All interns and shadow students are closely supervised by our staff at all times, are never left alone with children, and do not count in classroom ratios. They are present to observe, learn, and support simple classroom activities under staff guidance.

We are proud to provide these learning opportunities while maintaining a safe and high-quality environment for all children in our care. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Important Dates



June 18th - Last day of After School Program
June 19th - Juneteenth National Independence Day
June 21st - Father's Day
June 26th - Preschool Graduation (information will come from your child's teacher)
June 26th - My Place 2nd Annual Month of the Child Kick Off Summer Carnival (Center will be closing at 4pm, 2nd Street will be closed for the event. Details below)
June 29th - First Day of Summer Program for School Age
June 29th - Month of the Child Fundraising Kick Off (Details below)
July 3rd - DCC & SACC CLOSED in observance of holiday
July 4th - Independence Day
July 31st - Ends Month of the Child Fundraising Event
August 28th - Last day of Summer Program for School Age
September 4th - Last day of care for Preschoolers going to school
September 7th- DCC & SACC CLOSED in observance of Labor Day
September 8th - First Day of elementary school & Afterschool program for School Age
September 11th - DCC & SACC CLOSED for Grand Prix

A Note from the Wellness Committee

Miss Cass
Miss Taylor
Miss Kelly
Miss Brea
Miss Ashley
Miss Mikayla
Miss Kim



As we move into the summer months, our Wellness Team would like to take a moment to remind our families, staff, and community of the importance of caring for the whole child — socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally. At My Place, wellness is woven into the way we support children each day through safe routines, nurturing relationships, healthy habits, outdoor play, movement, connection, and opportunities for children to learn how to understand and express their feelings.

This season is a wonderful time to slow down, enjoy the outdoors, spend time together, and build meaningful memories. Whether it is through playing outside, sharing meals, reading together, practicing kindness, or simply taking time to rest, small moments of wellness can make a big difference for children and families.

Our team is excited to continue supporting a positive, healthy, and caring environment where every child feels safe, valued, and ready to grow. Thank you for partnering with us as we continue to promote wellness, connection, and belonging throughout our My Place community.

A Note from the Garden Committee



☐☐ A Note from the Garden Committee ☐☐

Our garden spaces have been busy this spring! The children have helped by starting seeds indoors and have recently planted them outside in our garden beds. We now have a pollinator box ☐☐☐, two vegetable boxes filled with lettuce ☐, carrots ☐, tomatoes ☐, and cucumbers ☐, as well as an herb pot featuring chocolate mint ☐☐. We are excited to watch everything continue to grow this season! *

A special thank you to all of the families who joined us for our grounds clean-up day ☐☐☐ Your help and support made a huge difference, and we appreciate everyone who took the time to help make our outdoor spaces beautiful for the children! ☐☐

A Note from the Kitchen



Cook - Mr. Wilson

"Cooking makes me happy. Cooking for others makes me complete." - Mr. Will

We recently introduced our new Spring/Summer menu, and the children have been very excited to see some of their favorite meals back on the menu! Mealtimes continue to be a highlight of the day as children explore new foods while enjoying familiar favorites. Some of our most requested meals include spaghetti and other pasta dishes, tacos, quesadillas, turkey and cream cheese pinwheels, pizza, and pulled pork. We love seeing the children try new things, talk about their favorite foods with friends, and build healthy eating habits together. Thank you for trusting us to provide nutritious and enjoyable meals that help fuel your children's learning and play each day! ☺☺☺☺



Jump into Summer with us at My Place! ☐



Get ready for an unforgettable summer with us at our Summer Program! It is a 9-week program, running from June 29th through August 28th. Located at the Watkins Glen Elementary School, operating Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM-6:00 PM for children ages 4-12. Please note that the program will be closed on July 3rd in observance of Independence Day. This summer is packed with adventure as children will enjoy hiking and swimming at the Watkins Glen State Park pool, with transportation provided by bus three times each week! We will also have exciting weekly themes, daily clubs to join, and plenty of opportunities for fun, friendship, and discovery. We provide a nutritious breakfast and afternoon snack each day; families will need to pack lunch for their child. Come make lasting summer memories with us!

☐☐☐☐☐☐

2nd Annual Month of Child Kickoff Carnival ☐



☐☐ We are so excited to invite all of our families and community members to our 2nd Annual Month of the Child Summer Carnival Kickoff on **Friday, June 26th from 4:00-6:00 PM!** *☐

To make room for all the fun, 2nd Street will be blocked off from Porter Street to Decatur Street, creating a safe space for everyone to spread out, play, and enjoy an evening together as we kick off the summer season! ☐☐☐

Get ready for an afternoon packed with excitement featuring carnival games ☐, face painting ☐, hair tinsel ☐, delicious food ☐☐☐, a bounce house ☐, prizes ☐☐, family activities ☐☐☐, exciting raffle baskets, and more! There will be something for everyone to enjoy as we celebrate another amazing year together and welcome summer break with lots of smiles and memories. ☺☐☐

Some activities and attractions will be free for families to enjoy, while others will require tickets. ☐

☐ Tickets will be available for purchase on-site during the event and can be used for select games, activities, food items, and special attractions. Be sure to bring your excitement and get ready for a fun-filled evening of laughter, community, and summer celebration! ☐☐☐

☐ **Month of the Child Fundraiser - Coming This July!** ☐

We cannot wait to see our My Place families there and celebrate the start of another exciting summer together!



July is all about celebrating children — their growth, laughter, imagination, and the joy they bring to our lives each and every day. At My Place, we are excited to recognize the importance of childhood through our Month of the Child Fundraiser!

Throughout the month of July, we will be raising funds to continue supporting enriching experiences, classroom materials, and opportunities for the children in our care. As part of the fundraiser, we will have a variety of fun raffle items available for families and community members to enter for a chance to win!

Tickets can be purchased directly at the centers throughout the month. We encourage everyone to join in the fun while helping support the children and programs at My Place.

Thank you for helping us celebrate and invest in the amazing children who make our days so special! ☺
