

# preschool news



Campus Child Care  
division of student affairs

## DIRECTOR'S DESK

I hope everyone had a little time to relax during spring break. Now it's time to gear up for the second half of spring semester. I think everyone is looking forward to longer days, warmer temperatures, and spending more time outdoors!

April is always a busy month for us. The teachers are preparing for parent conferences so be sure to sign up for a time to meet with them to discuss your child's progress and development. We will also be celebrating Week of the Young Child during the week of April 20. We will invite parents to participate in a variety of ways so look for more information in the upcoming days and be sure to keep checking our Web site calendar.

Last month I wrote about the importance of allowing young children to learn and develop through play-based experiences. This month, I would like to touch on the importance of early intervention. It is so important for parents to seek help for their children when needed. Making sure they can see (vision), hear, and speak (language development) properly are essential first steps. I discovered my son had a vision problem at age 9. A doctor told me it was probably too late to correct his lazy eye, but I was so distraught by the late diagnosis that I was determined to do whatever I could to help him. It is probably no coincidence that my son, although he could read, did not seem to enjoy picking up a book for pleasure, until his vision problem was diagnosed and treated. I still don't know whether to credit the patch he wore to strengthen his weak eye, or the beginning of the Harry Potter series with his new enthusiasm for reading! Either way, I now have a success story; a nineteen-year-old who can't understand why everyone doesn't love to read. So, when our teachers make referrals to specialists and outside agencies, please listen to their advice. You will be helping your child immensely by seeking help now and monitoring their progress. Sometimes there is a missed opportunity and there may be a price to pay down the road. Next month I will talk about early intervention as it relates to developmental delays.

We are already starting to think about summer enrollment. Janene will be sending out the summer and fall semester application at the same time, so be sure to get yours in by April 27. We will save your spot if you decide not to attend in summer but will return in the fall; but we can only do this if you submit a fall application before we start enrolling new families. We do not know yet if the university will be closed on Fridays, but since they have done



Shalese (Pre 3) and dad, working on a special project

**APRIL 2009**

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this for so many years the application will reflect a Monday—Thursday schedule. As usual, we will open the school-age classroom for children ages 5-8 years. We look forward to having some of our 'old' friends return for the summer. We typically move our kindergarten-bound children into the school-age room for the summer. More information about summer will be in the May newsletter.

Everyone will receive a program evaluation in your parent pocket and staff feedback forms are available in a stand by the pockets. Feel free to fill these out and return them to the drop box on the front counter. We appreciate feedback we receive from parents so we can see the areas in which we are doing well, as well as where we may need to improve.

We have a new feature on our Web site. We've added numerous articles, relating to children's development, under the 'Parent Resource' section (many of which were written by our own teachers). We have also added some links to a variety of educational Web sites, in addition to local and community resources/agencies. We have a calendar where we post all upcoming events, along with important dates (Interim periods, billing dates, semester start and end dates, etc.). Please take a look at this valuable information and let us know on the program evaluation how useful it is to you so we can make adjustments, if needed.

As a note of interest, I am a Deputy Registrar and can register anyone over the age of 18 to vote as long as you have 2 forms of identification (one needs to have your current residence listed). The registration period has been closed but will reopen on April 9.

We hope to see lots of involvement from our parents in the weeks ahead, between parent conferences and Week of the Young Child. It's very exciting to see when parents visit their child's classroom to share a special talent or activity. We recently had a parent who taught a two's class some simple yoga positions and another who shared video segments of the garbage and recycling process; both were great! Feel free to talk with your child's teacher if there's something you would like to share. Happy Spring (it's official now)!!

*Chris Herrmann*  
Director

### Parenting Workshop Series

Join us for dinner (school-age classroom) from **5:00-5:30** pm and a workshop presentation (large motor room) from **5:30-7:00** pm. Child care will be provided during the workshop. Parents must sign up in advance (with Janene); the workshop will be limited to 20 participants. All participants will receive a backpack (one per family) filled with lots of great resources (children's books and music, gift certificates, parenting book, board game .....).

April 8 — "Raising Children with Character"

April 16 — "Establishing Routines"

April 28 — "Using Communication to Invite Cooperation"

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S DESK**

Hello preschool families and happy spring! The weather has not been very "springy" (as it is currently 40 degrees as I write this....brrrr!) and I am hoping we are in for a better month of April than we had in March! Luckily the children have gotten a few good weather days to play outside despite the mud. With the recent time change, the children have been sometimes able to get outside again in the late afternoon to get some fresh air.

Parent Conferences are quickly approaching. Soon your child's teacher will have a sign-up sheet available for you to choose a time to meet. This is a great time for parents and teachers to meet and talk with no interruptions. The teachers go over a lot of valuable information about each child including a Child Development Summary (assessing their growth and development) as well as the recent additions to the portfolio. Teachers also use this time to go over any concerns they might have about your child's development. As Chris mentioned, we will refer parents to outside agencies or resources if we feel the need. Common referrals are the NIU Speech and Hearing Clinic, your child's pediatrician, Family and Child Connections, and preschool screening done through the school district you currently live in. Always let us know when you have followed up with a referral from your child's teacher; it is helpful for us to know what is going on. As a reminder, I like to sit in on several conferences as this gives me a chance to connect with families and learn more about your child.

This time of year starts the process of transitioning the younger 2/3s children into the preschool classroom. In the late spring semester, the children from the 2/3s classrooms will be "visiting" preschool rooms during small intervals of time throughout the rest of the semester. When the actual transition of moving to the preschool room happens, at the start of the summer semester, those children will have had a good introduction to the preschool rooms. Your child may come home saying they met a new friend or played with somebody different one day – those would be our 2/3s children.

Enjoy the rest of the semester and I wish you all well in your classes and at your jobs. My door is always open; come in for anything!

*Lisa Schmidt*  
Asst. Director

**REMINDERS**

- Summer and Fall child care applications are due by April 27.
- Please remember that enrollment is a two step process. First you fill out the application to request care and then you receive a contract packet to be signed and returned confirming your space. The **Contract needs to be signed and returned by the deadline to save your child's space** for the upcoming semester.
- The last day of spring semester is May 8. Full day care is available during Interim (May 11—June 12); applications are due by April 10.
- Child care bills must be paid in a timely manner to maintain enrollment in our program. Child care is terminated if two consecutive payments are missed.
- Please do not leave your car running in the circle drive. This is an illegal and very unsafe practice.
- For tax purposes, our FEIN# is 36-6008480. **We do not distribute statements regarding your child care payments.**



## NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 1

It's hard to believe that half of the semester is already over. I can't wait for spring to arrive. As much as I enjoy winter, enough is enough already. The playground is finally drying out and everyone has been excited to get the bikes out again. We were lucky enough to recently acquire quite a few new ones so there are enough for all to ride. The two seat bikes continue to be popular and it's nice to see the children working together to get up the hill. Although it is getting warmer it is still chilly in the morning so the children still need hats, gloves/mittens and boots. Nicer weather means that we can go outside again in the afternoon, which is great for the children who aren't here in the morning.

April is going to be a very busy month at the center. The Week of the Young Child is April 20-24 and we will be planning some fun activities for the children and their families. As part of this celebration we would like to invite you to have breakfast with us on Wednesday April 22 from 8:00-9:00. We hope that you will be able to make it but if you can't you are welcome to join us anytime for snack or lunch. Just let us know in advance so that we can let the kitchen know to send us more food. We would also love to have you come in and share any special talents, interests, or materials with the classroom. The children are a very forgiving audience and don't care if you're an expert, they are just excited to learn and experience something new.

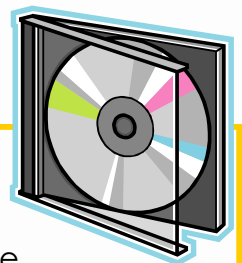
April is also parent conference month. David and I will be holding ours the week of April 27-May 1. The sign-up sheets will be out the week before and will be placed by the sign in book. We will also post a list of our primaries so that you know which of our sheets to sign up on. Parent conferences are a very important part of our program; we spend a lot of time preparing for them and take them very seriously. If none of the times offered will work for you let us know and we will arrange an alternate time.

The literacy program, Book It, will continue through the month of April. You can just keep adding your books to the poster under the sign in book. Remember that your child will receive a coupon for a free personal pan pizza from Pizza Hut at the end of March and April. Pizza Hut has been supporting literacy in this manner for the last several years. It is great to see such a big company giving back to the community in such a fun way.

The children have continued to keep busy in the classroom. Many of the children are spending a lot of time at the art table writing and drawing. It's amazing to see how their fine motor skills have grown. Recently Legos have been quite popular and the children have been building some really unique vehicles. We have also been encouraging the children to expand their block building by placing some pictures of different architectural styles as well as some famous buildings on the wall in the block area. We have actually seen some castles and skyscrapers constructed that looked a lot like the pictures.

### Classroom Photo CDs

We will be selling CDs with photos of the children from each classroom for \$5.00, starting April 20. Children who do not have permission will not be included (anyone who checked no 'personal' use of photos on the original enrollment form). Please see Janene if you would like to purchase a CD.



It is hard to believe this is the last semester that Dave and I will be spending with some of the children. It seems like just yesterday that our kindergarten bound children moved up from the two-year-old rooms. It is really remarkable to think of how much they have grown and changed in just two short years. I know that many parents worry about their child's academic readiness for school. At our center we really stress the importance of being socially ready, being able to get along with other children, follow directions, take turns and say goodbye to parents. A few of the things that you can do to help your child be socially ready are:



- Set rules and give consequences for breaking them.
- Have regular routines for mealtime and bedtime.
- Encourage your child to play with and talk to other children.
- Encourage your child to take turns and share with other children.
- Encourage your child to finish difficult or frustrating tasks once they have begun them.
- Model and discuss positive ways for your child to express his or her feelings.

Another important aspect of development that is incredibly important is communication skills. You can help them in this area by:

- Have regular conversations with your child.
- Encourage your child to listen and respond to others when they speak.
- Answer your child's questions, even if the answer is no.
- Help your child learn and use new words.
- Explore language through singing, rhyming, songs and chants.
- Model the language you want your child to use.

If you have any questions about your child's readiness for kindergarten please ask Dave or I, and we will talk more individually at parent conferences. We encourage all kindergarten bound children to go through preschool screening. This is done by each individual school district and you can schedule an appointment by calling the district office. This screening is a good way to identify any areas in your child's development that may need extra attention.

*Diane Coleman*  
Head Teacher

## Northern View Community

Northern View invites you to join our community this fall for the 2009-2010 school year. Our newest addition to on-campus housing, Northern View Community, is designed for students who are married, have a domestic partner and/or dependent, are graduate or professional students, or are undergraduate students at least 22 years of age. We are comprised mostly of two-bedroom apartments and rent includes all utilities, Internet, and cable. No security deposit is required and financial aid packages can be utilized. For more information, follow our NVC link from the Campus Child Care homepage, visit our Web site at [www.niu.edu/northernview](http://www.niu.edu/northernview), or give us a call at 815.752.VIEW. Northern View Community; all the comforts of home with the convenience of hassle-free, on-campus living.



## NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 2

The month of April is going to be a very busy and exciting time for our classroom and center. During the week of April 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> we will be celebrating the Week of the Young Child (WOYC). The WOYC is a celebration each April sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). WOYC is a chance to celebrate the learning opportunities of young children and recognize the responsibilities we share for helping them make the most of the early years.



During this special week we are going to decorate recycled Target bags that were donated to our center. Inside these bags Kendra and I will be providing a list of recycled art props that can be used at home. This list will give you some great ideas to do with your child at home together. We also are going to make picture frames out of popsicle sticks. The children will be able to decorate their frames with paint, markers or collage materials. Our last exciting project will be to decorate art smocks. The children will be using fabric paint to create pictures to decorate their own unique smock.

As the semester is winding down it is time once again to hold parent conferences. Kendra and I will be conducting conferences April 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. We each will have a sign-up sheet posted by the children's cubbies with the times available. If the times we have available don't work with your schedule, please let us know and we will arrange a time that works for you. We look forward to meeting with each of you.

Kendra and I would like to thank all the parents that have participated in the Book IT Program this month. Our classroom poster is really starting to fill up. This means that all of you have been very busy reading to your child at home. Keep up the good work! Just a reminder, at the end of the four week reading period your child will receive a pizza award certificate from Pizza Hut. The certificate is good for one free one-topping personal pan pizza and a sticker that says "I'm a Book It! Beginner".

Recently we had a Doctor's office set up in our dramatic play area. The children showed a great deal of interest taking on roles of a doctor, nurse, patient, and receptionist. During their play the children would talk about their own experiences at the doctor office or hospital. It's a lot of fun listening and observing them in their play.

As the weather becomes warmer Kendra and I plan on utilizing the school-age playground more often. We will be bringing the children outside during our free play to participate in art projects, organized games and activities that will encourage the children to use their large motor skills.

### Reminders:

- Please make sure your child has appropriate clothing in their extra clothes bin. With the warmer weather approaching we have a lot of children with winter clothes.
- Please check your child's art file each day. We have a lot of artists in our classroom and they are creating so much art, so it fills up quickly.

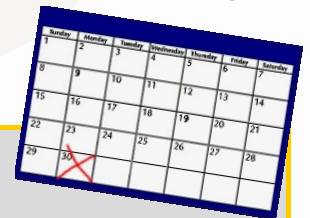
*Diane Mathison, Head Teacher*

**NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 3**

Hello Pre-3 Parents!

We have started our Spring Project and want to thank all of you for your donations. If you didn't get a chance to read the letter in your child's cubby a few weeks ago, we had asked if you were interested in volunteering for the classroom by donating for the Spring Project. These are the ways we suggested. If you have any additional ideas please don't hesitate to run it by us.

1. Save and bring in interesting recyclables and reusable items. These items may include but are not limited to textured cardboard, colorful plastics, safe metal, cork, wood, and cloth. (We will be building and creating structures throughout the rest of the semester.)
2. Purchase and donate bags of peat, soil, or wood chips for our garden. We will be preparing our garden for planting during NIU Cares Day on April 18<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested in this, please have all donations turned in by that day. Thank you!
3. Come in during Week of the Young Child and plant a variety of flowers in the garden with your child.
4. Read a book to the class about any of the topics we are focusing on in the Spring Project.
5. Cook with the children using fresh vegetables and fruits. Some ways to do this is by making smoothies, soups, salad bar, pizza, and tasting experiences.



**Calendar of Events**

April 6, 4:45-6:15 p.m. — **Good Evening Huskies** — Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services is providing snacks and beverages for commuting students in the main entrance of **Dusable Hall**.

April 22, 4:45-6:15 p.m. — **Good Evening Huskies** — Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services is providing snacks and beverages for commuting students in the main entrance of **Gabel Hall**.

April 8, 16, 28 — **Parenting Workshop Series** at CCC

April 16, 1:00-2:00 — **'Lunch 'and Learn'** Nutrition workshop (more info will follow)

**Week of the Young Child**

April 20 — **Dessert Day** — parents are invited to bring in a treat for the CCC staff.

April 22, 8:00-9:00 am — **Breakfast for parents/families**—join your child in his/her classroom for a breakfast of eggs, muffins, and fruit before you head off for a busy day!

April 23, 9:30 — **Fancy Day** — an **opera singer** will be here to perform for the children in the large motor room; parents are welcome to join us. Children may 'dress up' for the occasion.

Thank you again for all of your help and participation in this Spring Project. Our goal is for the children to experience and gain an understanding of how a plant grows, differences between seasons, a respect and love for nature, how recycling works and why it is important, and practice lifelong habits to help protect and save our Earth! We will be documenting our "Spring Project" experiences all around the classroom so check it out!



"Coins for Goodness" is another exciting goal we have in Pre 3. One of our very own children decided to do this so we could have a "fancy" day at school. We immediately found a jar and started collecting coins. We had the children vote on who we should give the coins to once we filled the jar. They voted between children and animals. Children won! We have decided to donate our "Coins for Goodness" to the Ronald McDonald Charities. This way we can give each of the children a bag of coins to carry (the back way to McDonalds behind the Stevens Building) to place in the Ronald McDonald fund box themselves. We will give the children information on where the money will go. This gives them a visual experience as well. Stay tuned for the exact date. We know it will be a Wednesday. We are committed to building a close community within our classroom as well as our surrounding community. We hope this experience will give our children a love of helping others.

You are all doing a fabulous job with the Book It slips. Keep reading! We want our door covered! We also hope you and your child enjoyed receiving a letter from a friend in Pre-3 over Spring Break. The children were very excited to drop a letter into the mailbox by the Student Center.

Parent conferences are April 6 –10. Please sign up on the sheets provided and let us know if you need a more convenient time. We look forward to meeting with you.

*Kristi Hayward*  
Head Teacher



## NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 4

Hello again! We would like to welcome our new friend Trevon and his family to our classroom! We are glad to have you with us!

Interim was fun! We got to spend time with friends from the Pre-3 classroom. The children have such a good time being with their friends from other classrooms. It gives them a chance to build stronger friendships and learn how to socialize with others that we don't get to see as often.

Our motor skills are coming along! The children have really been into dancing to the Disney songs. Our favorite songs are from Mulan and Mary Poppins. They dance alone and dance together, this builds communication skills, balance, coordination and turn taking. We have also enjoyed the tumbling mats. We practice our somersaults, flips and cartwheels!

The children have really been interested in coloring and printing. We have added giant poster markers to the easel and have added smaller markers at the art shelf. It is so incredible to see the progress of their printing skills. Some fun things you can do at home to encourage small motor skills and letter and number recognition is to put sand, salt or flour on a baking tray and have your child make letters with their fingers – it's something different and most children love to get their hands dirty!

If you have seen the block area you may have said to yourself, "boy, they sure have had the cars in there for awhile!" Well that's because no matter what else we put in there the children always ask to have to the cars back out so we put them back on the shelf! They love building roads, tunnels and ramps. They make garages and homes for their vehicles. They are learning to share ideas, be creative and work on strengthening small motor skills.

We have added a weather chart and calendar to our group area. The purpose of the chart is so the children can chart the daily weather, count the days, and learn the days of the week. We are learning two new songs to help us learn the names of the days of the week. This also helps with sentence-segmenting. This helps the children recognize each written word in a sentence. Some of us are ready for this advanced step in the reading process and some of us are still learning letter names and sounds.

We have also incorporated a "scientist bucket" in the classroom. It is filled with a variety of dry ingredients such as Jello, corn meal, corn starch, baking powder and we fill jars with water, milk, vinegar, and soda and the children use tweezers, eye droppers, and spoons to mix and create their own concoctions! The children also get to use their senses to smell, feel, see and hear what they create! It also increases their vocabulary when they describe what it looks like, or smells, or how it feels.

To celebrate Spring – which we are so excited that it is finally here – we painted with our feet! We had a "spring" in our step as we stepped into Spring! We are also working on recycling and taking care of the Earth this spring. We painted using packing paper instead of just throwing it away and we recycle the cups in our classroom every day.

During the Week of the young child (April 20-24) we will be doing earth-friendly activities and would love to have parents share a cooking project, music or any other talent!! Please let us know if you can join us!

Thank you to all families who made our family night a success!  
Thanks for all the delicious food!

**Reminder: Pre-4 Parent teacher conferences are the week of April 13!! Please remember your day and time!**

We are definitely playing more and more outside. Now that the warm weather has hit, the playground is a little muddy. We ask that you continue to bring boots daily for your child – this helps our classroom stay "mud-free."



Many of our children play "Star wars" or "power rangers" on the playground. The children need to have time to play these types of games. They need to feel that they have a sense of "power." I allow this type of play on the playground with rules. Our hands stay to ourselves and we use kind words to our friends and we also have to ask friends if they want to play because sometimes they don't want to be chased. So far so good – the children are doing well with the rules.

We are also doing great being super friends! We have filled up our marble jar three times! Once the jar is full the children get to vote on what special kind of day or activity they would like to do. The next special event is a pizza party! The children are very excited!

Just to let everyone know, I work nine months so my last day of the semester will be May 8<sup>th</sup>. I enjoy this time off to be with my children. I will return to work in August.

Happy Spring everyone! Remember that if you ever have questions or concerns feel free to talk to Dawn or I any time!

April Kaiser  
Head Teacher



## Student Coordinator Positions in Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services

**Student Coordinator Position: Available Fall 2009.** Are you a student looking for leadership opportunities or interesting ways to earn a little extra money? We are hiring up to four students to serve as Student Coordinators for the 2009-2010 academic school year.

Commuter and non-traditional students make up a large portion of our student body. We understand, however, that being a commuter and/or non-traditional student presents many challenges. To help provide programs and services for this large population, we are looking for a few key student leaders to serve as Student Coordinators. This position entails program planning, outreach, marketing, a little research, and office duties. Student Coordinators host programs and luncheons, greet and assist students in the office and contribute new ideas to best support students. Serving as a Student Coordinator is a paid position (minimum wage) and offers up to ten hours of work weekly. If you are interested in learning more about this leadership position please contact Jill Zambito, Director of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services at 815.753.0100 or [zambito@niu.edu](mailto:zambito@niu.edu). (Applications are due on Monday, April 20, 2009).

# Week of the Young Child

April 19–25, 2009

Bring Communities Together for Children Bring Communities Together



The Week of the Young Child (WOYC) is an annual celebration each April sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's largest organization of early childhood professionals, with more than 100,000 members. The purpose of this week is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to support the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs.

Childhood is a time of enormous opportunities—a time when children grow, learn, strive, dream and build the foundations for their futures. Every moment of a young child's life is a chance to learn more about the world, to develop social skills, and to gain critical knowledge and abilities. These early experiences lay the groundwork for all later learning, and help children succeed in school and beyond.

As parents, teachers, policymakers, community leaders, and concerned adults, we all share responsibility for making sure young children get the most out of those opportunities. It's up to all of us to make the early years count.



During WOYC, we will be playing a DVD titled, “**Unconditional Parenting**” by Alfie Kohn, in the front lobby. We hope you will take a few minutes to listen to his views on successful parenting. We will then allow parents to borrow the DVD so you can watch the entire presentation (2 hours).

Alfie Kohn is a renowned expert in education who has authored many books. He believes that traditional discipline doesn't work. So what does? Most advice for parents begins with the question, “How can we get kids to do what they're told?” – and then proceeds to offer various techniques for controlling them. In his landmark book and DVD *Unconditional Parenting*, Alfie Kohn begins instead by asking, “What are our **long-term goals** for our children?” it follows that we need to work *with* them, rather than doing things *to* them, in order to reach those goals.

Kohn argues that punishments (including time-outs) and rewards (including positive reinforcement) may sometimes produce **temporary compliance**, but they do nothing to help kids grow into responsible, caring, ethical, happy people. Moreover, he suggests that permissiveness is less worrisome than a fear of permissiveness that leads us to over control our children. Kohn concludes with **ten important guidelines to help viewers reconnect with their own best instincts as parents.**