Educators Return to School

Professional Development Days are essential for educator team-building, curriculum planning, and coordination of classroom plans with the advancement projects and research being led by the Administrative Team. Here’s a brief glimpse into how the Children’s School educators spent the day prior to the children’s return to school for 2012.

- Classroom Team Planning and Room Arrangement for the January Thematic Units

- Whole Staff Meeting and Surprise Luncheon Baby Shower for Mrs. Armbruster
  [The meeting involved discussion of the Building Foundations for Friendship (BFF) Longitudinal Research Project starting in January and the upcoming Educator Visit and Practicum Experience that are part of our developing partnership with Duksung Women’s University Early Childhood Education Department and Kindergarten.]

- Team Unit Overview Planning for the remaining spring semester units (Space and Rainforests in the Preschool and Egypt, Games, and Chicks in the Kindergarten) [We will work together on the next two Friday afternoons to plan the Whole School Unit on Healthy Mind & Body.] Note that while the teaching teams were busy with curriculum planning, the administrative team worked on other projects, such as Message from Me, the research timeline, and finishing this newsletter.
Perhaps You Wondered …

… how we handle classroom coverage when educators are absent. Understanding our coverage decisions for absences depends on first understanding what “full staffing” means in our context. The NAEYC Accreditation Standards specify Teacher-Child Ratios based on children’s ages. For 2.5 to 3 year olds in preschool, the acceptable ratios range from 1:6 to 1:9, for 4 and 5 year olds in preschool, the ratios range from 1:8 to 1:10, and for kindergartners the ratios range from 1:10 to 1:12. We use these guidelines when planning our professional staff ratios, which are 1:8 for the AM 3’s, 1:9 for the AM 4’s, 1:6 in the PM 3’s and 4’s, and 1:6 in the Extended Programs. For kindergarten, we have a 1:8 ratio in the morning and a 1:12 ratio in the afternoon. In other words, if all the educators are present, we meet the NAEYC standards without counting any of the student teachers, interns, student employees, etc. Nonetheless, we aim to schedule these students with a few to spare so that all of our preschool ratios are 1:6 and kindergarten 1:8, even if one or two students are absent.

If educator absences are known in advance, such as when we send them to conferences or to visit other schools or when they schedule Paid Time Off, we attempt to arrange for substitute coverage. Mrs. Cheri Mack and Mrs. Annie Smith have been our regular substitutes for several years. For last minute educator absences, we review the remaining coverage and have one of our Educational Administrators, Linda Hancock or Maggie Rosenblum, serve as substitutes when necessary to ensure that we maintain the NAEYC ratio standards. Because Mrs. Smith is moving to New Jersey in a month and we want to increase our pool of substitutes, we are beginning to interview new candidates for substitute positions and hope to hire two or three of them in January.

In the rare case of extended leaves, such as Mrs. Armbruster’s maternity leave this spring, we seek to hire full replacements rather than depending on day-to-day coverage arrangements. Because Mrs. Armbruster does not plan to return from her leave until the fall semester, we have hired a one-semester, full-time temporary assistant teacher for the kindergarten class. Ms. Holly Scholes joined the staff on January 2nd so that she will be fully integrated into the kindergarten teaching team prior to Mrs. Armbruster’s leave. Below is her staff bio and photo. Please welcome her and introduce yourself when you encounter her in the school. Also, feel free to direct any questions or concerns you have about classroom coverage to Dr. Carver, Ms. Hancock, or Mrs. Rosenblum.

Holly Scholes (pronounced 'skols' or ‘like scrolls without the r’) earned a BS in Human Development and Family Science at Ohio State with a minor in Early Childhood (2008) and a Masters of Arts in Teaching in Early Childhood (PreK-3rd) from Kent State (2009). In addition to day-to-day substituting in K to 5th grade since then, Holly has done long-term substitute positions in 2nd grade, 1st-3rd grade Art, and 4th-5th grade Math Tutoring. She also had student teaching placements in K, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, as well as being a summer nanny for children ages 4 and 6 and a summer nanny for a family with children ranging from 7 to 11, including a child with special needs. During her free time, Holly enjoys cooking, traveling, playing with her dog, and trying new restaurants. She is excited to join the Kindergarten team at the Children's School!