Wishing you and your family a Happy and Safe Holiday Season!

November Family Survey Results

Thank you for taking the time to complete the NAEYC Accreditation Family Survey and our optional Family Feedback Survey. As part of our program evaluation, these surveys are completed twice a year and the results are shared in the following month’s newsletter, discussed at our Parent Advisory Committee meetings, and at our monthly staff meetings. The survey helps us recognize our strengths and weaknesses. Our ultimate goal is to meet your child’s developmental and educational needs while supporting you. Our overall return rate was 100%!

Strengths of the program include:

- Parents and teachers have a good relationship
- Teachers take good care of the children and help them learn how to get along with others
- Parents feel comfortable communicating with the teachers at least once a week or more about their child
- Teachers often share information about things happening in the program
- Parents feel respected by the program staff and that their contributions are valued
- Parents are comfortable with what their child is learning and how progress is measured
- Parents enjoy the field trips their child participates in

Areas that need improvement or would like more information include:

- The program helps me get to know other families in the program and encourages us to support each other.
  - The Center organizes family social events throughout the year. Families are invited to participate in the events and meet other families. Examples include: Fall Picnic, Field Trips, Popsicles on the Playground, Wacky Wednesday Picnic Lunch, Parent Advisory Committee meetings, Caring and Sharing Community Giving Project, etc. When we have family socials, the children need to be supervised so it is hard to introduce parents to other parents. We hope that you will introduce yourself to others. Center staff are very open to new ideas on how we can help parents get to know one another and feel supported. We would love your ideas!
- The program staff helps me learn about community events and resources that can help my child and family.
  - Families are able to learn about community events and resources through a few different sources. The first source is the Center newsletter. The newsletter includes upcoming classroom field trips to learn about...
various resources throughout our community. The second source are magazines/brochures that are available in the main entryway table that have listings of different family friendly events happening in the Fargo-Moorhead area. Teachers also post community events next to the sign in/out sheet and place hand-outs above your child’s cubby.

- I am always welcome at the program and am invited to participate by helping to plan events and being involved in decisions about the program.
  - Parents are encouraged to attend the Parent Advisory Committee meetings which includes helping to choose, plan and evaluate different events for the Center. Ex. Caring and Sharing Community Giving Projects, Learning more about the Nurtured Heart Approach to guidance, T-shirt Fundraiser. Completing the optional Family Feedback Survey also incorporates your recommendation for program improvements.

- I know how the program makes sure that information about my child and his or her progress is kept confidential.
  - Each child’s file is kept in a locked file cabinet in the main office. The Individual Child Portfolios are kept in the teachers offices that are locked during the evenings. Individuals who have access to the child’s files are: families, legal guardian of child, teachers, authorized county agency, Dept. of Human Services representatives, field experience students, individuals who possess a written authorization from the child’s parent or legal guardian, and officer of law.

- The program gives me information to help my child make a smooth transition to kindergarten or first grade.
  - Every spring, a kindergarten teacher is invited to the Center for Child Development to provide parent education on your child’s transition to kindergarten. All families are invited and encouraged to attend this event. Sometimes the children who will be going off to kindergarten and teacher visit a kindergarten classroom.

Like/Please continue:

- The helpfulness and friendliness of teachers
- Encouraging independence and encouraging children to try a variety of new things
- Food Program and food activities
- Gardening/growing vegetables

Please try... a used toy drive.

AWESOME Parent-Teacher Conferences!

Thank you for meeting with your child’s primary caregiver for parent-teacher conferences. The teachers enjoyed the one-on-one time with parents to learn more about your child and family. Together we have written new learning goals to promote your child’s growth and development and updated your child’s emergency information.

Gratitude Tree

During the month of December we will have a Gratitude Tree in the main entryway to the Center along with stars for parents, teachers and children to share gratitude messages. According to Emma Seppala, Associate Director at the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education at Stanford University, there are many benefits to gratitude practices such as:

- Increases happiness
- Improved social intelligence
- Improved relationships and health
- More resilience after difficult experiences
Each classroom will have a different color star to easily identify their gratitude messages

Infant Room Children and Parents = WHITE star

Toddler Room Children and Parents = GOLD star

Preschool Room Children and Parents = RED star

Center Staff = GREEN star

“I am Grateful for…” stars will be placed in each classroom and on the main entry table for all to write a message. Stars will be hung on the tree daily and the children will visit the tree often. Before Christmas we will collect each child’s stars and make them into a small book of gratitude to take home. Please join us in sharing your gratitude for you child and the teachers.

Holiday Vacations and Family Travel

Teachers will be asking families if your child will be gone any days over the holidays. Accurate child attendance assist teachers in staffing the classrooms, maintaining accurate meal orders, and allows teachers to take vacation time with their family. Please help us keep accurate child counts over the holidays.

Professional Development Days

According to the ND licensing requirements, full time child care and education professionals are required to complete a minimum of 13 hours of Growing Futures approved professional development annually. Our national accreditation encourages a minimum or 20 hours of annual professional development. NDSU also has required annual trainings for employee. When the Center is closed for professional development each staff member completes and provides documentation of approved training hours.

Baby it’s COLD Out There!

Playing outside every day is important for children’s health and development. Children cannot get sick by going outside. Going outside actually can keep children healthier. Germs and illness can pass easily from one person to another when people spend a long period of time together indoors. Children do not have to re-breathe the germs of the group when they are out in fresh, outdoor air. Therefore, the chance of spreading infection is significantly reduced.

The National Health & Safety Standards for Child Care recommend that child care providers take children outside at least once every day. Even on days when it may be too cold to play outside, a short walk can be beneficial. The children and teachers alike feel rejuvenated when outdoor play is part of our daily routine.

Tips on how to dress for the cold:

- Dress children in warm layers of clothing.
- Keep children dry – wet clothing allows rapid cooling and frostbite.
- Cover children’s heads with hats (as much as 50% of body heat can escape from your head).
- Scarves or hoods with strings are not recommended for children to wear because they have caused strangulation.
- Children’s hands should always be covered with mittens or gloves.
- Always dress children in winter boots and warm socks.
Cold weather safety

- Instruct children to never put their tongue on cold metal.
- Do not let children eat snow as it may contain dirt or toxic substances.
- Hard packed snowballs can be dangerous.
- Check children’s skin temperature every 10-15 minutes to make sure it is warm.
- Watch out for icy areas where children and adults could fall.
- Bulky winter clothing can affect children’s movement; they may fall more easily.
- Winter clothing can also make children more slippery; they may go down hills and slides faster.

Sources: Information extracted from SafeKids and Child Care Aware of ND

Center Fever Policy

Fever is defined as an elevation of body temperature above normal. The Center uses the axillary (armpit) method of taking temperatures and never use the rectal or oral methods. An axillary temperature of 100 degrees F or higher is considered to be above normal in children. A child will be excluded from childcare whenever fever is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. The child may return to the Center when the child has been fever free for 24 hours without fever reducing medications and can participate fully in normal routine activities.

Source: Caring for Our Children-National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 3rd edition

Infant / Toddler EML 161 Happenings by Stacey & Raelyn

Classroom Reminders

Please remember to label ALL items brought into the classroom. The children are getting very curious and pulling clothing items out of the cubbies. If clothing is not labeled, we may not know who the items belong to.

Raelyn’s Family Medical Leave

We are preparing for Raelyn’ family medical leave from December 18, 2017 through February 23, 2018 (if all goes as planned). We wish Raelyn the very best as a mother of two children! Kellsie Trickle from Moorhead has been hired to work full time with Stacey in the Infant Room over the holidays. She will continue to work in the classroom spring semester around her class schedule. Kellsie will be oriented to the classroom routine, introduced to the parents and learn about the individual children prior to working full time. Tasha, Student Assistant, will also be working extra hours in the classroom. Raelyn will return full time to the Infant room Monday, February 26, 2018.

Saying Good-Bye to Students

Ariel (MSUM student) and Allison (NDSU Field Experience student) have completed their hours in our classroom. The children have enjoyed playing with them and exploring their educational activities.

Anna and Teanna, Student Assistants, will be leaving the center at the end of this semester. Teanna will be starting an internship with Cass County Services in Fargo and Anna will be starting her internship at an accounting firm in the cities. Both students have worked in our classroom for 4 ½ years. We will miss them dearly and wish them the best in their education and new adventures!
Language Development (8-18 months of age)

First words often emerge during this stage. As language develops, our job is to help children learn the words that represent the experiences and materials they are exploring. Mirror their actions with words such as “wash your hands”, “All clean”, “sit down”, etc. Choose books with pictures of familiar objects that you can help label. Self-talk (“I am washing your hands.”) and parallel-talk (“You are coloring with a red crayon.”) are critical components to language learning and linking words, actions, and ideas.

Singing songs and finger plays provide language experiences in a fun and engaging way as well. Some of the children’s favorite finger plays at this time are The Wheels on the Bus, Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed and Their Was A Little Turtle.

Featured Family Board

Each month we have one child feature their family by displaying photographs of their family accompanied by captions. There are a few months that remain open for families interested in participating in this fun activity in our classroom. The children love seeing family pictures and the “featured child” loves telling about their family. Please talk with Hayley if you have not signed up for a month and wish to do so.

Holiday and Semester Break Attendance

There will be green Attendance Schedules placed above your child’s cubby the end of November. Please take time to complete this attendance schedule and return it to the teachers by December 8. We will use your information for staffing and accurate meal counts. Even if your child will attend all days, please return the completed form.

Outdoor Play

One of the reasons we love where we live is that the seasons are both predictable as well as unpredictable. We will go outside when temperatures (including the wind chill) are 0 degrees Fahrenheit or above. Please LABEL your child’s outdoor clothing to prevent mix-ups. There are children with the same or similar clothing items and teachers do not want to misplace anyone’s personal items.

Words of Wisdom

- “If one stage is driving you crazy remember it will pass, then they’ll go through a new phase with something different to drive you crazy.”
- “A day spent playing outside with my child is a day to remember!”

The above quotes came from a book entitled Meditations for Mothers of Toddlers by Beth Wilson Saavedra. This book is full of inspirational thoughts based on a mother’s experience. Truly great reading for anyone with children under the age of three.
Parent-Teacher Conferences

Thanks for taking the time to participate in Fall Parent - Teacher Conferences! We are always so grateful for the extra, uninterrupted time to visit with you about your child’s growth and development. We also appreciate parents allowing a student to sit in on the conference. Currently we have four students earning credit in our classroom and planning to go into the Child Development field. Attending a parent-teacher conference provides the student with valuable information on how to cooperatively work with parents. Don’t forget that the teachers are happy to meet with you to discuss your questions, concerns and child’s development at other times too.

Holiday and Semester Break Schedules

On Dec 4th teachers will place an information sheet above your child’s cubby to ask about days when your child will be gone over the holiday and semester break. If you would please return this page, even if your child will attend all days that would be appreciated. Knowing this information in advance will help us staff our classroom and maintain accurate meal counts.

End of the Day Pick-Up

One of our goals for children are smooth transitions from home to school to home again. The teachers would like your help in making this transition positive for both the child and parent. The following are a few ways you can help promote a calm and stress free transition:

- Pick up your child by 5:15 (4:15 over break). Now that winter is here, there are extra clothing items to dress into that take extra time. Teachers love to talk to all parents at the end of the day about your child day. Arriving a bit early will allow those conversations.
- Allow for time to have your child clean up their toys before leaving. This helps children learn responsibility.
- Be ready to leave the classroom by 5:30 (4:30). Your child’s teacher has family events to attend and will need to lock the doors as she leaves at 5:30 (4:30).

Learning ABCs & 123s!

Many families asked about how their child is learning the alphabet & numbers at school. We talk about how we discuss which letters start words, identify letters in the classroom & in books, match up upper & lower case letters and especially which letters are in our names. These are all valuable ways to make learning more meaningful to children.

You can help your child learn their ABC’s and numbers too.

- When driving home from school, point out letters you see at the stoplight (near Walmart -I see a W, can you find it? Can you name other letters you see?)
- Let your child find letters or numbers on boxes in the grocery store, on the TV remote, in stories you read at night.
- Sticky letters and numbers for the bathtub are another fun way for kids to get familiar with these important concepts. Also give the sound of the letter as they show they know the letters well.

Happy Birthdays to You

December 22 Adrienne turns 4!
December 24 Desmond turns 5!