

PARENTS AS TEACHERS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2026



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REFLECTIONS FROM THE COORDINATOR

Hello PAT families,

Summertime is my favorite; I have always loved it. The longer days, fireflies, pool time, BBQs, and baseball are among the reasons. As our parent educators move into summer break and our office becomes quieter, I take a deep breath and savor the highlights of the year. This year, BV PAT served **592 children**, completed **3568 home visits**, and hosted **327 Group Connections**...phew! We love what we do and truly believe that providing support to parents so they can parent with intention, research-based information, and encouragement makes a difference.

I have been in this field for 20 years, and I have never been more passionate about the work we have the privilege to engage in. As the fields of neuroscience and child development grow, they continue to reinforce the considerable importance of the early years of a child's life. Your children's brains are developing every day in a thousand ways, and their interactions with you are building a foundation that will carry them through their lifetime.

I encourage you to watch this short video that gives a glimpse of what's happening in those little brains in the first 3 years and just how important your job as a parent is!

[Watch here!](#)

This summer, with a grant from KSDE, we are excited to send 4 more parent educators through the Conscious Discipline Institute for a week in Orlando, Florida, to dive into this neuroscience. We will continue to share information with you to help you build a strong connection with your child, manage challenging behaviors in ways that promote resilience and problem-solving, and begin building the tools necessary to learn self-regulation. These skills will help prepare your child not only for kindergarten but for life.

We also know that parents having strong connections with other parents is so important. One way to build these connections is to get involved in our Blue Valley Early Childhood [PTA](#). This is a smaller group of parents like you who gather once a month to plan events for families and support our staff. There are many ways to get involved, from small, one-time jobs to larger roles. Please let me or your parent educator know if you would like more information about how to get involved and what it could look like.

Finally, one of the best ways you can give back to our program is to share our information with your friends, coworkers, neighbors, and family. We will have lots of openings for August 2026.

If you have concerns that come up during the summer, feel free to reach out to me directly. Your parent educators will be excited to reconnect in August!

Michelle Kelly

Program Coordinator
Blue Valley Parents as Teachers



JULY BABY PLAYGROUP



Bring a Friend to Baby Playgroup on Wednesday, July 22!

Join us on **Wednesday, July 22nd, from 9:15–10:00 AM** for a special Baby Play where enrolled families are invited to bring a friend! This playgroup is designed for ages 3-12 months, including your friend's little one. It's a fun way to share the joy of playgroup, connect with other families, and introduce someone new to the wonderful experiences Parents as Teachers has to offer. We can't wait to welcome you and your little one for a morning of play, learning, and friendship!

Sign-up link will be sent on **JUNE 8th!**

Please sign up under **1** spot. Add your friend's name and email address in the space provided when registering.

Please note...

- Only one adult per child may attend.
- No siblings are allowed in the Baby Play
- All adults must show a valid state-issued photo ID or passport to enter any BV building. Please bring an ID; otherwise, you will not be allowed to attend.
- Strollers and car seats are not allowed in the playroom. Please plan to wear or carry your baby while in the playroom when not on the floor playing.
- Please stay home if you or your child is ill.

WEDNESDAY

9:15 - 10 am:
7/22



HLC PLAYGROUND



We welcome you to enjoy Hilltop's outdoor playgrounds this summer.

Here is the summer schedule:

June

Mon-Thurs: Afternoons only

Fri-Sun: All day

July 1st - August 12th

All playgrounds are open all day, every day.



SUMMER HOURS



During the summer, our office hours will be limited. Mandi will be available Mon–Thurs from 8 AM–4 PM, May 26–June 11, and will return on July 21. If you need assistance outside of those dates, please contact Michelle Kelly



at 913-624-2815 or Mkelly@bluevalleyk12.org. Messages will be returned as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience and understanding!

LOST & FOUND



We have a few items in the “Lost & Found!” Please [click here](#) to see if any of these belong to you. You are welcome to stop by Hilltop to pick them up during Summer hours, or feel free to email me Ahortshoj@bluevalleyk12.org to schedule a good time.

BORROW A NANA

Looking for intermittent childcare?

For:

- Date nights
- a long weekend
- out of town/country trips
- or a parent's day off!



Our own parent educator, Claudia Burford, is offering childcare beginning this summer and welcomes your call or text.

[Click here](#)

to see her flyer for additional information.

JOCO LIBRARY



Looking for a fun and free activity this summer? Be sure to check out your Johnson County Library’s summer storytimes! Storytime is a wonderful way for children to build early literacy skills through songs, stories, movement, and play while connecting with other families in the community.

[Click here](#) to view times and locations



PAT LIBRARY

THANK YOU!

We have received the majority of the checked-out books & items.

To ensure everything is accounted for and ready for next fall, please return any library items by **June 11th**. You're welcome to drop it off at Hilltop Learning Center during summer hours.

If any pieces are damaged or missing, we get it; things happen. We would appreciate your consideration of a donation to help replace those items.

We truly appreciate your support in helping us keep our library organized and available for all families.



PTA NEWS

Hello PAT Families!

Do you have a child aging out of the PAT program and looking to stay connected?? Do you love the playroom and connecting with other families, and want the opportunity to have some "bonus" playtime throughout the year? Join the PTA! For **\$30**, your membership will cover additional playgroups, music sessions, and help support our teachers/parent educators throughout the year. Your membership is good **through June 2027!**

[Click here](#) to fill out the form and remit payment.

Are you a parent who loves to give back and is looking for a way to do that from the comfort of home with a laptop/device during naptime? I am a PAT Mama, currently serving as the Vice President. Our PTA could use your help!

Outings Coordinator - plan an outing once a month (you could easily use ideas from this year as a starting point!), **Touch a Truck Coordinator** - this is sponsored by PAT each Spring (you would work with Michelle Kelly on this!), **Stock the Breakroom** - create a fall & spring signup genius (make sure our staff/therapists and parent educators have snacks to keep them going!), would be PERFECT Roles!!

[Click here](#) to learn more about those opportunities or any others.

Please reach out to me with any questions!

Kristen Byers: parentsasteachersvp@gmail.com

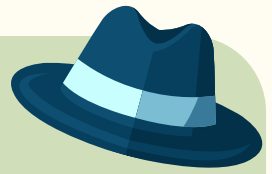
SUNFLOWER SUMMER APP

Sunflower Summer provides a wide variety of ways for families to get out, explore something new, and enjoy time together. Kansas families can visit museums, zoos, historical landmarks, and more for free!

[Click here](#) for more information.



30 Days of summer fun for babies and toddlers



Day 1: Go Swimming! Take a dip in the pool. To keep your child safe from sunburn, limit sun exposure, wear protective clothing, and always use sunscreen. Never leave a child unattended in water. [Overland Park Recreation](#)

Day 2: Make goop! Pour 2 parts liquid white glue into a bowl. Gradually add one part liquid starch and food coloring. Let it stand 5 minutes. Mix with hands until smooth and rubbery. If it is too gooeey, add more starch. If it is hard, add more glue. Store in an airtight container.

Day 3: Grow a salsa garden. Gardening with kids can be so much fun, and even the smallest hands can get involved in different ways. You can get a carrier or sling and wear your infant while you garden, and toddlers love to play in the dirt and learn to plant seeds and water plants.

Day 4: Pick some berries. Pick some berries on a farm, make strawberry shortcake, find other berry recipes, and learn about growing berries at home. [The Berry Patch](#)

Day 5: Read! If it's raining, you can spend a day reading. Find the best books for infants and toddlers and learn how to keep your older kids reading. [JOCO Library](#)

Day 6: Explore nature. Kids are naturalists by nature! Head outside and let them explore your own backyard. Engage their senses by letting them look, listen, touch, and smell.

Day 7: Go to the Market! Check out the Overland Park Farmer's Market. Located on Marty between 79th and 80th Streets, this market is a thriving open-air market offering produce, flowers, and entertainment for the entire family.

Day 8: Make sidewalk chalk! Make some sidewalk chalk and color your sidewalk. You will need 1 cup of Plaster of Paris, 1 cup of water, powdered Tempera paint, and molds (paper cups, toilet paper rolls). Mix Plaster of Paris and water. Add Tempera paint until the desired color is achieved. Pour mix into molds. Allow to dry completely, remove from molds, and enjoy!

Day 9: Try infant massage. View an infant massage video on YouTube and share this wonderful bonding experience with your child.

Day 10: Make a bird feeder. Smear nut butter onto a pinecone with a paintbrush until it is well coated. Give your child a ziplock bag filled with birdseed, then have them shake the pinecone in the bag until it is thoroughly covered with seeds. Tie a piece of ribbon around the end of the pinecone, knot the ends, and hang it outside.

ACTIVITIES

Day 11: Cook together. Kitchen time offers a special parenting opportunity. Cooking together creates closer bonds and lifelong memories. It's also a chance to talk and hear what your child has to share. Even very young children can begin by just spreading butter on bread or helping to stir.

Day 12: Take a walk! Take a neighborhood walk and let your child take pictures along the way. Print the pictures and put together a book to remember the day.

Day 13: Have a slumber party! Get out sleeping bags and the popcorn (or for small children, consider dry cereal) and have a slumber party in the living room!

Day 14: Make breakfast soup. Whisk together 2 cups of orange juice, 2 tsps lemon juice, 1/2 cup of plain yogurt, and 1 TBSP of honey until it is "all one color". Place 5 banana slices each into 2 bowls and add 1/2 cup of sliced fruit of your choice. Ladle the "soup" into the bowl and serve.

Day 15: Check out [Sea Life Kansas City](#). Get transported into the amazing underwater world! Get nose-to-nose with sharks and prepare for close views of everything from starfish to seahorses.

Day 16: Make some music. Gather materials from around the house and make your own musical instruments. You can create drums from empty oatmeal containers, cymbals from two metal pan lids, and tambourines with two paper plates.

Day 17: Go fly a kite! Flying is most fun when the wind is medium (6-15 mph), so you can do more than just hold on. You can make your kite dance across the sky by pulling in and letting out the line. [Click here](#) for simple kite-making instructions.

Day 18: Have fun at [Deanna Rose Farmstead](#). Take a trip back in time and relish the turn-of-the-century family farm features.

Day 19: Paint with water! Grab a bucket and some old paintbrushes and head outside. Fill the buckets with water and let your child paint the side of the garage, the house, the door, or the sidewalk. The water won't hurt these surfaces, and it's fun to watch the water disappear as it dries.

Day 20: Make clean mud. Unroll one roll of toilet paper into a large bowl or tub, cover with shredded Ivory soap (shred a bar of soap with a vegetable peeler), and add water slowly until the toilet paper starts to disintegrate between your fingers. Squish until very wet. Add more toilet paper, then add more water. Texture improves overnight.



ACTIVITIES



Day 21: Create a backyard obstacle course. Your whole family can participate by gathering items, setting up the course, and testing their skills in a family-friendly competition. Items you could use include a rolled-up beach towel for a hurdle, a garden hose for a tightrope, or a large box to crawl through.

Day 22: Grow a family garden. Growing vegetables teaches children that plants, like people, need food and water to grow and stay healthy. Caring for plants helps develop responsibility. It also builds self-esteem when kids can share what they grow.

Day 23: Visit the Arboretum. Pack a picnic and head to [Overland Park's Arboretum](#) and Botanical Gardens.

Day 24: Make your own Play-Doh. Combine the following in a saucepan: 1 cup flour, 1 cup water, 1/2 cup of salt, 1 TBSP cooking oil, 2 tsps Cream of Tartar, and several drops of food coloring. Heat and stir over medium heat on the stove until the mixture forms a soft ball. Put the mixture onto wax paper to cool. Knead slightly to eliminate a grainy texture. Store in a tightly covered container.

Day 25: Hit the Beach! Summer is a great time to head to the local lake beaches. Collecting shells is a fun activity when you're at the beach. If your beach doesn't have shells, you can pick up some at a craft or hobby store and bring them with you. Scatter some around the beach or bury a few and let your child have fun finding them.

Day 26: Start a collection. Help your child start a collection of something that sparks his or her interest. There are many things you can collect right around your house, such as bugs, leaves, flowers, or rocks.

Day 27: Have a carpet picnic. Make an everyday meal into an indoor picnic. Let your child pick the menu and set up the blanket with colorful plates, napkins, and plastic utensils. Let your child invite a teddy bear to the picnic and play "The Teddy Bear Picnic" song by [clicking here](#).

Day 28: Visit [Powell Gardens](#). Take a drive to explore the many gardens at Powell Gardens. Keep your eyes open for the many different birds, butterflies, insects, turtles, and frogs that inhabit the gardens.

Day 29: Shaving cream fun! Squirt a generous amount of shaving cream onto a cookie sheet or other flat, covered surface. Let your children run their fingers through the shaving cream and create "mountains" and "streams". They can also drive their little cars and trucks through the mixture.

Day 30: Make bubbles! Combine 1 TBSP of glycerin with 2 TBSP of liquid soap and 9 ounces of water, and let sit for several hours. Pour into a large pan and dip your wand for some unbelievably beautiful bubbles. You can experiment with wire hangers or floral wire to create wands.

