From the Director

A Shout Out for Monica

Each month our staff do things that are unseen by parents and other co-workers. This newsletter “Staff Shout Out!” will be a place to let you know what our staff are doing to go above and beyond.

Monica, Preschool Head Teacher, is very interested in the Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood learning. This approach encourages children to have input into their daily activities and environment. It encourages the child’s natural inquisitiveness and critical thinking skills. Monica has researched incorporating natural materials within the classroom and on the playgrounds. Examples that you may have seen in the classroom include wooden frames on the wall for a children’s art gallery, adding logs and bamboo to various center for the children to explore. When shopping Monica is always on the lookout for new lesson plan ideas and materials that will extend children’s learning.

Monica also has expertise in cake decorating and holds a second job at Cash Wise. She loves to travel and visit new places.

What will Center Staff Learn On March 15th?

On Friday, March 15 Center staff will have an eight hour training title Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Primer Training. Then on Saturday March 16, we will attend another full day training called CLASS Instructional Support Essentials for Teachers. This training will be with the Fargo Public Schools, Head Start and YWCA staff. What we learn will be applied in the classrooms to promote relationships with children and extend learning.

Why My-Plate?

By: Christina S. NDSU Dietetic Intern

Over the past several years, you may have seen a big push with the USDA’s My Plate in schools and early education programs. However, what exactly is My Plate and why is it so important? USDA My Plate has been around since 2011, it replaced the 2005 USDA My Pyramid and the 1992 USDA Food Guide Pyramid. 2011 My Plate focuses on reminding a person on what a healthy plate should look like. They are now focusing more on making half the plate fruit and vegetables as opposed to focusing on grains like the previous food pyramids.
Now you may be wondering why they shifted the focus to more fruits and vegetables. It has been found that eating more fruits and vegetables reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, high blood pressure, heart diseases and strokes, diabetes type 2, and some cancers. Fruits and vegetables have many key nutrients that the body needs in order to stay healthy. It is also low in calories and whole fresh produce has the fiber to keep you fuller longer. It does not matter if the fruits and vegetables are fresh, frozen, or canned (with low sodium or in natural juices).

Having the My Plate in early education program settings is a great way to remind children of eating more fruits and vegetables. By having that reminder at a young age, this leads them to have a healthier lifestyle as they grow up. It has been found that most adults do not get nearly enough fruits and vegetables each day, maybe 1 or 1 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables compared to 2 to 3 cups. Here are some tips that you can use to get your child and even you to enjoy and consume more fruits and vegetables each day:

- Offer fruits and vegetables at each meal
- Keep fruits and vegetables in easy reach for on the go
- Offer fruits and vegetables for snacks
- Sneak vegetables into a dish such as hot dishes, soups, etc.
- Get your child involved with preparing the meal
- Clean produce right away, you are more inclined to eat it and not let it spoil
- Test taste new produce as a family, you never know what you all might like

Parent-Teacher Conferences

It’s that time of year again where teachers start preparing for parent-teacher conferences that will be scheduled for the beginning of April. Teachers will post a sign-up sheet towards the end of March and a Pre-Conference Survey will be placed above your child’s cubby for you to complete to help guide our conferences. We look forward to meeting with you, sharing your child’s developmental progress and together creating new developmental goals for your child.

Annual Responsibility Reviews

This month Stacey will be requesting feedback from parents for Ariel’s annual Responsibility Review. An email will be sent out asking for feedback on her specific duties. Your feedback is greatly appreciated!

Breakfast Times

Please remember we serve breakfast from 8:00-8:30 each morning. This allows your child to have enough time to eat and get cleaned up for fun activities by 8:50.

Toothbrushes

Teachers welcome all families to bring a toothbrush for your child to promote and teach oral health, if you choose to. Please label the tooth brush with your child’s name. We only brush our teeth with water after lunch.

Pear-Peach Spinach Yogurt

(This is a great recipe to hide those vegetables!)

1 cup packed fresh Spinach
1 ripe Pear
32 oz. plain or Vanilla Yogurt
½ Banana or 1 whole Peach (optional)

Wash, peel, and cut the pear and banana/peach. Combine all ingredients in food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Can keep in refrigerator for 24-48 hours or frozen for 3-6 months. The children helped make this last month and LOVED it!
Spring Break Week (March 11-15)

With Spring Break week just around the corner teachers would appreciate any updates regarding your child’s attendance during the week of March 11-14. Remember Friday, March 15 the Center for Child Development is closed for Professional Development and Carpet Cleaning. Teachers appreciate the attendance updates as this helps with staffing and accurate meal counts.

Your Child’s Cubby

Please take home all miscellaneous items such as toys, ponytail holders, and art work daily from the top of your child’s cubby. This space is designated as a communication space between The Center for Child Development and home. Keeping this space clear of miscellaneous items will lessen the possibility of forms being forgotten and personal items lost.

Teacher Annual Leave

Mary will be taking annual leave on Thursday, March 21 (half day) and Friday, March 22 (all day). Hayley will be taking annual leave on Friday, March 8 and Friday, March 22nd (half day). Substitutes will be posted for parents as the dates approach.

MSUM Students

Our two MSUM students, Kylee and Emily, will be completing their 40 hour practicum the end of March or beginning of April. During the remainder of their practicum they will be choosing and conducting observations on three children. Once the students have chosen the children to complete their case studies on, Mary will inform the parents. Kylee and Emily will also plan, implement and evaluate three developmentally appropriate lesson plans for the toddlers.

Warmer Weather?

We never truly know when warmer winter weather will arrive. Teachers are hopeful that this occurs during the month of March. The toddlers self-help skills related to dressing have improved by leaps and bounds! This is a wonderful time to practice those independence self-help skills of dressing and undressing.

“From there to here, from here to there, funny things happen everywhere!” Dr. Suess
Spring Break Week

Please let teachers know if your child will be gone March 11-14, over spring break week. This helps us prepare for staffing and accurate meal counts.

Outside Clothing

Help us to keep your child warm and dry when playing outside by providing well-fitting winter outerwear every day. The children will be going out each day as long as the temperature is 0 degrees or above. Morning time can still be chilly if children aren’t dressed warmly. This year it seems like the snow will probably be around for a longer time and the children love to play in it. Please make sure your child has waterproof mittens (2 pairs would be great), large hat, snow pants and boots at school every day.

Checking your child’s outdoor clothing for wetness at the end of the day is also helpful. We are unable to dry outdoor clothing except for hanging them up and sometimes items are still wet the next day. If possible please take damp clothing pieces home for a quick dry or replacement. The children will need winter gear at the Center until our playground has dried up.

Gearing up for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Robin and Monica are actively working on your child’s developmental goals, putting together your Child’s Individual Portfolio and updating each child’s assessment. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled the month of April and the sign-up sheet for conferences will be posted soon. A Pre-Conference Survey regarding your questions, concerns and parent observations will be placed above your child’s cubby the end of March. Please let us know any questions or concerns you have about your child’s education and development. Teachers will gather additional information about topics of your interest when you let us know in advance.

Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss

On March 2nd it is Theodore Geisel’s birthday. We know him better as Dr. Seuss. This month we will be reading many of Dr. Seuss books and have planned some special, silly days (maybe some silly snacks also) to celebrate the “silliest” author we know.

Classroom Happenings

- **Movin & Groovin** will continuing through mid-April. The children are moving in new ways to promote physical development and help Physical Education students learn how children develop gross motor skills.
- **Nursing Students - March 20th** - We will have a group of nursing students educate the children on sneezing, germs, hand washing and ways to stay healthy. They will implement their activities at 3:30 PM this day and have three educational stations.

Happy Birthday to You

March 16th Amy will turn 5!
March 31st Abram will turn 4!
Center Playdough Recipe

Parents have often commented on how nice and soft our playdough is at the Center. Thought you might like to have the recipe and make homemade playdough at home with your child.

2 ¼ cups Flour
2 Tablespoons Vegetable Oil
1 cup Salt
4 teaspoons Alum or Cream of Tartar
2 cups Water
Food Coloring

Optional: Glitter, sand, beads, etc. to add some texture if you choose.

Directions: Add all ingredients to pan (we use an electric fryer) and cook until forms a ball. Remove and knead adding flour to prevent sticking to table or hands if needed. Add plenty of coloring if you want a darker colored dough. You may want to add the food coloring to the water for easier mixing. Playdough keeps 2 weeks in an air tight container. Enjoy!