March Already?? No doubt you are gearing up for mid terms and mid term projects. Possibly annual reports and goal assessment for the coming year. We want you to know that no matter what project you are working on we are here for you.

It is our mission to provide you with excellent care and a caring environment so that you can focus on your goals and get your work completed. When you arrive to pick up your child we will ask you about your day, we will ask you how things are going, we may even suggest resources to help you navigate NIU and the larger community. This is our way of getting to know you, supporting you as students and parents and helping you to learn and grow a long the way.

We value the relationships we build with you and your children and we look forward to helping you. So, even though you might not be up for talking or you have some place to be, try and connect with your child’s teacher, so we can help you feel connected and supported.

We recently found out that our NAEYC Accreditation visit was pushed back due to unforeseen circumstances on NAEYC’s end. We now have a new 15 day window, and can expect NAEYC to come sometime between March 26th & April 13th. This is a little later than we would have liked, but it also give us more opportunities to check and double check our work. Until then, we patiently wait.

We are getting ready for Week of the Young Child (WOYC) a celebration of young children and all that they do to grow and learn. Special events are being planned now and a full calendar of events is to come in April.

We will be hosting our parent program on March 21st, from 5:30-6:30p.m. Our parent program this year will be a literacy night, where we invite you and your family to wear your favorite pajamas, and join us for a night of fun. Each classroom has chosen a book, and has planned extension activities as well as a snack to help connect to the literature. Be on the look out for a sign up sheet as well as more information within the upcoming weeks.

Thank you for allowing us to care for you and your children. We are looking forward to the rest of the semester and a short break this month.

Good luck on midterms!

Kristin Schulz & Amy Lofthouse

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NIU NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
PRESCHOOL ROOM 1

We have had an eventful few months in Pre-1. We became overnight sensations on our stage, danced up a storm (and still do at group time) and learned about different genres of music, while learning to not only perform an Opera but to make soup!

The children’s interest has now embraced robots, aliens and space! We have some ambitious plans to build robots, create a solar system in the classroom and build a rocket or spaceship. We have not voted or designed it yet but the possibilities are endless!

As a reminder the children are to find their mittens upon entering the classroom. We have separated some to challenge those children who know their first and last names. Then each child is asked to print or trace their name once in their folder each morning and following up with washing their hands. Please help your child to accomplish these tasks each morning before joining in the fun.

To also help and develop name recognition, we have meal time name tags where each child identifies the letters to their names and the capital letter of their name. This is followed by us asking the children to identify the capital letter to their name and the sound that letter makes. Jaquida has been creating name books for letter practice at home with a wipe off marker. Look for these coming soon.

Conferences begin in April. Jaquida’s conference date for her primaries is on Wednesday April 4, and Tuesday May 1 for Ann’s primaries. Please look for the sign-up sheets when you come into the

REMINDE R S

- Full-time child care will be available during Spring Break, March 12-16. The registration has passed so if you still need care please see Janene ASAP for any space that may be available. At this point, extra care fees will apply.

- Please be aware that classrooms will be combined during Spring Break due to low enrollment; and teachers will take time off or spend time out of the classroom to plan the curriculum.

- For those who pick up at the end of the day, please remember that our building closes at 5:30 so we need you to pick up and leave the building by this time.

- 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.
Each teacher is being given a full 9-4pm shift out of the classroom to conduct parent conferences. We do require families to meet with staff for a 20 minute conference and goals setting period. We value our relationship with you and the home school connection for your child’s benefit. We will remain flexible with families who have trouble meeting this time frame but ask that you keep to your day as best as possible to help us manage all of the meetings we need to get through over 5 weeks.
bathroom.

Pre-2 has been working hard building strong relationships with their peers and branching out from their customary playmates to learn the interests and likes of new friends. One way we have created an open environment is allowing the children to choose which area they would like to play before leaving the snack table in the morning. This allows the children to make a conscious decision about where they want to play, rather than following their peers. We have noticed that this strategy has helped self-regulation, independent play, and turn taking.

Beginning at the end of last month, we began adding last names to our classroom word wall. This will encourage the children to distinguish the spelling between their first and last names, as well as, encourage letter recognition and beginning letter sounds. We will be encouraging our pre-kindergarteners to sign in during morning drop off. We also have added the written word of each color to the word wall. We wrote the written word and color coordinated it to match the word. For example, green will be written out, g-r-e-e-n, in green ink. We will encourage the children to look at the first letter of each color and match it to the corresponding letter on the word wall. With practice and repetition, Pre-2 will grasp their last names and sight words quickly.

During free choice the children were able to create their own stories using the flannel board prop pieces from the story, Four Little Stars. The children used their imaginations to create their own stories.

**Calendar of Events**

March 12-16 — **Spring Break** (Interim care must be requested, extra care fees apply).

**Parent Conferences** (Month of April): See page 3 for your child’s conference day!!

April 16-20 — **Week of the Young Child (WOYC) Guest Reader Program and Child Alumni Readers Welcome!**

May 4th — **Reading Day** (we are open as usual)

May 7-11th—**Finals Week**

May 14-June 15 — Spring Interim
and illustrations. Their stories were very descriptive and creative. The children also created self portraits of themselves. We placed a long mirror on the table and provided the children with paper and multicolored markers and crayons. The children’s art work is really becoming representational.

For science, the children participated in a balloon experiment. We placed two water balloons outside in the snow. The pink balloon was placed on top of the snow while the red balloon was buried in the snow. The children then were asked to make predictions on what would happen to the balloons if they stayed outside overnight. We learned that the pink balloon froze and became ice inside. The red balloon did not freeze and had water inside. We discovered that the snow acted like a blanket and insulated the red balloon, so it did not freeze. The children were amazed and asked to do the experiment again.

We would like to thank Hui for coming into our classroom and talking to the children about the Chinese New Year. This is a tradition that Leon and his family celebrate. It was informative and we had fun learning through a variety of activities: books, video, craft activity, props, clothes and special snack. In addition, we would like to thank Carl, La’Nia’s dad, for performing his keyboard and various instruments for the preschool classrooms. This experience went along with our music appreciation curriculum. We would like to invite all our families to come and share a tradition or talent with our classroom. Please let us know if you would be interested, we would love to have you.

Reminders:
- We would like to invite all our families to a fun filled family night on Wednesday March 21. We will be wearing our pajamas, reading a special book and eating a snack. More information to come.
- Please check your child’s art folder at the end of each day. The crate is located right outside our classroom door.
- Kindergarten sign up will be happening soon. Call your local school district if your child will be attending in the fall to find out the official date.

Have a great month!
Hillary Rosher & Diane Mathison
PRESCHOOL ROOM 3

We’ve had a busy month in Pre-3! We would like to welcome two more friends to the classroom, Jedidiah and Mayar! We are getting to know each other and building our classroom community.

Fine motor skills are necessary in simple everyday tasks such as getting dressed and eating, and eventually more complex tasks such as using a pencil, cutting, computer skills, or playing an instrument. We use fine motor skills in everyday activities, but intentionally planning fine motor activities will help to increase muscle strength and coordination and prepare children for kindergarten activities. Kindergarteners do activities daily that require these fine motor skills such as writing and cutting with scissors, and dressing themselves, so it’s important that children are provided opportunities to strengthen these skills. I recently reached out to other colleagues in the Early Childhood Field, including other preschool teachers, occupational therapists, and physical therapists to ask about additional activities we could be doing to strengthen and support fine motor skill development. A physical therapist reinforced that children need to develop their gross motor skills before fine, so strengthening arm and shoulder muscles is important! Climbing on the climber, climbing up the slide, bear crawls, crab walk, and hanging from a bar on the playground are good activities for strengthening these muscles. The occupational therapist suggested working at the easel or on a wall because this naturally pulls the fingers together into a pincer grasp! Other activities you can encourage at home are playing with play dough, stringing beads on pipe cleaners or spaghetti, cutting straws or paper, working with nuts and bolts, stickers, sorting mini M&M’s, and using smaller pencils such as golf pencils or broken crayons which will help with their grasp.

In social studies and literacy, this past month we noticed that some children have shown more interest in writing and we have supported this by writing letters and sending them in the mail! We read the book, It Came in the Mail, about a boy who really wanted mail so he wrote a letter to the mailbox and a dragon was delivered! This book helped to support the foundation for letter writing, and inquiries as to how the mail works. We wrote letters, talked about vocabulary words including addresses, envelopes, mailboxes, and stamps. We talked about where everyone in our class lives and graphed it. We took a walk on campus and mailed the letters. The children were excited to come back to school and tell us they got mail! For more ideas on how you can support emergent writing at home I have included a link to a great article on the NAEYC website.

https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/nov2017/
The other study that’s been going on in our classroom is eggs! This developed after we were learning about “winter” animals, such as penguins, and hatched a toy penguin egg for a science experiment. The children all made predictions on what was inside the egg, but no one guessed a penguin! It was fun to watch as the egg cracked and we could see a little of what was inside at a time! We read The Emperor’s Egg, and talked about emperor penguins and how they are the biggest of the penguins! We researched how big they can get and then drew a penguin to measure ourselves next to. An adult emperor penguin is bigger than all the children in our classroom! We also have been reading and talking about the other animals that hatch from eggs. We talked about chickens, alligators, snakes, spiders, fish, birds, ducks, lizards, turtles, dinosaurs and even platypuses! For another science experience, I froze small animals inside of water balloons and they made another prediction, and worked to help hatch their animal from the egg! Afterwards they drew a picture of what was inside. For more information on this study please see the documentation board inside of the classroom!

Reminders:
With additional children joining our classroom we have more children sharing cubbies now. Please make sure to take home your child’s art and extra items to create more space! Each child has a top or bottom cubby and shares the middle space for coats. Blankets for nap time are being kept on their cots unless you want to take them home at night. Please remember to keep toys and extra things at home.

We are still going outside as the weather allows. Children need to have boots here each day and shoes for in the classroom. It’s helpful if each child has their own items such as stretchy gloves or mittens for days with no snow, and waterproof gloves or mittens for snow play! Waterproof gloves or mittens help to keep their hands dry and safe! We have plenty of extra snow pants if your child needs to borrow them.

Jen Young & Leslie Dolan