

preschool news



Campus Child Care
division of student affairs

DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to the 'spring' semester at Campus Child Care. We are glad to see so many of our families returning and would like to welcome 16 new children (some of whom are siblings) to our program. I hope everyone had a relaxing break and you are ready to tackle a new semester.

We have some good news to share. We recently qualified as 3-star center through the Illinois Quality Counts: Quality Rating System. This program is funded through the Illinois Dept. of Human Services (IDHS) and administered through the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies. It is directly tied to the state subsidy program so in order to qualify, a center first has to serve at least 25% IDHS subsidized families. Next, the program has to meet specific quality indicators. The fact that we are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children qualified us as a 3-star center. Our rating is good for three years but we will likely work to attain a 4-star rating next year (4 stars is the highest). There has not been much publicity about this initiative but expect to hear more about it in the near future. Locally, both Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C) and DeKalb County Community Foundation (DCCF) are involved in supporting and promoting this innovative initiative.

As many of you know, Campus Child Care has been collaborating with the Office of Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services since the beginning of fall semester. Our goal is to help our students become more familiar with the services provided by this office. Check out the last page of this newsletter for a few events that are coming up. In addition, on Feb. 18, the staff from the CNT office will be hosting a continental breakfast in our conference room. Everyone is welcome to attend, but we especially encourage students who are commuters and/or non-traditional to take advantage of this opportunity to talk with the CNT staff about programs and services that are available to you, while you enjoy a light breakfast. CNT is also hosting 'Winterfest' for Campus Child Care on Friday, Feb. 20 from 10:00-11:30. The 2/3's and preschool classrooms will go over to the Holmes Student Center with their teachers to participate in some fun fair type activities and have a small snack. Parents are welcome to join us there!

Please keep in mind that teachers will be scheduling parent conferences toward the end of each semester. All parents are expected to meet with a teacher to discuss your child's overall growth and development. If you did not meet with a teacher in fall semester, please schedule a time to talk with him/her as soon as possible.

Have a great start to the new semester; and remember, only six weeks until spring break!

Chris Herrmann, Director



Aiden, Caleb and Ryan painting with their feet!

FEBRUARY 2009

In this Issue:

Preschool Room 1

Writing and Storytelling
Block Area
Music Students Perform

Preschool Room 2

'Young Photographers'
Classroom Book

Preschool Room 3

'Animals in our Backyard'
Classroom Mailbox
Sensory & Large Motor Experiences

Preschool Room 4

'Read to Me' Board
Benefits of Computers

Other Information

Children's Lending Library
Dental Health in Preschoolers
Commuter & Non-Traditional
Student Services

Kindergarten Readiness Workshop — February 12, 4:00-5:00



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S DESK

Hello to all preschool families. Welcome back to the start of a new semester. I hope everyone had a peaceful and relaxing break – now it's back to business! It is always exciting to see new faces at Campus Child Care each semester and I hope all families are getting into the "swing of things".

As Chris mentioned earlier in her newsletter, we recently qualified for a 3-star rating in the Quality Rating System. We are a truly fortunate program to have the quality staff and early childhood program for us to have earned national accreditation as well as a 3-star rating. The professional staff in our program are educated, skilled and experienced teachers who are supported by our competent and dedicated student staff who serve as teacher aides. Allow for me to share with you some information about our student staff and their training of which you may not be aware. Our students view working at Campus Child Care as a professional commitment as most are in the majors of child development, early childhood education or elementary education. New students are given an all-day orientation before each semester starts to assist in their overall job knowledge and expectations for working in the classroom. Each semester our students attend 5 on-site trainings. The teachers will either prepare a specific topic to present (such as "Language and Literacy"; "Conflict Resolution") or will plan for some open discussion surrounding the individual children and classroom management for the specific room they each work in. The returning students are evaluated annually by the head teachers and new hires are given a mid-term evaluation and another formal evaluation at the end of the semester in which they were hired. Teachers are consistently providing guidance and assistance to the students to help them be a strong team player in the classroom. We recognize how integral a part our students play to the overall quality of our center and how important they are in the daily management of our classrooms.

Enjoy reading the rest of the newsletter. It is always interesting to see what is happening in the different classrooms. Good luck with the start of a new semester.

Lisa Schmidt
Asst. Director



REMINDERS



- We will not be celebrating Valentine's Day at the Center by making or exchanging cards so please do not bring valentines or candy to distribute. We prefer to maintain our typical routine, allowing families to choose their own way of celebrating these special days at home. We also want to avoid imposing any additional costs on families who may be on a tight budget. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.
- Full-time child care will be available during Spring Break, **March 9-13**. Watch for a registration form in your pocket and be sure to hand it in by the deadline if you need care during this week.
- 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 remember to use your NIU One Card to enter the building each day. Keep in mind that Janene has the discretion to apply a \$5 fee to anyone who needs to be buzzed in multiple times.
- For tax purposes, our FEIN# is 36-6008480. **We do not distribute statements regarding your child care payments.** You need to track that information yourself, so you we recommend for everyone to save your invoices as a way of documenting your annual child care expenses.

NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 1

Welcome to the spring semester at Campus Child Care. Dave and I were so happy to see all of our friends again and to welcome four new classmates, David, Evelyn, Erik and Nick to the room. The children were quite excited to see each other again. Some of them hadn't seen each other for more than a month. They had lots to tell their friends and teachers about their holidays. Along with new children, we are also happy to welcome some new student workers to our classroom. The children have really enjoyed getting to know Juliette, Morgan, and Emily.

Many of the children have been showing a lot of interest in writing and storytelling. We have encouraged this by stapling paper together to make books. The children are then able to illustrate and write or dictate stories to create the own special book. Some of the stories make more sense than others but the process of creating is more important than the finished product. As the semester progresses we will continue to provide the materials and support needed so that all of the children can experience the thrill of seeing their own words in print.



Along with all the writing at the art table the children have also been making some really creative things with paper and tape. This interest started with just one or two children but now there are quite a few who are making houses, boats, purses etc. I'm sure that many of your houses are becoming filled to the brim with paper.

Another activity that has been popular lately is making cards for friends and family. As soon as I put a basket of donated cards and envelopes on the art shelf there was an immediate rush to write on as many as they could. You may have been the recipient of a few of these cards. I know I've addressed quite a number of envelopes to moms and dads, grandmas, and grandpas. I think that we are almost out of the holiday cards so hopefully you won't be getting anymore season's greetings.



The block area has been very, very busy so far this semester. Space ships seem to be the most popular structures built so far, although we have also seen a flying bed and a flying house. The children have also been stacking the unit blocks to make towers. They enjoy seeing how high they can get the tower but I think they really like watching them fall down more. Dave and I continue to encourage the children to use the unit blocks for building but they usually want to use them for props.

We were fortunate to have a group of music students visit our classroom recently. They played several games with the children and demonstrated different types of music. They also talked about tempo and how different examples of music make us feel. But the children's favorite part was when they played their instruments for us. They brought three different sizes of trombone and a French horn. They encouraged us to sing along as they played some familiar songs. What a fun experience!

Dave and I will be meeting with our new parents in the next few weeks for an intake meeting. If any of our returning parents would like to sit down with us to discuss your child, let us know. We would be happy to set up a time.

Please remember that we will be going outside as long as the temperature is above ten degrees so your child needs to have snow pants, boots, hat, and mittens along with their coat. We do not always have enough extra snow pants and boots so we really count on each child having their own clothing. Outdoor play is a really important part of our day. Children need to get fresh air and to move their bodies in order to learn. That physical activity actually helps them concentrate during the day.

Have a great semester!

Diane Coleman
Head Teacher



NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 2

I would like to welcome back everyone. I hope your families had a wonderful and safe holiday break. Kendra and I have fun activities planned for the children and we are excited to start a new semester.

We have a lot of the same children returning to Pre-2, but I would like to welcome Jamarie, Chenghau, and Mario. The children are always excited to have someone new in their class.

During our planning for the semester, Kendra and I came across a fascinating article from the *Young Children* magazine, titled *Young Photographers*. We thought this would be interesting to implement into our classroom. The center has purchased a child's digital camera for us to use in the classroom for our project. Here is a list of goals we plan to accomplish:

- We will teach the children how to hold, use and care for a camera by demonstrating, instructing verbally and allowing practice and application times for all of the children.
- We will allow every child an opportunity to capture moments, objects and activities from their day, as well as their perspective.
- We will use these experiences to stimulate and encourage language and communication about photos they've taken.
- We will encourage children to look at objects from a different perspective, using the camera to investigate their interests, supporting meaningful learning.
- We will display the children's photography in a manner so all families can enjoy it. This will further the already established and ongoing daily reflections by adding the children's language, perspectives and opinions.

This month the children have been working on a classroom book, titled Welcome to our Class, We're Glad You're Here. This book will help the children get to know one another. We will be asking the children a variety of questions and then have them draw a picture of themselves and how they are feeling. Here is a list of questions we will be asking each child: What is your favorite color? What is your favorite food? Who is in your family? Etc. The children enjoy reading about themselves and their friends.

Reminders:

Please remember, when dropping your child off in the morning, to help them wash their hands, get them involved in an activity and then say good-bye to your child. It is very important to say good-bye because it helps your child know what will happen and make them feel secure in their environment.

We also will be going outside if the weather permits, so please make sure your child has the appropriate clothing. Each child should have: boots, snow-pants, coat, hat and gloves. By providing the following items each day makes the transition of getting everyone ready much easier.



This semester we plan to continue our mailbox system. This semester we added a basket with paper and writing utensils for easy access. Please feel free to write your child a quick note in the morning before you leave and place it in the mailbox. Your children love to get notes from you.

Don't forget to bring back your family poster back to school so we can display it in the classroom. The children are always excited to show off their pictures to their friends and teachers. Thank you for your participation.

Diane Mathison
Head Teacher

NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 3

Pre 3 would like to welcome Adyson (Ady) to our classroom. Ady and her family are very familiar with CCC and Pre 3. Ady has two brothers, Tyler and Jacob, who have also attended Campus Child Care. "Jakey" was in Pre 3 last year. We are very excited to have Ady as our new friend. She has already made herself very comfortable at the easel. She has also earned the "Chef of the Week"

award for her spaghetti and meatballs from the media table. She has declared Pinkalicious by Victoria and Elizabeth Kann as her favorite book, and the salon in dramatic play as her favorite area.



We didn't waste any time incorporating meaning from our bulletin boards into the classroom. First, we searched for pinecones buried in the snow to use as feeders in our playground for the animals represented on our "Animals in our Backyard" board. We then covered the pinecones with Crisco and rolled them in peanut-free birdseed. After the long weekend, we were very excited to see animal prints in the snow that led to the feeders.

Kristin talked about the different shapes of the prints that were in the snow. When we were able to go outside, the children followed the paths taken by the rabbits and squirrels. We had a few children calling the animals both squirrels and chipmunks. So we dug out some Your Big Backyard magazines on chipmunks to research the differences between the two animals. The second bulletin board has gears linked together to demonstrate teamwork and a sense of community in Pre 3. As the children demonstrate their ability to work together we will take pictures and display them around the board. Once again this semester, we will use the bulletin board outside the classroom to document the children's work and the process of learning that takes place within the classroom.

We are continuing our mailbox system and appreciate the feedback on the returned evaluations. Feel free to let us know of any suggestions you may have for the classroom. You can give them to us directly or put them in our mailboxes. We have introduced a new daily schedule system that is located on the side of the cubby area. There are two sentences that each have a space for a picture illustrating what we are doing now and what we will be doing next. For example, now it is "clean up". Next it will be "grouptime". The children are permitted to change the cards as we transition.

With the very cold weather it has been impossible to get outside very much. We have taken advantage of our extra time indoors by stimulating our senses in a variety of ways. We made play-doh as well as silly putty in gloves to squish. We blew bubbles through straws from soapy cups. In the large motor room, we gathered pillows behind a stack of mats and encouraged the children to run and jump over the mats onto the pillows. They did this multiple times while adding slight variations. We used our muscles to pull others around on a blanket. The teachers gave the children a great movement experience by wrapping each child in a large purple blanket and swinging them side to side. We also designated a place on the mats where the children could swing large pillows at each other. They are permitted to target legs or backsides avoiding the head and face. This is a controlled and safe version of traditional "pillow fights". These activities allow the children to use their senses and be active. "I Like to Move It, Move It" has been the most requested dance song.

Be on the lookout for new and exciting take home bags. Pre 3 is continuing the classroom expectations to be respectful, responsible, and safe. We hope you have a great semester!

Kristi Hayward
Head Teacher

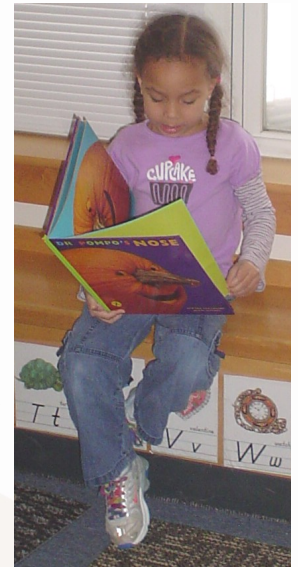


Children's Lending Library

We still have the center-wide lending library that has a variety of interesting books and music cassettes available in the front entry way. Several parents have asked why we don't have the cards in the books anymore because they liked knowing which book they have checked out. So we decided to have a sign out sheet for the books as well as the tapes. When you return the book, just write the date that you returned it and put the book back on the shelf. We hope you continue to use our lending library!

NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 4

Welcome back. We hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and a nice break. April and I have several fun activities planned for the spring semester. The children will also be working on learning their address, phone numbers (if you have a different number besides the one listed, let us know), and birth dates. One of our bulletin boards is 'Read to Me'; we will be adding dragonflies with favorite books that we read throughout the semester. If your child has a favorite book that is age appropriate and not a cartoon character or superhero please feel free to bring it in. We will also be continuing our letter and number recognition. Many of us can print our first name so we will be including our last names as well.



We have reintroduced the computer into our room this semester. The children each get 15 minutes to play and 15 minutes to watch. At this time we have the Fisher Price Pirate Ship and the Jump Start Kindergarten games; we will get more as the semester goes on. Computers help children in their **social and emotional development** by having them be able to demonstrate self-direction and independence. It also gives the two children that are at the computer opportunities to work together to solve problems while maneuvering through a program. The child that becomes good at a game also gains self esteem and takes on a leadership role because they can help the children that might not be catching on. Computers also teach patience because the computer will freeze if you keep clicking the mouse so you have to wait until the hourglass is gone. Computers also help with **physical development**. Children work on fine motor skills as they use a keyboard, coordinate the cursor with the movement of the mouse. In fact, every action on a computer involves fine motor development and eye-hand coordination. **Cognitive development** is also enhanced by computers because they bridge the gap between concrete and abstract thinking. As children explore cause and effect, create patterns, solve problems and discover solutions, they learn to connect it to past experiences. Their creativity flourishes as they create art, arrange objects in unique ways, and experiment with graphics. As children learn to identify and use computer-related terms they are **developing language**. With practice, they begin to identify the letters of the alphabet on the keyboard and in the programs. The children also start to make connections between speech and print. This information was gathered from the Creative Curriculum for Preschool, fourth edition.



- Please remember that we go outside everyday for 45 minutes as long as it is 10 degrees and above. Please be sure that your child has a hat, coat, gloves or mittens, snow pants, and boots for outside play. We have some extras but not enough for all the children.
- If you would like to come in and read a story or have lunch with your child, you are always welcome!
- Several of the children have had growth spurts this past semester, so please check your child's extra clothes bin in the bathroom.
- Please be sure they have gym shoes or closed toed shoes for inside play.

Dawn Reader
Teacher

DENTAL HEALTH IN PRESCHOOLERS

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics “despite the advances in oral health, dental and oral diseases continue to plague children.” Even before the formation of permanent teeth, oral healthcare in children is important. Dental problems in children can cause diseases in the mouth, cavities, and infected teeth. It can also affect a child’s speech, the way that they eat, their appearance, self-esteem, and overall health.

Poor dental health in preschoolers can be caused by a lack of nutrition due to poor diet, poor dental practices, the inability to obtain dental care due to lack of financial resources or insurance and dental problems left untreated.

Because preschoolers’ fine motor skills are not refined, they should have their teeth brushed with a drop of fluoride toothpaste by an adult at least once a day. Twice a day is best.

Tips for healthy teeth in preschoolers:

- Practice proper nutrition
- minimize snacking between meals
- Avoid foods that stick to your kids’ teeth
- Avoid giving children foods and drinks that contain excessive amounts of acid and sugars
- Make sure your preschooler children brush their teeth daily. Parents should assist them to make sure it is done properly.
- Your child should visit the dentist every 6-12 months.
- Obtain prompt treatment of any dental problems that occur.

Practicing preventive dentistry will keep your child’s teeth and gums healthy. Your preschooler’s oral health starts with you. By encouraging the proper care of your child’s teeth you are giving him the lifelong gift of a healthy smile!

Kindergarten Readiness
Workshop



Join us on Thursday, February 12 from 4:00–5:00 (5-5:30 for individual questions and answers)


The workshop will include a PowerPoint presentation along with a discussion of current practices and expectations for children entering kindergarten. Handouts will be provided. This workshop is geared toward families who have a child turning five by Sept. 1 (eligible to attend kindergarten in the fall) but all parents are welcome to attend.

Please let Janene know, at the front desk, if you will be able to attend. Child care for currently enrolled children is available during the workshop.

COMMUTER
& NON-TRADITIONAL
(student services)

Dear Parents,

We are excited to announce the first annual Winterfest; a morning of fun for your children this semester. On Friday, February 20 from 10-11:30am you and your children are invited to come to Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services for some games, snacks, and fun. We are located in the lower level of the Holmes Student Center next to the computer lab. We will have winter activities like snow-flake making, pin the nose on the snowman and bowling. Please join us!



Winterfest

Friday, February 20th
10 a.m. to 1:30 a.m.
Lower Level of Holmes Student Center

Parents and Children of Campus Child Care are invited!
Teachers will be bringing over the children in small groups for games, fun, and goodies!

Sponsors:
Campus Child Care and Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services
For questions call 815-753-0100

Also new this semester is Soup Du' Jour, a program on Tuesdays from 11am-1pm featuring a free soup of the day. This is a great opportunity to meet other students and staff members and enjoy some free soup!

Save these dates:

- Tuesday, January 27**, in The Lounge - Menu: Rotini Florentine Soup
- Tuesday, February 3**, in The Lounge - Menu: Canadian Cheese Soup
- Tuesday, February 10**, in The Lounge - Menu: Vegetable Soup
- Tuesday, February 17**, in The Lounge - Menu: Chicken Noodle Soup
- Tuesday, February 24**, in The Lounge - Menu: Cream of Tomato Soup



We look forward to seeing you soon!

Jill Zambito
Director, Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services
815.753.0100 <http://www.niu.edu/comnontrad/>