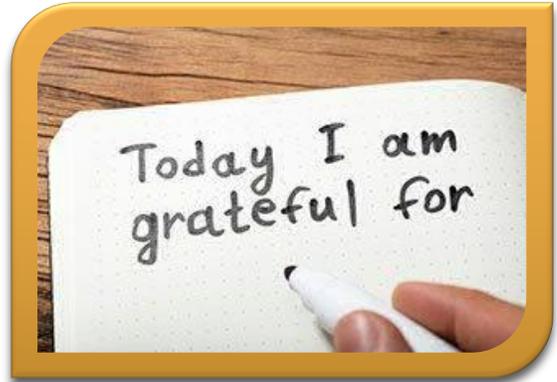


Giving Thanks and The Science of Gratitude

Did you know that there are 17 countries around the world that celebrate gratitude in a way similar to how the United States celebrates Thanksgiving? It's true! In China, Chung Chiu is celebrated and in Vietnam, Têt-Trung-Thu, both commemorating the fall harvest where families gather to share food, signify unity and peace, and to honor their families. In Germany, Erntedank is celebrated by some religious groups and farmland cultures to honor their harvest and give thanks¹. This time of year presents a great opportunity for parents and caregivers alike to incorporate gratitude into our daily lives. In fact, practicing gratitude can have positive health benefits! When we feel or practice gratitude, something special happens to our brain. Specifically, it produces more oxytocin, the hormone associated with bonding. This hormone makes us feel warm and fuzzy inside! From a young age, children are learning about gratitude from simple "thank yous" to being the beneficiary of birthday gifts or holiday presents². According to Zero to Three, "Fostering feelings of gratitude can transform our outlook on life and help us focus more on the good, than on the negative, news in our lives. But like anything else, gratitude requires practice. Sharing appreciations when we feel them and actively looking for things that make us happy can "retrain" our brains toward these attitudes of gratitude. Being grateful offers a new perspective, one that will help you see the best in your kids, and the world, and will teach them to do the same."³



¹ Deron, Bernadette. (2018). *This Is How 15 Other Countries Around the World Celebrate Thanksgiving*. Retrieved from: <https://allthatsinteresting.com/thanksgiving-in-other-countries/3>

² Kader, Hanady. (2015). *The Science of Gratitude and How Kids Learn to Express It*. Retrieved from: <https://pulse.seattlechildrens.org/the-science-of-gratitude-and-how-kids-learn-to-express-it/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CResearch%20shows%20that%20gratitude%20is,relationships%20when%20humans%20feel%20gratitude.%E2%80%9D>

³ MacLaughlin, Sarah S. and Rebecca Parlakian. (2017). *Nurturing Gratitude*. Retrieved from: <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/2108-nurturing-gratitude>

Gratitude throughout the Day!

Thinking about incorporating intentional gratitude throughout the day in your classroom might feel overwhelming. For starters, consider the gratitude ideas below that capitalize on moments that already exist each day within your classroom. The additional gratitude engagement ideas provided next in this month's newsletter will hopefully help ease the process of integrating gratitude practices in the classroom as well!

- **Meal/Snack Time:** Lead the classroom through a moment of mindful gratitude for all of the people that were a part of creating the meal/snack before you as you imagine how the food was initially grown or made, then gathered and packaged, then transported to a store, and finally bought and brought to your classroom!
- **Individual/Free Play Time:** Express gratitude for the opportunity for each child to explore their unique interests.
- **Collective/Group Time:** These moments can be times to name gratefulness for learning, growing, and playing with friends.
- **Outside Time:** Before going outside, encourage children to think about what they are grateful for when being outside. When you all come back inside, ask each child what they were grateful for having been outside in nature.
- **Rest/Nap Time:** As challenging as it can be to slow down and rest, name how grateful our bodies and brains feel after having rest/nap time, so they can be ready to learn and play more when they wake!
- **Bathroom/Potty Time:** A recurring moment throughout the day where you may voice and help children express gratitude for listening to and caring for their bodies.



Gratitude Activities & Ideas

Books About Gratitude & Thankfulness:

Younger Preschoolers

All the World, Liz Garton Scanlon
Thanks from The Very Hungry Caterpillar, Eric Carle
Apple Cake: A Gratitude, Dawn Casey
Thank You Book, Mary Lyn Ray

Older Preschoolers

Thankful, Eileen Spinelli
Thank you, Omu! Oge Mora
We Are Grateful: Otsaliheliga, Sorell
Gracias Thanks, Pat Mora

Circle Time Idea: Read a gratitude or thankfulness book and invite students to share a thank you or gratitude for people, places, nature, family, pets, siblings, etc.

Conversation Ideas for Older Preschoolers:

- Name something that you are grateful for or something that made you smile today.
- Can you think of someone you would like to write a thank you note? Who and for what?
- How can we remind ourselves to be happy for the good things already in our lives?

Movement Idea: Standing Mountain Pose: Breathe deeply, move slowly, and speak clearly. Standing up, reach up, breathe in "I am thankful for the sun or sky or clouds...." Pretend to grab sun, sky, cloud. Breathe out, fold over, place item gently on floor. "I am grateful for the Earth, ground, soil that grows our food...." Hands on hips rise slowly to stand. Repeat as desired.

After movement poses, sit with hand on heart and wish well to the people, nature, places, school community, friends, and any other student gratitude ideas.

Try adding a tree pose, or side bends, or child's pose as alternatives.

Art & Literacy Idea: Create a space in the classroom for a gratitude tree. Creating colorful leaves can be an art activity. At circle time, students share something they feel grateful or thankful for, teacher writes on a leaf. Child can hang or stick on tree with adult assistance.



Ideas to Consider for Older Preschoolers: Display or make a class gratitude book of student drawn pictures or photos. Discuss how we can feel grateful in our hearts, show gratitude with our hands, and remember moments or memories of feeling grateful or thankful in our heads (thinking/remembering).

- **Heart:** Draw a picture of someone who you are grateful/thankful for and hold in your heart.
- **Hands:** Draw a picture of something you can do to show your gratitude to a place or person. Be helpful, clean up, hug, taking care of nature (recycle or throw away trash).
- **Head:** Draw a picture of something you remember or think about that makes you feel calm, happy, or joyful. Memory of a place you visited, or something you did together as a family.

Boulder County Resources

Community Resources

◇ **Our Center: 220 Collyer St., Longmont, CO 80501**

Phone: (303)772-5529

Services Provided: food bank, clothing closet, rent & utility assistance, housing referrals, employment referrals, family law resources, substance abuse resources, mobility access, health care access and mental health resources

Call to set up an appointment to access services. Persons facing eviction or utility shut-off may be eligible for emergency walk-in hours (8:00 to 10:00 a.m. or 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. weekdays).

◇ **Sister Carmen: 655 Aspen Ridge Dr., Lafayette, CO**

Phone: 303-665-4342

Services Provided: behavioral health counseling, parenting education, direct financial assistance, resources and referrals, and enrollment in public benefits.

Must reside in Lafayette, Louisville, Superior or Erie. Call to set up an appointment.

◇ **Emergency Family Assistance Association: 1575 Yarmouth Ave, Boulder, CO 80304**

Phone: (303) 442-3042

Services: food bank, financial assistance, family housing, and children's program (providing enriching activities for families).

Food Banks

◇ **St. Joseph's Food Bank: 804 S Lincoln St, Longmont, CO 80501**

Phone: 303-678-1469

Hours of Operation: 10:30 am to 6:30 pm on Tuesday, 10:30 am to 5:00 pm on Wednesday, 10:30 am to 1:00 pm on Thursday

For assistance, stop by the location listed above during hours of operation. You will be asked to fill out a short application and supply a form of identification.

◇ **Our Center: 220 Collyer St, Longmont, CO 80501**

Phone: (303) 772-5529

Hours of Operation: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday 9:00am-12pm; Tuesday from 1pm-5:30pm

Groceries are available once/week via a drive-through service at 220 Collyer Street in Longmont. Participants will need to show photo ID and address verification, as usual. New participants will be asked to complete an Intake form.

◇ **Erie Community Food Bank: 635 Pierce St, Erie, CO 80516**

Phone: (720) 383-4865

Hours of Operation: Thursday from 12pm-2pm and 5:30pm-7:30pm, every 2nd Saturday of the months from 9am-11am.

To qualify, you must be a resident of Erie, Colorado. You must bring in proof that you are a resident: a utility bill of any kind and a current I.D., such as a driver's license. Patrons are able to visit the Food Bank once a month.

◇ **Harvest of Hope Pantry: 2960 Valmont Rd, Boulder, CO 80301**

Phone: (720) 382-1971

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 9am-11am, Thursday from 4:30-6:30

To qualify you must complete an intake. Intake form must include photo identification for all adults listed on application, identification for all children 18 years and younger which includes birth certificate, social security card, or school registration/school ID, and proof of city of Boulder residency which may include one of the following: a rental agreement, mortgage statement or piece of official mail such as an electric bill and phone bill or Voter registration.

◇ **Sister Carmen Community Center: 655 Aspen Ridge Dr, Lafayette, CO 80026**

Phone: (303) 665-4342

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 8am-5pm, closes every day from 12pm-1pm

Call to schedule an appointment.

◇ **Emergency Family Assistance Association: 1575 Yarmouth Ave, Boulder, CO 80304**

Phone: (303) 442-3042

Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday 1pm-4:30pm

Eligible households may visit the food bank once per week. Upon arrival, you may be asked to provide your name, date of birth, zip code and phone number.

FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Contact our warm line at,
(303) 245-4418, to talk directly to
an Early Childhood Mental Health
Consultant.

