DIRECTOR’S DESK

Welcome to ‘Spring’ semester at Campus Child Care. At least it is now February with March right around the corner!! It is good to see so many returning families and we would like to welcome all of the new ones as well. We hope everyone had a relaxing break and you are ready to tackle a new semester.

I want to start with some staffing updates. First, Krystal (Pre 4) is working to complete her master’s degree in early childhood so she is currently on leave as she does her student teaching in a school district. She will return at the beginning of spring break. Bri Wedoff is subbing for Krystal. Bri worked for us previously as a student worker—we are fortunate to have her helping us out! Katilyn Ostenson was recently hired as a teacher in our program. For this semester, she is working in Pre 1 due to the absence of Diane C. who is on an extended illness leave. We have also completed the hiring process for the Asst. Director position and will let you know as soon as that is finalized. Thank you to everyone who participated in either one or both of these processes!!

One of our staff (Kendra, 2/3-2) just returned from an early childhood conference in Chicago, and two others (Kristin, Assoc. Director and Kristi, Pre 4) attended our national conference in Dallas this past November. In addition, we have several staff who will attend an early childhood conference in Wisconsin in mid-April, and Kelly (Inf) will attend an inf/tod conference in March. We want you to know that we have a strong commitment to providing professional development opportunities for our staff and we are fortunate to have staff who love to learn and grow within their profession. They always come back with a lot of enthusiasm and great information to share with each other and parents.

Included in this newsletter is a very good article about the importance of spending time outdoors during the winter months. Parents sometimes express concern regarding the children going outdoors in this type of weather. I think every teacher mentions, in their classroom articles, the need for parents to bring appropriate outdoor clothing for winter time, as this is the important piece to staying healthy. Going outdoors daily is a very important part of our program (and is required by licensing, Accreditation, and our Quality Rating and Improvement System). This article speaks to the fact that going outside in the winter is good for you, and will not make you sick (in most instances). Please take a look at it; and remember, the germs are indoors, not outdoors! We also included a thermometer which can help you decide the amount of layering needed at various temperatures.

With the weather being very unpredictable during the winter months, please make sure you keep in touch with weather updates and NIU’s open/close status (via the website, text messages, and email). Sometimes classes are canceled.

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but offices remain open; this means we are open. However, we close any time the entire university closes and this can mean that we will close early if NIU closes the campus early. More than half of our staff commute quite a distance and many travel on country roads, so when bad weather hits, we lose nearly half of our professional staff. Please keep this in mind and allow plenty of time to pick up your children on these bad weather days.

Have a wonderful start to a new semester. We wish you much success!

Chris Kipp

Preschool Room 1

Welcome back to another exciting semester in Pre-1! We are so excited to have Katilyn joining us every day, and to welcome back a few returning students and a few new ones.

New to the classroom this semester is the “Who’s Here?” board. As the children arrive they are invited to find their animal name card and velcro it onto the board. As we’re waiting to go outside or the large motor room we can count how many children are here, how many red owls, or how many animals are on the board. While we were talking about this the children asked about signing themselves in every morning. I created a sign-in book for them as well to practice writing their names, and it’s a time where you can help your child and spend a moment together before saying good-bye for the day!

Dramatic play has been full of song and dance as the children have been busy performing! They have been dressing up and inviting others to join their band or to be the audience. They have also been learning some number concepts as they’re selling tickets, or using play money to buy a ticket to the show. As we were reading one of the scholastic flyers the children noticed a popcorn alphabet game and wanted to add popcorn with letters on it to the containers. They also have made signs announcing the show. This area is great for creative expression and social-emotional skill building as they learn to work and play together.

REMINdERS

- Please be aware that 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 or burden on families. We appreciate your cooperation.

- Full-time child care will be available during Spring Break, March 9-13. An application form was sent to your email be sure to hand it in by Friday, Feb 6th if you need care during this week.

- 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 we recommend for everyone to save your invoices as a way of documenting your annual child care expenses.

- If you have some CCC labeled underwear at home, please return them; we are running low!!

- All children will go outside when the ‘feels like’ temperature is above 15 degrees. They may go outside for a short time when this temperature is between 10-15 degrees.
Art is a very important part of our day. Throughout the day the children are busy experiencing the art materials independently, working with each other, and using the materials that teachers put out specifically for the day. They have asked for cardboard tubes and other materials to make 3-D art, so if you have any extras or other cardboard or plastic recyclable materials at home we’d appreciate a donation! Art experiences help foster creativity and we try to encourage them to create their own art and to try for themselves before asking for help. It can be frustrating to not be able to draw something as well as another child – but we remind them that they’re all learning!

Other highlights from week one include:

- Playing in the snow! We went sledding down the hill on the playground!
- Making Pizzas out of English Muffins, and reading Pete’s a Pizza!
- Drawing self-portraits. We used special paper that says, “We’re Super Kids” at the top and the whole class participated in drawing and some added collage materials!

Please remember to make sure your child has appropriate clothing for going outside and playing in the snow. “No child left inside,” is our theme because we don’t have any teachers to stay back. The children really do enjoy the snow, but it is not as fun if they don’t have the appropriate attire – winter coat, snow pants, boots, hat, and waterproof gloves or mittens. We have some extra things to borrow, but not enough for everyone and often these items are donated and may not fit your child well.

Thanks for your help!

Jen Young and Katilyn Ostenson

Preschool Room 2

Happy New Year! School is back in session. We hope all of you had a marvelous time during your break with your families. The children seemed to be excited to see their friends the first week back. As the new semester starts we would like to welcome our new student teachers and our new Pre-2 friend, Yazeed.

During the first week back at school the children worked on number recognition by using number cut outs and clothes pins. This activity allowed the children to match the amount of clothes pins with the num-
ber that was chosen to practice. Sawyer counted the number of clothes pins as he pinned them onto the number six.

Children worked on letter awareness. You may have noticed the children’s sign in sheet located on the entrance door of our classroom. Signing in every morning is to help the children recognizing their names and letters.

Here is a list of at home exercises that can be beneficial for your children:

- Letter bingo using upper case, lower case or a combination of forms
- Children targeting letters in books
- Having children identify letters on bulletin boards or street signs on their way home from school

Unfortunately, the very cold weather has been preventing us from going outdoors. The children are provided with a great amount of gross motor activities, such as, climbers, trampolines, scooters, jumping mats and a variety of seesaws. The children were given the opportunity to move their muscles by jumping, dancing, running and skipping in the large motor room. Learning does not stop in the classroom but proceeds over into large motor room. Children are not running around wildly but are shown how to run with proper form and techniques.

We will introduce the children to a vocabulary list and our persona doll, Sam, will help the children solve problems. A vocabulary list will be posted in the classroom to help children build on literacy. We will continue to describe actions and items that are part of everyday activities by using a selection of words.

Sam will be making more appearances during group time. Many of the children in our classroom are either the older sibling or soon will be. She will help us discuss with the children how she feels being the older sibling. For those who will soon be an older sibling, Sam will help us speak about adjusting to life with a new baby at home.

Just a few reminders:

- Make sure you are providing your child with extra clothes
- Hats, coats, gloves and snow pants are needed to keep your children warm outdoors
- **LABEL ALL** of your children clothing
- Check art folders located by the children’s sink every Friday

Jaquida Wynn and April Kaiser
Preschool Room 4

Welcome back Pre 4 families! We are excited to have Bri here to sub for Krystal while she is student teaching. The children are doing well and are so excited to see Bri when she gets here! We were busy the first week with making patterns and designs with the colored pegs. We played with a doll house, people, and furniture in the block area. Now we have the children constructing buildings with small waffle blocks and transporting blocks in the dump trucks. We started off with the doctor’s office in dramatic play. Now we are dressing up with shoes and clothes. We are taking care of babies and preparing meals for each other. Ask your child what they like to serve the teachers and other children.

We have been enjoying the large motor room as well as the snow outside. We had balancing materials out and now are working on our vertical and horizontal jumping skills.

We tried star fruit and talked about the shape and color when it's ripe enough to eat. They all liked it and were excited to see the star shape when it was cut. One child reported it was sour J.

We mixed liquid starch and glue together to make silly putty. We squeezed and stretched it giving our hands and fingers a great workout.

We had the NIU nursing students visit us the second week. They brought a board that had a person on it. They talked about things nurses use to help us, such as their eyes, nose, stethoscope, clipboard, band aids, etc. Each child had an item and placed it where it went on the nurse on the board. The nurses also listened to their heartbeat with their stethoscope.

We brought the writing table back into the classroom this semester. We have laminated name cards for the children to write their name on and then velcro to the back of the shelf to replace the sign in sheets from last semester. You can incorporate this into your drop off routine if your child is interested. Also, check out the new framed art in the hallway.

We hope you enjoyed the Teaching Strategies Gold system presented to you in our family conferences. Please remember to accept the email invitation to be able to access your child’s documentation and receive pieces throughout this semester. We will be planning our curriculum around the children’s interests as well as activities recommended for our classroom from Teaching Strategies Gold. Please don’t hesitate to ask questions or for help to get you started. We love this system and want you to get all you can from it.
Should Children with Colds go Outdoors?

Parents often request that their children be kept indoors when they have the sniffles. Besides the staffing problems that result when classrooms are divided into go-outside groups and stay-inside groups, parents may not be doing the best thing for their youngsters’ health by denying them the opportunity to be outside in the fresh air.

Even though it’s a common myth, cold air does not cause or prolong colds. Colds are caused by exposure to, and infection with, one of the viruses that cause upper respiratory infections. These viruses are transferred from one person to another more frequently during cold weather because we stay indoors in spaces that are small, heated, and not well ventilated, and we re-breathe shared air that’s concentrated with viruses and other germs that other people are exhaling. Heated air can also dry out the nasal passages, which may make us more susceptible to catching upper respiratory infections. Airborne bacteria and viruses that make humans sick rarely occur in the outdoor air, and cannot survive long if they do. In fact, outdoor air is considered to be naturally sterilized. Sunshine, heat, cold, and breezes quickly kill or dissipate the molds and germs that build up indoors where crowded humans are breathing together, and where ventilation might be poor. Active outdoor play naturally results in deep breathing, getting clean air into young lungs. Even just a few minutes spent outside gives little bodies a chance to replace indoor air with fresh air and possibly cut down on illnesses and reactions indoor pollutants.

Studies have shown that cold air doesn’t make the symptoms of an existing cold worse, or cause it to last longer. Cold air does make noses run, and may cause temporary nasal congestion in some people, but these aren’t worsening cold symptoms—they’re cold air responses that go away within a few minutes.

Daily outdoor time is an Illinois DCFS licensing requirement. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and Caring for Our Children—the National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out-of-Home Child Care—agree that “children shall play / be taken outdoors daily” when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Weather that poses a significant health risk includes wind chill at or below minus 15 degrees F and heat index at or above 90 degrees F, as identified by the National Weather service. As long as weather is safe and clothing is appropriate, daily outdoor time is not only good child care practice, but is considered the best practice. By the way, parents cannot dictate what they think a facility’s outdoor play time should be; this is to be determined by the child care professionals.

In other words, children who are well enough to attend and participate in activities at child care should be considered well enough to spend time out of doors when weather conditions permit. Or,
stated the other way, if a parent feels a child is too sick to go outside, then that child is too ill to be at child care.

This quote from the journal Early Childhood Research and Practice sums it up nicely, “Children of all ages enjoy and benefit from playing outdoors in all except the most extreme weather. Daily outdoor play is healthy and burns energy. It gives children an opportunity for a change of environment, a balance in play and routine, and activities of large muscle development. Even children who are mildly ill but active should go outside if the weather is not severe. Staff and children alike will feel refreshed when fresh air is part of the daily routine. Taking children outdoors daily, even in winter, can be a healthy part of their schedule, and is safe when clothing is appropriate.”

Source: Child Care Health Solutions, 11/10
References:
1. Penn State Engineering Dept., Outdoor Purge Air Systems
2. Caring for Our Children Standard 2.009, Playing Outdoors, and NAEYC Accreditation Standards 5.A.06, 5.A.07

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**What to Wear for Outdoor Fun**

- **65°** One shirt (long or short-sleeved)
- **60°** One long-sleeved shirt
- **52°** Unzipped jacket or two shirts
- **45°** Unzipped jacket
- **35°** Zipped coat

Below 35° Hats, gloves, and a zipped coat

On snowy days, add boots, snow pants, and a change of clothes.

On windy days, dress for one level lower.