DIRECTOR'S DESK

March Already?? No doubt you are gearing up for midterms and midterm 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 the 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 gives 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 5:30-6:30 p.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
INFANT ROOM
Dear infant families,
We are so grateful for all these children. They have made us smile every day, all day long. We have seen so much individual growth in all the children.

With the weather being warm on some days, and bitter cold on other days, we decided to bring in snow on the really cold days. Some of the children were not so sure about touching the snow. We talked about how the snow was cold in their hands. Emily was not worried at all, she found the snow and began to eat it! On the days the children were able to go outside, we encouraged the mobile children to explore the climber. A teacher helped them use the slide in an appropriate and safe way, so they learn how it is used. We are usually outside with the toddlers and they are wonderful role models for the younger children. They have much more experience on the playground and know how the equipment is used.

We have brought in the trampoline for the children to attempt to jump. The children enjoyed climbing on and off the trampoline, with very little jumping. The biggest lesson for the children and teacher was not about physical development, but taking turns. So needless to say we only had the trampoline in for a few hours!

The children have really enjoyed finger painting lately. They are starting to figure out that paint doesn’t taste good. The teachers are continually reminding them that the paint is for the paper. We hope you enjoy looking at the artwork displayed in the room.

The children have displayed interest in pulling objects out of containers. It started with the scarves in an unused wipes container.

REMINDERS
- 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.
At first the children didn’t understand the concept, but once a teacher modeled and encouraged the activity—everyone started pulling the scarves out. We will often place a scarf on a child’s head and when they pull it off we say “boo” to them. Not only is this a super fun social game for the child, but it also encourages the children to problem solve how to get the scarf off of their head. We recently added to our fun container activities. Luckily, Sherie eats a lot of ice cream at her house, so she brought in some ice cream buckets with holes in the top so the children can pull a variety of objects out. One container has many links, another has shapes, and last one has small soft animals.

Reminders & upcoming events:
- Our NAEYC visit will be soon. Please make sure you are washing your child’s hands for a full 30 seconds upon arrival. If you come to visit, please remember to wash your hands before entering the room. Another policy that is important to remember is that the children cannot wear hooded shirts or sweatshirts while they sleep. So if they do wear something like that, it will be taken off.
- We will be having a fun family night soon and we hope you can make it. More details about family night have been posted by the parent bulletin board.
- Spring Break is March 12-16. We hope everyone who is able to take advantage of some well-deserved time off, is able to enjoy their little ones and some rest.
- Parents conferences will be at the end of April, so be looking for a sign up from your primary teacher by the parent bulletin board.
If you have any questions, concerns, or would like any information on any subject, please do not hesitate to ask us.
Sherie Newman and Alex McAnally

Calendar of Events

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

Parent Conferences (Month of April): See page 8 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 15th — Spring Interim
TODDLER ROOM

Happy March!

We celebrated Queen and Harvey turning two in February.

Spring is just around the corner. However, we have been taking advantage of the snow that has fallen recently. When the temperature is too cold to play outside, we have been bringing the snow inside. It has made a great science and sensory experience. The children have used their hands as well as cups, spoons, and shovels to play in the snow. We observed snow melting in containers in the classroom as well as outside. The observations introduced the children to words such as cold, warm, ice, and melting. We read books in the classroom about snow, weather, and seasons in order to reinforce the concepts. While outside on the playground the children helped to build a snowman.

Socially and emotionally, toddlers are still learning to develop a sense of self-identity. They are still trying to figure out who they are and how they fit in with their family and community around them. Even though we will not expect them to share, use manners, have empathy, or to give to others we model these concepts in the classroom. We model behavior we want the children to use in conversation, through reading books and singing songs. When the children demonstrate behaviors such as being gentle, having patience, showing empathy or being a good friend we make sure we point it out through verbalizing what we see happening. As a result, we have seen more of these behaviors in the children.

Our dramatic play area with the kitchen set up has been very popular. The children have been involved in preparing meals. We have a variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy and carbohydrates. We are using the interest in food to talk about healthy choices when eating. Not only are they learning that fruits and vegetables are foods that are good for their bodies they are expanding their vocabulary by identifying the food. We have several baby dolls in the dramatic play area as well. The children are learning to take care of their dolls by rocking, feeding, burping, and playing with them. Some of the children sing and read to the dolls. We encourage both boys and girls to play with dolls because of the social skills they gain while playing with them. The children are beginning to learn through play that others have needs that as well as their own.

Please join us for our Spring Semester Family Night on Wednesday, March 21 from 5:30 – 6:30. This semester it will be a PJ and
Literacy Night. Stay posted for more details.

Both Pam and I will soon be scheduling for Parent/Teacher conferences that will take place next month. Pam will be conducting her conferences on Tuesday, April 2 and I will be conducting conferences on Tuesday, April 10.

Have a great Month!
Kellie Fuss & Pam Yockey

**TWO/THREE-1**
2/3-1 is literally marching into March! We love the instruments and having parades around the room and throughout the center!

We have started talking about peace. Each of us need a little peace every day. Even if it is just for a minute or two we need to take some breaths and have quiet time. We are showing the children different relaxation techniques and yoga. We will be incorporating a couple minutes of quiet and yoga daily. We had a peace parade with headbands and ribbons tied onto instruments!

We have a “mystery story box” for our group times. Each day we try to put in different props that go along with what we may be working on for the week. The children love to find out what is inside the box. We have done The Soup Opera, The Three Little Pigs, The Three Tamales, and The Three Billy Goats Gruff and one about families.

Kat and I were observing and talking about how well the children are doing- we must have done something right last semester, even when it was our first time with two’s in years! The children are beginning to develop friendships, their speech is increasing and they have a desire to learn and explore new things. It is very rewarding as a teacher to see these little minds grow!

Science is hot in our room! We did the exploding milk, in which the children observed colors swirling in milk. We discussed how milk has fat in it and when we add dish soap, the soap molecules grab onto the fat in the milk causing the colors to swirl around. That’s why we use dish soap to wash dishes- it gets the dirt and “fat” off the dishes and leaves them clean! We blew up a balloon, taped it to a straw and put the straw on a string that was the length of our room- we let go of the balloon and watched as the air inside the balloon rushed out and pushed the balloon across the string. Then we did an experiment with not using air to blow up a balloon- we used baking soda and vinegar! We also let the children experiment with baking soda and colored vinegar on trays to see their reactions! We discussed “chemical reaction” and the word of the
day was “Bubbly”! They love science!!

Kat and I have been very intentional about modeling kindness within our classroom. We expect the children to show kindness to one another with their words and actions. If we are having a concern, we walk the children to the quiet area and have them point out happy faces on the wall. Then we ask them to think of words to say or things they can do to help their friends feel happy like the pictures. Social skills are one of the most important skills we can teach children. If they can understand how to use their words and express their feelings this will carry with them throughout their lives and they will be able to handle many different social situations in a positive way.

We have noticed that the children play in the different areas and with the toys, but when it comes to the unit blocks they just don’t have an interest or maybe aren’t quite sure how to use them. Kat and I will be intentionally putting unit blocks out in our small groups and large groups and will some type of structure set up in the block area before the children arrive in the mornings. We want to see if this will spark an interest. There are so many mathematical, cooperation, and language skills children learn from using simple unit blocks!

Please remember
- Bring proper outside attire daily- we go on walks and play on the playground every day.
- Toys from home need to stay at home.
- Eat food before entering building- if children have food in their mouth they will need to put it in the garbage can.
- Have your child here by 9am so they can get the most out of our curriculum.
- Conferences will be coming up next month- make sure you sign up for one!
- Any questions or concerns please let us know. We are here for you and your child and want the best for your family!
- Think Spring!!

April Kaiser & Kat Dolan

TWO/THREE-2
Welcome to March and to the halfway point of the semester. The past month has been a flurry of activity. We started off with the continuation of the interest in dinosaurs and volcanoes. In last month’s newsletter, you’ll remember, the children had helped build and paint a volcano. Once it dried we made it erupt and erupt and erupt. The eruptions were a demonstration of a chemical reaction. The children helped to pour the baking soda and vinegar inside the volcano and within a few seconds the bubbles came erupting out, just like real magma within the earth’s surface, that when under pressure and breaks free it comes out of the earth’s surface as lava.
The children then became paleontologists after they helped make stegosaurus bones out of plaster. We first watched a video of paleontologists uncovering dinosaur bones. They noticed how they used brushes (that looked like paint brushes) to softly and slowly brush away the sand and dirt from the bones. Once our bones were dry, we buried them in a bin full of sand, and the children used some of our paint brushes to uncover and discover a stegosaurus.

As the interest in dinosaurs and volcanoes have faded a new interest in sea creatures has emerged, especially in octopi and crabs. With this interest we have changed our media table into an ocean and borrowed Pre-2’s hermit crabs to spend time with us. The hermit crabs create quite an interest in watching them walk and looking for their eyes.

We continued the interest in numbers and the recognizing and naming of numbers by measuring how tall we are. Even Antonio, our Persona doll, was measured. With Antonio we talked about how we all are alike and different. We took several days to look at our eyes and skin to see what color they are and who has the same or similar color. A classroom chart was made to collect this data and is hanging in the hallway outside our classroom.

We have quite a few singers and performers in our room. Many of the children like taking the tree blocks and the tree stand and using them as microphones. To expand on that interest, we put in a stage and performance area in our dramatic play area. Complete with microphones and costumes. Sometimes the children just want to stand and be watched by an audience eating popcorn. Then there are times, voices are ringing out. Children who would not normally be in a large group are getting onstage with their classmates and interacting. These performances show how important the arts are for all children. It not only lets their creative expressions out, it is a way to make them feel more comfortable in a crowd.

Have a great month!
Barbara Zeman & Kendra Nenia
Parent Conference Schedule for April

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<td>Kendra</td>
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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.