

OTR NEWSLETTER



April 2026

What We Learned

April is full of engaging themes and hands-on learning experiences for our children! We will kick off the month by celebrating the Week of the Young

Child, focusing on creativity, exploration, and the importance of early learning through fun daily activities. Next, we will learn about

Community Helpers, giving children the opportunity to explore the important roles people play in keeping our communities safe, healthy, and running smoothly.

As we move further into the month, we will focus on All About Earth, where children will learn about ways to care for our planet through reducing, reusing, and recycling. We'll wrap up April with a magical exploration of Fairy Tales and Rhyming, encouraging imagination, storytelling, and early literacy skills through classic tales and playful language activities.



Reminders

Butter braids/cookie dough fundraiser ends April 3

Please use the Brightwheel app and QR code located outside all of the classrooms to check your child in and out.

Upcoming Events

- April Fool's Day: April 1
- Easter Bunny in Cheshire: April 2
- Autism Awareness Day staff and Kids wear blue: April 2
- Good Friday, OTR CLOSED: April 3
- Rainbow Day: April 6
- National Unicorn Day: April 9
- Hamden Soccer Shots free day: April 14
- World Art Day: April 15
- National Animal Cracker Day: April 21
- Earth Day: April 22
- National Pretzel Day: April 27
- National Super Hero Day: April 28

OTR CELEBRATIONS

April 2026



Cheshire Birthdays

Emerson 04/03
Charlotte 04/07
Callie 04/24
Peyton 04/30

Hamden Birthdays

Raya 04/08
Miss Faith 04/13
Miss Olivia 4/13
Miss Johanna 4/18
Naomi 04/27

OTR Work Anniversaries

**No celebrations this
month**



CHESHIRE HAPPENINGS

April 2026



Infants

Our infants will be busy growing and exploring this April! We will continue practicing the sign for “milk” to support early communication skills. As our little ones gain strength and confidence, we’ll be working on sitting up, practicing standing, and even taking those first exciting steps.

To celebrate the season, infants will enjoy creating spring flower art, exploring colors and textures in a fun, sensory-friendly way. We will also continue our daily exercises to help build strength, coordination, and overall development. It’s a month full of growth, movement, and discovery!

Toddler 1

Our toddlers will have a fun-filled and creative month this April! We’ll start by making our own maracas, giving children the chance to explore music, rhythm, and movement. As we learn about Community Helpers, children will discover the important roles people play in our everyday lives.

For Earth Week, toddlers will create paper plate Earths using blue and green paint, helping them learn about caring for our planet in a hands-on way. To wrap up the month, our Fairy Tales theme will spark imagination with sensory bins, along with princess and pirate handprint art. It’s going to be a month full of creativity, learning, and imaginative play!

Waddler

Our waddlers are in for a fun and engaging April! During the Week of the Young Child, we will celebrate with hands-on activities that encourage play, creativity, and exploration. For our Community Helpers focus, children will create fireman hats and learn simple safety rules to help them understand the important people in our neighborhood.

During Earth Week, we will get a little messy with handprint Earth art and a fun grass sensory activity, helping children explore nature while learning to care for our planet. To wrap up the month, our Pirates and Princesses theme will spark imagination as children create their own treasure chests and engage in playful pretend adventures. It’s going to be a month full of discovery, creativity, and fun!

Toddler 2

April will be full of fun, learning, and hands-on activities in our Toddler 2 classroom! For Tasty Tuesday, we will be making mini pancake muffins, giving children a chance to explore simple cooking and new flavors. As we learn about community helpers, we’ll introduce some of the important people who help keep our neighborhoods safe and running smoothly. During our Earth Week activities, children will learn about recycling through a fun sorting activity, helping them understand the difference between garbage and recyclables. To wrap up the month, we’ll bring fairy tales to life by creating Beauty and the Beast-inspired crafts and making Tinker Bell wands, encouraging imagination and creative expression. It’s going to be a magical and meaningful month!



CHESHIRE HAPPENINGS

April 2026



Toddler 3

Our Toddler 3 classroom is ready for an exciting and hands-on April! We'll explore sound and movement by creating our own rain sticks, encouraging sensory learning and creativity. During our Community Helpers theme, children will engage in dramatic play, using their imaginations to act out real-life roles in our community.

For Earth Day, we'll go on a fun scavenger hunt, helping children connect with and appreciate the world around them. As we move into our Fairy Tales theme, children will enjoy painting beautiful ice castles and exploring a treasure hunt sensory bin filled with exciting discoveries. It's sure to be a month full of creativity, exploration, and imaginative play!

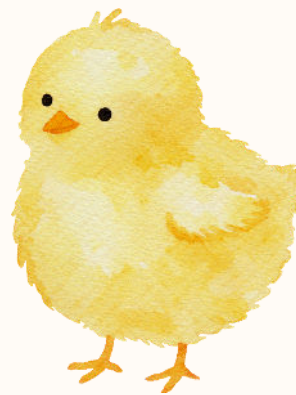
Pre-K

April is full of creativity, learning, and teamwork in Pre-K! During the Week of the Young Child, children will make friendship flowers, celebrating kindness and the joy of working together. We will also explore Community Helpers, discussing why they are important and how they help make our world a better place. For Earth Week, children will brainstorm ways to care for the planet, focusing on the question, "How can we help?", and discovering simple actions they can take to make a difference. To end the month, we will dive into the magic of words by creating rhymes as a class, encouraging literacy, imagination, and collaborative storytelling. It's a month full of curiosity, creativity, and meaningful learning!

Preschool

Our preschoolers are looking forward to a fun and collaborative April! During the Week of the Young Child, we will work together as a team to create some exciting and creative projects, building cooperation and teamwork skills. As we explore Community Helpers, children will learn about the important roles people play in our everyday lives.

For Earth Week, we will focus on caring for our planet by learning the difference between recyclables and trash through engaging, hands-on activities. To wrap up the month, we'll dive into Mother Goose rhymes with a fun and interactive Humpty Dumpty science experiment, combining early literacy with simple science exploration. It's going to be a month full of learning, teamwork, and discovery!



CHESHIRE SPOTLIGHT

April 2026



The Kennedy Family

The Kennedy family knows how to celebrate in style! Their favorite holiday is Christmas, though little Jack loves any reason to celebrate. As a family, they especially enjoy traveling together, with Jack delighting in adventures that include riding elevators along the way.

When it comes to food, their favorite is homemade fettuccine, and one of their happiest memories is swimming together in the wave pool at an indoor waterpark. The Kennedys used to have a litter box-trained pet bunny who roamed the house, and they hope to welcome another bunny into their family soon.

What makes the Kennedys truly unique is their Christmas Eve tradition because each year they pick a new theme that sets the tone for the menu, games, outfits, and even how they decorate the tree! With their Irish heritage, they hope to someday take their kids to Ireland. Movie nights are always special with their favorite film, Moana, and excitement runs high as Jack's older sister performs in a stage musical this year.

Their favorite getaway is Provincetown, MA, at the tip of Cape Cod, where they love the mix of beaches, food, and fun during summer trips.

The Kennedys are a family full of love, creativity, and a sense of adventure!

Miss Glori



Miss Glori is our amazing Toddler 1 teacher, and we are so lucky to have her as part of our team! She began her journey in our Infant Room, where she quickly helped babies acclimate to daycare and supported them in reaching important developmental milestones.

Since transitioning to the Toddler classroom, Miss Glori has continued to make a meaningful impact by encouraging children to build independence, especially during mealtimes and while playing with others. Her love for art truly shines through in the fun and creative crafts she plans for her class.

Miss Glori is always willing to lend a helping hand and can often be found supporting in any classroom when needed. Her flexibility, dedication, and caring nature make her an invaluable part of our team, and we are so grateful for everything she does!



HAMDEN HAPPENINGS

April 2026



Infants

This month, we are excited to welcome new friends into our Infant Room! We are focusing on helping everyone feel safe, comfortable, and loved as they begin to explore their new environment.

Our little ones are getting plenty of tummy time each day to help build strength and support their growing milestones. We're also enjoying some fun spring art activities, allowing the babies to explore colors, textures, and creativity in a hands-on way.

In addition, we are beginning to incorporate simple sign language into our daily routines. Using signs for common words like "more," "all done," and "eat" helps support early communication and gives our infants new ways to express their needs.

Waddler 2

Our Waddler 2 class is ready for a fun and creative April! During the Week of the Young Child, children will make bracelets out of cereal, combining fine motor skills with a fun and tasty activity. As we learn about people in our neighborhood, children will create police officer badges and firefighter handprints while exploring the important roles community helpers play.

For our All About Earth week, we will create "Small Hands Can Change the World" handprints, helping children understand how even small actions can make a big difference. To end the month, our Pirates and Princesses theme will inspire imagination as children create their own treasure maps and set off on exciting pretend adventures. It's going to be a month full of creativity, learning, and fun!

Waddler 1

April will be full of hands-on fun and exploration for our Waddler 1 class! During the Week of the Young Child, we will get creative by making our own musical shakers, encouraging rhythm and sensory play. For our Community Helpers theme, children will work together to create a neighborhood map with roads and buildings, then drive their cars along it to explore how people move through our community.

During our All About Earth week, we'll enjoy a fun and messy blue and green shaving cream sensory activity, helping children explore colors while learning about our planet. To wrap up the month, our Pirates and Princesses theme will spark imagination as children create their own pirate treasure maps and go on exciting pretend adventures. It's going to be a month full of creativity, discovery, and fun!

Toddler 1

April will be full of sensory fun and creativity in our Toddler 1 classroom! Children will explore a rice sensory bin, building fine motor skills while engaging in hands-on play. As we learn about Community Helpers, we will create and use puppets to encourage imaginative play and understanding of the roles people have in our everyday lives.

For our Earth Week activities, children will make handprint Earths, helping them begin to understand and appreciate our planet. To wrap up the month, we'll dive into a magical theme with mermaid sensory bags, offering a calming and engaging sensory experience. It's going to be a month full of exploration, creativity, and fun!



HAMDEN HAPPENINGS

April 2026



Toddler 2

April will be full of creativity and hands-on learning in our Toddler 2 classroom! During the Week of the Young Child, children will create handprint spring flowers, celebrating the season while exploring art and self-expression. For our People in My Neighborhood week, we will build a city using construction paper, encouraging creativity while learning about the places and people in our community.

As we focus on how "little hands can change the world," children will paint their own versions of the Earth, helping them begin to understand how to care for our planet. To wrap up the month, our Fairy Tale week will spark imagination as children create their own princess wands and engage in magical pretend play. It's going to be a month full of creativity, learning, and fun!

Preschool

Our preschoolers have an exciting and creative April ahead! For Music Monday during the Week of the Young Child, children will enjoy painting to the beat, exploring rhythm and self-expression through art. As we learn about Neighborhood Helpers, we will create a fire truck shape collage while discussing the important roles helpers play in our community. During our Reduce, Reuse, Recycle week, children will make egg carton flowers, learning how everyday materials can be reused in creative ways. To wrap up the month, we'll explore nursery rhymes with a fun Baa Baa Black Sheep sensory bin, encouraging imaginative play and early literacy skills. It's a month full of creativity, learning, and hands-on fun!

Toddler 3

April is full of hands-on learning and imagination in our Toddler 3 classroom! We will explore building and problem-solving by creating structures using marshmallows and toothpicks. As we learn about Community Helpers, we'll have discussions about doctors, firefighters, and police officers, helping children understand how they keep us safe and healthy.

During Earth Week, we will talk about ways to care for our planet, including planting trees and picking up trash when we see it, encouraging responsibility and environmental awareness. To wrap up the month, we'll enjoy reading a variety of fairy tales, sparking imagination and a love for storytelling. It's going to be a fun and meaningful month of learning!

Pre-K

April is full of engaging, hands-on learning in our Pre-K classroom! For Tasty Tuesday during the Week of the Young Child, children will create a colorful rainbow salad, exploring healthy foods and trying new flavors. During Community Helpers week, we'll go on a fun mail carrier scavenger hunt, learning about how mail gets delivered and the important role of postal workers.

For our All About the Earth week, children will participate in seed sorting and planting activities, helping them understand how plants grow and how we can care for our environment. To wrap up the month, we'll have fun with words during Rhyme Time week by playing a silly name game, encouraging laughter, creativity, and early literacy skills. It's going to be a fun-filled month of discovery and learning!

HAMDEN SPOTLIGHT

April 2026



The Hernandez Family

The Hernandez family is a wonderful example of love, culture, and connection. As a multicultural and multilingual family with both Mexican and Indian roots, they cherish sharing traditions from both sides of their daughter Nalini's heritage while also creating new traditions together as she grows.

They love celebrating meaningful holidays like Día de los Muertos and Diwali, special times centered around remembrance, light, and togetherness. These celebrations reflect their strong values of honoring family, culture, and connection.

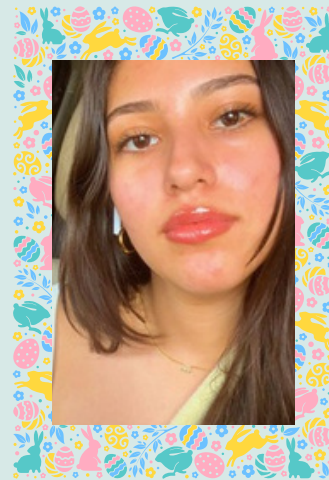
Spending time outdoors is another big part of their family life. They enjoy going on walks and hikes together, especially at Lake Wintergreen and Sleeping Giant State Park, and are looking forward to hiking Mount Greylock as a family this summer. At home, they enjoy sharing home-cooked meals, especially family-style comfort foods from their cultures.

One of their most cherished memories is when Nalini rolled over for the first time, a simple but meaningful milestone that brought so much joy.

Instead of screen time, the Hernandez family focuses on reading books together, listening to music, and enjoying the outdoors. And while they love exploring, Nalini's favorite place is simply being at home with her family.

We love celebrating the Hernandez family and the beautiful traditions and memories they are creating together!

Miss Johanna



Miss Johanna is our incredible Waddler 1 teacher, and she truly makes the transition from Infant 2 seamless for our little ones. She has a special talent for helping children adjust quickly, within just a few days, they are comfortably napping on cots and joining their friends at the big kid table for meals!

Her classroom is always full of creativity and exploration. Miss Johanna plans fun art projects and incorporates engaging sensory activities that keep her waddlers learning through play. She is extremely caring and attentive, always making sure each child feels supported and nurtured throughout the day.

Circle time in her class is a highlight, filled with fun songs, interaction, and meaningful learning moments. Miss Johanna truly brings our core values of Family and Fun to life in everything she does.

She also does an amazing job keeping families connected by consistently updating Brightwheel and sharing photos throughout the day, giving parents a glimpse into all the special moments happening in her classroom.

We are so lucky to have Miss Johanna as part of our team!



NOURISHING MOMENTS



April 2026

Family Meal Idea: DIY Spring Veggie Pasta

This colorful and customizable meal is perfect for getting the whole family involved in the kitchen!

Ingredients:

- Pasta (any shape)
- Olive oil or butter
- Garlic (optional)
- Cherry tomatoes
- Broccoli florets
- Bell peppers (any color)
- Spinach
- Parmesan cheese
- Salt & pepper

Instructions:

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. While the pasta cooks, chop veggies together as a family.
3. In a pan, heat olive oil or butter and sauté garlic (if using).
4. Add vegetables and cook until tender.
5. Drain pasta and mix it with the veggies.
6. Top with parmesan cheese, salt, and pepper to taste.

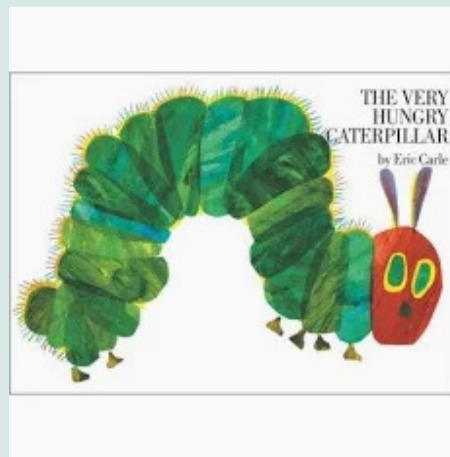
Why it's great for families:

Kids can help wash veggies, stir, and sprinkle cheese, making it a fun and interactive experience. Plus, it's a great way to introduce colorful, healthy foods!



LITERACY RAINBOW

April 2026



This classic story is perfect for springtime! The Very Hungry Caterpillar follows a tiny caterpillar as it eats its way through a variety of foods before transforming into a beautiful butterfly. It's a wonderful way to introduce children to concepts like growth, change, and the life cycle of a butterfly.

Why families love it:

- **Bright, colorful illustrations that capture children's attention**
- **Repetitive and predictable text that encourages participation**
- **Great connection to spring, nature, and Earth-themed learning**

Family Activity Idea:

After reading, families can create their own caterpillar using paper circles or even snacks, then talk about what foods they would include!



FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

April 2026



Family Activity: DIY Mini Garden

What You Need:

- Small pots, cups, or recycled containers
- Potting soil
- Seeds (flowers, herbs, or vegetables)
- Water
- Markers or stickers to decorate the pots



How to Do It:

1. Let each family member choose a container and decorate it with markers, stickers, or paints.
2. Fill the containers with soil and plant seeds together.
3. Water your mini garden and place it somewhere it can get sunlight.
4. Check on your plants daily, observing growth and changes.

Why It's Great for Families:

- Encourages teamwork and responsibility
- Connects children to nature and Earth Day themes
- Provides a visual way to learn about growth, patience, and care



OTR BLOG

April 2026



The Magic of Mud Pies: Why Spring Messes Are Worth It

Every spring, as the weather warms and the ground softens, something wonderful happens: children start to dig, splash, and explore with pure joy. And yes, it usually ends with muddy hands, wet socks, and clothes that tell the story of a very good day.

Before you reach for the wipes or rush to hose them down, take a deep breath. That messy play you're seeing isn't chaos, it's learning in motion. Mud pies, puddle jumps, and squishy hands all help children build skills they'll carry for life, from creativity and coordination to problem-solving and confidence.

Here's why those muddy moments matter more than you might think and how you can embrace them at home this spring.

Messy Play Builds the Brain

When children dig, pour, and squish, they're doing more than just having fun, they're developing critical brain connections. Hands-on, sensory-rich play activates multiple parts of the brain at once, strengthening pathways that support thinking, memory, and coordination.

As early childhood experts often say, "the hand is the instrument of the mind." When little ones touch mud, feel textures, and experiment with scooping or stirring, they're learning about cause and effect, testing ideas, and gaining awareness of how the world works.

Research Insight:

Studies show that sensory play supports everything from fine motor skills to language growth. When children describe what they feel, "cold," "sticky," "squishy," they're building vocabulary and processing experiences in meaningful ways.

Try This:

Set up a small outdoor play station with dirt, water, and a few old kitchen tools. Let your child mix, pour, and "cook." It might get messy, but the learning (and laughter) are worth it.



OTR REFERRAL

April 2026



At Over the Rainbow Learning Center we love and appreciate each and every one of our families. We are honored you choose to recommend our Center to your family and friends day after day. As a way to say “thank you” we are offering a referral program to reward our existing students and families. For every full-time new family referral, who registers in our Learning Center and is enrolled for 90 days, you will receive a free week’s tuition applied to your account. Referred families must tell us that they were referred and by whom during their tour.

