DIRECTOR’S DESK

I’m sure all of you are looking forward to the end of the semester. Unlike most semesters that zoom by, this semester has been long and trying. Everyone is anxious for a break and looks forward to summer. We hope you are able to take some time between semesters to rejuvenate your mind and spirit.

I want to take this opportunity to give you an update regarding Accreditation. We submitted our materials to the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs in February. We were notified in late March that CCC was accepted as a candidate for Accreditation. The next step is to have an on-site visit; this will occur any time within the last three weeks of the semester. The assessor will spend one day here to observe the program and review evidence that we meet specific criteria (there is over 400). We have all been working hard on pulling together documentation to provide evidence. The criteria measures components such as teacher and administrator qualifications, developmentally appropriate curriculum, health and safety practices, child interactions, family and community relationships, etc. Many of you have already assisted us in this process by filling out a Family survey (last November). Another way you can help (and this is not just for Accreditation, but at all times) is to make sure your child is 100% supervised when dropping off and picking up. This means they cannot run ahead of you or enter classrooms without you also being present. It’s best to tell your child they need to walk through the building and stay by your side. We also discourage children from hiding; a game they often like to play with parents. I remember, years ago, when I was the director of another center, a child hid at the end of the day; it took us a good 10 minutes to find him and it was frightening to not know where he was. He was being a ‘good hider’ and was staying very quiet. We are responsible for keeping children safe any time they are in the building so we rely on parents to follow the rules we establish, even when they are with you.

Thanks to those of you who participated in Week of the Young Child in some way, either by attending the breakfast or bringing in treats for the staff. It’s always a big week for us and you helped to make it extra special.

Thanks to those of you who took the time to fill out a program evaluation; it’s not too late to submit one if you are still interested. We always appreciate the feedback we receive from parents. The staff will review a summary of the evaluations prior to fall semester, looking at ways we are doing well, along with areas that need some attention.

Good luck with finals and a big congratulations to those who are graduating; what a huge accomplishment!

Chris Herrmann
Hello families. The semester has been a busy one to say the least. Thanks to everyone who helped us celebrate Week of the Young Child by bringing treats for the teachers and student workers, eating a meal with your child, joining a group time, sharing a talent, or decorating a bag with your child. The treats were such a wonderful surprise for the teachers and we never ran out! I think Sweet Dreams may have had a hard time keeping up each day as that was a popular treat to bring in. We truly appreciate your involvement (and so do your children)! Remember, it does not have to be a special week for you to spend some extra time here; you are welcome to do this any time.

We will have five classrooms open this summer due to lower enrollment (Toddler, 2/3’s, Pre 1, Pre 2, and School-Age). Since Pre 3 and 4 are closed for the summer, those children will combine with another preschool room but will return to their original room in the fall. We will offer a school-age program for children ages 5-8 years during the 8-week summer semester. In the past, we invited kindergarten bound children to join the school-age room and we plan to do this again; a letter will go out soon with more information.

During some of the Parent Conferences I joined in on, the topic of “moving up” was discussed with some families. As returning families know, we make our annual classroom and staffing changes at the beginning of the summer semester (mid-June). At this point, all of the children (except for those already in a preschool room) will be “moving up” to a new classroom. The infants will move to the toddler room, the toddlers to the 2/3’s room, and the 2/3’s to the preschool classrooms. The biggest change occurs for the 2/3’s children because they will be split among the four preschool classrooms and will most likely have “new” teachers. We try to keep small groups of children (at least 2 or 3) together so no child moves alone. The toddlers moving to the 2/3’s classrooms will be split between two rooms. This year we have a staffing dilemma that we have not had before. The two toddler teachers are both on a 9 month contract and therefore both will be gone during the interim and summer semester and return the two weeks before fall semester begins. Kellie will return in the fall and be in the infant room and Barbara will return and be in the 2/3-2 classroom. We realize this is breaking continuity for the summer. To help with this transition, we are going to have the teachers who will be with these children in the summer coming down and being with them as much as we can during interim. The 2/3’s teachers for the summer are Stefanie and Kathy. These teachers will also be coming into the toddler room to “visit” for the remainder of the semester. Feel free to let us know if you have any questions related to the “moving up” process - it gets complicated but it works. We will send out classroom letters prior to each semester so parents will know who their child’s teachers will be.
Good luck in your finals, papers, presentations, and jobs! For those of you not coming back until fall – have a wonderful summer and enjoy the outdoors!

Lisa Schmidt

INFANT ROOM
I can’t believe the end of the semester is almost here. What a great year we’ve had together in the Infant Room! The children have all grown and changed so much since they’ve started here. We’ve really enjoyed this time that we’ve spent with your children getting to know them, watching them grow, and seeing them learn new things!

Thank you for taking the time to meet with Sarah and me for parent conferences. We really appreciate you taking the time to sit down and talk with us about your child’s development, and we like to share the changes that are so visible through their portfolio. We also would like to thank you for joining us for the parent breakfast, the treats you brought in for W.O.Y.C. and for the nice messages in our cards. We love our jobs, and appreciate you recognizing our hard work! Thank you for your support!

Now that it is May and we’re spending more time outside and the sun is more intense, we will be applying sunscreen before we go out. Please provide a bottle for your child or we will be applying ours. We also encourage you to bring a sunhat for your child to wear. On the playground each child needs to have closed-toe shoes for safety. Thank you for bringing them in! We’re very excited to be on the playground more often. The children have been playing in the sandbox. They have been scooping sand, and watching as they dump it out or pour it into a container. We have many different shovels and buckets for them to explore. The playground balls have also been popular. We’re practicing our gross motor skills of throwing and some children have attempted to kick the balls. This takes a lot of coordination that we’re working on! There are also climbers and ride-on toys for the children to explore.

In the classroom the large foam blocks have been very popular. The children have been stacking them on top of each other. Some of the blocks are very large so this takes coordination of their gross motor skills and uses cognitive development as they decide how to use them. The children have been using the blocks to sit on, climb on, and to make towers. They’re learning to play together when more of them want to play with the same toys at the same time, and in the same area. They’re also learning math concepts such as big and little as they stack them on top of each other.

HUGS! The children have been showing their affection for each other by giving hugs! We have been teaching them about gentle touches and helping in their interactions with their peers. Recently, they have been showing more interest in the baby dolls. They will bring a teacher a doll and either a blanket or scarf for us to wrap up for them. They will then take the baby and give it hugs, kisses, and pat its’ back. We teach the children to show affection for their dolls and each other to help teach them to respect each other and to show empathy. We’re seeing positive results as they’ve begun sharing their hugs with each other! It’s adorable to watch!

Thank you for being such great parents to work for! We wish you the best of luck with your finals, and in finishing off the semester! As always, if you have any questions or concerns please talk with Sarah or me!

Jen Young
Head Teacher
On behave of Barbara and myself I would like to extend a heartfelt “Thank You” for the treats and kind words from many of you during Week of the Young Child. Barbara and I really appreciate your expression of gratitude. During the week it was nice to have so many families involved in either doing an activity, joining us for breakfast or both. I hope you had a chance to look at the photo display outside the classroom of the week’s activities. Once the semester is over we will be taking down the butterfly bulletin board and giving each of you your child’s butterfly made out of his or her footprint.

Vanessa became a big sister last month. Her brother Gabriel Antonio was born on Saturday, April 12. He weighed 6 pounds 15 ounces and was 19 inches long. We said good bye to Vanessa on April 25. She is staying home with her Mom while she is on maternity leave.

Hilary and Mark will be done at the center at the end of the semester. Hilary’s Mom and Mark’s Dad are both graduating. Good luck to both families.

It is hard to believe another semester is coming to an end. All of the children will be moving up to a 2/3’s classroom for the Summer semester. The meal time and nap schedule will stay the same but there will be some other changes. You will need to start providing diapers and wipes for your child. Because the 2/3’s and preschool classrooms share the laundry room, your child’s dirty clothing will be sent home. Please be sure your child has plenty of extra clothing. Janene will be sending you a letter with your child’s teachers and room number for the summer semester before the open house.

We have seen so much growth and development in the children this past year. Many of the children have shown an explosion of language this semester. We have seen many friendships develop. They are beginning to show concern for their friends well being. Almost all of them are discovering their independence (you may have noticed this at home too).

Last month we got the children involved in gardening. We planted wildflower seeds that we sent home already. For several weeks we had dirt with gardening tools in the media table for the children to continue digging and filling flower pots. We also planted bean seeds that we will be sending home for you to transplant to your garden or in a pot. There are copies of a couple of gardening articles available for you to take if you would like one.

Barbara and I are both working 9 month contracts so we will be gone at the end of the semester until fall. Have a wonderful summer.

Reminders:

- Please bring in a bottle of sunscreen for your child. We also ask that you apply in the morning before you get here. Sunscreen needs to be on for at least 30 minutes before going outdoors for it to be effective.
- If you haven’t done so already we recommend you bring in a sun hat for your child. It will protect him or her from the sun as well as help to keep sand out of hair. If you would like to bring in a pair of sunglasses we will try to help your child keep them on.
• This time of the year the weather changes so quickly it could be very warm one day and cold the next. Please bring clothing to the center for both warm and cooler weather.

Kellie Fuss
Head Teacher

TWO / THRESS—1

Yes! The warm weather is here. We are enjoying every moment possible. It has been such a busy time for our classroom and center. It is hard for me to know what to share. We have explored a few areas on campus. Our children enjoyed looking in the creek, the waterfall, and through the sides of the bridge. We were able to view some ducks and geese floating in the water. Several other trips were taken to the NIU Founders Memorial Library. The children were able to pick a book from the juvenile book section. Then, we went into the area where the books were scanned and put into the computer system. It was quite interesting. Carol and I were really proud of the quiet whispers and walking feet while we were in the library. We also visited Jimmy's mom, Jenny. She invited us to her office in Graham Hall. Jenny pointed out the different materials and equipment that she uses for her work.

Celebration of the WOYC was fun. Many of our parents came to help their child decorate a tote bag with fabric paint. Most of the children made hand prints on the bags. Our student workers took advantage of this experience by bringing their own bags to have the memento of 2/3-1 child hand prints. We hope the tote bags will be a useful way for your child to bring extra clothes and take artwork home in. A center quilt was made by decorating a square from each of the classrooms. Our room made individual painted fingerprints on our square. Take a look at it hanging in the lobby if you haven't noticed it already. Joe’s mom Kellie came one afternoon to make banana pancakes with the children. The children were given the opportunity to measure, pour, stir, and watch the pancakes cook. Of course the best part was eating them! We also enjoyed having all of our parents join us for the family breakfast. Fourteen family members came for the delicious meal. It was wonderful seeing our families relax, play and read after eating.

We look forward to doing more extensive block experiences. The children are most interested in the block area right now. We have both small and large wooden blocks on the shelf. We are adding interlocking shapes, magnetic shapes, and other types of blocks to another shelf for use. It is amazing to see how the children are beginning to connect, stack, and interlock blocks to create 3-dimensional forms.

Singing along with CD’s will happen more often. Our group is now requesting favorite songs. New ones will still be introduced. Of course we will still do the occasional “Marching Band”.

As the semester comes to an end, Carol and I want to make sure that you know how much we have appreciated our parents involvement in our room. Some have baked tasty treats for the student workers and teachers. Others have given us treats and gifts for holidays. Parents have taken the time to verbally recognize our efforts or write thank you cards. Many parents have been involved by helping us pat backs at nap, dress for outside play, remove clothing when coming inside, read at group time, plan and help with cooking activities, do art with the children, and share a special book or interesting item from home.
So many have been able to come to our family gatherings. All parents have made time to be at our parent/teacher conferences. Carol and I each had to leave for family needs throughout the year and it was kind to hear expressions of sympathy. All of this support was not expected, but we feel truly appreciated.

Most of all you have shared your child with us. Each child in our room has enriched our lives and made our days joyful and fulfilling.

Kathy Cregier
Head Teacher

TWO / THREES—2

Hello 2/3’s parents. It is so hard to believe that the semester is almost over! One day we’re all wishing for the snow to stop falling and then it seems the next day the sunny is out and you’ve need to start studying for finals!! Not much has slowed down in the room. The children continue to impress us with all their knowledge and the fact that most of them can reach the soap on the wall! It really is the little things in life that make us smile!!

In dramatic play the Birthday Party was a huge success. I’ve never eaten so much cake in my life!! The Post Office was fun for the children to learn about. They now understand that cards need envelopes and stamps before they can be put in the mailbox. While out on a walk (4-9-08) the children saw some real mailboxes. This inspired us to have them make cards for themselves and have them mailed. I hope you have received yours already. The children have been talking a lot about airplanes. They love having them in the block area. One of our students thought it would be fun to make a big airplane for the dramatic play area. We also have the airport Duplo blocks in the room so the children can make their own planes.

The children have really enjoyed going on walks around campus. With weather being so nice we are trying to walk further - we’ve made it to the fountains behind Davis. We hope to get to the Lagoon before the end of the semester.

The easel has been out for the children to be creative on their own. We’ve had water colors, colored pencils and now we have three crayons wrapped together for them to design pictures in a new and different way. We have been changing the artwork in our room so make sure you talk to your child about which one is theirs and ask questions about it. The balancing scale has been a fun and problem solving experience for the children. We have two different kinds of scales. One scale encourages the children to place objects in the buckets to make one heavier or to get them to balance. Another scale we have has specific objects that are used to weigh down each side.

Stefanie and I would like to say “Thank You” to all the parents who came in during the Week of the Young Child. Eva’s mom Andrea taught the children a few words in German and read a story to us. Cael’s mom Heather brought in her juice maker and had the children put in a variety of fruits and vegetables to squeeze. Everyone enjoyed the refreshing drink. Chance’s mom Doris came in and made salsa for the
children. It was so good and healthy for us, too! Taylor’s mom Llouellyn came in and taught the children an ACB chant. We love it so much that we use it now to get the children over to group times and through transitions. Zakaya’s mom Krystal came in the room to read a book to everyone before snack time. Jacob’s mom Susan came in with many projects. We first watched a music video of Jacob’s favorite song. Then she had art materials for the children to recreate the scenes on the video. She had paper that had water and a beach and a bunch of stickers that the children could put on the paper. The morning was wrapped up with a book titled *Make Way for Ducklings*. We also want to say thanks for all the treats! I was on a sugar high all week!

Our conferences went very well. Thank you for coming in and spending some time with us. Stefanie and I work very hard gathering information and contributing to your child’s portfolio. We hope we could answer all of your questions.

Stefanie and I have truly enjoyed being your child’s teachers. We hope they have grown as much as we have! I feel that I change every year and I know that it is because of the children I work with. I’m a better teacher and individual because of the experiences I have had with you and your child. Thank you so much for a wonderful year. We would like to wish everyone good luck on your finals. Congratulations to Chris (David’s dad), Jason (Cael’s dad) and Susan (Jacob’s mom) on your graduation. We hope the future holds great things for you.

Sherie Newman
Head Teacher

Infant and Toddler Activities to Do at Home

*Infant/Toddler: 12-18 months*

**Cleaning**
Provide your child with various materials used for cleaning like spray bottles of water, cloths, small brooms, hand towels. Enjoy a fun moment of cleaning with your child – they love having the “responsibility”!

*Infant/Toddler: 12-18 months*

**Paper Ball Toss**
Crumple many pieces of paper into balls. Bring out a large basket – like for laundry – and show the children how to toss or how to drop the paper balls into the basket.

*Infant/Toddler: 18-24 months*

You can make your toddler aware of using words to express feelings. Show your child pictures in books of children expressing simple emotions. Explain what is happening and describe the emotions expressed. When your child is experiencing a simple emotion, encourage him to tell you how he feels with words.

*Toddler: 18-24 months*

**Feelie Socks**
Place a familiar object inside an adult sock. Have your child reach in and feel the toy. Let your child take the toy out of the sock and touch it. Talk about the attributes of each object.