

Children's School

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2003

Thursday, May 15 Last Day for All Programs

It's hard to believe that it is May already here and the school year is coming to an end.

Remember to check the Lost and Found Items. They are located outside the Children's School office - there are many items of clothing (especially mittens and hats) left at school. **Please return your gate card** to the office by the last day of school (or camp) if your child is not returning to the Children's School in the fall.

We will be closing the school year with special events in each classroom.

The Three Year Old Groups are having a "Teddy Bear Picnic" on Monday, May 12. The Four Year Old Groups are having a Game Day with the Kindergarten Class and an ice cream social on Friday, May 9.

The Extended Morning Program is having a picnic at the Children's School Playground on Wednesday, May 7 from 12:00 to 1:30. The Extended Afternoon Program is having a "p. j. party" on Wednesday, April 30.

Watch for more information on all these special events!

Friday, May 16 Celebration Day!

Please join us on Friday, May 16 for "**A Celebration Day**". There will not be regularly scheduled classes that day. Whether you are in the 3's, 4's, or kindergarten, plan to be at the Children's School on May 16.

At **9:00 AM**, the Kindergarten will have their Graduation Ceremony. Parents are asked to park in the University Parking Garage on Forbes Avenue. The Ceremony will take place in room 14, which is the auditorium at the end of our hallway.

Then at **10:00 AM**, all Children's School families are invited to the school for a special celebration. We will celebrate our NAEYC Accreditation. We will thank Ron and Renee Bartlett who, along with many Children's School families, donated the funds that enabled us to update and improve our playground. We also will thank the F. Brooks Robinson Family who donated the money for the green awning at our entrance. There will be special visitors that day along with refreshments. If you would like to help with this day, please call Mrs. Simpson.

What a wonderful and fun way to close the 2002/2003 school year!

For all events, please remember, parking is limited in our lot – we only have 7 spaces available for visitors. Please try the University's parking garage on Forbes Avenue, which is now available to the public on a "pay as you park" system.

National Teacher Day

“Teachers teach because they care. Teaching young people is what they do best. It requires long hours, patience, and care”.

Horace Mann

Few other professionals touch so many people in such a lasting way as teachers do. May 6, 2003 is National Teacher Day, a time for honoring teachers and recognizing the lasting contributions they make to our lives. In 1953, Mrs. Mattye Whyte Woodridge began corresponding with political and education leaders about the need for a nation day honoring teachers. One of the leaders she wrote to was Eleanor Roosevelt, who persuaded the 81st Congress to proclaim a national teacher day in 1953.

At the Children’s School, we are fortunate to have exceptional teachers. We thank all our staff for their dedication to the children and to the early childhood profession!

NAEYC Accreditation Update



The Children's School has earned accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This prestigious recognition has been achieved by approximately 6% of early childhood programs nationwide - some 7,826 programs as of March 1, 2003, serving 688,760 children. The accreditation process included an intensive self-study, collecting information from parents, teachers, administrators and classroom observations.

We then received not one, but two on-site visits, conducted by early childhood professionals trained by NAEYC, to validate our self-study results. All this information was independently reviewed by a team of national experts. The accreditation is valid for three years.

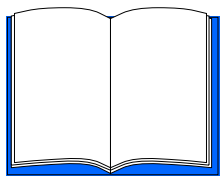
"We will now proudly display the NAEYC torch - the sign of NAEYC accreditation", said Dr. Sharon Carver. "Our children are fortunate to have positive and caring experiences at both home and school".

Thank You Jamie Rubin for giving us a tricycle for our playground!

May Web Artists: Joshua C., Leah F., Shawn L., Gannon L., Sophia Scherlis, Matthew R., Tiernan P., Sophia P., and Scott S.

Thank You

Update about On-Going Committees



Library Committee: We would like to thank the library committee for taking such good care of our library this year. This committee worked weekly to make sure all books were kept in good condition and returned to the right shelf.

Nancy Knowles, the chairperson, took over this committee a few years ago when her older son Nat was in our program. She organized the library books by developing a system to repair books and remove books that were beyond repair or outdated. She also organized the inventory list and the whole system of returning books. Thank you, Nancy, for all the time you spent getting our library in great shape!

Scholastic Book Club: Thank you for purchasing books from the Scholastic Book Club. The Children's School earned bonus points, and we were able to purchase many new books for our library. A big thank you to Audrey Olmer and Deb Zuroski who organized this program.

Repair and Construction: We would like to thank Doug and Kathy Wolfe for overseeing and organizing this committee. They repaired toys, tables, chairs, and the homasote bulletin boards in the classrooms.



Sarris Candy Sale

The Children's School earned \$265.13 from the Spring Sarris Candy Sale! Thank you to all the families who purchased candy this spring!



Safety Corner

As summer approaches, remember to protect your children (and yourselves) from the sun. Overexposure to the ultraviolet rays from the sun can cause sunburns, wrinkles, freckles, cataracts, and skin cancer. Doctors believe that most skin cancers can be avoided by preventing sun damage. Childhood is the best time to begin sun safety habits.

Sun safety habits include:

- using sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or more,
- covering up with clothing, sunglasses, and hats, and
- staying inside during the sun's peak hours (10AM to 3PM) or taking cover under shade from trees or umbrellas.

Sunscreen should be applied 30 minutes before exposure to the sun. Use waterproof sunscreen that cannot be washed off by water or sweat. Do not use sunscreen containing the insect repellent DEET, which reduces the SPF of sunscreen. It is also suggested that sunscreen not be used on babies under 6 months old. Instead cover them with clothing and shade.

Nutrition Corner



The Food Guide Pyramid, which is a dietary guideline from the U. S. Department of Agriculture, is a great way to plan your daily meals. Choosing foods according to the Pyramid will help your child get all the nutrients they need for good health. Grains, fruit and vegetables found at the bottom of the pyramid are the foundation of any good diet plan. Be sure to choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains. The Pyramid gives the number of servings for each group. The number of servings you need depends on your age, sex, and level of physical activity. The Food Pyramid enclosed is for young children, ages two to six. A serving is a standard amount of food such as 1 cup or 1 ounce. For example, one serving in the grain group equals 1 slice of bread or a cup of “ready-to-eat” cereal. At the top of the Pyramid you will find fats, oils, and sweets. This represents cream, butter, sugars and candies. It’s okay to have these foods occasionally, but use them sparingly.

Find out more about the guidelines by visiting the USDA’s Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion website at www.cnpp.usda.gov.



Director’s Corner

Congratulations to everyone on the successful NAEYC Accreditation process! We hope you will join us on May 16th to celebrate this validation of our high quality program, as well as the many financial supporters who have made specific physical improvements of our facilities possible.

Though we are not required to apply for re-accreditation until the fall of 2005, we seek continuous quality improvement in all aspects of our program. During the second half of May each year, the primary focus of our professional development time is on reflection, evaluation, and planning for the coming year. We take time to affirm the ways in which we excel and to contemplate how our program would be “even better if ...” Please take some time to add your voice to this process by reflecting on the strengths that are most important to you and by offering your ideas for improvement. I’d appreciate receiving your feedback on the enclosed form by the end of next week so that I have time to compile it prior to the start of our evaluation meetings. Feel free to adapt the form or simply write your ideas in your own format. What’s important is that you share your perspective with us.

Thanks so much for the many ways you contribute to the success of our school!

Research Results

Overcoming the “positive capture” strategy in young children: Learning about indeterminacy

Dr. David Klahr, Carnegie Mellon University
Dr. Zhe Chen, University of California, Davis

A fundamental part of science education, starting in the earliest grades, is teaching children how to recognize when there is enough evidence to choose between one hypothesis and another (Sodian, Zaitchik, & Carey, 1991). We were interested in studying this ability in pre-school children, so we devised a simple game in which 4- and 5-year old children were asked to distinguish between “knowing” and “guessing” (Fay & Klahr, 1996).

In the basic version of our game, we asked children to tell us if they “knew for sure”, which of three boxes full of beads had been used to construct a simple multi-piece object, such as a necklace made entirely of red beads. We explained that each box contained pieces of only one color, but that more than one box *might* contain pieces that matched the object. We began our questioning with all the box lids closed, and then we opened them, one by one, each time asking the children “is this a time you can tell for sure, or is this a time you have to guess about which box I used to build the necklace?” The boxes’ contents, and whether they were open or closed, were varied so as to present several different evidence patterns. For example, when all three lids were closed, the correct reply was “guess”. When all the lids were opened, revealing boxes filled with green, red, and blue beads, for example, the correct answer was “know”. In contrast, a pattern of fully opened boxes containing green, red, and red beads requires a “guess”.

Children answered correctly on a wide variety of patterns. However, they had great difficulty on a particular kind of pattern: in which one open box matched, another open box did not match, and the third box was closed. Because it is possible that the closed box, when opened, would also match, the correct answer for this pattern is “guess”. However, pre-schoolers usually got this problem wrong: they “knew for sure” that the necklace had been constructed from items in the open matching box, even though a closed box remained. Because even the earliest science instruction usually includes reasoning about conclusive and inconclusive evidence, it is important to overcome children’s tendency to misinterpret this type of evidence pattern.

The social context version of our game included a cover story aimed at increasing children’s motivation to reason correctly about the evidence. We asked children to evaluate problems (consisting of different color markers in different children’s boxes) so as to give another (fictitious) child credit for drawing a beautiful picture or blame for making a mess. We expected that children would do better in this contextualized situation – whether the outcome was credit or blame – than in the “no-context” situation described earlier because there would be social consequences for their decisions. To our surprise, social context had no effect on children’s performance.

In a follow-up study children received several days of training and explanation about how and why “knowing” and “guessing” should be associated with particular patterns of evidence. We found that, with extensive and explicit instruction, preschoolers, especially 5-year-olds, could learn how to correctly solve these problems, and that their learning was robust and stable even when assessed on different materials seven months later. This means that even preschoolers can be taught how to evaluate simple evidence patterns, and thus be better prepared for early science instruction.

References:

- Fay, A. L., & Klahr, D. (1996). Knowing about guessing and guessing about knowing: Preschoolers' understanding of indeterminacy. *Child Development, 67*, 689-716.
- Sodian, B., Zaitchik, D., & Carey, S. (1991). Young children's differentiation of hypothetical beliefs from evidence. *Child Development, 62*, 753-766



We have a variety of t-shirts and sweatshirts for sale. We also have lunch bags, mugs, and hats. Stop in the office to see all our School Spirit Items!