



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

December 2010

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excerpt from **No Stress Holidays** Paula Statman, MSSW

Holiday stress is contagious

It's not realistic for parents to expect children to relax when they are running around like crazy, shopping, baking, decorating, and becoming stressed at the thought of blowing the holiday budget after just one trip to the mall.

If parents are experiencing an increase in stress then so are their children. Children reflect the mood of the household and the ideas and values of the family. So if the parents are spinning out of control, the kids will spin out of control, too.

How to manage kids' stress

1 Adjust attitudes and manage expectations

Have a discussion before the holiday season begins. Pledge to make the holiday season a time of love and peace, not a time focused on material goods and gifts. Talk to your children about the true meaning of the holiday season depending on your faith and heritage.

Kids need some degree of control and predictability. Prolonged uncertainty, constantly changing plans or last minute decisions can all increase stress. Include your children in holiday planning sessions, and let them know the final details well in advance. This will give them a chance to prepare themselves emotionally for the visits, dinners and other running around of the season...





3 Preserve and protect routines
Stick to your normal family routine as much as possible. It's often hard to take time out of busy holiday preparations, but a walk, a trip to a playground or play area, or whatever else you usually do with your kids each day can be a great stress reducer. Kids are often dragged along on shopping expeditions or taken to events over which they have no control. And when a routine is broken, stress can result. If possible, skip unnecessary

activities or tag-team as parents. Have one parent do the shopping or run the errands while the other stays home to keep things status quo. It can make a big difference.

4 Eat healthy and consciously
Try to plan at least one healthy, homemade meal every day. And don't let your guard down with snacks... a nutritious snack can help a child function much more smoothly through a long afternoon of shopping at the mall. Limit the fast food during the holidays. Factor in sugary holiday treats that can cause kids to be hungry and stressed.



6 Use stress-reducing techniques
Instead of telling your child to go "calm down" this holiday season, give them the tools they need to manage stress and anxiety. If you see your children beginning to get stressed, try to spend some quiet time with them before the situation gets out of control. Stop for a snack, a game or a few minutes of reading before rejoining the holiday activities.



complete article can be read at : <http://www.sheknows.com/holidays-and-seasons/articles/801407/parenting-strategies-for-destressing-the-holidays>

From the Director

Child Care Space

Teddy One: seeking MWTh, F avail after March 15

Teddy Too: seeking WF, T available

Pandas, Koalas, Polars: schedule changes underway!

Woollies: Th available

Grizzlies; seeking MTF



Dear Big Jeff

Disclaimer: Your child's teacher knows your child MUCH better than Big Jeff. He recommends that you ask their opinion!

Dear Big Jeff,

How do you handle a situation where a group of children are ganging up on another child. This happened in a public park recently. My child saw some children he knew and thought were buddies, but instead of playing, ended up with four children telling him he could not play with them, he was not in their club. I tried to distract my child and lead him to another area, but there were no other children around for him to play with and he wasn't interested in going. The parents of the kids involved were sitting nearby, but apparently not supervising their kids. I told the kids involved that my child could play on public play equipment. However, they got caught up in their game and yelled at and blocked my child as he got on the play equipment. My child handled this tough situation by pushing the kids and hurting one. I made him apologize and leave. This seemed unfair to me, and we talked about what he would do if he saw this happening to another child. I find it hard to discipline other peoples' kids with the parents in close proximity. What could I have done better? How do you help young children develop the skills to deal with this type of situation in a more appropriate manner?

Signed,

Caught off guard

Dear Off Guard,

That's a tough one! It can be heart breaking to see our children rejected by their peers and equally as unsettling to see them respond in ways that we know won't work. And, it can really bring out our protective instincts. I think you were right to intervene. The odds were stacked against your child and you could tell that leaving the children to their own devices was not likely to have a successful outcome. In cases like these, the first task for the adult is to take a deep breath and move to a rational state. Once calm, you can choose your approach.

1. Move away. If it appears unlikely that joining the play will be successful, say so and engage in another activity. "I don't think that's going to work, Buddy. Come on, I'll push you on the swing."
2. Move in. Go with your child. An adult's presence may help everyone remember their pro-social skills.
3. Intervene directly. Sometimes children just need a reminder. "Kids, remember the playground is for everyone. Buddy is going to play here, too."
4. Choose an alternate activity close by. Parallel play can be a good way to participate that may be satisfying in itself or a good way to gather more information while strategizing the next move.
5. Model negotiating skills. The degree to which you speak for your child depends on his/her developmental level and emotional state. It might go like this.

You (to the other children, in a friendly manner): "Hey, guys, Buddy would like to play."

Others: silence

You: "Tell us about the game. How does it work?"

Others: We run around and chase people.

You: Ah! What could Buddy do?

Others: He can't play. We were here first.

You: That's a problem. The playground is for everyone. Let's think some more. What do you do in this game?

Others: We catch Bad Guys and put them in jail.

You: Great! What could Buddy do?

Others: Well, he can be the Bad Guy.

You: That's an idea. What does the Bad Guy do?

Others: He goes to jail while we get more Bad Guys.

You, to Buddy: They need a Bad Guy to be in jail. Does that work?

Buddy: OK.

Note: The solution doesn't have to appeal to you. If it works for the kids, it works. Once play has begun and the initial hurdle has been overcome, the play takes on a life of its own anyway with changing roles and themes. Step back and let things develop, but don't go too far. It doesn't look like you're going to be counting on anyone else's parents!

Greetings From Sunnie:

During this season of festivities and light, I have noticed how important music is to us!

I walk throughout the building and hear teachers singing gently to babies, songs being used for calling a classroom together, toddlers dancing to music in the multi, instruments being played, and music being used to help children connect to one another in the classroom and from time to time, we have a sing-a-long in the multi for the entire center!

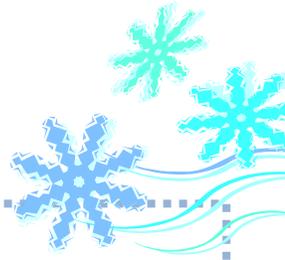
Children gain so much from engaging in music:

- They gain language skills.
- They build spatial – temporal skills.
- They develop social and emotional skills like the ability to regulate their responses and relate to others in complex ways.
- They increase their fine motor skills while doing finger plays and playing instruments
- They develop their gross motor skills while dancing and moving to music.
- Creativity is encouraged by creating and moving to music.
- And of course, they develop a lifelong love of music.

We are so fortunate to have a weekly music class here at DCCCC. Brooke offers so much enjoyment to our program and our children. I'd like to share a few pictures of music class for your enjoyment. As we move into the New Year remember to keep a song in your heart!



ANNOUNCEMENTS



Warm Clothing Drive

The Tucker Foundation will be collecting warm clothing to donate to the Upper Valley Haven. The Haven is located in White River Junction and provides shelter, food and services to families in need. Child size items are especially needed!

Drop off your donations at the Tucker Foundation in South Fairbanks Hall.

Questions? Blitz Kate Petcosky!

Snow Days

Whenever Hanover schools close or open late due to inclement weather, DCCCC will have a late opening time of 9:00 a.m. A late opening at DCCCC will be announced on:

- WMUR TV Channel 9 and www.WMUR.com
- WCAX TV Channel 3 and www.WCAX.com, (go to weather, select school closings)
- New Hampshire Public Radio web site: www.nhpr.org

During school vacations, late openings will be decided by the Director in consultation with local authorities and will be announced in the same media as above.

Grizzlies may arrive at 9 a.m. too and pay the full day rate.



Here Comes Tax Time

Dartmouth College's EIN

#02-0222111

You'll want that to claim a dependent care deduction.

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- December 23-31, 2010** – Winter Break
- March 21, 2011** – In-service Training Day
- May 30, 2011** – Memorial Day
- July 4, 2011** – Independence Day

HANOVER LEARN TO PLAY HOCKEY

Sponsored by Hanover Hockey Association

For boys and girls ages 4 - 8 (as of Dec. 31)

Session Two starts Dec. 18

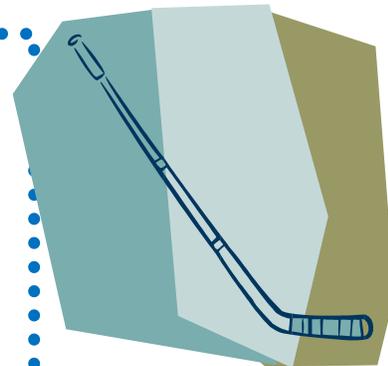
No prior hockey experience required. Emphasis is on fun. The on-ice sessions will feature an active clinic-style approach to the practices with lots of hands-on coaching, instruction, and fun games. There are two more 7-week sessions, so players can register for just one, or both. Cost is \$125/session. Registration includes a team jersey.

Session 2 starts Dec. 18. Session 3 begins Feb. 5 and concludes with a Jamboree on March 20.

Practices are normally Saturday and Sunday at the Campion Rink at 8am-9am with some Sundays at 910am.

Parents are encouraged to help on the ice, and new coaches should contact Dan French if interested.

You can register online and find additional information at www.HanoverHockey.org. For other questions, please call the Learn To Play Coordinator, Dan French, at (802) 649-5427 or Dan@EvergreenLandworks.com.



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Resources for Families

CCFC GUIDE TO COMMERCIAL-FREE HOLIDAYS TIPS FOR RESISTING HOLIDAY HYPE

Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood.

<http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/holidayguide/holidayguide.pdf>

SIMPLIFY THE HOLIDAYS 2009

~ FROM THE CENTER FOR A NEW AMERICAN DREAM ~
(still appropriate for 2010)

<http://www.newdream.org/holiday/simplify.pdf>

Family Friendly Events in the Greater Upper Valley Area:

The Christmas Revels

The 60-member Revels North chorus celebrates the season with zesty traditional Québécois music, dance and stories as it presents one of the most popular shows from the Revels repertoire, the magical tale of “The Flying Canoe.”

- Thursday, December 16th at 7:00 pm
- Friday, December 17th at 7:00 pm
- Saturday, December 18th at 2:00 pm & 7:00 pm
- Sunday, December 19th at 1:00 pm & 5:00 pm

•
January at the Billings Farm and Museum:

1 & 2: Christmas at the Farm 10:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Visit the authentically decorated farmhouse with preparations underway for the holiday meal; tour the operating dairy farm. Holiday programs and activities, plus making historic ornaments. *Horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides.*

8 & 9, 22 & 23, 29 & 30: Winter Weekends 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Visit the dairy farm, featuring the Jersey herd, draft horses, oxen and sheep; tour the restored & furnished 1890 Farm House – a model of efficiency in its day; A Place in the Land, our Academy Award®-nominee film which chronicles the development of the Billings Farm, is shown in the theater.

15, 16 & 17: Sleigh Ride Weekend Horse-drawn sleigh rides through the frosty farm fields, sledding with jack jumper sleds; visit the dairy farm and restored farmhouse; farm programs and hands-on activities. 10:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Ongoing: Festival of Trees in Enfield: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., dwelling rooms, Great Stone Dwelling, Enfield Shaker Museum, 447 Route 4A. Vote for your favorite tree. \$5 for nonmembers, free for members and Enfield residents and children. 603-632-4346 or info@shakermuseum.org.

Ongoing: Mitchell's Magic Christmas in Claremont, featuring 45,000 lights synchronized to music: Through New Year's Eve, 4:30 to 9:30 p.m., 16 Francis St. Donations accepted for CHaD. 603-542-9388 or claremontchristmaslights.com.

Ongoing: Christmas Light Display in Enfield: Featuring more than 50,000 lights on 20 acres of hillside: 5 to 9 p.m., La Salette Shrine, 410 Route 4A. Admission is free; donations appreciated. 603-632-7087 or claude.f.rheaume@valley.net.

Dec. 16, 2010: "A Poet's Christmas" in West Lebanon, presented by the Pontine Theatre: 6:30 p.m., Kilton Public Library, 80 Main St. Event includes a reading from Clement Moore's *A Visit from St. Nicholas* by Marguerite Mathews and Greg Gathers. Free. 603-298-8544 or leblibrary.com

Dec. 16, 2010: Nativity Pageant in Norwich: 7 p.m. in front of Tracy Hall, Main Street. Carol singing pilgrimage, re-enacting Mary and Joseph's journey to the manger. Gifts of food or clothing for The Haven accepted at the hall or in the collection box in town clerk's office. 802-649-8648 or benders@valley.net.

Dec. 17, 2010: Holiday Crafts in Chelsea, for all ages: 3 to 6 p.m., Chelsea Public Library, 296 Route 110, Chelsea. Today's project: paper ornaments. 802-685-2188 or chelsealibrary@chelsealibrary.com.

Dec. 17, 2010: Lights and Santa and *The Christmas Story* in Enfield: Featuring more than 50,000 lights on 20 acres of hillside from 5 to 9 p.m., and Santa at 7 p.m., La Salette Shrine, 410 Route 4A. Admission is free; donations appreciated. 603-632-7087 or claude.f.rheaume@valley.net.

Dec. 18, 2010: Cookie Sale in Chelsea: 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Chelsea Public Library, 296 Route 110. Sponsored by Friends of the Library. 802-685-2188 or chelsealibrary@chelsealibrary.com.

Dec. 18, 2010: Lights and Santa and *The Christmas Story* in Enfield: Featuring more than 50,000 lights on 20 acres of hillside from 5 to 9 p.m., and Santa at 7:30

p.m., La Salette Shrine, 410 Route 4A. Admission is free; donations appreciated. 603-632-7087 or claudf.rheaume@valley.net.

Dec. 18, 2010: Middle Eastern and American Belly Dance Benefit in Randolph: 6:30 p.m., Murray Auditorium, Randolph Union High School, 15 Forest St., Randolph. \$12, proceeds benefit the Holly Jolly Project, a community program which provides holiday gifts to low-income children. 802-356-3916 or thehollyjollyproject@yahoo.com.

Dec. 27, 2010: Stories and Activities in West Lebanon, for ages 2 and 3, with caregiver: 1:30 to 2 p.m., Kilton Public Library, 80 Main St. 603-298-8544 or carolyn.crocker@lebcity.com.

Dec. 27, 2010: Story Time in Enfield, for ages 2 to 5, with caregiver: from 1:30 to 2 p.m., Enfield Public Library, 23 Main St. Theme: falling leaves. 603-632-7145 or mcarr@enfield.nh.us.



Recent Events at DCCCC

Decorating A Gingerbread House for the Gingerbread Festival to benefit The Family Place



Big Jeff and The Professor of Percussion Awe and Amaze with Where the Wild Things Are and The Three Little Pigs!



News from the Float Team

Eileen Ruml

Teresa Hahn

Moya Stevens

Gladness Msumanje

Recently the team of Floating Assistant Teachers were asked to finish the following statements:

The most rewarding part of being a Floating Teaching Assistant is

and

The most fun I have had in a classroom was when

Here are their answers!

From Moya



The most rewarding part of being a Floating Teaching Assistant is the children. It is wonderful to see and work with all the children in the center, and especially wonderful when a child or several children ask when you will be coming to their classroom and their big smile when you can give them a date. Receiving their unconditional love and hugs are awesome too!

The most fun I have had in a classroom was when I was able to play soccer, volleyball, baseball, monster or whatever the children would like to play. Doing baking and art projects with the children are also enjoyable as well as reading stories one on one or to the whole group. Another fun time I remember is planning circle and activities and working with Gladness while covering for other teachers. Working with the babies is always fun and rewarding! There are so many fun times that I cannot list them all but it is just wonderful to work with all the staff and children of the center especially when I see the children benefit from everyone's effort!

From Eileen

The most rewarding part is enjoying a personal, ongoing relationship with children and families as they progress through the center. In the case of a family with 3 or 4 children, this may exceed 10 years!

I love watching each child's personalization of developmental stages, as they move from exploration through competency to mastery of successive challenges.





From Teresa:

I love being able to get to know all the children in the center; as well as all the families and staff. I find it rewarding to feel useful in the classrooms.

The most fun I have had in a classroom is dancing with the children.

From Gladness:

The most rewarding part of being a floating assistant teacher is knowing all of the children in the center and having the opportunity of meeting all of the parents throughout the building. I have the chance to learn about all age groups and to know what kind of behavior to expect at various ages. I feel so talented as a floater every time I switch from room to room because I am able to recognize the different areas of the whole child's development.



The most fun I had in the classroom was when Zachary served me tea for hours!! I told him I was done but he kept filling my cup! He pretended to save his mom a cup too even though she wasn't there! What a thoughtful child I thought and all of a sudden he approached me with a pot of tea and said more, more, more!! I thought, Oh boy this tea is gonna kill me! According to my traditions this is the best thing that can happen to your life!! My day was filled with joy!!



News from Teddy One

Debbie Burnham,
Lead Teacher

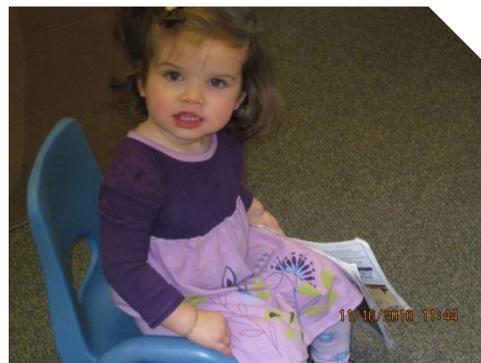
Wendy Irwin,
Teacher

Keri Wolfe,
Assistant Teacher

A Typical Day in Teddy One

7:30am...I see Amelia walking down the hall. She looks up to see me and smiles. Once inside she checks out the activity that is set up on the table and immediately starts putting stickers on a small paper plate.

8:15am...Kirsten arrives in daddy's arms. Once I make eye contact and greet her, I get a big smile. Dad says she has been up since 4:30am. A diaper change and snuggle has her asleep within ten minutes.



8:45am...Harper comes in and, after washing her hands, she spies some plastic ducks in the kitchen. She grabs as many as she can hold and comes into the Teddy Room. She goes right over to Roxy and gives her one. Wendy, Keri and I all praise her for such wonderful sharing.

9am...Nate notices the activity and comes over to see what is going on. A duck quickly goes into his mouth and he crawls back over to the toy shelves to pull himself up. He then bangs the duck on the shelf and smiles.

9:15am...Time for some morning naps. Annabel gets a snuggle and then goes into her crib awake. Nate gets into his sleep sack for a cuddle and a bottle, then off he goes to his crib. Greta is next for a bottle and a rock in the chair. She goes in awake and, after a few minutes, Wendy goes in to rock her in the crib as she drifts off. Katherine is the last one to get a diaper change, a hug, and her pacifier before she goes in. Then we watch on the monitor as she pulls off her socks and they go onto the floor!

9:30am...Oh, Kirsten is awake! I go in to get her and cuddle her in her sleep sack to see if she will go back to sleep. No luck! I unwrap her and we play Pat-A-Cake as she giggles at me.

10am...Time for activity. Keri sets up a painting activity in the kitchen. She goes to the teddy door and asks if anyone wants to paint. Roxana and Guillem come right away. Roxana dots her paper with orange and yellow paint. Guillem goes to the end of the table and we



offer him a chair. He starts making marks on his paper.



10:50am...Time for outside play. Leilani heads right to her cubby to get ready. Once out she watches as Roxy and Amelia go into the playhouse and Harper gets into a car. Leilani goes over to a truck and climbs in. Guillem goes into the gazebo and plays at the toy kitchen. Soon Roxy and Harper join him.

11:20am...It's getting cold and some tummies are getting hungry. Amelia heads to the Teddy door and all her friends follow her. The crew quickly gets off their coats and boots and wash their hands. Some play and some wait impatiently at the table for their lunches.

11:45am...Time for Katharine's lunch. She picks up peas from her tray and lets me feed her some jar food. She points to her container of cheese and happily eats when I put some on her tray.

12:15pm...Oh, oh, Wendy and Keri notice some smells. Time for diaper changes. Roxy runs away from me smiling and I stomp after her, laughing. Harper picks a book to take to the diaper table with her and Amelia tells me "diaper" when it is her turn. She likes to hold her diaper and look at the picture.

12:45pm...Harper is ready to lay on her mat. I sit by her with my hand rubbing her back. She starts talking and moving. A quiet shush doesn't work, she just chats more. I try a firm, "Time for Nap" and one hand on her back. She drifts off and I tiptoe out of the room.

1:00pm...Nate, Greta and Annabel have finished their lunches and the kitchen is clean.

1:30pm...Kirsten is taking turns sleeping in everyone's arms. Katharine is going around the room carrying the black dog. Nate comes up and touches her pacifier which Katharine takes out of her mouth and offers him.

1:45pm...We all take turns trying to get Greta to take a step, but she smiles and plops down to the rug. I take Katharine and Nate out for a quick stroller ride.

2:00pm...The second nappers are getting restless. The trip outside did not last long. Katharine and Nate decide they are too tired to play. Our afternoon workers are here to help out.



2:15pm...Annabel starts crying and Wendy offers her a bottle and a cuddle. All is much better now! Harper is awake and Roxy and Amelia are chatting in the crib room.

2:30pm...Guillem is stirring on his mat. I quietly go in and scoop him up for a cuddle in the chair.

2:45pm...Snack Time! Everyone who is awake goes out for some food and then hangs out in the kitchen playing with the toys and reading some books.

3:15pm... I've put on dancing music in the room and off we go moving to the beat!



3:30pm...Time to say goodbye to Amelia, but first she has to find Harper and they grab each other in a big hug!

4:30pm...Time for a diaper check for everyone and then we pile onto the futon for some books and songs. "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" is a favorite right now.

4:45pm...A few parents arrive and then it's time to close up the nap rooms and make sure the kitchen is clean. Roxy starts to ask

for Mommy and Dada so we go look out the window and find the moon.

5:00pm...Kirsten's last bottle. Nate has been busy going all around the room. Katharine and him chased each other round and round the chair, looking back at each other to make sure the game was still going on.

5:15pm...Kirsten has been watching everyone from the exersaucer. Annabel has found the cricket book and opened it to the chirps! Guillem has been rolling some trucks on the rug. I pretend the truck has bumped me and Guillem laughs. Greta looks at us as we tell her, "feet on the floor". She has been putting her leg up on a shelf, getting ready to climb! As we move towards her, her foot goes down onto the rug and she reaches for a toy.



5:30pm...Everyone leaves with a goodbye, see you tomorrow. A last minute check of the room to see if it is ready for tomorrow and lights go out.

Wendy, Keri and I love being in Teddy One where no two days are ever the same, but each day is always full of smiles and laughter, tears and tantrums!!

Fondly,
Debbie B.

News from Teddy Too

Terri Crane,
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,
Teacher

Denise Ayres,
Assistant Teacher

Teddy Too News

The Teddies have been very busy with their hands these days. The older Teddies have been coloring with crayons and markers, painting with finger paints and playing with play dough. We have a few that get right into it, and some who are more tentative and reserved especially with finger paints. We'll have some of our art work displayed at the Howe Library through the month of December.



Some of the younger Teddies have been using their hands for pulling up and for reaching to move themselves forward. They are also using their hands to explore toys and figuring out how they work by pushing knobs and pulling strings and sometimes just banging it to see what kind of noise it make. One child has figured out if you pick up the pop up toy and drop it all of the things pop at once making quite a noise. Another child has figured out that when you pull yourself

up by the ballet bar you can see out the window. Sometimes their hard work is rewarded by the sight of the birds on the feeder just outside our window or on special occasions a deer may appear in our field.

We are enjoying some outside time; it is cold but we bundle up and have fun. I think half the fun is chasing down the ones who pluck off their mittens just as soon as we get outside. Once we get one suited back up we notice bare fingers across the playground and are off to find those discarded mitts. Outside time can be a hassle, but it is so important to have even if it's just for a short time.





We are all looking forward to the winter break as I am sure you are as well. Although, the holidays and time off will no doubt test your patience as a parent at some point during the break.



Here are a few things to keep in mind and some tips for staying sane as you go into the busy holiday season. Cut yourself some slack this year and have fun.

As tempting as it is, you don't need to go to every holiday event or Santa sighting. Instead choose a few things that you really must attend or really want to attend. It can be overwhelming sometimes for little ones to endure so much.

Try to stick to your child's routine, if they have one, as much as possible. Don't skip the nap, or wait too long for feedings. In the long run everyone will be happier.

Don't feel like you need to entertain your kids all day long. It's ok give them time to play by themselves without play dates or company and to have down time.



When everyone is fried read books or put on music. Take naps or just rest and read on a cozy bed.

Play outside especially if we get snow.

Have one parent take the kids for a drive in the early evening to see all the pretty holiday lights while the other parent makes dinner and has some quiet time.

Hire a baby sitter and go out.

Whatever your winter break finds you doing I hope that you enjoy your time off and that the time you spend with your families will be joyful and full of good times.

Happy New Year everyone,

Terri



News from the Panda Bears

Susan Young,
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro,
Teacher

Angie Terino,
Assistant Teacher

I'm baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaack!!! And it feels great! It's amazing to see how the crew has grown, physically, verbally, cognitively.. the whole 9 yards! One thing that i noticed right away was their ability to sit through circle time for way longer than in October. One little guy's Mom has called to say they were running late a couple of times and asks, "Will he miss circle?" It is so cool that



he just loves it as do the others. If your child comes home singing a song that you aren't quite sure of what it is, what the words are, etc, just ask and I'll blast it out for you!! I want to thank Jen for running the show while I was gone. I hear things went very smoothly! Angie

is now in full "Panda mode". The help and support from Teresa, Gladness and Moya and a variety of others were instrumental in keeping the crew happy and stimulated. They are AWESOME!! We love having them in the Panda room and so do the kids. Thank you ladies!!

We've had fun doing some holiday decorations. Today we painted with evergreen branches. Some kids were swishing it all around. Some were slapping the paper with the greens. Some were rubbing their hands in the paint and bagged the greens! Some went home with paint in their hair. We'll do more with greens as the next week and half come along. I'll be bringing in a few different kinds for children to feel and smell. We'll look at pinecones, break them open and talk about how they are actually seeds. I like giving kids exposure to that great outdoors!



And speaking of the great outdoors, I went for a walk with a few kids. They trucked right along in pretty tall grass. We went under a big hemlock tree and stopped to smell the needles and see a few pinecones still on the tree. I'll continue these walks with small groups and whole groups sometimes. I'll show them where deer have nibbled on ends of branches, where the ground hog holes are (just you wait til groundhog's day.. my fav!!), how to slide on

their bottoms down this great hill that can get really slippery and there is no need for sleds, just to name a few. (If you look at my profile outside the door, you'll see a picture of me sliding down on my back) One of my absolute favorite things to do with the Pandas is to go out the gate of the playground and head out into the field. There truly is so much to see. Sometimes we just sit and sing, talk and look at the school buses across the road. We'll keep you posted and take pictures!

I just have to say how unbelievably wonderful the "school pictures" came out. That guy is amazing! I could not get over how great they were as I looked at the envelopes on the cubbies. I think we are so lucky to have him!

OK.... it was too cold for us to go out today so it really is time for warm boots, snowpants, etc. It might be easier to leave a pair of snow pants here. I recommend secondhand ones if possible. There is often a decent selection at LISTEN. Of course you can also bring whatever you select back and forth if you wish or leave a pair here ... up to you. It's getting cold out there!!

This is the last newsletter for this year so have a wonderful, peaceful and relaxing break.

Happy holidays to you all from the Panda teachers, floaters and subs that have been in our room this fall.

So very fondly,
Susan



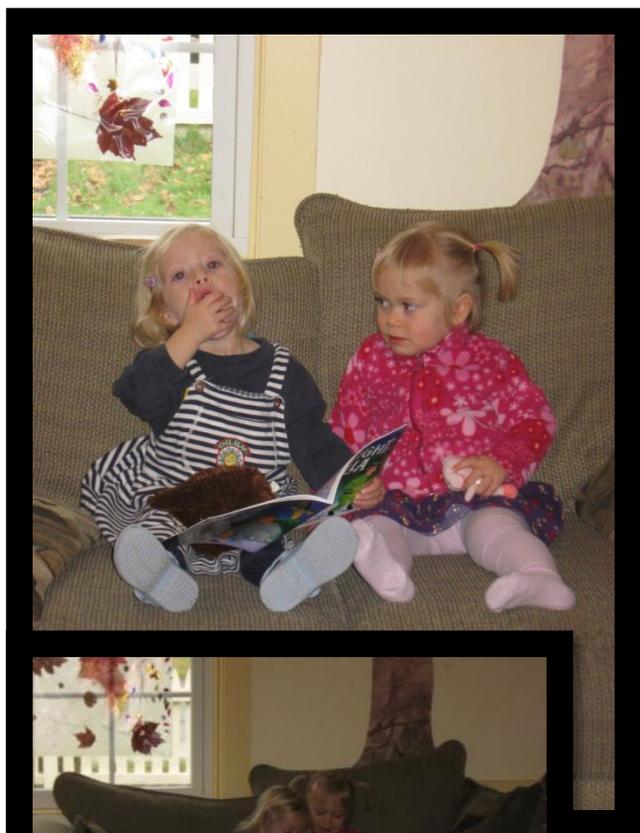
News from the Koalas

Terri Hollis,
Lead Teacher

Bobbie Lynn Stone,
Teacher

Jessica Lambert,
Assistant Teacher

Pictures are worth a thousand words! A great way to end the calendar year!









Happy New Year from the Koala Team

News from the Woolly Bears

Deb Girdwood,
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand,
Teacher

Kristin Ball,
Assistant Teacher

Greeting Woolly Families,

We thought for our December's newsletter we would share photos from our parent/guest teachers visits. The Woollies love when a family member or member of the community comes in and shares traditions, vacations or trips.

Amy and Sebastian shared with us their summer in Cape Cod. We learned about ocean life and the research that Mark and Amy were doing. Sebastian shared some of the fun summer camp activities that he was able to do. The children were fascinated by the exoskeleton of a horseshoe crab.



During our African safari unit Gladness, a DCCCC float teacher, came in and shared with us her childhood memories of growing up in Tanzania. We learned how to get water from a well and carry the bucket on our heads. She showed us how she made a ball out of fabric, papers and stings.





Coleen, Noah's mom, took us on an imaginary trip to Africa to share her photos from her recent trip to South Africa with the College. We enjoyed seeing pictures of a water buffalo, zebra, giraffe and short video of baby elephants playing.



Diwali is the Hindu festival of lights. Rhea and her mom, Swathi-Bethi, shared with the children their family traditions. Our class was excited to see the pathways of the Dartmouth green lite up with candles. They shared beautiful silk festival outfits that Rhea and her brother wear or have worn during their celebration. We also made one of Rhea's favorite sweet snacks, Kheer to share with the class.



Thank you to everyone who has visited so far. We are looking forward to having Kate's dad, Andrew come in to share their Hanukkah traditions and Beckett's dad, David, (according to Becket) will be sharing about pigs and his trip to Portugal.

We invite families to come in any time to share a book, family pets, or places you like to go, or your special family traditions.

We hope you all have a safe and restful winter break.

Deb, Barb and Kristin

News from the Polar Bears

Radoyka Garcia,
Lead Teacher

Tatyana Bills,
Teacher

Raquel Fluette,
Assistant Teacher



The Polars ended November with their annual Thanksgiving Feast! Polar parents brought in all the goodies and then the children baked, chopped, made their own turkey-place-mats and had lots of fun preparing for this event. Then... we ate and ate and ate! It was a special time spent together with our Polar families. We are very thankful for all of you in making this feast a success!

Now in December... winter is among us and Polars still love the outdoors! We get all of our winter gear on; there are Polars who can dress themselves! Some have been asking, "When is it going to snow so that we can sled?" Others just stand with their tongues hanging out waiting for a little sprinkle of snow to fall from the sky. WE WANT SNOW!

In the Polar Room children continue to PLAY! With so many different children, come so many different interests. We are enjoying castle play with dragons and princesses, building with Lincoln Logs, dressing up as wild animals, putting things together in the Creation Station, learning new songs, the alphabet and counting. Children are becoming more creative when setting up the Multi, while thinking of safety. All the time: Safety always comes first! We have also been talking about the holidays, particularly Hanukkah and Christmas. Many families in our room celebrate both at home too. Children have shared really fun books about the holidays and we have been doing art projects and displaying them around the room. Some projects include: making a menorah, paper plate snowmen, santa

hand prints, winter scenes with white paint and 'shake and bake' snowflakes! Children have really enjoyed these!

It has been the perfect weather for making our bellies warm and this week Jeff joined the Polars with a special project...how to make soup. Not just any soup! It was Turkey soup from the turkey carcass we saved from our feast! He also showed us how to make Vegetable soup for the vegetarians in our room. Polars peeled and chopped carrots, potatoes and celery then we saw how it all gets drained and separated and lastly, rice was added. We discovered that adding too much rice to the veggie soup makes it more like a 'rice casserole', but it was still so delicious! So we took some rice out and added more vegetable broth! Polars giggled but they thought it was great to have two kinds of soup and one 'casserole'; each one so tasty in its own way!

During the last week before the Holiday vacation, we will be celebrating in our Pajamas! We'll be having hot chocolate, baking cookies and watching a holiday movie.

We hope that everyone has a safe and restful holiday and we will see you all in 2011!

Ray and the Polar Team



News from the Grizzlies

Karen Gray,
Lead Teacher

Joelle Wyffels,
Teacher

Although the short days and busy preparations make this a hectic time, the wonder and delight of young children can remind us of the miracles and magic of the holidays. The Grizzlies enjoy the preparations involved in making crafts, gifts, special foods, and decorating. They enjoy the partying and being with family and friends. They love frolicking in the first snowfalls and anticipating all that's to come with holiday traditions as well as in the new year.

Too much anticipation, however, can put young children in a dither of excitement. And excitement does not always equal a good time. We take a low-key approach to the holidays. In addition to learning about different celebrations, and some of the ways Grizzly families are celebrating, we are doing many other things throughout our day. We want the holidays to be an unhurried and enjoyable time in the Grizzly room. Our daily routine is consistent and predictable, and as always, there is plenty of time for children to play.

Here are some glimpses of what's been happening over the past few weeks:

We've been learning about night...particularly about nocturnal animals and stars:

- *Matching the sounds some nocturnal animals make at night with the mystery animal;
- *Mapping out where some nocturnal animals live from around the world;
- *Dissecting owl pellets to identify the bones and what animals were eaten;
- *Creating some paper cut out nocturnal animals;
- *Learning about how bats use echolocation;
- *Creating another collaborative Grizzly tale: One Dark Night;
- *Learning about the only star in our solar system- the sun!
- *Better understanding the words "revolve" and "rotate" to figure out how we get day and night;
- *Making paper towel tube rockets;
- *Becoming fascinated with using gel markers and pencils on dark paper to create nighttime scenes;
- *Being mesmerized by different colored light instruments in the dark quiet space;
- *Reading many related stories.

We continue to do cooking projects on Tuesdays with the Grizzlies. Some of the snacks we have made lately are: "Owl Nests" with chocolate chow mein noodles,

“Turkeys” made from Ritz crackers and candies, yogurt biscuits, gingerbread cookies, and baked potato latkes.

Many games have been played as children work on their turn taking skills, good sportsmanship, memory abilities, reading and addition problem solving, and using our imaginations. They have enjoyed playing Granny’s House, Don’t Pick the Sun, word searches, dreidel, “SNOWY” bingo, nocturnal animal matching cards, and dice games. Impressive structures are also engineered daily from blocks, Legos, Magna Tiles, and even play dough. If you have some repairs or remodeling work to be done, don’t hesitate to ask the Grizzlies for assistance as they take the job seriously and safely with their goggles and hard hats on while they work with the various tools in our dramatic play area!

Joelle will soon be welcoming her son into her life and into this world. Her due date is January 6th and therefore will be on maternity leave for the winter term. Decisions will soon be made and announced to who will be filling in for her. We will make sure you have been introduced to this individual before the break and that the Grizzlies are acclimated and comfortable with this new teacher. I am anticipating a smooth and fun transition into the new year but of course we will miss Joelle and have to adjust to changes.

Joelle and I have both enjoyed meeting with all of you for family conferences. It is always pleasant to have the chance to connect, share insights, and develop goals together for the year ahead. Thank you for taking the time to come in to chat and working collaboratively with us to make it a fun and successful year for each child.



Grizzlies often request to do painting activities. They have contributed their own creative paintings to be displayed in the children’s section of the Howe Library throughout the month of December. We hope you will be able to go see this beautiful display together! We also hope that you will experience the warmth of family love and togetherness, the joy of life and friends, and peace for everyone this holiday season.

Happy Birthday to Sophia Shi (Yaya) on December 1st and Natalia Somoff on December 31st.

Happy Holidays,
Karen and Joelle

Shoe Box Gifts—for hours of creative play

Giving gifts to children usually means buying manufactured toys at a store. Here is an alternative gift idea that you can easily put together. Shoebox gifts are collections of small, familiar items that are organized around a play theme and presented in an appealing way. They show that expensive toys in fancy packages aren't necessarily the best.

- Decorate an empty shoe or appropriate-sized box and lid with gift wrap and stickers.
- Choose a theme, and put a label on the box which includes both a simple word and a picture of the theme.
- Look for most of the items in hardware stores, pharmacies, stationary stores, art/crafts stores and supermarkets.
- Use small containers, sandwich bags, or build dividers made with small pieces of cardboard to make compartments for the various items in the shoebox. Young children like to organize play things by returning everything to its place.

Make sure these suggestions are appropriate and safe for children to use independently; some items, such as food coloring, may require adult supervision.

Shoe Box Gift Theme Ideas: Use these or create your own.

BATH TUB PLAY

- small measuring cups and spoons for pouring
- empty plastic bottles with pump and squirt tops
- clear plastic tubing
- terry face cloth
- small baby doll for washing
- plastic and aluminum tops
- small plastic boats, animals and people

SHOE BOX GARDEN

- plastic-lined shoe box
- potting soil
- seed packets
- small watering can
- popsicle sticks
- garden tools
- gardening gloves

NATURE EXPLORER

- nature guides with pictures of birds, trees, woodland animals
- small sketch book and colored pencils
- binoculars
- plastic magnifying glass
- camera (toy or real)
- vest or small backpack with pockets
- small, re-sealable bags
- bag of bird seed

COLLAGE KIT

- roll of wax/craft/freezer paper
- recycled gift wrap and ribbon
- children's glue and tape
- fallen pinecones, other natural materials
- scrounge materials: old keys, plastic bottle tops, buttons, fabric scraps, etc.
- craft feathers, glitter

RESCUE/FIRST AID

- flashlight
- band aids
- fabric strips/ bandages
- ace bandage
- sling
- eye patch
- gauze
- stethoscope
- surgical mask

PLAYDOUGH

- buy a small can of non-toxic playdough or make your own
- garlic press
- plastic knife
- popsicle sticks
- wooden dowel
- plastic lids
- small tray/plate
- buttons/beads
- plastic animals



BEYOND SHOE BOXES

Recycle large boxes that can be painted and decorated for dramatic play. Create a car, spaceship, animal, creature, house, or cave. Extend the play possibilities by adding blocks, flashlight, tablecloth, and pillows.

MATERIALS:

- appliance box
- paint, tape, markers
- wallpaper samples to decorate and glue
- utility knife (for adults to cut holes)
- carpet samples