DIRECTOR’S DESK

We are fast approaching the end of a semester and more importantly, the end of another year! We hope it has been a great 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 course work, real work or your professions, 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! Big thanks! to Amy, Hillary, Kendra, Bri and the Parent Advisory Board members for all of their hard work on the activities surrounding this week. Thank you to all of the parents that signed up and brought in food for staff appreciation, stopped over early for Music Monday and the Huskie Drum Line, went through the obstacle course, stopped in the read and dressed your child for spirit day! Some photos of these events are included on the last page of this newsletter. Thanks again for a great celebratory week! We had over 20 guest readers from all over the university stop in to see what great things our teachers, as professionals are doing to build a great foundation for future learning.

The summer semester is soon approaching and we are starting to prepare. We will begin applying sunscreen to the children as of the first day of interim, May 15th. If you have given us permission to apply the center sunscreen we will use that or you are welcome to bring you own bottle of cream sunscreen only (no sprays please). Please label the bottle with your child’s name for us to apply.

Our plan is to have 3 classrooms open this summer: the Toddler Room (for toddlers and twos) with Katelyn, Sherie, and Pam as teachers. Preschool 1 (for all current Pre 1 and some twos moving up) with April, Leslie, and Jaquida as teachers. Preschool 2 (for all Pre 2 and Pre 4 children with some twos moving up) with Ann, Hillary and Jennifer as teachers. Jen will be working on NAEYC classroom portfolios in preparation for accreditation this fall.

Several of our teachers will be off for the summer and returning for fall; they include Kellie, Barbara, Diane M., Kendra and Bri. Bri will be returning in October from maternity leave and Jen will be gone from August 21st till October 16th for student teaching.

As of fall semester, the current toddlers returning 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. Also, all of the children who are currently in a 2/3’s classroom will be divided into the four 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.
Fall semester is a time of year when we make some changes to our staffing to try and keep with continuity and relationships. Most preschool children will stay in their current room placements but may have one new teacher for fall depending on the needs of the children and the staff. Letters will go out in early June with your fall contracts and an email will be sent in early August with the fall teacher placements.

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, know that we will miss you so please keep in touch and feel free to visit at any time or send a quick email with a photo or short update. We love to see how our graduates have grown.

Kristin Schulz

INFANT ROOM

Wow, it is so hard to believe another semester is coming to an end. Pam and I have enjoyed watching all of the children in the Infant Room grow and learn so much in the time we have spent with them. We have also enjoyed getting to know each of you, as well.

We would like to extend a sincere Thank You to all of you for the support, tokens of gratitude, providing ingredients for our smoothie project, reading to the class, supplying t-shirts, visiting the classroom, and dressing your child in spirit wear during Week of the Young Child. As always the week is a celebration and awareness of the work we all do here at NIU CCC for the children in our care.

REMINDERS

- The last day of spring semester is May 13th. Full-day care is available during Interim (May 15th — June 10th); applications are past due. the ‘extra care’ fee; an additional 10% will be applied if you still need care.

- Child care fees need to be paid in full prior to the upcoming semester.

- 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.

- Campus Child Care will be closed on 2 Fridays for staff training—August 18 &25.
This past month, we continued to provide art activities for the children. Because we emphasize the process and not the product you have not received many of the finished products. Usually the paper ends up ripped because they children are practicing with their small muscles, torn because the paper can handle only so much paint, or crinkled because it makes a cool sound and feels good in their fingers. Whether it is using paint, crayons, markers or chalk is what occurs while the child uses the media is what is important. Multiple skills and cognitive areas are used during the activity. The children are using both their fine and gross motor while holding onto the art tool and moving it on the paper. Cognitive and problem solving skills are used when they figure out how to get what they are using onto the paper. Because the children are still very oral we use all nontoxic materials. Sensory exploration is the method of learning for the children. Tearing the paper, eating the paint, and chewing the crayons are all the beginning stage and the basis for future writing and art skills. You will begin to see the progression in your child’s art skills as he or she continues to grow and develop.

In the next couple of days Pam and I will be meeting with parents for parent/teacher conferences. One of the domains of development we have been focusing on is language. In the classroom we continue to promote the use of language by talking to the children throughout the day. We give them opportunities to communicate back to us with verbal and nonverbal language. Because we know each child so well it can be very easy for us to know exactly your child wants or needs without having him or her use spoken language or sign language. Instead we encourage each child to say the word or sign it. For example, at meal time when a child cries out in order to get more food you may hear us say, “I see you would like more fruit; tell me you want more” while we are saying more fruit we are signing the word more as well. If the child can say the word we tell them, we want to hear them use the word. Sometimes we slow down and sound out each letter.

**Calendar of Events**

**May 8 — 12** — **Finals Week**

**May 15 - June 16** — **Spring Interim**

**June 19th— August 11th** — **Summer Semester**
in the word. I have included to resources from the Zero to Three website to give you more information on language development. [www.zerotothree.org/resources/301-tips-on-learning-to-talk](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/301-tips-on-learning-to-talk) and [www.zerotothree.org/resources/303-dual-language-development-double-the-benefit](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/303-dual-language-development-double-the-benefit)

Just a reminder, with spring weather being so unpredictable please have warmer and cooler weather clothing at the center for your child, this includes outdoor clothing. The temperatures can be very cool in the morning but warm up dramatically by outdoor time so please have a lighter weight jacket here as well. Please bring a sun hat and sun glasses (if you choose) for your child. Until the trees fill in there is not much shade on the playground.

I will be off for the interim and summer semester. Pam will be moving with the children as they move into the toddler classroom during the middle part of interim. The class will officially be the “Toddler Class” starting with the summer semester. Malakhi’s Mom, Moriah, will be graduating and may not continue graduate school here at NIU. It is possible he will not be returning in the fall. Good luck to Malakhi and Moriah. Elena will turn 1 on October 1 so she will be returning the Infant room next fall semester as the veteran infant. I will see the rest of you in the toddler room.

Good luck on finals! Have a fun and safe summer.

Kellie Fuss & Pam Yockey

**TODDLER ROOM**

April showers may bring May flowers, but it also brought ballet dancers, chickens, and a calf named Lucy. The children have been interested in dancing all semester so we decided to take advantage of this interest and ask Jack’s mom and dad, Kendra and Joseph, to help us with this interest.

First, Kendra loaned us some of her tap and ballet shoes and skirts. Clara, from Pre-2, even loaned us a pair of her tap shoes and dance costumes. The tap shoes from Kendra were a little big for the children, but, not for Katilyn and I (which we took full advantage of). Kendra then brought in some of her students to come in and show the children some ballet moves. The children loved this. After a short “dance recital” the dance students interacted with the children on a more personal level. What a great time for the children and dance students. A little later in the month Joseph came in and showed the children how you can move your body to be fast, slow, up or down and like a variety of animals. This was a perfect tie in to our Animal Action songs we’ve been listening to.

Also, this month we’ve been discussing and exploring farm life. We’ve had a variety of implements you might see on a farm in our classroom; combines, open and closed cabbed tractors, front loaders and dump trucks. We even had an example of an “old fashioned” open cabbed tractor you might have seen on a farm forty years ago. Sherie, one of the teachers from 2/3’s – 1, brought in two laying hens from her farm. We were lucky enough to have them spend the day in the Infant/Toddler Room next door to us, so we took multiple trips throughout the day to visit the hens. With that, we explored what we could do with
the eggs chickens lay. We made scrambled eggs and hard boiled eggs. Each child got to break open an egg and help scramble it (mix it) so it could be fried up for lunch. The hard boiled eggs didn’t break open like the eggs used for scrambled eggs. These eggs needed to be peeled. This took some fine motor dexterity and patience to get it done. But the results were well worth it. Sherie also brought in a young calf, Lucy, from her dad’s farm for the children to pet and get up close to. Not everyone shared the same enthusiasm as the teachers for petting Lucy. A few preferred to sit on a teacher’s lap, or view Lucy from a distance. Others ran up eagerly to pet her. We didn’t just explore real eggs with the children, we also explored plastic eggs, but not for eating. The plastic eggs, which were all blue, were spread all over the playground for the children to practice balancing skills; squatting down and then standing back up after picking up and egg. Some children put the eggs in a basket other in piles, either way, when they were done collecting we counted how many they collected.

Some of the children were more interested in opening and pulling apart the plastic eggs to see if anything was inside. This was good practice for their fine motor strength. (No, there wasn’t anything inside the eggs.) With the eggs, plastic and real, we used this opportunity to talk about the colors white, brown, yellow and blue. Sherie’s chickens laid brown eggs, but some of us get white eggs at home. We talked about and looked at the inside of these eggs to see if they were the same or different on the inside. They are the same (yellow) and even tasted the same.

Thank you, for sharing the Week of the Young Child with us, it was a fun week, and we enjoyed helping the children celebrate! Good luck with finals and have a happy summer.

Barbara Zeman & Katilyn Ostenson
I can’t believe that I am writing the final newsletter for the year. I can still remember when most of them started back in the fall, which seems so long ago, but it really shouldn’t. Some of you were new to the center and had many questions. We had so much information for you that day, from expectations in the classroom to countless policies and procedures that we have at the center. We set up a “TSG” account and most of you had no idea what to expect. We hope you have enjoyed all the photos and documentation. We are intentional about creating activities that relate to goals that were discussed at the in-take meeting when we first met to discuss your child.

This month has not been short on fun and creative activities. The farm has been at the center for several weeks. The children have enjoyed the baby calf, a bunny, two hens, and a baby goat. The eggs have been very exciting to have in the room. They should be hatching around May 1st. The children have checked on them every day for the past 3 weeks. We candled an egg on the 9th day, and noticed a dark mass on one side and at the other end of the egg the light was able to shine through. This is where the air pocket is. The children were given a white oval and asked to draw what they thought was inside their egg. The children came up with a variety of answers: “chicks, fish, Oreo, alligator, and hippo.” Thank you Julian for sharing the “Egg” book with us, the children really enjoyed it. The children were also encouraged to tell us about what they knew about farms. Most of them named several animals that can be found on a farm. During group times and other discussions, the children learned about dairy farms and farms that grow different crops. We also talked about gardens. The children were able to take pictures of fruits, vegetables and flowers to create their own gardens. We hope you have taken the time to look at the art in the hallway and the documentation in the room.

We had a fun filled week during the Week of the Young Child. The children were able to participate in dancing and listening to the NIU Drumline on Monday. We had several guest readers come to the center to read books to the children, I think the adults enjoy this activity more than the children! Tuesday was fancy day, all the children made crowns to wear. On Wednesday, the children found an obstacle course in the Large Motor Room. Many thanks need to be given to Kendra and Hillary for setting it up. I think the children will always remember diving into the ball pit. On Thursday, everyone was able to use sidewalk chalk, we wished it was a warmer day outside, but we know how to flexible and creative, so we moved it to the hallways for the children to enjoy. On Friday everyone was exhausted from such a busy week, that we wore our jammies to school. We want to thank everyone who helped provide treats, lunches, and time to the staff during this special event. We truly appreciate the thoughtful gestures.
For those children who will be here during interim, which starts on May 15th. Leslie and Jennifer will be your teachers. An announcement will be made on which room will be open, so you know where to drop off your child. Two/Three’s one and two will be combined during this time. More information about summer will be announced at a later date. For those children NOT returning for the interim or summer, please make sure you have all your child’s clothing, artwork, and anything else that may belong to you. We hope you have a wonderful summer filled with precious memories.

Jennifer and I would like to say THANK YOU to all of our families. It has been a wonderful year filled with growth, learning, loving and amazing memories. All of you will never be forgotten in our hearts. We want to wish the families who are finished at NIU the best of luck. We hope your future is bright with endless possibilities. Take care of yourselves and one another. We always encourage you to come back to visit whenever you can.

Sherie Newman and Jennifer Weber

TWO/THREE-2

Over the last month, we have provided a lot of learning opportunities for the children. First, we have focused a great deal on firefighters. Wednesday April 12, firefighters from DeKalb brought a fire truck for the children to touch and explore. The day before they came for a visit we prepped and talked about what was going to happen, asking a lot of “I wonder...” questions. One thing the children showed the most interest in was the doors in the side of some firetrucks. The children wondered what was behind the doors. The children got to walk around and look around at what was behind each of the doors. They saw hoses, and tools specific to fighting fires and rescuing people.

A second learning opportunity that has sprouted has been our seeds. We planted lettuce, carrot and radish seeds. Within 4 days of planting them the lettuce and radishes are beginning to sprout. The carrots take a longer amount of time, so we have been waiting patiently for our carrots to grow. As the days have passed the radishes look full and green! Everything else, not so great. Our plan is to taste what grows by the end of the semester. We will post that documentation in the hallway for families to see. I am excited to see what the children think of what we grow!

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to meet with us for parent-teacher conferences. It is such a great opportunity to share our observations and assessments of your child’s development. We spend so much time with your children we really want to get to communicate what we see, hear and do with them each day. Our conferences allow us that opportunity. Thank you!
We recently celebrated Week of the Young Child; Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work-Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday and Family Friday. I hope you took a moment to participate in these activities to bring attention to the importance of quality early childhood education.

Our semester is winding down; our last day of the semester will be May 12th. This year I have accepted a 9-month contract, so my last day will be May 12th as well. I will return in August for the fall semester, so I will be back. I will miss my daily interactions with the children and families at CCC, but I am looking forward to enjoying a summer break with my family! Thank you all for bringing your children to Campus Child Care, and trusting us to provide loving, quality care for your children. It has been a great year!

Kendra Nenia & Leslie Dolan
Infant room on Music Monday

Week of the Young Child Special Events

President and Mrs. Baker as guest readers!

NIU Winter Drum Line