

FRANDELJA FAMILY CONNECTION

Winter Edition



IN THIS ISSUE

Temperatures Are Dropping (Page 1)

Stay healthy—mentally and physically—during the holiday season

The Family Giving Tree (Page 2)

Working together to help bring a holiday smile to each child's face

Healthy and Happy New Year (Page 2)

What New Year's resolutions look like for young children

FranDelJA Family Connection – Online (Page 3)

Getting connected on our new website

Friendship Week – Our Valentine Celebration (Page 3)

What we aim to teach the kids

Temperatures Are Dropping

By Cornell Cobbins

FEC Director of Operations

The temps are dropping in the Bay, which means we are in the holiday season. Here's a short, easy-to-follow list to help you stay healthy—mentally and physically—during the holiday season:

1. Move your body daily

Even 10–20 minutes of walking, stretching, or yoga can boost mood, support digestion, and reduce stress.

2. Set gentle boundaries

Protect your energy by saying no when needed, limiting draining interactions, and carving out quiet time.

3. Stay hydrated

Holiday drinks and salty foods can dehydrate you—aim for steady water intake throughout the day.

4. Nourish yourself consistently

Enjoy holiday treats, but keep balanced meals in the mix to stabilize energy and mood.

5. Prioritize real rest

Schedule downtime, unplug from devices before bed, and aim for consistent sleep.

6. Practice mindful moments

Deep breaths, brief meditations, or gratitude check-ins can keep you grounded when things get hectic.

7. Connect meaningfully

Reach out to supportive friends or family members, or participate in communities that uplift you.

Thanks to one of the Site Coordinators at the Fairfax Housing Complex for sharing this information.



Family
Giving
Tree™

The Family Giving Tree

By Alberta "Bibi" Walker
FEC Master Teacher

The Family Giving Tree has partnered with over 200 agencies for over 35 years to give joy during the holiday season to children, adults and seniors. I started with FranDelJA in 2015. That was the first year that I experienced The Family Giving Tree. Since that first year, The Family Giving Tree has been my baby.

We start at the beginning of each school year, making sure that we have an accurate count so each child can be included, and their ages to help ensure age appropriate gifts.

Lead Teacher Yvette (caterpillars classroom) and I borrow a truck each December to go pick them up at the organization's south bay location. Then Lead Teacher Samantha (ladybugs classroom) helps us unload, sort, bag, tag, and deliver them to each classroom for parents to pickup for their children. It's a lot of work, but we do it to support our FranDelJA families in bringing a holiday smile to each child's face.

Christmas is about "giving" and while we'd all like to be able to give to our children, sometimes our means aren't reflective of the love in our hearts. The Family Giving Tree helps to ensure that every FranDelJA child has something to open on Christmas morning.

If you have a little extra and wish to donate to them for next year, you can donate on their [website](#).

Healthy and Happy New Year

By Dianne Alvarado
FEC Director of Programs



The start of a new year is a fantastic opportunity to support infants, toddlers, and preschoolers as they begin forming healthy habits. While New Year's resolutions look different for young children, simple goals—such as learning to wash hands, using kind words, trying new activities, or practicing independence—can be both fun and meaningful. With encouragement, routine, and plenty of praise, children build confidence as they learn through daily experiences. Together, families and teachers can help little ones develop positive habits that will grow with them throughout the year.

FranDelJA has so much to be thankful for:

- *Our strong parent and teacher partnerships within the FranDelJA family and community*
- *Our children's relationships and connections that help them feel safe, secure, and healthy*
- *Understanding each child's behavior—connecting before correcting*
- *Remembering can't, not won't, as children grow and learn*
- *Facing the challenges of today's world together—we are better together*
- *Lastly, we are excited to share that construction on our new site will begin soon. We will need your continued support as we work together to clear each hurdle. We move forward by honoring our journey—never forgetting the past, which is part of our strength—as we build our children, our community, and our new school.*

Thank you for allowing us to witness these meaningful moments and for trusting us with your most precious legacies. Wishing you many blessings, love, and joy as we begin this new year together.



FranDeIJA Family Connection - Online

By Michelle Cole
FEC Digital Communications Coordinator

As many of you know, over the past two years, we have been recreating our website in an attempt to build a safe place for connection between FranDeIJA and the families that we serve!

While we're still customizing it, the time has come that we would like to invite you, the parents/guardians to [register](#) on the site.

Create a new account

Register new account in order to get access to the website.

Email *

First Name *

Last Name *

What brings you to FranDeIJA? (Please check all that apply.) *

☒ I have children enrolled.

☐ I am an FEC employee.

☐ I am an FEC board member.

☐ I have affiliations with FEC (city, state, other).

☐ I'm interested in learning more about FEC.

Username (cannot be changed later) *

Password *

Repeat Password *

Got an invitation code?

Sign Up

Once approved, you will have access to our [Family Connection page](#), as well as pages and articles that are specifically for you, our FranDeIJA families.

Friendship Week – Our Valentine Celebration

By Vernee Pulliam Davis
FEC Master Teacher



In Early Childhood Education, we use Valentine's Day not as a romantic holiday, but as an opportunity for social-emotional learning. In fact, we make a week out of it and call it **Friendship Week**! During Friendship Week, we focus on friendships, kindness, and helping children develop empathy, as well as building on their fine motor skills.

By celebrating positive relationships, we use Friendship Week to build a foundation for healthy emotional intelligence and attachments, teaching children to express appreciation for their peers and teachers, in a structured social and emotional environment. When children exchange cards, it teaches the value of inclusion, which is important for every child's self-esteem as it gives them a sense of belonging here at the school and in their classrooms.

Developmentally, Friendship Week encourages creative expression through art. Children practice dexterity by cutting paper hearts and using glue which prepares them for more complex writing tasks. Friendship Week activities introduce basic literacy and math concepts. When we label mailboxes, it helps with letter recognition while counting heart shapes introduces early numeracy.

Books about friendships:

- [Peekaboo](#) (by Camilla Reid)
- [Guess How Much I Love You](#) (by Sam McBratney)
- [A Letter to Amy](#) (by Ezra Jack Keatz)
- [Do You Want to Be My Friend?](#) (by Eric Carle)
- [Gossie and Gertie](#) (by Olivier Dunrea)