From the Director

I LOVE YOU BOX

During the month of February three I LOVE YOU boxes will be placed in the main entrance to the Center. Purple hearts for infants, pink hearts for toddlers and yellow hearts for preschoolers. Parents, teachers, students and children are invited to write an I LOVE/LIKE YOU note to a child as frequently as you like. Place the child’s name on the note, the I LOVE YOU message, the name of the person writing the note and place it in the appropriate I LOVE YOU box. Teachers will read the I LOVE YOU messages to the children on Friday of each week. At the end of February, all I LOVE YOU messages will be sent home with your child. We want each child to receive an I LOVE YOU message’s weekly. The children will be so proud of themselves after the notes are read to them!

A Shout Out for Hayley!

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.

Hayley, Toddler Teacher, has really focused her lesson planning on developmentally appropriate STEM activities. Her goal is to challenge each child’s development one step further. With the wide age range of children in the classroom (22-months to 3 years 3 months) she is a master at learning what the children are interested in and then implementing those hands-on activities. She researches STEM curriculum books, uses Pinterest and when shopping always checks out the children’s toy section for ideas.

Kindergarten Transitions: Off to a Great Start

Date: Monday, February 4, 2019
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 4th to learn about kindergarten transitions. Nicole Braaten, an experienced past kindergarten teacher from Washington Elementary, will answer your questions and share ways we can prepare your child for a smooth transition. All families are welcome to attend!

Little Chefs

Healthy Carrot Loaf by Food Meanderings

¾ c. whole wheat flour 1 egg
¾ c. all-purpose flour 3 T. vegetable oil
1 ½ tsp. cinnamon ¾ c. non-fat plain yogurt
½ tsp. nutmeg ¾ c. packed brown sugar
1 tsp. baking powder ¾ tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking soda 1 c. shredded carrots

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray a 9x5 loaf pan with non-stick cooking spray. Combine flours, spices, baking soda, and baking powder. Set aside. In a large bowl beat egg till fluffy, beat in oil, then add yogurt, sugar and vanilla. Stir in carrots. Add flour mixture and stir until combined. Pour into prepared loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 50 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Let cool in pan 5 minutes, then remove from pan and cool completely. Enjoy!

The preschoolers helped shred the carrots in the food processor. They thought the carrots looked like shredded cheese after we put them through the food processor. Then we looked at the egg and saw how different it was after the egg was beaten. The brown sugar was kind of lumpy before we mixed it in, but after the children mixed it with the other ingredients it blended in well. The children said it “liquefied”. We looked at the color of the different flours and smelled the spices. Some children liked and others weren’t so sure about the smell of the spices. They enjoyed tasting the bread and smelling it while it was baking.

Eco-Healthy Practices

This is the second of several educational articles on eco-healthy practices to protect children from harm. Eco-healthy practices include the use of pesticides, air quality, household chemicals, lead, art supplies, plastics and plastic toys, recycling and garbage storage.

The second eco-healthy practice to be shared is on plastics and plastic toys. Certain plastics are known to contain toxic chemicals which have negative impacts on human health. Children are particularly vulnerable to these toxic chemicals since their body systems and organs are still developing. Young children are also at greater risk since they often put plastic objects into their mouths. Baby bottles, sippy cups, teething rings and toys are often made with phthalates and Bisphenol A (BPA). These two toxic ingredients in plastic are of particular concern, as research increasingly shows that these chemicals mimic or suppress hormones. (E.g. estrogen and testosterone) and disrupt normal development and growth.

Tips for using plastics safely include:
1. Avoid plastics with the recycling codes of #3, #6, and #7. Recycling codes are found on the bottom of the products.

   #3- Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) products that likely contain PVC include flexible plastic toys ex.
   rubber duckies, dolls, beach balls, infant bath books), inflatable swimming pools, raincoats Etc.

   #6-Polystyrene (PS) commonly known as Styrofoam products including cups and lids, carry-out
   containers, packaging “peanuts”, food trays, disposable cutlery, packaging for meats and
   cheeses.

   #7-Other (usually Polycarbonate) Bisphenol A (BPA) can leach from polycarbonate plastic and
   act as a hormone disrupter. Recycling code #7 is considered the “catch all” category. These
   products tend to be very hard and ridged and are generally see-through. Products that likely
   contain BPA include: hard, clear baby bottles, water bottles, sippy cups and regular drinking
   cups, canned food liners and receipts.

2. Purchase glass baby bottles with a silicon sleeve or milky, opaque plastic bottles and sippy cups
   labeled “BPA free”.

3. Never heat plastic baby bottles. When mixing formula, heat the water before mixing. When
   warming breast milk, use a glass bottle.

4. Only buy “new” silicone teething toys for infants and toddlers that are labeled “phthalate-free or
   PVC-free”.

5. Never heat or microwave food or drink in any plastic container, even if the product says
   “microwable”. Leaching of toxic chemicals from plastic to food or liquid may occur. Use a
   paper towel instead of plastic wrap to cover food in the microwave.

6. Eat fresh or frozen produce - Minimize the use of canned foods and canned drinks as many are
   lined with BPA.

7. Discard all worn or scratched plastic food containers, especially baby bottles, sippy cups and
   infant feeding plates and cups.

The Center uses sippy cups in the Infant and Toddler rooms that are BPA free, a recycling code of #5.
Our green toddler plates are BPA and BPS free with a recycling code # 2. Toddler cups and pitchers
are a recycling code of #5. Preschool plates, bowls, pitchers are marked with NSF which is the most
accepted and trusted certification and registration program for commercial food service products. We
rarely use plastic cutlery and Styrofoam plates, bowl and cups. Center staff are currently in the process
at looking at our plastic toys to avoid toys with the recycling code of #3, #6 and #7. As we purchase
new toys and materials, we will be much more aware of the recycling numbers for the safety of the
children.

Plastic Resources:
www2.epa.gov/childcare/information-parents-and-providers-about-plastics-child-care-settings (EPA),
myplasticfreelife.com/plastics_guide.pdf (Smart Plastics Guide for Parents and Children),
www.cehn.org/ehcc (Eco-Healthy Child Care)

Screen Time-What are the Guidelines for Children?
By: Christina Steckler NDSU Dietetic Student Intern

After a long day at work sometimes all you may want to do once getting home with your child(ren) is
let them watch TV or give them an iPad so you get time to relax or get other things done. However, did
you know that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that children 2 years and younger shouldn’t have any screen time and children 3 years and older should only have about 1-2 hours of educational non-violent screen time per day.

You may be thinking “But I only let my child(ren) play educational games.” The AAP states, “Infants and toddlers have immature symbolic, memory, and attentional skills and they cannot develop these skills thru digital media, they have difficulty relating digital media information into their 3-D experience.” They need interaction from caregivers to better develop their skills. Also, games that promote exercise may not help children reach a high enough physical activity level compared to being outside.

It’s important to limit screen time for younger children because they can’t tell the difference between programs and ads. Since most TV and internet ads are for high-calorie low nutrient-dense foods this leads to children eating more unhealthy foods and less fruits and vegetables. This has been shown to have a relationship of being overweight as they age.

Children need 120 minutes of physical activity daily, 60 minutes structured and 60 minutes unstructured, with only 30 minutes of sitting at a time for an activity/lesson. It’s so important for children to have this because it helps them develop physically, mentally, and social/emotionally. It’s important for children to learn simple gross motor skills like jumping, catching, and kicking, in order for these skills to develop into complex skills like skipping, dribbling, and throwing, these skills are not being met with screen time. These skills are only learned through interacting and imitating their caregivers.

Some helpful tips for limiting screen time for your kids:

- Completing age appropriate chores
- Set up a daily screen-time limit
- Record TV shows so you can skip the commercials
- Hide the remote from areas that your child(ren) usually play in
- No digital devices while eating meals, instead talk with family
- Limit digital device use during short car trips, instead talk
- Interact with your kids as much as possible indoors and outdoors
- Teach your child(ren) new developmental skills

By being more present in your child(ren)s life they become more aware of their own bodies and skills. They learn how to use their hands, walk, and problem solve. Children are more confident in themselves and aware of their surroundings. By limiting screen time for children and giving them time for physical activity, they are better prepared for the future.

Media and Young Minds

COUNCIL ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA

Pediatrics Nov 2016, 138 (5) e20162591; DOI: 10.1542/peds.2016-2591

Friendship Day
Our classroom will be celebrating Friendship Day on February 14th. Your child will be decorating a friendship bag and is welcome to bring cards (7) to exchange with their friends. The children are encouraged to wear red, pink, or purple that day.

February Activities
This month we will be doing activities with hearts and the colors red, pink and purple. The children will be doing matching games, coloring on hearts, and decorating a friendship bag. We will be making a Jell-O salad and bread in a bag to promote fine motor skills, counting and measuring.

Lesson Planning Time for Stacey and Ariel
Each semester teachers have lesson planning time to prepare our activities and the hands-on environment for the children. Ariel will be out of the classroom Monday 8:30-10:00 and Tuesday 11:30-1:00. Stacey will be out of the classroom Tuesday 3:00-4:30 and Friday 8:30-10:00. If you would ever want to visit with one of us about your child’s development, these are great times to visit!

Field Experience Student
This semester Bailey is our HDFS Field Experience student. She works in the classroom five hours per week and her goal is to be a Child Life Specialist in a hospital. She will be planning educational activities for the children over the semester.

Minnesota State University Students (MSUM)
The Infant room would like to welcome two Early Childhood Education students from MSUM, Lynette and Ruth. They will each work 40 hours in our classroom interacting with the children. A warm welcome!

Forming Relationships with Adults
Children develop expectations of consistent, positive interactions through secure relationships with familiar adults. Things to look for:

Birth to 9 months
- Interacts in predictable ways with familiar adults
- Responds positively to familiar adults’ efforts to help with stressful moments.

8 to 18 months
- Looks to familiar adults for emotional support and encouragement.
- Reacts or may become distressed when separated from familiar adults.

Children use expectations learned through repeated experiences in primary relationships to develop relationships with other adults. Things to look for:

Birth to 9 months
- Does your child show recognition of familiar adults by turning their head toward a familiar voice
- Does your child smile, reach or quiet when being held
• Does your child avoid or withdraw from unfamiliar adults.
8 to 18 months
• Moves or stays close to familiar adults for emotional security when unfamiliar adults approaches

Source: Adapted from the North Dakota Early Learning Standards.

Welcome MSUM Students
We would like to welcome two Moorhead State University Moorhead students to our classroom. Emily and Kylee have begun their practicum and prepare developmentally appropriate lesson plans to implement with the children. They will also prepare case studies on two children in the classroom.

“Friendship Day” Celebration
On Thursday, February 14th, we will celebrate “Friendship Day”. Traditionally children are invited to prepare a Valentine card to exchange with their classmates. This is optional. If you choose for your child to exchange cards please put only your child’s name on the card with the envelope blank. Teachers will help your child distribute their cards to friends. Concepts we will focus on are team work, being respectful to others, and saying “please and thank you”.

Responsibility Reviews
During February Mary will be requesting feedback from parents for Hayley’s Responsibility Review. Parents will contacted you via email and asked for input on her duties and responsibilities. This feedback is very helpful for the individual to learn what is going well and what areas to improve upon. Please take a few minutes to give your feedback, it is greatly appreciated!

Guidance and Toddlers
Our young toddlers are always on the move, constantly exploring. Toddlers are learning about themselves, others and safety. In all this learning toddlers need to know what their boundaries are. In learning these boundaries, toddlers will get a sense of safety and security. Toddlers need guidance in learning the “rules” or boundaries which are set for them. They will also need help learning how to deal with the emotions which come with learning new boundaries. It is always a great plan for Mom and Dad to discuss how they will support their child in learning to handle these emotions and work together, consistently and reliably to teach the desired behavior.

Teaching toddlers boundaries and acceptable behaviors is a two part process:
First—Children need to learn what behaviors are acceptable before they can learn to operate within set boundaries. Children need and want parents to provide “boundaries” for them. The predictability of knowing what their boundaries are helps your child feel safe. During the initial time boundaries are being set, your child may exhibit some intense emotion due to the newness of the boundary. When
this happens hold your child, comforting them so they feel safe and talk to them about the boundary and why it is important.

Second -- Is deciding what the result will be when the boundary is tested. Toddlers need to feel in control which is part of the reason boundaries are tested. Give your child two acceptable choices. These choices should be ones which you have chosen. Make sure the two choices you offer will maintain the boundary which you are working on establishing for your child.

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Preschool Happenings by Monica, Robin & Michele

Read, Read, Read!

We have been excited to welcome many parents/grandparents in the room to read the past month. During February we will continue this literacy project as some parents did not get a chance to read. The sign up form is posted by the sign-in and out sheet.

Welcome Mikaela!

A warm welcome to Mikaela Dosch a student teacher from Minnesota State University Moorhead. She will be in our classroom Tuesday & Thursday through March. In April, Mikaela will be with us full time. We are excited to have her a part of our team!

Movin’ & Groovin’

The HNES 257 Physical Education class will be with the preschoolers Wednesday mornings from 9:10 to 9:50 AM. This class gives students experience working with young children in a physical activity setting. The children will go to FLC room 319 in two groups for 20 minutes per group. Teachers will stay with the children during the entire activity time.

Boot Ice Skating

On Thursday, February 7 (Weather Permitting) we will be taking the city bus to Roosevelt Park located in North Fargo to learn about skating rinks and movement on ice with our boots on. Teachers will bring along sleds for the children also. If the weather is cooperative, we will leave at 9:15, take the Bus 13 to the park and spend about 35 minutes skating and sledding. The children will return to NDSU at approximately 11:00. If you’d like to join us you can come for the bus ride or meet us at the park. All parent welcome!

Friendship Day Celebration

On February 14th we’ll be celebrating Friendship Day. The focus with the children is on what makes a good friend, why we need friends and how we show kindness to others. We will play cooperative games that day and have Mary Poppins as our guest reader. As part of this celebration we will have:

- **Pink, Red & Hearts Day:** Let your child wear their red, pink or hearts on clothing that day.
- **No Valentine Exchange:** We will not be exchanging valentine cards or treats with friends. Our focus will be on actions of friendship and kindness.
- **Friendship Fruit Salad:** Each child is asked to bring one whole fruit or one canned fruit to make a friendship fruit salad. The children will cooperatively prepare, mix and eat the fruit salad as part of a healthy snack.
Brain Development and Preschool Children

Recent technology has enhanced scientific research on brain development. The images have improved our knowledge about how the brain grows and helps us function in our everyday learning. This is especially helpful when working with preschool children. According to Dr. Pam Schiller (2010) preschool children’s brains are considerably more active than adults. When preschool children are playing they are using these experiences to make brain connections called “synapses”. More than a 1000 trillion of these connections will form in a child’s brain by three years of age.

As parents and teachers of preschoolers, we guide children to use these recently developed connections to learn about the world they live in. There are many ways this can be accomplished. Schiller’s article “Early brain development research review and update” provides some suggestions on maximizing children’s learning in the early years. You may be using some of these methods yourself and seeing your early education teachers applying them with your child at school.

- Daily music has been shown to enhance the language processing skills in young children. The melody and rhythm in music help children develop their natural language tendencies. When children sing they are using the same words and sounds they use in language. They are also using their native language to enhance their musical experience. How can your child’s learning receive the boost that music provides? Sing together with your child. When you are walking, bathing, dressing or completing routines. Your preschool teacher is using song to help children wait for activity, calm themselves for specific tasks and to expand knowledge about a topic, as well as daily music/movement group activities.

- Touch, gestures and movement are important ways for children to make sense of what they are learning. When children use movements they are exercising their brain by increasing the memory and problem solving areas of the brain. Trying a task instead of hearing or seeing information allows children to make these brain connections. Gestures while talking is another key piece of this learning process. Adults use gestures often in speaking and children do also. This is their way of using their visual experience to get their meaning across. What will enhance your child’s learning in this area? Hands on learning, daily exercise to get the brain moving, and encouraging the use of gestures when children talk.

- Technology is an important part of everyday life for most of us, children included. Technology can both enhance and hinder learning in the early years. Limited use of technology has helped children to sharpen their cognitive skills by reacting to cues quicker and with more accuracy. However, too much “screen” time can lead to “partial attention” and less social contact with people. When children are learning social prompts they need face time with people they know and trust. Children “read” cultural social cues from us (ie. acceptable eye contact) and this knowledge cannot be learned from a screen. What can we do? Limit all technology experiences in young children, have lots of face to face conversations with your child and give them your full attention when interacting.

- Sleep is another factor that is stressed by Dr. Schiller in helping children learn. When the body sleeps the brain is processing the day’s activities in a way that makes them more useful in later experiences. If a body is tired, it can’t process experiences as it is in more of a function mode. Making sure your child is well rested will help maximize his/her learning. A minimum of 10 hours/night is recommended for preschoolers. In addition, a midday nap allows them to “recharge their brains” for further learning.

Brain development is not a one-time experience. Our brains are constantly learning new materials and exploring old information. This is true for children also. As early educators we seek to help children take full advantage of brain development in their early years.