

Perhaps you wondered ...

... how NAEYC assessors conduct site visits as part of accreditation renewal.

This question is timely because we have been notified that our two-day NAEYC site visit will take place sometime between Monday, March 4th and Friday, March 22nd. Since our spring break is the middle week of that three-week window, we know it will happen either the week before or the week after spring break. We will receive final notice of the exact timing just one business day prior to the start of the visit, so we will notify families via email. There's really nothing that families need to do differently while the NAEYC assessor is here, other than recognizing that even the best educators who are used to being observed constantly in a laboratory school environment get a little extra nervous on days when the school's accreditation status is being assessed.

On the first site visit day, the assessor will begin at 8am with an administrator orientation meeting, which involves checking lots of documents, including verification that the staff have the required First Aid / CPR training, that we can prove we conducted staff and family surveys as we claimed, etc. We then provide a tour of our facility and a workspace for the assessor that has access to our electronic program and classroom portfolios. The portfolios include photos, documents, and descriptions of the ways that we meet each of the standards that might not be evident to the observer otherwise. After that, the assessor will work independently for the two days to observe 6 of our 10 groups, each for one hour, to conduct a facility and safety check, and to review the randomly chosen subset of our portfolios. We will have a chance to locate any "missing evidence" for the assessor and finish the visit with a brief visit verification procedure. Then, the assessor submits her findings to the Academy for review, and we wait for their decision about our accreditation renewal. We'll keep you posted!

Introducing Olympia Saunders

Have you ever wondered who cleans the school at the end of a busy day of learning? It is Olympia Saunders! Olympia works for ISS, the custodial services company contracted by Carnegie Mellon University. Olympia's workday begins after 11pm, which is why families do not meet her. Until recently, our staff had not even met Olympia, except as "pen pals" when we leave each other notes to discuss cleaning needs. On Friday, February 22, we invited Olympia and her supervisor, Rege Koslof, to share breakfast with the staff and meet the children. It was wonderful for all of us to be able to get to know each other and for Olympia to finally see the school in action!

Olympia was born and raised on the North Side of Pittsburgh and currently lives in Avalon. She is the oldest of 6 children – 3 girls and 3

boys. She has been employed by ISS since September 2011. She reports that she loves to do crossword puzzles and collects dolphins, her favorite animal. Her favorite childhood memory is going to Disneyland when she turned 10. It was her first time getting on a plane. Olympia would like to thank the whole staff for making her feel so loved. She also appreciates the kind gifts and letters that she receives from the staff and the children. Thank YOU, Olympia, for all of your hard work!!

