

Early Childhood Center Newsletter

February 2012
Issue 2



Our Vision is a community where children become independent, confident lifelong learners with a strong sense of self and a love of learning.

Our Mission is to create a positive preschool experience that fosters a love of learning through a child-centered program in a nurturing community. In each child we will cultivate autonomy, a sense of belonging, respect for others, and enthusiasm for exploration.

The Director's Corner

It's hard to believe that it is already February...not only that, the weather has been downright balmy out there!

We are so pleased that ECC continues to grow and thrive. Registration went off without a hitch, and as of the date of publication, we have sixty-four "class slots" filled!

One of the things I most enjoy about being with children is observing their play; seeing children deeply engaged in the here-and-now of their experiences and working to seek their perspective as they explore the immediacy of their environment. As they discover things through exploration, they build on their understanding of the world.

By noticing aloud how involved children are in their experiences, they tend to build on their work and engage more deeply in their ideas. What a validation of their abilities! In addition, when they revisit activities they've experienced, they are able to stick with the activities for longer periods of time which ultimately extends their learning.

To be a part of a community like ECC, we are lucky to have parents and teachers that respect children's need for play to develop independence and self sufficiency. As Valentine's Day approaches, that kind of love surely supports our children in so many ways!

Thank you for entrusting the care of your children to us!

Marion Entwisle, Director

Important Reminders:

Enrollment Agreements will be emailed to families no later than Friday, February 10. Please review, sign, and return to the office **NO LATER** than Monday, February 27th.

Parent Satisfaction Surveys have been distributed and should be returned to the box in the front hallway marked "Parent Surveys" no later than Friday, February 10th.

Thank you in advance for your feedback!

Bluebird News

Our Bluebirds class has come a long way since the first days of school when saying good-bye to Mom or Dad in the morning was so hard to do. The children are now familiar with our classroom routines and are eager to explore and learn.

One of our winter themes was mittens. As an art project, the children decorated one paper mitten as they wished using sparkly paints in different colors. When they finished painting, we gave them another paper mitten to place on top of their painted mitten. The children rubbed the surface, and then carefully pulled their two mittens apart. They discovered that they had made one pair of mittens.

The class has also enjoyed the story The Mitten by Jan Brett. The children first listened to the story, with animal figures and a mitten being used to demonstrate the action in the story, during circle time. At a subsequent circle, each child chose to be one of the animals in the story and we enacted the story, using a blanket as the mitten. The children played their roles very well and we had many giggles, too.

The children are also practicing putting on their own mittens when we are getting ready to go outside to play. They have come to know that mittens keep their hands warm when they are outside on chilly days.

Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Esha

Duck News

The Ducks spent the month of January expressing themselves through color. Each day our activities revolved around the color of the day. We mixed colors to make a new color or a lighter version of the same color. We used tempera, watercolors, finger paints, colored foam, bingo dotters, brushes, pipettes, eyedroppers, gutters (yes, gutters), and our hands to experiment with color. We even mixed food coloring in our beverages. Everyone worked really hard finding clothes and objects from home to reflect the daily color and share at group time. Many days the toys we played with, the dishes we used, the snack we ate, and the sensory table contents were the color of the day. On the last day we immersed ourselves in multiple art activities that utilized all the colors. The children are finding it a little bit hard to let go of color days, but the teachers know that shapes will offer lots of opportunities for fun and creativity.

Star News

We've kicked off the new year in the Stars classroom. After the holidays, we were happy to be back at school! In January, we learned all about music and healthy bodies. We explored new instruments and ways to move around. Ms. Janice even brought her special instruments for us to play and taught us some dances, too. We had a blast exploring exercise equipment and showing off our big, strong muscles! In learning about ways to be healthy, we enjoyed tasting some crunchy vegetables for snack and using toothbrushes to paint bright smiles.

During circle time, we enjoy learning about letters and opposites. We talked about our favorite songs and learned some new ones, too. We thought it was so cool to listen to music using headphones built-in to Ms. Kelsey's jacket - it has become a frequent request.

We celebrated Audrey's 3rd birthday with very special, very delicious Chinese treats! We're looking forward to Daniel's birthday coming up this month. We will all be three years old! We're growing more and more each day!

Goldfish & Butterflies News

It's been a busy few months since our last news letter. We're amazed at how self sufficient and independent both classes have become; putting on coats is a now a breeze. Many friends have become proficient at buttons, snaps, and zippers and are helping their classmates that haven't quite figured it out yet. The children that use the swings have learned or are learning to pump, so we don't need to give quite so many pulls on the swings. They also serve themselves snack and lunch with little assistance from the teachers. Their ability to solve problems, their sense of empathy, kindness, and consideration toward each other has also blossomed! We are really "wowed" by how much the Butterflies and Goldfish care about each other. Before lunch one day a few weeks ago, Ryosuke was the first child ready to eat lunch, but he didn't go to the table to sit down. Hands washed, lunchbox in hand, he stood in the middle of the room. When asked to sit down and start eating, he went instead to help another child wash their hands. He looked at me and said "I am waiting for my friends." That's one of those moments that brought a tear to my eye even after 25 years of teaching. On the bike path one day, there were several children that wanted to ride scooters but not enough scooters to go around.

Without a teachers' help, Ryan and James from the Butterfly class came up with a plan for sharing the scooters so that all interested parties would get a turn. Just another moment that left me impressed and grateful to be working with these two groups of children. The children are great at verbalizing their feelings. Priya tells me everyday "I love school!", "I love my teachers!" and then the other Goldfish chime in "Me too!"

The Butterflies and Goldfish have been playing a variety of non-competitive multi-sensory math games with dice like Candy Cane Counting, Number Bingo, and the Snowman Game. Skills developed and reinforced by playing these games include one to one correspondence, numeral recognition, sorting and classifying, turn taking, social skills language, and emergent reading.

We've also started the practice of answering a "Question of the Day" and asking questions about what's in the "Mystery Box" in both classes. "Question of the day is a wonderful tool to stimulate language, communication, social skills, counting, patterning, comparisons, etc.... Mystery Box is Show and tell with a twist. It encourages children to ask and answer "W" questions like What, Where, When, and Who. Divergent thinking skills are also developed as children make inferences and take guesses about what item might be in the box.

Looking ahead to February, our topics of study will include but are not limited to "Emotions" and "Good Things Come in 3's"

Looking forward to another great month,

Ms. Angelika, Mrs. Gupta, and Ms. Christy

Tadpole News

Tadpoles had great fun while exploring with MAGNETS! We learned Magnet Facts, examined magnets and tested their effect on many objects and each other. The strongest magnets startled us and made us laugh when they jumped out of our hands because the attraction of opposite poles was so strong. When we tested those same magnets to understand that same poles repel each other, we were startled again. The strongest magnets flipped over in our hands to an opposite pole rather than let us force same poles together.

While conducting experiments, we moved paper clips, toy cars, keys, nuts and bolts (and lots of other small items of hardware). Paper clips traveled along rulers and through water. Toy cars traveled through cardboard tunnels. Children separated paperclips from corn sand with magnets. And, we magnetized items by stroking with or connecting to magnets.

We learned how magnets are useful - to move scrap metal in junkyards, hold a wallet or purse closed, point north on a compass and keep food fresh by tightly sealing refrigerator doors. Also, some toys use magnets, like our Magna-Doodle writing boards. Tadpoles were delighted by the art process of moving paint over the paper with magnetic marbles and magnets. At times, we had marbles spinning on top of marbles as they danced through the paint and mixed colors across the paper.

SO MUCH FUN! SO MUCH LEARNING!

Patricia Cesare and Guhhan Green

Explorer / Discoverer News

The Explorers are having lots of fun putting knowledge old and new to work. They have been working with letters and sounds in many capacities throughout the classroom. We have created a classroom word wall and are enjoying separating new and familiar words onto the wall by their initial letter. Explorers are also experimenting with letter sounds to spell creatively in labeling their own work. Due to a recent excitement in with American Sign Language, we have begun learning the ASL alphabet and several other basic signs.

Mother Nature's indecisiveness on a weather pattern has led to an interesting study of weather starting in January. We have already learned about and observed clouds and look forward to doing several science experiments to see how clouds and fog form. During our study of the other types of weather we will study the power of wind, learn about temperature and evaporation and play with shadows. February celebrations will also lead to a study on friendship and family which should provide many opportunities for show and tell.

Discoverers: Even though the temperatures have dipped, the Discoverers have been having fun playing outdoors and indoors with some clever games like shoebox ice skating and tissue paper snowball races. We have been keeping track of the weather and are finding that we have had mostly sunny days in the past month, which allows us the opportunity to play outside in the crisp air.

We have been listening to many stories, even acting them out. We read about a boy who loses a mitten, which then becomes home to many wild animals. That is until a bear sneezes and all the animals get tossed about, and the boy finds his mitten on his way home. We all enjoyed huddling under our "mitten" and then jumping out or rolling away when one of our Discoverers gave a big *AHH-CHOO!* We listened to a story about a box of crayons and how it would be so boring if there was only one color. And we also read about an elephant named Elmer and how great it is to be different.

We started the New Year with learning how to keep track of our days with a calendar and have counted up to 31. We know the days of the week and which day comes next. For the month of February, we will first check to see what the groundhog has to say about when Spring will arrive, and we'll keep track of the weather on our calendar to see if any pattern develops and if the groundhog's prediction was correct.

We have enjoyed decorating our classroom with all of our great art. With so little wall space, we have been resourceful by making use of the ceiling. Be sure to look "up" when you visit to see all of the wonderful art we have created.

In December we welcomed our new friend Michael to our classroom. Thank you, Michael, for joining the Discoverers, we love having new friends to play with us!

Adventure Bound News

We have all continued to have an endless number of adventures together since September. While sharing the afternoons together we have formed a bond and have developed a great rhythm together that really allows us to build extra experiences out of our many shared adventures. Here are a few:

- We sing lots of songs and have one that we made up together, "The Matter Song". Our many songs include movement, in the forms of dancing and marching, along with pantomime. This way we integrate a bit of fitness into our afternoon.
- We read books. Our most recent favorites have been, Balto, the Dog and The Nome from Nome. One exposed us to perseverance and the other to the idea that friendship makes us "warm from the inside out."

- We have explored and discovered much more about the world around us. The concepts we have covered include, gravity, the center of gravity, centrifugal force, friction, absorption, and evaporation. We have become very skilled at using observations, predictions and experiments repeatedly. The experiments are very hands-on and child-centered and sometimes we don't want the time to end.
- Currently, we are growing crystals, three different types so far, but Mrs. Coburn says there are more to come.
- We include art into the fun and discovery by making creations such as bubble paintings, centrifugal force paintings and creating drawings for our notebooks.
- Cooking is also a very popular activity. Most recently we made individual portions of ice cream inside a plastic bag and then made chicken and dumplings from scratch since we like the song, "She'll be Coming 'Round the Mountain".
- We also find time to take our experiments outdoors such as when we searched for rocks outside that we will soon break open to examine for any crystal formations. We also have time for play and exercise.
- Soon we will be exploring air pressure, water pressure, the Earth layers and tectonic plates. There is truly no end to the number of things that we can learn and discover about our world.

We take lots of photographs and display them in the hallway, on our bulletin board, or in our scrapbook. Presently, you can see our sheets of salt crystals hanging on the windows next to the sidewalk, so stop and take a look and come to have an adventure with us any time you would like.

Christy Coburn, Rochelle Slonin-Miller and all adventurers in Adventure Bound



Creative Movement

Happy New Year ECC! We are always busy exploring new concepts in music and dance! We discussed tempo in the 2 and 3-year-old classes and moved with different speeds to match the tempo of the music. We also used instruments such as bells and rhythm sticks to tap out different rhythms/tempo. We are always working on developing our gross motor skills throughout dance as we practice galloping (on both sides), skipping, balancing on each foot, and more!

In our 4 and 5-year-old classes we identified the symbols for whole notes, half notes, quarter notes and musical "rest". We clapped the beats and also jumped for each of these notes to see the differences between them. We then used instruments such as drums, xylophones, and tamborines to play the different notes and listened for these notes in songs too! In movement we did the "Macarena Math" dance where we explore counting by one, two, five, and ten! We are celebrating winter with some 'Icy' hip hop moves! In February we will focus on friendship and learn some moves with a partner!

Stay warm and healthy!

Janice :)

Now For Some Really Big News...

- Registration for the 2012-2013 School Year...only a few openings left!
- Summer camp registration is ongoing with spots filling fast—REGISTER TODAY for one of our THREE SESSIONS of summer fun!! ☺

Save The Date!

Saturday, May 12, 2012

ECC FUN FAIR!! 3-5 p.m.



ECC

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Look for ECC on
Facebook!

Other Upcoming Events

- ✓ February 13: ECC Board Meeting (see below)
- ✓ February 29: Parent/Director Coffee, 9:15-10:15 am
- ✓ February 20: ECC Closed for President's Day
- ✓ March 13: ECC Closed for Professional Development
- ✓ March 22: Parent/Director Coffee, 9:15-10:15 am
- ✓ April 2-9: Spring Break! ECC Closed

LOOKING FOR ECC BOARD MEMBERS! We are currently recruiting new members to our wonderful Board of Directors! Consider offering your multitude of talents to supporting the Vision and Mission of your child's wonderful school community. Join us on February 13th at 7:30 a.m. for a Wine and Cheese Social and see a brief board meeting in action!! Current Board members will be present to share their experiences and offer their support. Please RSVP to Marion at earlychildhoodcenter@verizon.net. Hope to see you there!