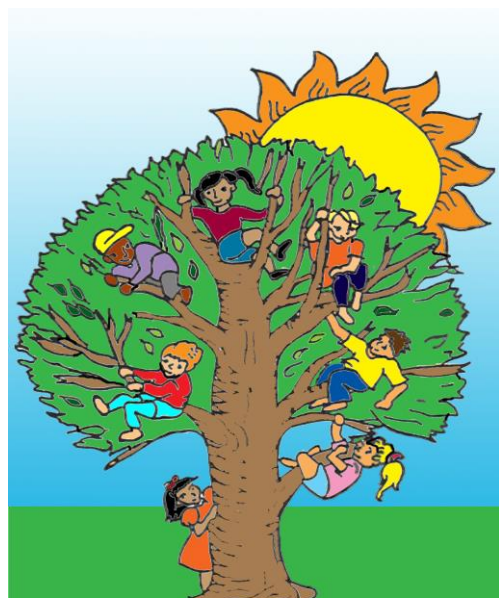


# SUNS NEWS

Suntree United Methodist School

*"The Lord is risen indeed"*

*Luke 24:34a*



Dear Families,

April is a wonderful time to marvel at the exquisite gift of God's creation. The beauty of this season is a testament to the incredible strokes of a master artist. Our Christian faith bestows upon us a unique responsibility to cherish and protect this environment. Tuesday, April 22nd, marks the annual celebration of Earth Day, a global event where people from over 190 nations come together to raise awareness and devise strategies to safeguard our planet. We are the custodians of God's unique creations. The choices we make today not only affect us but also our children and the generations to come.

Suntree United Methodist School takes great pride in its commitment to practicing what we preach. Once again, our classes are sowing the seeds of change by planting gardens around our campus, and our children are learning to take their role in environmental stewardship very seriously. Our actions may seem small, but our commitment is unwavering. To live as people of faith is to demonstrate our care with all the choices we make.

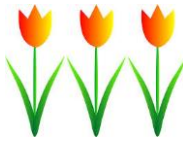
What a fantastic way to welcome springtime!!

Blessings,

Denise Schilling

*"CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN TODAY, SONS OF  
MEN AND ANGELS SAY. RAISE YOUR JOYS  
AND TRIUMPHS HIGH; SING, YE HEAVENS  
AND EARTH REPLY."*

Charles Wesley



*April 1<sup>st</sup>*  
*Extra VPK Day for 3 Day Classes*

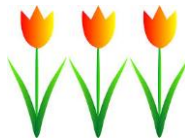
*April 2<sup>nd</sup>*  
*Science at SUMS – Space Science*

*April 18<sup>th</sup>*  
*School Holiday*

### **Kindergarten and Registration Orientation**

Here at SUMS, we have a few openings in our Kindergarten and would be happy to answer any questions regarding the scholarships available. Please let us know if you are interested. Call us in the office at 321.254.3866 or stop by.

Some elementary schools are offering Kindergarten orientations. Please check with your home school for more information.



### **Green Reads**

Show your child the importance of Earth Day and help him/her understand how little, everyday things can help make a big difference by sharing the messages in these eco-friendly books.

- *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss
- *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest* by Lynne Cherry
- *Recycle!: A Handbook for Kids* by Gail Gibbons
- *The Green Mother Goose: Saving the World One Rhyme at a Time* by David Davis and Jan Peck
- *Let's Celebrate Earth Day* by Peter and Connie Roop
- *Compost Stew: An A to Z Recipe for the Earth* by Mary McKenna Siddals



## The Importance of Self-Care Skills in Young Children ([www.childdevelopment.com](http://www.childdevelopment.com)) con't from February

### How can you tell if my child has problems with self-care skills?

If a child has self-care difficulties, they might:

- Be unable to feed themselves independently.
- Require more help than others of their age to get dressed or undressed.
- Find it difficult to tolerate wearing certain clothes.
- Struggle to use cutlery.
- Need adults to open food packaging in their lunch box.
- Refuse to eat certain foods.
- Be unable to coordinate movements to brush teeth.
- Require extensive help to fall asleep.
- Choose to toilet only at home where there is adult support.
- Be late to develop independent day time toileting.
- Show limited motivation for independence in self-care, so they wait for adults to do it for them instead.

### What other problems can occur when you see difficulties with self-care skills?

When a child has self-care difficulties, they might also have difficulties with:

- **Following instructions:** The ability to understand and be able to initiate the tasks to be done as per requested by others.
- **Receptive language (understanding):** Comprehension of language.
- **Eating:** The physical skill of using cutlery in an age-appropriate manner as well as eating a good range of food.
- **Sleeping:** Being able to independently settle and resettle to get to sleep.
- **Dressing and undressing** or assisting with dressing to an age-appropriate level and recognizing what articles of clothing go where and in what order.
- **Social skills:** Determined by the ability to engage in reciprocal interaction with others (either verbally or non-verbally), to compromise with others, and be able to recognize and follow social norms.
- **Fine motor skills:** Finger and hand skills such as opening lunch boxes, tying shoelaces, doing up buttons.
- **Gross motor skills:** Whole body physical skills using the 'core' strength muscles of the trunk, arms, and legs such as getting on and off the toilet and standing to dress.
- **Organization:** The ability to know what a task involves, the materials required, how to collate them such as packing the bag for preschool or even getting dressed.
- **Learning new tasks** and retaining that information for the next time the task is done again.
- **Executive functioning:** Higher order reasoning and thinking skills.

### What can be done to improve self-care skills?

- **Visual schedule** of the steps involved.
- **Reward chart** for independent completion of tasks (or attempt at, in the early stages).
- **Small steps:** Breaking down self-care skills into smaller steps and supporting the child through each step so that, in time, they can do more for themselves.
- **Routine:** Use the *same* routine or strategy each time you complete the same task to help them learn it faster.
- **Consistency:** Be consistent with the words and signs used to assist the child and keep instructions short and simple.
- **Allow enough time:** Ensure that there is enough time available for the child to participate in self-care activities without feeling rushed (e.g., practice dressing on the weekend to start with before then doing it before rushing to preschool or school).

### What activities can help improve self-care skills?

- **Small parts of activities:** Practice doing a small part of a task each day as it is easier to learn new skills in smaller sections.
- **Observation:** Have your child to observe other family members performing everyday self-care skills.
- **Role play** self-care tasks such as eating, dressing or brushing teeth with teddy bears. Doing it on others can help learning it before then doing it on yourself.
- **Take care of others:** Allow the child to brush your hair or teeth first, before brushing their own.
- **Timers** to indicate how long they must tolerate an activity they may not enjoy, such as teeth cleaning.

### Why should I seek therapy if I notice difficulties with self-care skills in my child?

Therapeutic intervention to help a child with self-care difficulties is important as:

- Self-care skills are the everyday practice of the foundations skills for academic performance, not just life skills.
- The more these tasks are performed incorrectly (i.e., often daily) the more the bad habits are reinforced.
- To support age-appropriate independence before these skills become a problem, such as at school camps for older children or much desired sleep overs for kindergarten aged children.

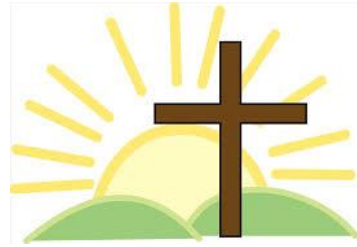
### If left untreated what can difficulties with self-care skills lead to?

When children have self-care difficulties, they might also have difficulties with:

- Reluctance to attempt not only self-care skills, but many other skills that require planning and sequencing. This is then likely to impact on academic tasks and potentially a child's transition into preschool or school.
- More difficulty resolving the difficulties as it becomes harder to change.
- Reliance upon an adult helper: A child may become accustomed to having a parent or carer assisting with self-care skills to the point it becomes an expectation, so when a helper is not there, they might display behavioral challenges.
- As the child gets older and the gap between them and their peers increases, they are more likely to become aware of this gap, resulting in lowered self-esteem and possible reluctance to attempt activities for fear of failure. This is a difficult cycle to break so the earlier it is resolved the easier it is to make forward progress.

### What type of therapy is recommended for self-care skill difficulties?

If your child has difficulties with self-care skills, it is recommended you consult an Occupational Therapist.



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