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## A note from the office:

*May 2025*

We are excited to share our themes for May! We'll kick off the month celebrating our mothers from May 5th-9th. Don't forget to come to **Muffins with Mom** on **Thursday, May 8th**. More information is below. Then, we will explore At the Beach and Ocean Animals from May 12th-16th, followed by Gardening from May 19th-23rd, and end the month with At the Zoo from May 26th-30th. We will be reviewing all of our letters this month. May will be a fun and busy month, and we look forward to all the exciting learning that will take place.

### Important Information

**\*\*You're invited to Muffins with Mom!** We want to take some time to celebrate the moms, grandmas, aunts or sisters who play a special part in the lives of the children at Apple Tree. Join us for muffins and juice on Thursday, May 8th from 9:30-10:30 a.m. in your child's room at Apple Tree. Please note: The 3-year-old preschool Muffins with Mom event will vary from these times due to the preschool program also being on this day. Your child's teacher will inform you of the specific time that they will have their Muffins with Mom on the 8th.

**\*\*As the weather begins to change, we ask that you bring boots along with your child(ren) so that we can enjoy the spring weather and the playground together.**

**\*\*Apple Tree will be closed on Monday, May 26th** to observe Memorial Day.

Goodbye from Melinda:

I want to express my sincere gratitude for the privilege of caring for your children and being a part of their lives here at Apple Tree for the last 35 years. Your trust and partnership have been invaluable to me. I will always cherish the happy memories and positive experiences we've shared. While it's with mixed emotions that I am saying goodbye, please know that I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside you all. I have full confidence that Apple Tree will continue to provide quality care and education to the children who are enrolled. Take care and best wishes!

Melinda's last day will be May 15th.

Thank you for choosing Apple Tree Early Child Center for your child's care and learning. Please let us know if you have any questions.

**You can reach us at the telephone numbers/emails below or by stopping in to talk to us.**

Melinda/Madison - telephone number: 722-4336 email: [director.ecc@appletreechildcare.com](mailto:director.ecc@appletreechildcare.com)

Jessica - telephone number: 722-4337 email: [assistantdirector.ecc@appletreechildcare.com](mailto:assistantdirector.ecc@appletreechildcare.com)

Avery - telephone number: 722-4335 email: [earlychildcenter@appletreechildcare.com](mailto:earlychildcenter@appletreechildcare.com)



# 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](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).

## More Information

More information and resources on this and other topics are available on our website, [ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org).



[ChallengingBehavior.org](http://ChallengingBehavior.org)

# How to Give Clear Directions

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

"Why do I have to repeat myself time and again?" "Why won't she listen to me?" Listening and following directions are important skills young children must learn. There are many reasons why children do not follow directions.

- **The child does not hear the direction.** Parents often give directions from a distance or in passing. "Lauren, get your shoes on." Did your child actually hear what you said? Just as adults often don't hear what their partner has said to them because they are focused on reading, email or talking on the phone, children too often don't hear what a parent has said because they are focused on a task such as building a tower or drawing a picture.
- **The parent gives too many directions at one time.** When you give your child too many directions at one time, it reduces the chance that she will follow the directions and increases the chance that she will be confused. "Lauren, please go upstairs, brush your teeth and pick up your blocks while I finish the dishes." This multi-step direction is too long and complicated for your child to easily understand. Instead, try giving one direction at a time.
- **The child doesn't understand the direction or the direction is too vague.** Directions such as "Settle down," "stop," or "be nice" might be too vague and difficult for your child to understand. If she is throwing toys out of the bathtub and you simply say, "Lauren," you have not actually told her what you want her to do. If you say, "stop it," it may temporarily stop the behavior, but she still may not know what you want her to do. If what you mean is, "Lauren, toys stay in the tub," then you need to explicitly tell her so.
- **The direction does not tell the child what to do.** Parents often tell children what not to do, rather than what they should do. It is important to state directions positively in order to teach your child the expectation. Instead of saying, "Stop running!", state the direction positively by saying, "Use walking feet."
- **The direction sounds like a suggestion or question.** Daily conversation is filled with questions, suggestions and directions. When you say, "Will you put your shoes away?" you are not giving your child a direction—you are asking her a question. When you give your child a direction that needs to be followed, it is essential that you tell your child what to do rather than ask. For example, "Lauren, put your shoes by the door."

- **Make sure that you have your child's attention.** Eye contact is a great indicator! When you state the "do" direction you



are teaching your child the desired behavior. For instance, "Lauren, go brush your teeth." When you count to five, you are giving her the opportunity to hear and process the direction. Parents often repeat the same direction over and over in that five second period. When you repeat the same direction to your child time and again, it teaches her that she does not have to follow the direction the first time. Instead, state the direction once and then have your child restate the direction back to you. This way you can confirm that she heard you and understood what you were saying. Finally, offering help may simply mean that you take her hand and lead her to the bathroom. Don't forget to encourage your child by saying something like, "Wow, Lauren, what great listening ears! Thank you for brushing your teeth."

## Practice at School

In addition to verbal instructions, teachers use many methods to give directions and help children understand expectations. These methods may include using symbols or pictures, sign language or gestures, songs, puppets, instruments, sand timers, or other tools. The more opportunities children are given to see or hear the instructions, the more likely they are to complete the task. For example, when teachers need to tell the class that it is time to go inside from the playground, in addition to words they may use a sound (e.g., ring a bell) to alert the children about this event. Children know that the sound means that it is time to line up at the door, even if they do not hear the verbal instructions. When teachers pair words with other signals, they help children to confidently and successfully participate in activities.

## The Bottom Line

Listening and following directions are skills that children learn through their daily interactions. When children do not follow directions, for any reason, it can be extremely frustrating for parents. You can increase the chances that your child will listen and successfully follow your directions when you make sure that your direction is clearly stated and you follow through.

An important consideration for parents when teaching their child to follow directions is to "pick your battles". You want to avoid insisting that your child follow directions that are not important or can escalate to a major struggle when the direction is not critical. Pick a few, very important directions that you will follow-through with your child.



## Try This at Home

- It is important to follow through when you give your child a direction. A technique you can use to make sure you do follow through when your child has difficulty complying, or following directions is Do-WAWP.
  - » Do—State the "do" direction.
  - » W—Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
  - » A—Ask the child to restate the direction.
  - » W—Wait for compliance (silently count to 5).
  - » P—Provide encouragement or help (helping will ensure success).



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## Weekly Themes:

4/28 - 5/2	Dinosaurs
5/5 - 5/9	Mother's Day
5/12 - 5/16	At the Beach & Ocean Animals
5/19 - 5/23	Gardening
5/26 - 5/30	At the Zoo



## Teacher Fun Fact

### My favorite flowers are...

Miss Anita: Daisies  
 Miss Connie: Gerber Daisies  
 Miss Kara: Daisies  
 Miss Emma: Roses  
 Miss Lois: Lilacs  
 Miss Liberty: Tulips  
 Miss Shaylawn: Roses  
 Miss Amy: Lilies or Roses

Miss Josalyn: Roses  
 Miss Maggie: Anemone  
 Miss Kellie Jo: Dahlias  
 Miss Michelle: Anything pink!  
 Miss Rhonda: Zinnias  
 Miss Journey: Orchids  
 Miss Amber: Daisies, Tulips & Zinnias  
 Miss Noelia: Roses, Common Zinnias & Dahlias

## Important Dates:

5/8 - Pre-K Graduation (9:30am - 10:30am)

5/8 - Muffins with Mom (9:30am - 10:30am)

5/11 - Happy Mother's Day

5/21 - Last Day of School - Sioux Center Christian

5/23 - Last Day of School - Sioux Center Community

5/26 - Memorial Day - Apple Tree is CLOSED today.

## Stay in touch :



@AppleTreeECC



@appletree\_earlychildcenter



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# Health & Fitness Tips:

## SCREEN-FREE ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER

With summer break approaching, the need for screen-free activities is at a high! Here is a list of activities for all ages...

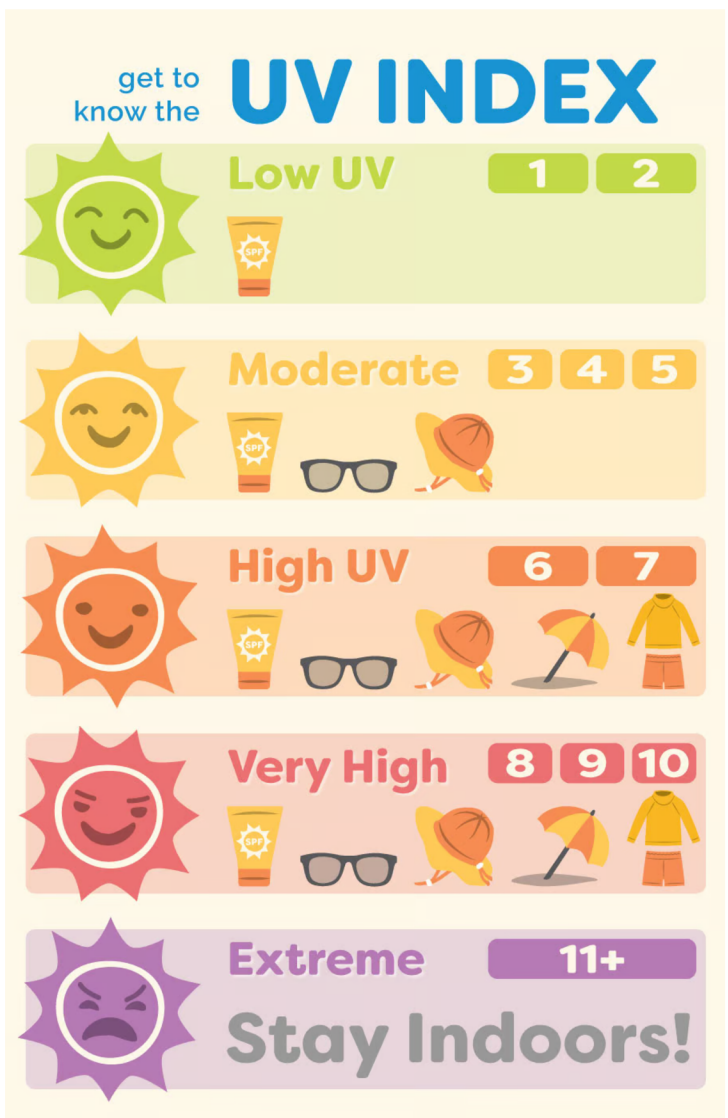
- **Read a Book** and give a report once finished (older kids)!
- **Play a Board Game**
- **Take a Walk** and go on a scavenger hunt!
- **Play with Water** by going to the pool, set up sprinklers or a water table.
- **Camp Out... or In!** Get out those sleeping bags and make some s'mores!
- **Go on a Picnic.** Either outdoors or keep it indoors on a rainy day.
- **Host a Backyard's Olympics.** Invite your friends & neighbors over for a fun afternoon of obstacles in the backyard.
- **Set Up a Bike Car Wash.**
- **Plant a Garden.**
- **Make Popsicles.**

## WHEN TO COVER UP FOR YOUR KIDS SUN PROTECTION

To know when UV rays are strong, you can check the UV Index. Any time the UV Index is 3 or more, it is recommended to use sun protection, especially in the afternoon. It's not just sunny days either! The sun's rays can get through clouds, fog, and haze, so don't forget to protect your kids even if it doesn't look super sunny.

To effectively protect against all types of UV radiation, it's crucial to:

- **Use Sunscreen:** Broad-spectrum natural sunscreens with an SPF of 30-50 protect against both UVA and UVB rays.
- **Wear Protective Clothing:** Choose UV clothing and hats with a 50+ UPF rating, and polarized UV 400 sunglasses to shield your skin and eyes from UV rays.
- **Seek Shade:** Avoid direct sun exposure during peak hours and find shade when spending extended periods outdoors.





## Green

Welcome to the Green Room!

We are excited for warmer weather so we can go on buggy rides! This month we will count to 10 as we wash our hands and sing *The Wheels on the Bus*. Be sure to check out the Easter bunny ears that we painted! They are so cute! We will continue to read books and this month we will read, "Little Blue Trucks Beep Away".

**Ainsley** has mastered sitting solo and loves her food! **Callie** is learning to sit up on her own and she is so close!

Have a great month!

**Miss Anita & Miss Connie**

## Light Green

Welcome May!

We are excited to get outside more and enjoy the wonderful weather! This month we will be counting blocks and reading, "Witz's Colorful Garden". All of our friends are sleeping on cots and are ready for when they move up to the next room!

**Niko** has learned to crawl all over and loves keeping up with his friends. **Jeriah** is now starting to move around the room and is loving his finger foods!

We can't wait to spend more time outside and see the flowers pop up!

**Miss Kara & Miss Emma**

## Light Blue

Greetings from the Light Blue Room!

This month we will learn so many fun things! We will talk about our moms and how they are special to us! During our beach theme week, we will play in the sand and read, "Going to the Beach". The kids will learn what grows in a flower and vegetable garden and what is needed to plant a seed. We are excited for our zoo theme, when we will count zoo animals, sing *Going to the Zoo*, make a zoo animal craft and read, "Who Lives in a Zoo".

**Hudson** loves playing outside and he gets so excited when we put on his coat. **Lisandro** is having a great time in his first daycare! He has made so many new friends!

'Til next time...

**Miss Lois, Miss Liberty & Miss Shaylawn**

## Blue

Welcome to spring in the Blue Room!

We have several exciting things we are learning this month. We will start the month learning about different dinosaurs. Then we will talk about Mother's Day and make so many fun things for our moms! During ocean animals week, we will learn what animals call the ocean their home and we will do an ocean beach art project. We will talk about gardening and what things are needed in order to grow a garden. Finally, we will learn about the different animals that live in a zoo. We will count animals and read, "Animals at the Zoo".

**Clara** has been talking more and has started using words when she wants something. **Lillian** has figured out how to get her own coat off when we come inside. She takes her coat off and then she helps her friends take off their coats.

From all of us in the Blue Room, we wish all of the moms a Happy Mother's Day!

**Miss Amy**

## Yellow

Hello spring from the Yellow Room!

This month we will learn and play with the themes: Mother's Day, Ocean Animals, Gardening and Zoo Animals! Some of the fun activities we have planned are learning to count with zoo animals and singing *The Goldfish Song*! We will read the book, "How to Feed Your Cheeky Monkey". We will make a fun Mother's Day art project and paint flowers.

Please note that we will be starting to apply sunscreen before going outside. If you have a special sunscreen that you would like your child to wear, please label it with their name and send it with them. If you elect to bring your own sunscreen, we will need a doctors note.

**Jace** has begun sharing with his friends! He enjoys picking up and helping out at pick up, as well. **David** is becoming so social! It has been great to see him talking with all of his friends.

Have a fantastic month!

**Miss Josalyn**

## Red

Hello parents and friends of the Red Room!

This month will be an exciting one in the Red Room, as we spend a lot of time outdoors now that the weather is warming up. We have loved being outside the past few weeks, seeing the grass turn green and finding bunnies & lady bugs. We will continue to learn about nature for Earth Day, explore zoo & ocean animals, and celebrate Mother's Day! We will count goldfish in the sensory table and make zoo footprints when we paint. We will sing *5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* and read, "New in the Zoo" by Osbourne Phonics, to learn about rhyming with zoo animals.

**Maddie** has a new baby brother and is very excited to share the news with her friends. She will also turn 3 this month! **Raelle** has been a good friend and leader for the younger children in the room, helping them clean up and put shoes on.

Have a great month!

**Miss Maggie & Miss Kellie Jo**

## Purple

Greetings from the Purple Room!

This month we will finish up our preschool year! This year has flown by and each child has learned so much! Now it's time for them to spread their wings and go on to be great! Thank you for sharing your children with me! We will continue to work on making simple patterns and review our numbers 1-10. During art, we will be making graduation keepsakes and Mother's Day art for our moms. The kids will be practicing their graduation songs for our program! We are anxious to share these fun songs with you!

**Aubrey** loves pretend play with friends, playing dress up and having tea parties with the stuffed animals. **Everlee** loves to sing! She also likes playing outside & pretend play with friends!

Until next time...

**Miss Michelle**

## Black

April showers bring May flowers...

This month we will learn about flower growth patterns and make our own May flowers in bloom! We will read the book, "A Seed Grows" and talk about how seeds turn into flowers and plants. We will sing *Herman the Worm* by the Learning Station and do the actions that go with it. We will also be making May Day baskets at the start of the month.

**Kairi** gave a nice compliment to a friend and told them "I like your hair". **Cannan** had jelly beans and asked a friend, "What color do you want?" We love to see the kids share with one another.

May the month bring many blessings.

**Miss Amber**

## Dark Blue

Hello from the Dark Blue Room! We are so excited that spring is here!

This month we will be doing a Mother's Day craft for a special gift for our moms! When we learn about gardening, we will be planting flower seeds to watch them grow! During ocean animals week, we will sort ocean animals, make patterns and talk about what to do at the beach.

Join us for Muffins with Mom on May 8th at 9:45 where we will read, "If you Give a Moose a Muffin" and enjoy a tasty treat!

Preschool graduation will be May 8th in the Dark Blue Room at 9:30. We are excited to celebrate our graduates.

**Archer** has a lot of fun building in the block area. He loves building structures with his friends. **Gabriel** loves to bring things from home to play with his friends. He also loves to build in the block area.

With preschool ending, we need to say goodbye to our preschool friends. We look forward to a great summer.

**Miss Rhonda & Miss Journey**

## Gold

Hello families! May is here and we're blooming with learning and fun as we wrap up a fun month.

This month we will be learning about flowers, plants and insects. We will be practicing our counting skills by counting insects, flowers and the plants that we see. For an art project, we will create our own flowers with crayons, markers and paint. We will be going outside to observe what we see and hear. If we have a chance to grow our own plants, we will do that! We will have such a fun month!

**Mataya** is a really sweet girl! She's always helping to clean up and inviting friends to play if they are left out. **Jhett** is very good at picking up after playing. I love to see his sweet smile each time he walks up to tell me something, or to tell me about what he is doing.

Thank you for being a part of our classroom family.

**Miss Noelia**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Jeriah  
Brayden  
Logan  
Maddie  
Aubrey  
Hannah  
Henry  
Mataya

# MAY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27	28	29	30	1  BLACK May Day Basket Making	2	3
4	5 	6	7	8 Muffins with Mom 9:30 - 10:30am PURPLE & DARK BLUE PRE-K Graduation	9	10
11 	12	13	14	15  Melinda's Last Day	16   2-HR DISMISSAL Sioux Center Community	17
18	19	20	21   LAST DAY OF SCHOOL Sioux Center Christian	22	23   LAST DAY OF SCHOOL Sioux Center Community	24
25	26  MEMORIAL DAY  APPLE TREE is CLOSED TODAY	27	28	29	30	31