Welcome back to the second half of spring semester. We enjoyed a nice break to catch up and get ready for the good weather (warmer with rain) and fun times ahead.

The teachers have prepared for parent-teacher conferences (conference schedule is listed on page 3 of this newsletter). We do expect all families to sign up for a time to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss their growth and development since fall. Each teacher has a sign up sheet in the classroom with times they are available to meet. If the times offered don’t work for you please talk with the teacher to plan for a time when everyone is available.

April is a busy time of year with conferences, WOYC, and assessments. During the week of April 9th we will have enrollment week for returning families. Everyone who will need child care for summer and fall will need to stop up front and take about 10 minutes to fill out the re-enrollment forms. Janene will take a week to make placements and then the week of April 23rd you will stop back up front to sign your contracts. The signed contract will hold your enrollment. The week of April 16th we will open enrollment to new families and you may lose your priority placement if you don’t have an application on file and you need care.

In a few short weeks, we will be sending out a program survey that will be asking for feedback about your experience this year and an opportunity for you to share feedback about the teaching staff that will be shared with them during their annual review. Please take some time to fill these out honestly, and openly as we use this information to plan program goals for the next academic year.

During the week of April 16th the center will be participating in The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Week of the Young Child (WOYC). Take a look at the calendar of events, which is included in this newsletter. The week will be filled with opportunities for parent and child play, participation and learning. Each day has a theme and an opportunity for center wide participation. We love this week and the opportunity to appreciate our teachers for the amazing work they do educating young children to be smart, strong and healthy members of society. The parent advisory board will have a sign up sheet posted near the check in station for ways you can help contribute!

We are happy to say that our NAEYC site visit is behind us. Everything went well, and now we play the waiting game, and wait for the results. We should hear something within the next three months. Thanks for your continued support!

Kristin Schulz & Amy Lofthouse
Hello Infant Families,

First off, we wanted to say thank you to all of the families who came to Family Night. We are glad that you were able to join us and explore the different classrooms and hear different stories that were being read.

This month, we have focused a lot on social emotional development. Many children in the classroom are at the stage where they like to wave. We have been focusing on using terms such as "hello" and "goodbye" along with waving or even blowing kisses to our peers and teachers that are coming and going in the classroom. We have also started to point out other children’s feelings. For example, if another child is feeling sad or happy, we make sure to point out those emotions by said, “I see you are feeling happy”.

We have also started to implement group time into the classroom. We will use the group time to help transition from free play to outdoor time, or just have group time when the children are asking. Some fun group time activities that we have done are, Brown Bear, Hey Diddle Diddle, and Itsy Bitsy Spider. The children enjoy sitting down and watching the group time take place and help us out by placing the felt pieces on the felt board.

April 16-20 is Week of the Young Child. We are very excited to be planning many fun activities for the children to do. Each day will have a theme, and we will be doing different activities based on....
of the theme for that day. As always, parents are more than welcome to come in and join the fun. As the week gets closer, a more detailed schedule will be posted for everyone to see.

**Friendly Reminders:**
- Since the sun is out longer now, we will be ending our day outside as long as it is not too cold or raining.
- Please remember to bring weather appropriate clothing for your children such as hats, gloves, snow-suits, boots, etc. as the weather is still a bit chilly.
- Please continue to bring spare clothes for your children. We are always using various art materials and getting a little messy at meals, so we want to make sure that your children have a change of clothes in their bin if needed.
- Parent Conferences will be at the end of April, so be looking for a sign up from your primary teacher by the parent bulletin board.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or would like any information on any subjects, please do not hesitate to ask us!

Alex McAnally and Sherie Newman

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**Calendar of Events**

**Parent Conferences** (Month of April): See page 9 for your child’s conference day!!

April 16-20 — **Week of the Young Child (WOYC) Guest Reader Program and Child Alumni Readers Welcome!** (See schedule on page 9)

May 4th — **Reading Day** (we are open as usual)

May 7-11th— **Finals Week**

May 14-June 15th — **Spring Interim**
Hello Spring!! Time certainly flies when you are in the toddler room. We are in the last half of the spring semester and the changes in the children are huge!!! The biggest change being Language and Social Development. The children are learning new words every day and some children are putting together sentences, they are interacting with each other on a whole new level. I just want to tell you about the moments of compassion and true caring we see in the room. If one child is crying another will come up and rub a back or offer a hug and when one child falls down another child will offer a hand to help them up. Holding hands and giving hugs is happening so much in our room. It is heartwarming to watch!

The highlights from this last month include cooking experiences, Bagel Pizzas, Smoothies, and Zoodles (Zucchini Noodles). Cooking with the children provides practical experiences such as following directions, measuring, it helps develop fine motor skills, eye hand coordination and early concepts such as math and science. We have been talking about healthy foods and making healthy choices for our bodies, including what we eat, exercise and making safe choices. Now that the children have more confidence and coordination we encouraged the children to attempt more challenging movement activities, depending on where they are at developmentally. Some of the children are learning to climb the steps to the climber while others are tackling the rock wall on the climber. The children were also quite involved with the creation of our fort we made in our room using big boxes.

As the children mature we are seeing longer attention spans for group time which has added more intentional teaching moments, colors, math and sorting are included with group time activities. The children still have the favorites such as books with CDs and We Wish You Well Activity. A more recent favorite group time that the children enjoyed was the book My Truck Is Stuck with Velcro board props. Happy Birthday to Henry! That makes 6 two year olds in our room! Many changes come with being two, including potty training! Children are showing interest in our room and we continue to encourage them. Here are signs that your child is ready

Common readiness signs include:
Pulling at a wet or dirty diaper.
Hiding to pee or poop.
Interest in others' use of the potty, or copying their behavior.
Having a dry diaper for a longer-than-usual time.
Awakening dry from a nap.
Telling you that they're about to go, are going or have just gone in their diaper.

Kellie and I hope you enjoyed family night and the yummy fruit kabobs, we look forward to our conferences coming up this first week of April, The Week of The Young Child at the end of the month and spring time! Happy April Everyone.

Pam Yockey & Kellie Fuss

Greetings families,

We are midway through the semester, which is so hard to believe. Hope your midterms and classes are going well.

Music has been a huge part in our classroom. We have touched on a few of the genres of music that are popular and have been popular. The children are very interested in seeing people dance, the outfits that were popular in previous decades, and what each genre sounds like. One of the groups that is becoming a fast favorite is Earth, Wind, and Fire. The children were very intrigued by the instruments they were playing, their outfits, the dancing and just hearing the music. We look forward to our music study over the next few weeks by creating instruments, deciding which kind of music the children like, dancing and singing, art projects with music, and more.

We are continuing to model kindness in our room. We hope to continue to help the children problem solve by coming up with ways to communicate their needs effectively with others. We are working with the children to really think about how to handle different situations when feeling frustrated or angry and how to ask for help or use words to express themselves.

On this note, as we are working on our kindness, we will be starting to collect toiletry items and food and donate it to a local food pantry and create pictures for a local retirement home. Please feel free to donate whatever items you may have or would like to donate.

Another thing we have been continuously working on is handwashing. We are working on handwashing skills for fifteen to twenty seconds. The children are working on the correct steps to washing their hands. The steps that we use are: rinsing hands, dispensing soap, scrubbing hands outside of the water for twenty seconds (we sing a song with the children during this time), rinsing soap off hands, grabbing a paper towel, dry hands, and lastly, using paper towel to turn off the faucet. We have included the lyrics to the song we use during handwashing (please see below). Also, if you would like to
visit our classroom, please wash your hands as well.

Parent teacher conferences are coming up. April’s conferences are on Thursday, April 5, 2018 from 9:00-4:00 and Kat’s are on Thursday, May 3, 2018 from 9:00-4:00. A sign-up sheet is posted for April’s conferences right outside our classroom door. A sign-up sheet will be posted at a later date for Kat’s conferences. These will be twenty minutes long to discuss your child’s growth and development.

Reminders:
- Bring proper attire for outside as we go on walks and play on the playground each day.
- Parent teacher conferences: please sign up as soon as possible—these are a requirement.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know! We are here to help you and your child and want the best for your family!

Hopefully some spring-like weather will be on the way soon! Have a great month!

Kat Dolan and April Kaiser

TWO/THREE-2

Hello families of 2’s-3’s/2.

I am excited to tell you about our most recent study! The children have been extremely interested in octopuses. If you think it’s easy to find activities for two and three year olds about octopuses you are mistaken. So, how did this study start? Derek, asked time and time again to watch an octopus. I pulled up a YouTube video from BBC Earth about an octopus stealing crabs from a fisherman’s trap. “Let’s watch it again!” he would say. Bria joined us, then Nora, and then… every child wanted to watch the video. The two and three’s began asking a plethora of questions. I did my best to answer but I wasn’t sure of the answers myself. As each day past the children became more and more interested in octopuses and wanted more answers to their questions.

Continuing to follow the children’s requests I found more videos on YouTube about the nature of an octopus. We also watched the same video of an octopus getting into a crab trap over and over again. We watched some videos about an octopus using camouflage changing color and texture. I began to read and research more about octopuses so that I could answer the children’s questions as they arose.
I found a few pieces of children's literature that had octopuses in it. I read them a few times with the children to see if their interest continued. It did! I pulled out our ocean and sea life box and found some plastic reproductions of creatures from the ocean. One of them was an octopus! We looked closely at it we looked at its tentacles, suction cups, beak, head, eyes, and we wondered certain things such as does an octopus have a mouth? Doesn’t octopus have teeth? Does an octopus have bones? How does an octopus defend itself? Slowly we began to answer those questions.

With children’s interest in sea life increasing, I brought in some artifacts from the ocean; a bivalve, a brain coral, standard coral, a sea star, shark jaws conch shell, etc... The children were very interested in these things for quite a while. Jack would pick up the conch shell and hold it to his ear and say, “I can hear the water!” He would even put it up to other people’s ears so they could hear it too.

On my own time I had been looking at ways to obtain an octopus so that the children could look at its parts and see how it felt and what it looked like. I was thinking I wouldn’t be able to obtain one so I was talking to the children about what we could possibly do. Nora suggested we make one!

First we started by drawing octopuses... After a few attempts we got out “Model Magic” I gave each child a ball of “Model Magic”. We looked at some video and images of octopuses and tried to decide what shape the tentacles were. We looked closely for a long time we started rolling the Model Magic on the table making snakes. After some practice the children started to make worms, and tentacle-like shapes as they rolled their “Model Magic” back and forth. When we laid them in a circular pattern it began to look more and more like an octopus. When we felt like we were done we counted to make sure we had enough tentacles Connor remembered that an octopus has eight tentacles. So we counted together-1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8! We looked at the tentacles closely together. As we looked one of the children asked where its head is. So I asked, “Well what shape is an octopus's head?” Together we looked at our toy octopus from block area. Connor and Alaa both said it's an egg shape. They were right, the octopuses head was an egg shape. I got a ball of “Model Magic” and began rolling it. At different stages I would set it down and ask them, “Does this look right?” The children would say no so I would try again listening to their comments about the shape I was making. Finally I had made an egg like shape that fit their expectations. After 2 days of dry time we sat down and painted the octopus. After some conversation the children decided the octopus should be pink, purple, brown, and white. These were all colors that they had observed in their videos.
covered all the tentacles in the shades that they felt like they should be.

As a child continued to request more videos about octopuses I decided it was time to see if I could find a real octopus for the children to explore. I made a call to 3 meat markets & fishmongers in the Dekalb & St Charles Areas. I got a response from Inboden’s Meat Market they let me know they have an octopus set aside for me. On my lunch break the day I drove to Inboden’s and picked it up. I put it in our classroom sink filled with cold water so that it could defrost slowly and gently. As children awoke from their nap I let them know that we had an octopus in our classroom sink. They stood wide-eyed staring at me. I asked them if they’d like to see it. Of course they did. The first question that came out of their mouths was “Is it alive?” I assured them it was not going to come back to life. Confidently, we pulled a couple of chairs to the teachers sink and they stood watching the ball of octopus bobbing up and down in the ice cold water in the sink. I asked if they’d like to touch it. Nora absolutely refused she didn’t want anything to do with an octopus. Amelia was very interested but she wasn’t sure if it was safe to touch so I put it in my hands on lifted it up. Gently I pried a tentacle off the ball of frozen octopus. With that Amelia pinched her nose and announced that it is super stinky. I let her know she’s right! It is stinky; it smells like dead fish. As more children awoke from their nap they came to the sink to see what was going on when I let them know it was an octopus. The excitement began to rise in our classroom. More children wanted to come and see so as it’s thawed I placed the octopus on a tray so that we could spread out its tentacles and get a closer look at what we had been so interested in. Amy walked into our classroom and asked what was going on. We let her know that there was an octopus on our table! She was surprised to hear that! The children were hesitant to touch it at first so Amy suggested the children wear food handling gloves. Everybody wanted a pair of gloves and a couple of the children decided to touch the octopus with a gloved hand. Jack still wanted to stand back and watch as we touched the octopus.

As time went by they became more and more confident handling the octopus. I sat down with them and put my hands under the octopus and picked it up to show them how long the tentacles were. Their mouths were a gape as they watch me lift the octopus up off the tray to show them the length of the eight tentacles. They noticed some were short and some were long I explain to them that some of them had been broken or cut off. As a group we counted how many tentacles an octopus has. Connor and I knew there were 8 but the other children were not so sure about that. Together as a group we counted how many we saw together. With help from the teacher we counted 8. Then they wondered how long the
were. Their mouths were a gape as they watch me lift the octopus up off the tray to show them the length of the eight tentacles. They noticed some were short and some were long I explain to them that some of them had been broken or cut off. We wondered how many tentacles an octopus has, Connor and I knew there were 8 but the other children were not so sure about that. Together as a group we counted how many we saw together. With help from the teacher we counted 8. Then they wondered how long the tentacles were so I pulled out yardstick and we measured the longest tentacle; it was 24 inches long. I showed the children a video of an octopus using its valve to deflate and inflate its “head” and propel itself. We looked closely at our octopus to see if we could see the tubular protrusion. When we found it I stuck my pinky through it to show it was similar to a straw.

Bria had a particularly strong interest in the octopus. She spent a lot of time touching it, squeezing it, holding it, lifting it up, and dropping it back down again. The day she did that I went home smelling like a day old octopus! But, it was worth it because the children in the classroom got a very close and meaningful look and an animal that they were deeply interested in. This type of learning is a strong foundation for the future learning the children will be doing as they move through their educational experiences. For that I am willing to smell like an octopus for a day!

Kendra Nenia, Barbara Zeman & Brianna Wicker
Parent Conference Schedule Changes- Up and coming for April-

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<td>May 7th</td>
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Each teacher is being given a full 9-4pm shift out of the classroom to conduct parent conferences. We do require families to meet with staff for a 20 minute conference and goals setting period. We value our relationship with you and the home school connection for your child’s benefit. We will remain flexible with families who have trouble meeting this

April 16th-20th

**Music Monday**- A musical break at 10:00, 12:15, and 3:30. CCC Band/Parade—all are invited to attend! *(Wear work out clothes)*

**Tasty Tuesday**- Each classroom will choose and cook a healthy recipe. Families may be asked to help provide ingredients. *(Wear your favorite color!)*

**Work Together Wednesday**- Each classroom will have a designated time and spot in the building to work together *(Career Day- Dress for future career)*

**Artsy Thursday**– All classrooms will have an opportunity to create art by visiting our art studio (pre-4). *(Crazy Day- Mismatched, crazy hair- just be crazy!)*

**Family Friday**– Pre-4 will be open as an art gallery, and families are encouraged to walk through. We will be hosting a family talent show from 10-11 in the large motor room. Parent’s only, stop in the conference room for muffins and coffee to go! It’s our way of saying thank you for being our partner! *(Fancy Friday)*