From the Director

Kindergarten Transitions: Off to a Great Start

Date: Monday, February 1, 2016
Time: 7:00-8:00 PM
Location: EML Hall room 269
- How can I help my child have a smooth transition to kindergarten?
- How do I register my child for kindergarten?
- What are the expectations for my child in kindergarten?
- What are the best ways to communicate with my child’s teacher?

Please join us on Monday, February 1st to learn about kindergarten transitions. Vicky Wiisanen, an experienced kindergarten teacher from Longfellow Elementary, will answer your questions and share ways we can prepare your child for a smooth transition. All families are welcome!

Four Things Kindergarten Teachers Want You to Know

Kindergarten teachers are passionate about partnering with the families of their students. When families and teachers work together, kids win! Here are four things that kindergarten teachers want you to know.

1. **Parents Play a Critical Role**-Kindergarten teacher’s value you as your child’s first teacher. Welcome your child’s teachers as an important partner in your child’s development. Share what you have discovered about how your child learns and include examples of times when your child has learned something new.

2. **The Value of Families and Teachers Working Together as Partners is Research-Based.** Research tells us that when families are involved, children do better academically and socially. Tell the teacher that you sincerely want to work with them to help your child learn and grow. Ask the teacher to offer specific ideas that will involve you in your child’s learning.

3. **Communication is Key**-Communication with families is such a high priority that kindergarten teachers are willing to use a variety of methods to correspond. Some parents prefer to connect via email or text, while others prefer a phone call or a printed letter in their child’s backpack. Ask the teacher the best way to access information about the classroom and the school. Share with the teacher you preferred method of communication.

4. **Teachers Want to Know What Makes Your Family Unique**-Learning about these qualities and values that make your family unique, improve partnerships. Tell your child’s teacher about unique characteristics of your family. Let the teacher know about family changes at home that may impact your child’s attitude and behaviors at school. Building bridges between kindergarten teachers and families is an important step in supporting your child’s learning and development.
Year-End Child Care Tax Statement

A child care and education tax statement will be sent electronically by January 31st to the employee on payroll deduction. Please contact Noah Fischer in the office of Human Resources/Payroll or by email Noah.Fischer@ndsu.edu or call him at 231-8965 if questions.

Michele on Medical Leave

Michele will take medical leave starting January 28, 2016. The recovery time is approximately four weeks. She looks forward to seeing everyone after her recovery. Deb Habedank and students will assume her responsibilities in the kitchen.

Student Involvement in the Center

1. HDFS Observation and Assessment
2. Nursing Health Promotions-Childhood Obesity
3. MSUM Practicum Student in the Preschool room

Infant / Toddler EML 161 Happenings by Stacey and Sam

Welcome and Good-bye

A warm welcome goes out to Daenerys (8 months) and her parents, James and Jill. Daenerys also has a sister, Eowyn in the toddler room. She will be starting Feb. 1st. Bell has transitioned to the toddler room. Good luck to Bell and her parents in their new adventures!

Featured Family:
Our “Featured Family” this month is Kate. Check it out!

Friday Gym

Our older children have been going over to the Benson Bunker Gym on Fridays from 10:00-11:00 for movement activities. The children run, dance, chase balls, and play with the preschoolers. The preschoolers are so helpful with our younger ones and siblings enjoy seeing each other. Parents are always welcome to join us.

Friendship Day

The children will be celebrating Friendship Day on Friday, February 12th. You are welcome to bring seven cards to exchange with friends. We will be making a “friendship snack” in the afternoon and your child is encouraged to wear red or pink that day. More info to come....... 

Where are Stacey and Sam???

With the start of the new semester, the teachers have new weekly lesson planning and room meeting times: 
- Sam: Monday-8:30-10:30, 3:30-4:30 and Tuesday-8:30-10:00
- Stacey: Tuesday-3:30-4:30, Wednesday-8:30-10:30, Friday-8:30-10:00

Our room meeting will be held on Mondays from 8:30-9:00.
New Field Experience Student

Please help us welcome Erin to our classroom. She will be working 10 hours per week and playing with the children all semester. Erin is very excited to be a part of our classroom! Welcome Erin!

How Babies Learn

For the first few years of baby’s life, everything in the world is new. Learning is a 24/7 process. They have to figure out how to move their bodies, how to manipulate objects, how to understand and use language, and more. It’s an understandably exhausting process. Here are some things you might not know about what’s going on in a learning infant’s mind.

1. **They start learning in the womb.** The parts of a baby’s brain that process sound start working during the third semester of pregnancy, and it can remember what it hears in the womb after it’s born.

2. **They start processing language like adults at two days old.** At just a few days old, infants use language processing skills similar to those adults use.

3. **Moving their mouths helps them listen.** Infants need to move their tongues to distinguish between sounds, according to a study of 6 month old infants. Researchers found that when a pacifier prevented babies from moving their tongues, they were not able to distinguish between 2 novel “d” sounds.

4. **Imitation is key.** When babies watch an adult use a body part, their brains light up in the areas that correspond with that particular movement.

5. **Touch helps them understand words.** There have been studies done showing that infants relate touches to the sounds they hear at the same time.

6. **Social skills help them acquire new languages.** Several studies have found that social interaction is key to a babies’ early language acquisition. Social interactions boost their ability to absorb information. Previous research has shown that babies learn better through interactions with people than through video or audio recordings.

7. **They learn music very early.** Before a child learns to understand language, talking sounds a lot like music—it’s repetitive and rhythmic. A child’s understanding of music parallels its initial acquisition of language, and merits a central place in our understanding of human development.

8. **Music helps them communicate.** Studies show that interactive music classes lead to better communication in infants.

9. **Language helps.** Babies develop a sense of humor around 18 months old. Studies have found that laughing can help kids learn new tasks.

10. **Surprise is key.** Infants learn best when they are surprised.

11. **Their brains are shaped by expectation.** Infants learn to make predictions based on their previous experience.

12. **Napping is crucial.** If babies didn’t spend so much time sleeping, they probably wouldn’t remember what they learned. Infants are constantly learning during their first year, and their constantly napping. Sleep is a very important part of a child’s day.

Source: Baby Talk (January edition, 2016)
“Exercise for your Heart” Activity

Take time to do some “high intensity” cardio play such as running outside through the snow, jumping/hopping and counting the jumps/hops, dancing to fast paced music and talk about how this fun play keeps our hearts healthy!

Responsibility Reviews

Center staff will be gathering feedback from parents and students regarding our annual Responsibility Reviews. Please watch for emails requesting your feedback on how we are doing as your child’s teacher. Your feedback helps us make improvements in our curriculum and teaching practices.

Breakfast Time

Breakfast will be served between 8:00-8:40 AM. This will allow the children to finish eating and begin play by 9:00. Please have your child to the Center no later than 8:40 if you want them to eat with their friends.

Where is Raelyn?

Raelyn will be on annual leave February 1 - 5. She will be posting subs next to the sign in and out sheet.

Friendship Day

On Friday, February 12th, we will celebrate “Friendship Day”. It is a classroom tradition to make a “Friendship Fruit Salad” to eat at snack. Please bring the equivalent of one cup or one whole fruit for our fruit salad. We will work cooperatively to pour and mix the delicious fruit. Friendship boxes will be creatively made by each child during group time. These boxes will be used for our “Friendship Cards” given by the children. If you choose to give out cards, please put your child’s first name on the card. This makes it much easy for the child to distribute cards to their friends.

Friendship Day

On February 12th our classroom will be celebrating Friendship Day. We will focus on what makes a good friend, why we need friends and how we show someone they are special to us. All week we will be talking about how to be a friend to others using books, creative art and music. On Friendship Day the children will work together to make a “friendship snack”. We WILL NOT be exchanging valentine cards or treats with our friends, but will concentrate on acts of friendship. More information to come.

Happy Birthday To You:

Feb. 1st – William will turn 5!
Self - Calming Techniques

As children learn what techniques work for them to help negotiate with friends during play, they sometimes need a little extra help. Teachers have established some respectful ways to help children through this process:

* Deep breathing is a very common way to help children get control of strong emotions. This helps to relax their throat and upper body muscles and take a moment to gain control.

* The preschool environment has three areas designated as “Spots for One”. These areas allow a child that feels overwhelmed by group play to retreat and “regroup” their emotions. This is NOT a time out spot. Children are free to use this area in the day whenever they want. Sometimes teachers suggest the area as a choice when a child is having difficulty controlling his/her emotions in group play.

* The classroom offers calming toys/materials designed to help a child pinpoint their feelings and give ideas on how they may help regulate their emotions. This is our Tigger/Pooh/Eeyore station. There are toys/materials in the “Eeyore” drawer to help a child who is feeling sad. In the “Tigger” drawer we have items to help children get a little bouncy energy used up so they can play constructively with the group.

* Friendship puppets occasionally join our classroom for group times. These puppets have personalities that help children see how others negotiate through common classroom disagreements. The children respond wonderfully to these “friends” and always have great suggestions for them to solve problems.

Wanted: Preschool Room Readers

Teachers would like to invite parents into our classroom to share a favorite story with the children. We have also invited professors from the HDFS Department to read. Just let Monica or Robin know when you can participate. Children are always so proud to have their mom or dad come visit!!!

Group Time Literacy

After reading Head to Toes by Eric Carle, the children shared what animal they would like to be and why. Below are their thoughts!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Choice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aiden</td>
<td>Cheetah, Because they run fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>Giraffe, They have a long neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drake</td>
<td>Lion, because they roar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabe</td>
<td>Horse, They gallop fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Fox, Because they have orange skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>Dinosaur, They can smash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasper</td>
<td>Monkey, They can climb trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livia</td>
<td>Lizard, They can stick to walls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyla</td>
<td>Peacock, They raise their feathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Monkey, They eat bananas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Max</td>
<td>Gorilla, They beat chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyla</td>
<td>Gorilla, They crawl fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olen</td>
<td>Tiger, They walk on 4 legs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piper</td>
<td>Turtle, They crawl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramin</td>
<td>Cheetah, They’re fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>Gorilla, They beat their chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savanna</td>
<td>Elephant, They have a trunk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soo-Ah</td>
<td>Peacock, They can flap wings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Cheetah, They run fast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YeoJun</td>
<td>Shiny Crocodile, They catch fish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>