



KINDNESS MATTERS AT IEGA

FEBRUARY PRESCHOOL/KINDER NEWSLETTER



February is Skill Check Month so we will be focusing the first two weeks on checking everyone's progress on their gymnastics skills.



VALENTINE VAULTING

This month on vault we will be focusing on hurdling and jumping, as well as continuing to work on safety landings. Some of the station work you may see includes:

- Coordination and body control will be required this month as we focus on three types of jumps - straight jumps, tuck jumps & straddle jumps. You may see us working on these types of jumps on the ground, off a raised surface or on a trampoline. For straight jumps, we are working toward a tight body, with arms stretched up high, before landings with bent knees. For tuck jumps, we are learning to lift our knees toward our chest, quickly grabbing them before landing safely with bent knees. Finally, for straddle jumps, the goal is to straddle our legs in the air before bringing them back together quickly in order to land safely with bent knees.
- We will be practicing hopscotch again this month, progressing from jumping- open/close/open/close - to hopping from one foot to two feet. This is not an easy concept for the brain and body to put together, but for those students who have mastered this skill we will add the challenge of backward hopscotch!
- Hurdling is an essential gymnastics skill, used on vault, floor & even beam, and the beginning stages are one of the required skills in our preschool/kinder program. A hurdle resembles a skip and, for vault, requires a gymnast to move from a full run (launching themselves from one foot) to a two-foot punch on the springboard, with straight legs, which then propels the gymnast upward.
 - Tumble Tykes will be working on the very beginning of this concept practicing jumping, with feet together, on to a springboard and then up to an elevated surface.
 - Tumble Kids will be taking this concept to the next stage, starting in a lunge position (simulating a run) and then launching themselves on to the springboard to punch it with two feet, with straight legs, which should then propel them up to an elevated surface. As we are ready, we will add in the run as well as an arm swing as we move through our hurdle.

**Some of the station work you may see this month includes other important developmental skills like hand/eye coordination, spatial awareness & school-skills and cognitive development activities like color, number and/or letter recognition, manipulation & matching.

BIG-HEARTED BARS

This month on bars we will be focusing on the continued development of our upper body, core and grip strength. Activities you will see us working on include casting, supporting, hanging, swinging and rolling on the bars. Some of the station work you may see includes:

- We will be working on supports, both on the single rail and parallel bars, building arm and shoulder strength.
 - Tumble Tykes will also be working on shimmies across the bar, requiring them to maintain body control while focusing on grip and hand coordination.
- Monkey bar work for Tumble Kids and tuck & straddle hangs for our Tumble Tykes will challenge students to work on both their grip strength and body and hand coordination.
- Tumble Kids will be practicing forward roll dismounts this month as well, a prerequisite requirement for promotion. The focus here is control, in both the roll and landing.
- Tumble Tykes will be working on possum hangs with chin holds, requiring coordination, grip and core strength.

Ways to learn about and practice kindness at home:

Make Someone's Day - Write a card or draw a picture and give it to someone you want to show kindness to

Perform Small Acts of Kindness for Others - Help a neighbor with yard work or your sibling with chores

Be Kind to the Earth - Don't litter & recycle

Books to Read: The Last Stop on Market Street by Matt de la Peña, Give by Jen Arena or & Lola & the Troll by Connie Schultz



BENEVOLENT BEAM

Beam is all about balance, body awareness and body control and so we work on skills like crawling, walking, jumping, and even marching, down this narrow piece of wood called a balance beam. Some of the station work you may see this month includes:

- Walking on the balance beam is an essential beam skill and this month you will see our students doing so in many different ways: forward, backwards, sideways both on flat feet (Tumble Tykes) and on tippy toes (Tumble Kids). You may also see marching on the beam, which requires us to engage our core muscles and focus on body control as we lift our feet higher to step over larger objects.
- Bear walks (Tumble Kids) and crawling (Tumble Tykes) are also ways in which we get comfortable with balancing on a narrow beam and require us to be in full control of our body.
- Jumping on the beam requires not only good balance and body control, but also bravery as we launch ourselves off both feet simultaneously and try to land back on that same narrow space. Our Tumble Tykes will work on progressing from hopping (one foot to the other foot) over objects to jumping with feet together.
- Tumble Kids will move from balancing on the beam with their feet to balancing on their hands as we introduce and practice donkey kicks on the balance beam. This is the first step toward a handstand on beam.
- Mounting and dismounting an elevated beam are one the required Tumble Kids skills, so practicing these two skills this month as well.

FRIENDLY FLOOR

This month on floor we will be focusing on rolls, handstands and the cartwheel concept, all of which are essential preschool/kinder gymnastics skills. Some of the station work you may see includes:

- Handstands are probably the most foundational gymnastic skill. Nearly every skill on every event either starts, passes through or finishes in a handstand. This month both our Tumble Tykes and Tumble Kids will work on wall handstands, gaining the necessary arm, shoulder, and core strength required for this skill.
 - Tumble Kids will also be taking those handstands off the wall and working toward a successful Open Handstand, which starts and finishes in a lunge.
- Rolling or somersaulting is the very beginning of what will someday become a “flip”, the skill everyone always wants to learn the minute they sign up for gymnastics. 😊
 - Tumble Tykes will be focused on forward rolls, and working toward standing up at the end of their roll without using their hands, or crossing their legs or using their knees in order to stand up.
 - Tumble Kids will be focused on backwards rolls, supporting their necks as they roll over with strong arms and hands that push them over the top, rather than rolling sideways.
- Cartwheels and Flanks will also be an important focus this month.
 - Tumble Tykes will be working on flanks to understand that they have to turn and jump their body and hips from side to side, as they begin to imitate the cartwheeling motion.
 - Tumble Kids will be working on starting and finishing their cartwheels in a lunge, kicking their back leg up and over to the other side.

