DIRECTOR’S DESK

Once again we are approaching the end of a semester, and more importantly, the end of another year! We hope it has been a good year for each of you, both at NIU and CCC. Our intent is to nurture your children as they learn and grow, and also support you in your ongoing efforts to balance a busy life of college studies, work, and raising children!

Thanks to those of you who took the time to get involved in our Week of the Young Child activities. It certainly was a busy week! And, thanks to Diane, Kristin, Barbara, Kendra and Carol for all of their hard work on the activities surrounding this week. Some parents brought in food for the staff, painted a picture with your child, shared a special talent, wrote a thank you note, or joined the classroom for a snack time. Some photos of these events are included on the last page of the newsletter. Thanks again for a great celebratory week!

The summer semester is soon approaching and we are starting to prepare. We will have 3 classrooms open this summer: the Toddler Room (for current infants and toddlers) with Sherie, Carol and Pam as teachers. Preschool 1 (for all 2/3-1, Pre 1 and Pre 2 children) with Katilyn, Klint, and Jaquida as teachers. Preschool 2 (for all Pre 2/3-2 and Pre 4 children) with Kristi, Christy, and Kendra as teachers. And, current toddlers will be charged the lower 2/3’s rate.

As of fall semester, the current toddlers will be placed into a 2/3’s classroom and the current infants (who turn one by Sept. 1) will move to the toddler room. Younger infants will go back to the infant room. Also, all of the children who are currently in a 2/3’s classroom will be divided into three preschool rooms. We will make every effort to keep small groups of children together as they move into new classrooms. We take into consideration current relationships among children, as well as teachers and children.

This is the time of year I often dread because we lose some staff members. First, congratulations to Krystal Kennedy (Pre 4) for completing her master’s degree in early childhood education. She has been with us since 2008, first as a student worker and then as a professional staff member, and, unfortunately, will be leaving our program as of May 8. Krystal has already moved to Chicago and will be seeking a job closer to home (which is understandable)! So, please join us in wishing Krystal and her fiancé, Adam, the best. We sincerely thank her for being such a steadfast team member at Campus Child Care. She has grown into an amazing teacher, and we hate to see her go. I know the children will really miss her, as will all of her colleagues. I will truly miss her quiet nature, cooperative attitude, and wicked sense of humor!

This is also the time of year when we make some changes to our staffing (at the beginning of Summer and Fall semesters). Letters will go out in early June.
AND EARLY AUGUST) INDICATING YOUR CHILD’S CLASSROOM AND TEACHERS FOR THE UPCOMING SEMESTERS. SEVERAL OF OUR TEACHERS WILL BE OFF FOR THE SUMMER AND RETURNING FOR FALL; THEY INCLUDE KELLIE, BARBARA, DIANE M., APRIL, AND JEN.

Since we are nearing the end of the semester the teachers will be starting to close down their classrooms. The janitors will then be able to get into each room during interim to do a thorough cleaning to prepare for the upcoming semester. So, you will notice things coming down from the walls and items removed from the classroom. We hate to do this but with so many teachers that are off during the summer, it’s really the only time they have together to get it done. We appreciate your understanding!

We wish all of you good luck with finals and congratulations to those who are graduating; what a huge accomplishment! For some, we will continue to see you, and for others we won’t see you until next fall, so have a great summer. For parents of preschoolers heading off to kindergarten, we have an early reader book we will send him/her off with. Know that we will miss you so please keep in touch and feel free to visit at any time. We love to see how our graduates have grown.

Chris Kipp

INFANT ROOM

It’s hard to believe that your infants’ first year in child care is coming to an end! The children have grown so much this year! Kellie and I want to thank you for trusting us to have a part in their development. It has been a joy to be with your children this year! We have also loved seeing the many ways in which you participated in the Week of the Young Child. We loved seeing your babies in their mismatched socks, crazy hair, pajamas, dress-up clothes, and Huskie attire! Even our little ones were able to contribute to the spirit of the Campus Child Care community. Some of you were able to come into the classroom to take our quiz on “how well do you know the infant room?”

Some of you stopped to paint with your child in the morning or afternoon. Some of you shared your talents in our parent performance on Thursday. Some of you joined your child for snack on Friday. And some of you treated teachers to food treats and much appreciated words of thanks. THANK- YOU!

REMINDERS

- The last day of spring semester is May 8. Full-day care is available during interim (May 11—June 12); applications are now past due. Anyone who requests care after this date will be charged the ‘extra care’ fee; an additional 10%.

- Summer and fall applications are past due. See Jane-ne if you have not re-enrolled yet. To see if space is still available.

- Campus Child Care will be closed on 2 Fridays for staff training—August 14 & 21.

- Child care bills must be paid in full by the end of each semester. Families with an outstanding balance will not be able to enroll for future semesters.

- If you are enrolling for summer semester, please remember that children must be enrolled for the entire semester and not just part of it. If you leave early, our withdrawal policy will apply.

- Child care rates for the fall semester will be posted to the CCC web site by the end of May.
One large motor opportunity that has been in our classroom this past month is a little rocking boat. This has challenged our mobile children as they have used their muscles to climb into and out of it and as they have used their problem solving skills to get out of a tough situation when they've crawled in backwards and have had their feet under the seat. Children have also used this as a social tool as they have shared rocking with a classmate and a literary tool as they've listened to us singing the rhyming words to “Row, row, row, your boat.” They recognize that tune and move to it, whether they are on the boat or not. Our two youngest babies continue to get plenty of floor time for rolling and sitting.

These past weeks, when the weather has become warm and wonderful, we have spent more time outdoors on the playground. The infants have been climbing up the steps and ramp of the climber and going down the slide. Some of the babies are pushing bikes or using large muscles climbing into and out of cars. Balls are out for throwing and kicking. The sandbox has been open for scooping and pouring. Dishes and foods have been added to the playhouse to encourage dramatic play. There’s plenty of room to explore and use large muscles. The youngest infants lie on a blanket with manipulative toys to explore. Everyone gets the advantage of fresh air and sunshine. As we begin interim, we will begin to apply sunscreen on the infants each time we go outdoors. If you have your own sunscreen for your child, feel free to bring it in. However, we do have sunscreen here at the center that will be used if you do not bring your own.

Spring semester ends May 8th. And the very next week we’re already into interim. The interim classroom will be in the Toddler room. Your children will be the new toddlers and they will be combined with the old toddlers (soon to be 2/3s) for this period of time between semesters. The biggest change for the children in the toddler room is washing their hands at a child-size sink. It’s a fun challenge to use the sink ONLY for hand washing and not for constant water play! We will be saying good-bye to some of our infants for the interim and for the summer. We wish everyone lots of fun in the sunshine.

Carol Schroeder & Kellie Fuss

TODDLER ROOM

It is hard to believe this is the last newsletter for this semester. Everyone has been working so hard to accomplish great things this year. For us it’s hard to remember how it was last August with all the children new to the Toddler and
some of them new to the center. We sure have come a long way!!! The expectations were set for these young children and all of them went above and beyond anything we could have imagined. Most of the children will take turns, have simple conversations with teachers or peers, build amazing structures with blocks, “read” books, sing a variety of songs, and use the art mediums on their paper.

This month has been busy with keeping the newly sprouted seedlings watered and hopefully they will be big enough to go home at the end of the semester. The seedlings are incased in paper that an easily be placed in a flower pot or in your flower garden at home. Supposedly the flowers are wildflowers and should try to be in a sunny spot. Another science activity the children experienced was having a hen visit the room for one day. All the children enjoyed the hen when she was quiet, but when she started to cackle, a few of our toddlers were not so sure about her.

We worked on shapes this month. Many of the children are able to find a match for shapes. This activity is age appropriate for 2 and 3 year olds and can be achieved in a variety of ways. We were also asking children to name several shapes, which according to Creative Curriculum is more appropriate for four-year-olds. I believe if the children are having fun with the challenging activity, then allow them to explore how much they really know. It is important to understand the age appropriate milestones in development. When an activity is too frustrating for a child, it may be because they are not developmentally ready.

We also wanted to be in some more diversity into the room. We talked about our individual eyes, hair, the shade of our skin, and also many posters of families. The children were able to look at families that have two dads or two moms, and families that have lots of people or just a few. We also made a “Peek-a-Boo” book that has a picture of just the children’s eyes and nose. We are encouraging the children to recognize the features of their classmates. All the individual pages of our classroom books will be given to the children at the end of the year.

As far as we know all the children will be returning for the Fall semester. In the 2’s room the schedule is still the same, the children will eat morning snack at 9:00, lunch at 11:45 and afternoon snack at 3:00. The only big changes are not having a washer and dryer available on a daily basis, so if your child’s clothes become soiled they will be placed in a plastic bag and put in the cubby. Another change is only for those children who still are in the process of potty training. All diapers and wipes will need to be provided by the parents. We will always let you know when you need to replenish them, since a diapering fee will be given to those who do not bring diapers and wipes in when needed. The other change is the class will be divided into two rooms; so, not all the children will be in the same room. We, feel that it is important to have “veteran” children in each room to help model play, our routine, and to demonstrate their comfort in the center. If you have any questions please just ask.
Week of the Young Child was so much fun!! Pam and I want to thank the families who brought in treats for us. We always appreciate a good snack to keep us energized to keep up with these active toddlers!! It was fun to see all the children dressed in the pajamas, silly socks, fancy clothes and NIU attire. And let’s not forget the crazy hair some of us had!!! We hope you enjoyed painting a picture with your child and we hope you found a special place for the individual photo that Pam and I created for you. I have the pinwheels ready to help the children calm themselves down and breathe. Just let me know when you are ready for yours and ask Pam or I for it; we don’t want to leave them in their cubbies.

Thanks so much for a wonderful year; your child has given us so much joy. We hope they can carry forth some of the Conscious Discipline strategies we have worked on all year. We hope all of you who have the summer off to enjoy yourselves and for those who will be staying with us for interim and summer, we will be in the Toddler Room for Interim and we will let you know about summer placement.

Sherie Newman & Pam Yockey

TWO/THREE-1

You may have heard of the old saying, April showers bring May flowers. Well we certainly had some showers this month. With the showers came puddles. And out on the playground those puddles did a lot of entertaining and teaching. Water does not stay on a shovel very easily. Matthew discovered to fill a bucket with water, using a shovel, you need to move slowly. Jack commented on how heavy his bucket was after he filled it with wet sand and tried to lift it and empty it into the sand box.

We also started out the month looking at and building structures. In the classroom building bridges using the train set up proved popular. Parissa and Matthew started out building separate tracks and bridges, but when they combined them Jasen and Matthew noticed that it had two “supports” just like in the picture of the Golden Gate Bridge we had in our block area.

Out on the playground Matthew and Zyni built “tall towers” out of the large plastic blocks. We then took a walk to find buildings around campus. The white One Room School House and the Barsema Alumni and Visitor Center were two of the buildings we discovered we could see from our classroom. We even used a telescope to view the one room school house from our classroom. While exploring structures the children had the opportunity to make their own architectural drawings on newsprint using drawing pencils. Those drawings are hanging in our classroom from the tree branches. Also hanging in the room are paper plate collages the children made using shape stickers. Some turned into 3-dimensional pieces of art due to the thickness and amount of stickers put on their plate.
Outside the children explored movement with scarves, ropes and bubbles made with Kayro syrup. The larger bubbles proved to be stronger or last longer than the smaller ones. Balls and sidewalk chalk were also provided for the children to explore. If you look down at the sidewalk, under the awning as you come outside, you’ll notice a rainbow of colors at your feet.

Back inside we started out the month with a laundromat in dramatic play and then changed it to an ice cream parlor/coffee shop. In the laundromat the children were able to practice ironing and washing clothes; but a few other items ended up in the washer and dryer as well as clothes.

Earlier in the month we had two NIU nursing students come in and visit. The showed us how to stretch as animals. This was something we were already familiar with doing, so after the nursing students showed us their stretches, we showed them how we could move and dance like animals from the Greg and Steve song Animal Action.

We’ve also set up a listening center in our classroom. This has become the new favorite way to read and listen to stories/books. The headphones provide a different type of sensory experience when listening to books on CD. Wearing the headphones create total focus on the story/book because all other noise distraction is eliminated by the headphones.

To continue with sensory exploration we spent a little over a week explore flour and mixing it with different things. First we added baby oil. Matthew said, “It looks like gravy” as the baby oil was getting mixed it. The baby oil also turned the flour darker. When we added water everyone agreed it was sticky. This combination was the least favorite. When the water was first added all the children eagerly mixed and stirred with their hands. But as their hands got coated with the paste they quickly stopped. Soon, only two children were left. Adding shaving cream turned out to be the most interesting for the children and adults. Samantha said, “It looks like soap” as she tried to mix in the shaving cream. This was such an interesting discovery that we took it outside in the evening for all the other classrooms to experience.

Thank you to all the parents who were able to attend Family Night last month. And thank you to those parents who were able to attend and/or participate in any of the Week of the Young Child activities. By the time this newsletter comes out, you will have, or very soon will have, attended parent conferences. Thank you for signing up and letting us share information about your child with you. Good luck with finals and enjoy your summer.

Barbara Zeman & Klint Mathey
TWO/THREE-2

Well spring is finally upon us! It’s great to finally be able to enjoy the fresh air and sunshine! We have been very busy! It’s amazing to see how the children have developed physically over the past winter. The children have been strengthening their fine motor muscles by decorating the sidewalk with shapes, letters, and various pictures with chalk. The children have been riding bikes with much more control and are going much faster than last semester. Shooting hoops has been a very popular outside activity as well. The children have been showing off their ball handling skills and persistence trying to get the basketball into such a high hoop.

With all the rain we have been getting, there have been several worms on the playground. The children have been learning how to take care of living things by observing and handling the worms. They have also learned that worms breathe from their skin, so we have to be careful when touching them. We even had worms to take care of in our classroom. The children enjoyed counting the worms, looking at them with magnifying glasses, and sifting through the dirt to find them.

The children are also interacting with one another more frequently outdoors. The children have enjoyed using the two seated bike and working together to get up hills and riding around the sidewalk. They also have been playing the monster game where a group of children run away from a pretend “monster” and they hide behind slides, bushes, light poles, etc. What Time is it Mr. Fox has also been the game of choice at the end of the day. This activity teaches children the beginnings of games with rules as well as turn taking and teamwork.

The Week of the Young Child was such a blast. The children were excited to show off their mismatched socks, crazy hair, fancy attire, pjs, and spirit wear. It was great for the children to learn community and comradery as they participated in the week’s festivities. The children enjoyed the talent show as well, especially when Leo’s dad sang a song for us! On Friday, we had two student workers do gymnastics for us. They even taught the children how to do forward and backward rolls. Many of the children have been interested in doing “tricks” on the mats like the gymnasts. We had various readers from across campus come to read to the class as well. The children were great listeners and even showed them around the classroom.

Thanks to all the parents and families who participated in the festivities. It is greatly appreciated! Thanks for a wonderful semester! Have a great summer.

Christy Pelikan & Kendra Nenia
What do Children Learn in a High Quality Early Childhood Education Program?

**Cognitive Development:** how children learn to think, make decisions, and solve problems.

**Physical and motor development:** how children use their bodies to make large movements with their legs and arms (gross motor) and small movements with their fingers and hands (fine motor). Children learn with their legs and arms when they run, climb, or ride a tricycle. They learn with their fingers and hands when they cut with scissors, use a pencil, or put together a puzzle.

**Constructive Play:** when children use blocks or Legos to make buildings or towers.

**Print Awareness:** when children understand how print works. For example, after listening to lots of stories, children notice that letters make words, words make a story, and reading goes from left to right in English.

**Dramatic Play:** when children pretend to be someone else, such as a firefighter or doctor, and they make up scenes and dialogue.

**Environmental Print:** the words that are all around us, such as store signs, a menu board, or a poster with the daily schedule.

**Exploratory Play:** when children discover how materials work. For example, when playing with water or sand children explore how to fill and empty buckets.

**Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** teaching strategies that are based on knowledge of how young children develop and learn, what makes each child unique, and the child’s community and family culture and home language. DAP activities are not too difficult or too easy, but just right. For example, in most cases it is developmentally appropriate for a 4-year-old to introduce a 4-year-old to the letters in his name, with the expectation that over time he will learn to write his name on his own. It is not developmentally appropriate to ask 4-year-olds to write letters over and over again on worksheets.

**Social and Emotional Development:** how children learn about feelings. It helps them feel good about themselves and understand the feelings of other people.

**Scaffolding:** when an adult helps children learn more and faster than they would on their own. For example, when an adult holds a child’s hand as he goes up the slide ladder, the adult is scaffolding his learning to climb.

**Approaches to Learning:** how children become curious about learning new things. It is also how children think about what they have learned.

**Self-regulation:** how children learn to control their feelings and their bodies. For example, if a child wants to play with a toy her friend is using, she asks for a turn rather than grabbing it.

**Print Awareness:** when children understand how print works. For example, after listening to lots of stories, children notice that letters make words, words make a story, and reading goes from left to right in English.
Families joined classrooms for a snack time.

**Week of the Young Child**

Special Events

Family members painted a picture together.

Guest Readers from the NIU community came in to read to the children.

Parents and student staff shared their special talent with us.