

# preschool news



Campus Child Care  
division of student affairs

## DIRECTOR'S DESK

We had such a busy beginning to the semester that October seems to have slipped by. Both the Open House and Book Fair were a big success so thanks to any of you who assisted with either of those events.

Janene has been adding more resources to our Web site ([www.ccc.niu.edu](http://www.ccc.niu.edu)). So far she has added the fall semester calendar, along with some commonly used forms (extra care and schedule changes). These are all posted on our web site under Parent Resources. Two of our teachers have written articles for parents as well; one is by Kristi Hayward on Toilet Learning, and the other is by Kendra Nenia on the Art Process. Look for more items to be added in the future. Janene also changed the re-enrollment application form so you don't have to fill out nearly as much information — primarily your desired schedule (yeah)!! She will provide you with a copy of the other info we have on file for you (phone numbers, etc.) so you can make changes as needed.

I want to highlight a few more additions to our Parent Handbook for this year. I added a section on 'Safety Practices'. We have been practicing a variety of emergency drills for years but we keep adding to them and working on improvements. As all of you are aware, the center was in lock down status for a few hours on Feb. 14th. After talking with the Chief of Police, we are setting the practice that lock down means parents may call the center (you may get a recorded message) but you should not come over to the center and expect to get in. It also means that anyone who is inside the building will have to stay until the police determine it's 'all clear'/safe to leave; the same practice will be in place during tornado warnings. One way that both parents and students who work here can assist with safety is to refrain from sending individuals to the building to drop off items, deliver messages, or meet you here. Also, keep the number of people who come to pick up and drop off your child to a minimum. It helps us to not have to deal with a large number of people with whom we are unfamiliar. We continue to work on our safety planning and attend as many meetings and workshops on this topic as possible. I also wanted to let you know that the NIU Police have been stopping in at various times so don't be alarmed if you see them; they are just here to help, if needed. They are just checking on things, as they are throughout the campus, on a more regular basis; we are happy to have their support and presence.

An extremely important policy that parents need to pay close attention to is that your child needs to stay with you while you are in the building; they cannot run to their classroom ahead of you, be left alone in any part of the center, or exit the building without you. This is a strict DCFS policy, and also an important safety practice, that parents must obey.



Annika (Pre-1) working on a masterpiece!

## NOVEMBER 2008

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Another policy, in which everyone should be aware, is that CCC is required to provide all food to children throughout the day and parents are not permitted to bring in any food for other children to eat. Every year we have a few children who have a peanut allergy so we would also like to ask for parents and children to refrain from bringing any food into the center. So, children and adults should not be eating any type of food in the hallway or front area because bits of food could be dropped, and someone may be unaware if it has some form of peanut content.

We do not have access to monthly payment reports for students at this time (due to the switch over to MyNIU), but please be aware that we will be checking with the Bursar's office at the end of this semester. Anyone who has a balance due will not receive a contract for spring semester. They expect to get the reports going again, we just don't know exactly when that will be.

We have a **new set** of trivia questions to 'test' your knowledge of Campus Child Care. Anyone who submits the highest number of correct answers will be placed in a drawing to win a Campus Child Care coffee mug. Congratulations to Amy Waddle (Levi's mom) for winning our first mug with 6 correct answers (it's harder than it looks)!

Here are some of the answers to last month's trivia questions. Diane Coleman, Janene Boyer and I have all worked here for 19 years BUT Diane and I also worked at CCC as students; and Diane beat me by one month! The center was originally located in Gabel Hall, with one classroom, and we moved into our new facility in 2000; our first set of parent pockets was actually a Legg's pantyhose display case (check out the photos if you don't believe me); and, we had a lofted book area, fire pole (to get down, of course) AND an indoor sandbox in the original center; so that question was a freebie! Best of luck on the next round!

*Chris Herrmann, Director*



## ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S DESK

Hello Preschool families! With the fall semester being about half over, the teachers in your child's classroom are gearing up for a very busy time. Parent conferences are soon going to be offered in your child's classroom. The teachers spend a great deal of time working on each child's portfolio and Child Development Summary.

## REMINDERS

- Although classes are not scheduled on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, CCC will be open for business as usual. This means everyone will be billed their regular daily fee even if your child does not attend. The Center will be closed on Nov. 27 & 28.
- Interim requests have been sent out. You must return this form by the due date if you need full-day child care any time during the Dec/Jan break.
- All children who are well enough to be in attendance at the center will be taken outdoors on a daily basis. As the weather turns colder, please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play and walks.
- The teachers will be holding parent conferences from early November through early December. Dates and times will be posted by your child's sign-in sheet. **All** parents are expected to sign up for a conference.
- Remember to pay bills by the specified due dates. A reminder is sent out after one missed payment and child care is terminated after two missed payments.
- Please remember to check your parent pockets daily; they fill up quickly!

Since there are new families to the center, as well as new preschoolers from the 2/3s classrooms, I would like to spend just a moment to talk about the Child Development summary. The summary is a developmental assessment tool used to document what skills a child is in the process of working on and what skills s/he is proficient at concerning all areas of development. The same assessment form is used for both semesters (fall and spring); as this is a good record for growth and progress that you will see. After reviewing the Child Development summary, you and your child's teacher will have the opportunity to discuss goals for improvement and growth for the upcoming semester. The teachers will often document goals based on their developmental assessments of each child and parents are welcome to add to these goals.

I would like to thank all the parent volunteers who helped to make our book fair a success again this year. Our book fair is our only fund raiser for the center and we appreciate support through volunteerism and/or purchasing of books. Our center roughly earned about \$1000 in cash and free books. On top of this, we also had a large amount of books purchased by parents from the teacher's Wish List cards. Thanks so much for all your generous contributions.

Enjoy the rest of the fall weather as it will soon start to feel like winter! Good luck with the rest of your semester.

*Lisa Schmidt*  
Asst. Director

## NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 1

It's hard to believe that November is already upon us. I'm sure that parents and staff alike are extremely busy. We have been busy as well. The room has been a beehive of activity. None of the children seem to be having a hard time finding activities that interest them. Even though they may be using the same toys or areas for extended periods of time, as they grow and gain new skills their play changes as well, becoming more detailed and focused. It's really interesting to watch their play mature.

The manipulatives continue to be very popular. The magnet tiles are still the children's favorite and their buildings are becoming more complex. Many of the children are becoming aware of symmetry and are taking great care to make sure their structures are balanced. When creating houses for the animals some of the children have begun to separate them by habitat, putting all the ocean creatures in one house and having the birds live in another. As the children are so interested in animals David and I have taken the opportunity to discuss many of them in more detail. We have talked about the differences between mammals and reptiles, carnivores and herbivores as well as many other fascinating facts. The children are picking up these concepts very quickly. Another manipulative that the children are exploring are the Kapla blocks. These are very simple wooden planks that can be stacked in very creative ways. The blocks are constructed to fit together tightly which allows the children to make very tall and complex structures.



The children have really enjoyed the housekeeping props in the dramatic play area. They have been cooking lots of food, feeding their babies and throwing lots and lots of birthday parties. They get quite creative in their combination of foods. I'm not sure that I would make a chocolate cake with green beans and corn but you never know; it might be delicious. Another very popular prop in this area are the cell phones. The children carry on long conversations with their family and friends. Good thing the phones aren't real or we'd have a huge phone bill.

The block area has been transformed from a space ship to a series of ramps for the matchbox cars. The children have experimented with a variety of configurations and have found that some work and some don't. One of the problems they are having is how to keep the big blocks together, because they shift and then don't line up straight. This is frustrating because then the cars rarely make it to the bottom of the ramp. We fixed this problem by taping the blocks together, which seems to be helping. They make a series of tunnels with the curved unit blocks for their cars to go through and get very excited when they make it all the way to the end.



As the weather gets colder please make sure that your child has the appropriate outdoor clothing. It's also a good idea to check your child's extra clothes box and take out the shorts and put in some pants.

David and I will be holding parent conferences the week of November 3-7. There will be sign-up sheets posted by the sign-in book. There will be one for each of us so make sure that you are signing up on your child's primary caregiver sheet. If none of the times listed will work for you, let us know and we will be glad to figure something out. David and I take parent conferences very seriously and spend a lot of time preparing for them. We ask that you first take the time to sign up and then please be on time. We sometimes have another conference right after and it isn't fair to make the other parents wait. Thank you for your cooperation.

*Diane Coleman*  
Head Teacher

## NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 2

It's hard to believe we are already in the month of November. I guess the saying, "time flies when you're having fun" is true. The children have been busy participating in a variety of art projects involving **no** paint brushes. I found the idea in Teaching Young Children, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. I plan on using this idea for my window display that will be set up on November 1st. The display case is located in the entry way to our building. I can't wait to show off some of Pre-2's creative work.



Recently the children have shown an interest in pretending to fix things in our classroom. It all started when we had plastic screws and screwdrivers out on our manipulative shelf. During one of our group times the children helped decide our new dramatic play area. Can you guess what it was? The children came up with an auto shop. They enjoy role playing a mechanic and using the variety of tools to fix the vehicles that come into the shop. The children are also practicing turn taking and cooperation skills to engage in this area.

Kendra and I have been encouraging the children to use their words with peers when they are upset with someone. For example, if a toy was taken away by someone we would encourage the child to say, "When you are done playing with such and such can I have a turn". We also like to talk about feelings. In this particular situation we might say, "It hurts my feelings and makes me sad when you take my toy away from me". By giving the children appropriate words we are teaching them problem solving and empathy skills. These skills will be helpful as your child enters kindergarten.

Finally I would like to talk about a program called "Second Step." In the past we have used this program and found it to be very beneficial to our classroom. The goal of the program is to build your child's social skills and self-esteem by giving them the tools to solve everyday problems. The Second Step lessons are divided into three areas:

1. Empathy Training  
Children learn to:
  - A) Identify feelings (happy, sad, mad, scared...).
  - B) Predict how other people feel (by reading faces, body language)
  - C) Show others they care (by responding to others' feelings)
  
2. Impulse Control
  - A) Solve problems
  - B) Perform social skills (sharing, taking turns...)
  
3. Anger Management  
Children learn to:
  - A) Calm down
  - B) Redirect their feelings in a more positive ways

As the semester goes on I will be giving you more information about what your child is learning from this program. The first few weeks we will be talking about a variety of feelings and discussing the different situations that are pictured on the posters.



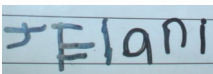
If you have any questions or concerns that come up throughout the semester, we encourage you to come and talk with us.

*Diane Mathison*  
Head Teacher

### NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 3

Hello to all, as we head into fall! Hey that rhymes!! We have been thinking of words that rhyme at group time and throughout the day as we play. We have many different self-correcting picture cards that match like a puzzle piece when it is the correct match. At group time, each child will get a card and the teacher will hold up a picture card that rhymes with one a child is holding. The teacher asks what words rhyme with whatever picture is on the card. The children begin saying words and the child holding the correct match hands the card to the teacher. Next time you are traveling or waiting in line somewhere, ask your child to think of words that rhyme. You can let them think of a word to work with or give them a word to rhyme.

We are all so very sad to hear Nya is moving to Chicago. We will miss her so much and hope the best for her and her family. As Nya leaves we will be welcoming back Alisha to Campus Child Care. We are very excited she will be in our classroom. She is a familiar face to many of the children. We also all want to thank everyone who donated a book to Pre 3 and Campus Child Care. We read each book and pointed out the sticker inside the cover saying who had donated it. These books are absolutely fabulous and the children are requesting them to be read over and over.

I hope everyone is enjoying their mailbox notes and having fabulous conversations. Remember that these are short conversation starters to initiate communication between you and your child. If you would like more detailed information about the daily happenings, please read the daily reflections and check out the bulletin board outside of the classroom. This is where we will post pictures and give more detailed information about what we are doing in the classroom. It also may give you more understanding about something in your mailbox note. This will also give you much more information to communicate about with your child. I also wanted to remind you to have your child sign in each morning. Please model for them to use uppercase letters for the first letters of their first and last names and lowercase for the rest. There is a letter reference key on the table with arrows showing the direction to write the letter correctly.  Please have your child do the writing on their own as we document their progress throughout the year. It is important to note it is developmentally appropriate for some children to be writing their name while others are not or not showing any interest. It is ok for a child to refuse to write their name. They will write it when they are ready. Anything a child writes should always be encouraged and not praised. This process should not be forced upon your child and should always be a positive experience. If they can't make a letter simply tell them they can try, and to keep practicing. Encourage effort, not product. They will be able to write it when their body is ready.

#### PARENTING TIP

Does your child bring home a lot of art work (some bring home nothing and others bring home massive amounts; both are typical). An idea shared by a parent is to mat (and frame) some of your child's art work to give as gifts to family and friends. What a



Over the past month, the children have been so excited to engage in Pirate Play in the block and dramatic play areas. In the block area, we built ships and had many pirate accessories. Across the way in dramatic play, we spotted an island where we looked for treasure, relaxed on the beach, dressed up with hula grass skirts, wore leis, caught fish, and played musical instruments. We experienced this area during the day with beautiful sunny island pictures, a sun overhead, and additional tree and flower hangings. We then turned it into the night with sunset pictures, a dark sky with stars and lights hanging down and we searched for treasure with flashlights. We read many books about pirates and spoke in pirate language by saying, "Ahoy Mateys!" and "Aaarrggghh!" to name a few.



During the day with beautiful sunny island pictures, a sun overhead, and additional tree and flower hangings. We then turned it into the night with sunset pictures, a dark sky with stars and lights hanging down and we searched for treasure with flashlights. We read many books about pirates and spoke in pirate language by saying, "Ahoy Mateys!" and "Aaarrggghh!" to name a few.



Conferences for our classroom this year will be held November 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup>. Kristin and I will be putting out a sign-up sheet very soon. Please remember to let us know if any of the times are not convenient for you and we will work together to find a time that works well for all. We look forward to meeting with all of you. Thank you!

*Kristi Hayward*  
Head Teacher



## Calendar of Events

Nov. 3 - Dec. 5 — **Parent Conferences**; check with your child's teachers for specific dates

Nov. 11, 12, 13 — **Vision and Hearing screening** at the center for all 2.10 to 5 year olds

Nov. 17 — **Spring Semester Applications** are due

Nov. 24 & 25 — **Vision and Hearing re-screen** for those who were absent or failed the first test

Nov. 27 & 28 — **CLOSED** for Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 5 — Spring Semester **Contracts are due**

Dec. 8-12 — **Finals Week** — Fees are charged as usual, regardless of attendance; extra care may be requested, but switching days is not permitted

Dec. 15-23 & Jan. 5-9 — **Interim** (for those who have requested care; only full-day care is available)

#### NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 4

We would like to thank all families and friends who supported our book fair!! Thank you for the wonderful books for our classroom! We are enjoying them every day!

Let me be the first to apologize to coworkers, families and children for the time I have missed due to illness this semester!! Not only is it hard on me but everyone else here at the center! From the flu, pink eye, strep and viral infection I think I've pretty much had it all and hope to stay healthy for the rest of the year!

This brings me to the importance of hand washing!! We have gone over proper hand washing several times at group times and accompany the children to the sink to make sure they are doing it properly but this is a skill that requires lots and lots of practice. First we have the children wet their hands and put on soap. We have them scrub hands to the count of ten or they can sing the ABC song-this ensures that they are scrubbing for enough time to kill germs. Then they rinse off the soap with warm water, shake off excess water, (1,2,3) RIP the paper towel, and completely dry their hands. The children are getting better at this but still need reminders everyday and reinforcing this at home will help cut down on germs also. We sanitize the classroom everyday and sanitize the toys once a week unless needed sooner. If you know your child is ill, running an elevated temp or is contagious, please keep them home. This will help cut down on shared sicknesses in our classroom. Our skin and lips can get very dry during these colder months. If you would like to bring in lotion and Chapstick for your child, we will apply them when needed. Please put your child's name on these.

In the fall and winter months our classroom tends to be a little chilly. Please have a sweater or sweatshirt in your child's cubby in case they need to put it on. We do go outside everyday unless there is bad weather or it is colder than 10 degrees. Hat and mitten weather is just around the corner. Please label all articles with your child's name.

We are learning so much this semester! It amazes me how much the children have been into learning about geography! They love looking at maps and globes finding out where other states and countries are! I found a fabulous memory matching game of faces of children from all over the world. It has been fun learning about different cultures. The children have carried this over into their creative play. They make the "Great Wall of China" and "Altgeld Hall" (the castle) out of plastic cups. We have learned about Japan, Australia, China, Italy, United States and Canada! Since the children are really into this, now would be a great time to explore this at home too!

We brought a pumpkin into the classroom. We observed it, cut it open, scooped out the seeds, and chopped it into small pieces. We cooked the pumpkin and made pumpkin seeds, pumpkin pie and tried to make doughnuts but we had some problems with the dough – maybe we will try this again! The children love getting involved in cooking. The science of it – learning where things come from, how they grow, and how something can change form; the math aspect – measuring and counting; literacy – learning to interpret meaning from pictures to words in recipes, and reading books on the subject. Cooking is a great way to learn!



Our visiting the library will slow down in the colder months, but not our reading or literacy activities! We read books everyday and incorporate literacy in many different types of activities. We worked on our large motor skills acting out "The Three Billy Goat's Gruff" and our cognitive skills matching numbers and letters!

We are beginning to work on patterning. The children copied patterns of ice cream cones and we will build on this skill by asking the children what comes next in a pattern.

Parent /teacher conferences will be in November. Our week is November 17. Dawn and I will have a sign-up sheet for the conferences by the sign-in book on top of the cubbies. If these times do not work for you please tell us and we will work with you to set up a time that will! Please remember to sign up on the correct sheet. Dawn and I will have separate sheets for our primary families.

We hope you are all well and stay healthy!! Any questions any time just ask us!! Have a great month!

April Kaiser, Head Teacher



## DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING FOR CHILDREN BIRTH TO THREE YEARS OLD



Child and Family Connections is holding a free screening that is open to residents of DeKalb. If you have a child under the age of three and are concerned about your child's development, you are invited to participate in a FREE infant and toddler screening. Call Mary Hess at Child and Family Connections to reserve a screening appointment (815-895-0481).

Friday, November 21st  
8:30—11:30 a.m.  
Brooks Elementary School  
3225 Sangamon Road, DeKalb

COMMUTER  
& non- (student services)  
TRADITIONAL

Hello! Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Services is proud to announce the creation of a new program geared towards non-traditional students. We are beginning a program called the Sunday Series: a monthly event held in the Northern View Community Center to provide educational and social options for students to learn, grow, make connections and have social interaction with students with similar college experiences. These workshops will feature guest speakers from campus including staff members from different NIU departments. We hope that the workshops we offer will help relieve some of your stress and provide you with options to better manage your hectic student lives.

Please save the dates for the tentatively scheduled Sunday Series (the fourth Sunday of most months during our academic year):

**Sunday, October 26, 1pm-2:45pm, food provided:** Toddler Rearing Workshop: I'm a Big Kid Now (potting training and child discipline).

**Sunday, November 23:** How to Host a Thanksgiving Dinner on a Budget (food preparation demonstration and workshop)

**Sunday, January 25:** Winterizing Your Car and Preparing Your Child for Winter

**Sunday, February 22:** Women's Health and Wellness 101

**Sunday, March 29:** March Madness (a kick off to Commuter and Non-Traditional Student Appreciation Week)

**Sunday, April 26:** Parent's Day Celebration

If you would like more information regarding this exciting series for non-traditional students, please contact us, we would be happy to assist you!

Please stop in and visit our office and lounge space, call us (815.753.9999), drop us a line at [CommNonTrad@niu.edu](mailto:CommNonTrad@niu.edu), or better yet, join our Facebook group (**Commuter & Non-Traditional Student Services: What's the 411?**). Any way you chose to contact us we would be happy to assist you.

Hope to see you at the Sunday Series!

Jill Zambito  
Director  
Commuter & Non-Traditional Student Services  
815.753.9999  
[zambito@niu.edu](mailto:zambito@niu.edu)

**T-Shirts**

We have a few extra CCC t-shirts available (size 2, 3, 4 and adult S, L, XL) if anyone would like to purchase one.



**30th Anniversary Trivia Questions**  
Those with correct answers will be entered into a drawing  
to win a CCC Coffee Mug



Put an 'X' by the correct answer:

1. Who, of our current professional staff, did NOT start out as a student worker?  
 Jen Young (Toddlers)  
 Stefanie Echols (2/3-1)  
 Kristi Hayward (Pre 3)
2. Who prepared meals at CCC before the expansion in 2000?  
 the teachers       student workers       the director
3. Who did the grocery shopping for the program before the expansion?  
 the teachers       student workers       the director
4. How many full-time professional staff were employed at CCC before the expansion?  
 3     5     7
5. How many full-time professional staff are currently employed at CCC?     20     25     30
6. How many student workers were employed prior to our expansion?     15     20     25
7. How many student workers are currently employed at CCC?     40     50     60
8. Where did the professional staff hold their weekly staff meetings?  
 in a closet in the full-time classroom       in the director's office  
 in a conference room down the hall
9. Who does Campus Child Care report to?  
 Finance and Facilities       College of Education       Student Affairs
10. One CCC family had how many children enrolled in the program (not at one time)!  
 4     5     6

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return this form to the drop box on the front blue counter by November 14. Good luck!!**