The semester is up and running and everything seems to be going well. As promised, this month’s newsletter is a bit shorter. The monthly newsletters will now be available on our web site (www.ccc.niu.edu) for parents and staff to access. Feel free to let us know if you want a hard copy and we’ll be happy to provide one. We hope you will take the time to read the newsletters; they are meant to keep you informed of center happenings. Also make sure you read the Daily Reflection sheets posted outside your child’s classroom for those day-to-day updates.

We recently sent out a survey regarding parent involvement in our program. Thanks to those who filled this out; there is still time if you want to hand one in. We will be going through these to see what types of opportunities you are looking for and ways you would like to participate in your child’s classroom or the overall program. We will be getting back to you, in some way, very soon.

We are going through a national accreditation process this fall so we will be asking you to fill out a survey in early November. Parent participation is important to our success so we look forward to working with all of you in different ways. Some of the teachers have already invited parents into their classroom. For example, Preschool Room 3 invited a parent to read a book in Spanish; what a great experience for the children (and teachers)! We look forward to making more connections like this.

Vision and Hearing screening was completed for preschool-age children in September. We will have a follow-up rescreen for those who missed it or did not pass. I will send letters out by the end of October for children who had difficulty with the screening; otherwise, there were no concerns.

Although it’s not our intent to squash anyone’s enthusiasm, please remember that we do not celebrate holidays at the Center. As early childhood professionals, we believe the celebration of holidays belongs at home and is best left up to the family to decide which holidays to celebrate and in what way. This means the children will not be wearing costumes for Halloween or distributing / collecting treats.

More information can be found in the Parent Handbook which details the type of curriculum our center provides.

Please look on the last page of this newsletter for an announcement regarding NIU’s new housing project for students with dependents.

I hope your semester is going well (and stays that way)! Please don’t hesitate to talk with any of us if you have any questions or concerns.

Chris Hermann

www.ccc.niu.edu (815) 753-0125
Greetings to all preschool families. This is a new thing for me writing to all of you! In the September newsletter, Chris had mentioned that an important change in the program was that I was going to be supervising all classrooms in the center now. For the past 6 years, I have been supervising the Two/Threes, Toddler and Infant rooms. I am very happy and excited to have this opportunity to work more closely with the teachers, children and families in this age group. In the past, families from the younger classrooms only have received newsletter contributions from me, but now, expect to see a letter from me each month in your newsletter as well.

I want to thank all the families who were able to come out for the Family Night. It was an hour full of conversation, fun, and creativity! The theme for the evening was a Math and Young Children “make and take”. Refreshments and the activities were self-contained in your child’s classroom. We hope everyone had an enjoyable evening, shared some fun time with your child, and was able to connect with other families in the classroom. For those of you who attended, Chris placed an evaluation for the event in your parent pockets. Please take a moment to fill this out and hand back. We appreciate any and all feedback.

Parents in the Preschool 2 classroom are aware of their child’s teacher Diane Mathison going on an early medical leave; however, I would like to let all families in the preschool classrooms be aware of this. Diane is pregnant and due in November and she had to go on bed-rest for a while. She will most likely be gone till the end of her maternity leave. We don’t know exactly when she will be returning but it is likely to be early in the spring semester. Some families in other classrooms know Diane, and the children come in contact with her during different parts of the day, such as their outdoor time from 11-11:45 or when children are scheduled for care during the interim times. We are all thinking of Diane and wish her and her family well.

Book Fair time is just around the corner! Every fall Campus Child Care hosts its annual Children’s Book Fair. The book fair is the only fundraising event we do all year long. This year it’s going to be held on October 23-27. The book fair is in the large motor room and we always have a large selection of over 1500 children’s books, calendars, and some adult selections. We ask for parent volunteers to work this and a sign-up sheet will be posted soon on Janene’s counter. Without the parent volunteers, it would not be possible to staff this event as it is extremely time consuming through the entire week. We appreciate everyone’s assistance in making this fair a success. Have a great rest of the semester and my door is always open if you have a question, concern, or comments. Enjoy the rest of the newsletter!

Lisa Schmidt
NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 1

We were glad to see so many of you at our family night. I hope that it gave you an opportunity to get to know other parents and have a good time as well. We realize that it is important for parents to have good support systems in place as raising a child is an extremely difficult job. Getting to know other parents may give you a forum for any questions or concerns you may have about parenting.

I think that by this time all the children and teachers have settled into our daily routine. Everyone has had a chance to get to know one another and the children are forming some close relationships with their peers.

Kristin and I have found out what some of the children’s interests are and what areas of the classroom they gravitate towards. We’ve discovered they all like to be in the same area of the classroom at the same time, generally the block area and dramatic play. While we are glad they want to be with groups of their peers this has caused a lot of arguing and tears. It can be very difficult for young children to interact peacefully with one peer at a time so you can imagine the stress when they become part of a large group. Everyone is trying to be heard and they all want their ideas to be utilized. This situation certainly does give them a crash course in social interactions but can cause a great deal of stress, both for the children and the teachers. Kristin and I asked the children what we could do about this problem and we all decided that we should limit the amount of children in each area. This allows the children to become more actively involved in their play because the atmosphere is much calmer. We have seen their play become a lot more productive and these limits have also lessened the amount of tears. We, as a group, also developed some classroom rules which are posted in the block area. The children came up with many good ideas, some of them a little strict but the main point became the fact that we need to be gentle with our friends and our materials. While an individual may forget one of the rules as it pertains to themselves, they always remember when someone else is involved.

The block area in large part has become a pirate ship. The children usually use the hollow blocks to build some kind of vessel. They also make flags and treasure maps to take on their journeys. Conversation mainly consists of “Argh” repeated over and over again, which hardly becomes annoying at all (just a little touch of sarcasm). Just lately, everyone wanted to build houses with the hollow blocks, so we put food, blankets and pillows on the shelf. They have really enjoyed making beds. The day in their block house generally includes going to bed, waking up, and going to bed again. I’m sure you wish they would go to bed so easily at home.

We have been teaching the children some sign language. We are starting with a few simple signs such as “more” and “thank you”. The children have been excited to learn the sign for the first letter of their name. This has been a fun way to dismiss the children after group time. If any of you know any sign language, we would love to have you come and help us with this endeavor.

Kristin and I are really excited about a new component to our curriculum. We have put together some take-home activity bags. There will be a variety of activities to choose from, memory games, musical shakers, and playdough, to name a few. These bags will be located on top of our cubbies. You are free to choose one whenever you have time to do an activity with your child. There will be nothing for you to bring back to school; everything will be yours to keep. We wanted to make these
as fun and as stress free as possible. We aren’t making a big deal out of these bags to the children, as we didn’t want them bugging you to take one when you really don’t have time that day. Instead they are for you to take whenever you are interested. Your child will love the time that you spend with them and you will have a new activity to use over and over again.

We also wanted to again invite you to share any interests or talents with our class. We would be thrilled if you wanted to read a story, do a cooking activity or just join us for snack or lunch. The children are quite excited to have their family be a part of the classroom.

Diane Coleman
Head Teacher

NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 2

During the first few weeks of the semester, Dawn and I have discovered the children have shown a great deal of interest in our planned science activities. We usually do these activities during group times or free play. Science is an active process of inquiry and investigation. It is a way of thinking and acting, asking questions, and solving problems. Young children are investigators, curious and full of wonder. Dawn and I support the children’s enthusiasm for exploration by encouraging them to ask questions, make predictions and discover ways to test their hypotheses. Open-ended questions are especially important for the development of emergent scientific thinking in young children. They provide children with a foundation for critical thinking and problem solving. You encourage children’s sense of wonder when you ask questions such as:

“What do you think might happen if …?”
“How do you think we will find out …?”
“What do you see happening when …?”
“Why do you think that happened …?”
“How would you describe what you see?”

Dawn and I recently went to a workshop entitled, ‘School-age Learning Activities’. We found some excellent ideas that we could incorporate into our classroom. I would like to share some of these science activities with you, so you can try them at home with your child.

Fizz, Bubble, Erupt
Fill a clean, plastic soda bottle (16 oz.) ¾ full of vegetable oil. Fill the rest with water (almost to the top but not over flowing). Add 10 drops of food coloring. Be sure to make the water fairly dark in color. Notice the food coloring only colors the water, not the oil. Divide an Alka Seltzer tablet into 8 pieces. Drop one of the tiny pieces of Alka Seltzer into the bottle. When bubbling stops, add another. It looks just like a lava lamp! When you’ve used all the Alka Seltzer tablets and the bubbling stops completely, screw on the soda bottle cap. Tip the bottle back and forth and watch a wave appear.

Shaving Cream and Water
Put water in a large, clear container. On top of the water, put shaving cream. Allow your child to drip colors onto the shaving cream using an eye dropper. What happens to the water when two primary colors are on top of the shaving cream?
**Baking Soda and Vinegar**
Place some baking soda into a pie tin. Using eye droppers, your child can drop vinegar on top of the baking soda. Watch the chemical reaction. Extension: Let your child add food coloring to the vinegar. Be prepared with a lot of supplies as they will want to continue experimenting for a while.

**TIP:** You can purchase a medicine dropper for infants if you don't have an eye dropper.

**Clickety-Clacking Coin**
Place an empty 2-liter bottle (uncapped) in the freezer for about 10 minutes. Remove it, and dip a quarter in some water and place it on top of the bottle. The coin will move as warm air from around the bottle tries to get inside and cold air from inside tries to get out; causing a clickety-clacking sound. Prepare several 2-liter bottles in the freezer ahead of time so you can do the experiment over and over again!

**Bending Straws**
Fill a plastic cup with tap water. Place the drinking straw in the cup. Bend down to look at the straw though the side of the cup. What do you notice about the straw? When you looked at the straw from the side, it appeared to be bent, but it really was not. Light rays retract (bend) as they go from air to water. Light travels faster in air than in water, so the straw looked slightly bent.

Dawn and I would like to thank all the parents that signed up for the parent intake meeting. It was nice talking with everyone. We were able to set goals for your child and answer any of your questions about the classroom.

As most of you know, I was put on bed rest due to pre-term contractions. There might be a slight chance that I could return to work when I reach 35 or 36 weeks. This will be determined by my doctor, if all looks well with the baby. I really miss seeing all the families and the children and plan on visiting if at all possible.

As a center, we are really working on enhancing parent involvement. Dawn and I would like to invite the parents in Pre 2 to come and share a book during one of our three group times throughout the day. Feel free to borrow a book from the center or bring a book from your home. If you would like to participate, please talk with Dawn and let her know the date and time you would like to share your story with the children.

Diane Mathison
Head Teacher

**NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 3**

Hello again to our families. The beginning of this semester has been very busy. We welcome all of our new children, parents, and siblings. Kendra and I are taking every moment possible to interact with all the children. So that we may get a feel for their patterns of play and interests.

One thing that we learned was our group looks forward to the day when the grounds workers from NIU mow our playground. The children continue to run to the windows to watch the fast, sharp turning mowers. We were able to get one of the workers to stop for a photo. One may have thought he was a superhero by the way the children waved and viewed the picture.
This led to a project that extended over the course of several weeks. A book, Stanley Mows the Lawn was checked out from the library. This became the kick off point for planting grass seeds in clear plastic cups. We watered the seeds and watched them germinate and shoot up through the soil. After the grass was set in the direct sun, it quickly grew. We took advantage of the grass height, and mowed it. Actually cutting it with scissors. Which was a good hand/eye coordination activity. The children who were not yet skilled with scissors, were able to hold the scissors sideways and cut. The cups of grass have been sent home for future growing and cutting.

We also have discovered that we have a room full of children who enjoy being read to. It is not unusual to come into the room, and find Kendra, myself, or a student worker sitting in the book area reading to one or more children. We have introduced new authors and illustrators to our group, by way of Group Times and reading individually. We discuss the way the books have some of the same themes and variety of illustrations and art work. Books by Mark Teague and Carol Yolen, Dr. Seuss, Mercer Mayer (critter books), and Norman Bridwell (Clifford) have been shared. Look in the blue basket to discover which books we are currently reading.

Literacy Bags were introduced at the recent Family Night. These are books and learning activities can be found in the assorted color bags by our classroom door. These can be checked out on a weekly basis. The sign-in and sign-out sheet is on top of the cubbies. The purpose of these bags is to help ensure a love of reading. Please feel free to check these bags out during this semester. Hopefully, you and your child will enjoy sitting and reading the book, and engaging in the simple, fun learning activities. The books and materials are meant to be shared between the parent and child. There is a checklist of materials in the bag. When you and your child are finished, you may go through it and return the materials to the bag. This is definitely not homework; but meant for literacy enjoyment!

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- We will be taking a Campus Walk on Monday, October 23rd, between 10:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. with a rain date of October 24th. Magnifying glasses will be passed out. The children will use them to discover the small, small, living things in our world. Several parents are needed to help make this walk more enjoyable and successful. Please let Kathy or Kendra know if you can join us.

- Mark your calendar for the first "Linger Longer" sponsored by Pre-3 family, Rich, Sarah, and Jakob Kakkuri. This will be held on Monday, October 30th from 4:30 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. What we are simply asking our families to do is linger a little bit longer at the center, after picking your child up from child care. Refreshments will be served. Your family can hang out in the lobby, and take the time to chat and get to know other parents and children.

**REMINDERS**

1. Please make sure you bring in a 4"x6" or smaller family photo. The picture will be framed. Your child will place it on a shelf in the classroom for viewing. The children are very proud to show and name members of their families to each other, and anyone else who is willing to take the time to look. It is our way of bringing some of your home into the room.
2. If your child likes to wear open-toed sandals or flip flops, please bring tennis shoes for your child’s cubby. Feet are easily injured on the playground. By way of tricycles, climbers, and running.

3. Make sure you take a moment to read the Daily Reflections posted on our message board by the classroom door. This gives a brief written description of our day at school. Occasionally, individual child names are posted as to the specific activity, learning or interest they have participated in.

**THANK YOU**

1. The Kakkuri family donated several books about guinea pigs. These are available for further study in our Science area. They also donated several baskets for use in the classroom. One of the baskets is being used for storing books in our Language Area.

2. Gloria Garcia came and read several books to our children at Group Time. One book was read in both Spanish and English. The other book was read in Spanish. It was pleasant to here to rhythm of Gloria’s voice, while she read.

3. We really appreciated the time that each of our parents took to meet with Kendra or I to review your child’s time spent in our room; also, to discuss goals for your child. Enjoy this fall.

Kathy Cregier
Head Teacher

**NEWS FROM PRESCHOOL ROOM 4**

I would like to start by saying thank you to all of our families who participated in our fabulous family night! I heard it went great and we had a super turn out! A huge thank you goes out to David, my co-teacher, for all the hard work, extra planning, time, and effort he put into not only the family night but everything since I have been gone. I am so lucky to have such a wonderful co-worker and friend! Also, a big thank you to all the student workers and staff who went above and beyond the call of duty! I appreciate all that you have done. As some of you know I had a family emergency last week. I appreciate all your care and concern. We are doing better. Thank you.

October already!! It’s amazing how fast the semesters go! David and I have enjoyed observing and getting to know the children. It’s fun to learn about each individual personality, favorite activities and interests. We are having a great time.

The children have enjoyed all areas of the classroom, especially art, science, and the media table. We offer a variety of tools and supplies for the children to use during free play. At group times we have discussed how to use scissors (for paper only), we saw how “just a dot will do it” when it comes to using glue and we’ve learned to listen for the “click” when we put the caps back on the markers. The children develop social skills: sharing and taking turns; language development as they converse.
back and forth; small motor skills when using the media; and creativity when they have the opportunity to do these activities.

The magnets grabbed our attention! We enjoyed using the wands as we strengthened our eye-hand coordination maneuvering the balls through the maze. We expanded on this activity by adding magnetic balls and disks to ‘super sand’. The children used the wands to find the balls and disks hidden in the sand. The children were amazed to find that magnets will repel against each other causing one to spin on the table.

We have had a variety of items in the media table but water is the favorite by far! We added food coloring, bubbles, different scents and many different tools to allow the children to sort, measure, compare, count, fill, empty, and create many “potions, soups, and juices!”

Group times have been going great! The children are learning about personal space using name tags. They enjoy dancing and singing to a variety of music and our favorite is listening and being active participants in story telling! We use flannel boards, puppets, finger plays, and big books. Remember to read to your child every day. Make it a special time for you and your child and your child will grow to love reading! We are including two fall songs we are learning. Some of you may have already heard them.

**Fall is Here**
Fall is here, fall is here
Yes it is, yes it is
All the leaves are falling, all the leaves are falling
Crunch, crunch, crunch
Crunch, crunch, crunch

**I’m a Little Acorn**
Laying on the cold, hard ground
I’m a little acorn round
People always step on me
That is why I’m cracked you see
I’m a nut, I’m a nut, I’m a nut!

**Reminders:**
- Your child makes art daily. Please check the art files daily (located on the floor by the sink).
- The weather is getting cooler. Please send a jacket daily. We go outside everyday.
- Be sure to sign in and out daily.
- Toys from home need to stay at home!

**Quote for the month:** “As parents, we never stand so tall as when we stoop to help our children.”

If you ever have questions or concerns or would like to meet with us before conferences, please let us know. We are here for you! Thank you and have a terrific month!

April Kaiser  
Head Teacher
**Children's Book Fair**

We will be holding our annual Children's Book Fair the week of October 23rd. Our books are provided to us by Anderson Books in Naperville. Every year we have a variety of books for all ages of children - ranging from board books, preschool soft covers and hard covers, holiday, early readers, school age reference, sports, poetry, and some adult selections usually including cook books, books surrounding parenting, and some recent releases. The book fair is located in the Large Motor Room and we fill at least 15 tables full of books! The books are sold at regular price (however we don’t charge sales tax) and typically we make about a 25% profit for the center. Every year we ask families to donate at least one hour of their time during this week - your time would be spent selling books, helping customers select books, and straightening the books as needed.

Another way you can help us with our book fair is to promote it - tell everyone you know about the book fair and encourage them to stop by. Feel free to ask for extra fliers to take back to your offices or classes to pass along to others. We often get customers in here who were directly invited by someone else - by one of our parents or a staff member. We understand how busy all of you are but this is a great way for you to become involved in our program and help raise money for essential equipment and program supplies.

**Housing for Students with Dependents**

NIU is planning to replace the existing University Apartment facility with a newly constructed 120-unit facility to house students with dependents. These apartments will be configured as one-, two-, and three-bedroom units. These will include modern amenities such as academic support programs, technology lab, playground, and social gathering areas. The facility will be located on the far northwest section of campus, west of Stevenson Towers and north of the Convocation Center.

The Office of the President is planning a groundbreaking ceremony for this new facility on Thursday, **October 12 at 1:00** and they are inviting our preschool families to participate in this very exciting event. We are asking parents to attend **with their child**. Please contact Chris if you need more information and/or plan to attend. Parking is available by the site, but for your convenience, an NIU Bus will leave from Campus Child Care at 12:30 and 12:45. Let’s give our full support to this very important project by attending the groundbreaking ceremony!!