



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

January/February 2013

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Office: Jeff Robbins,
Sunnie McPhetres,
Terry Chase, Dawn
Cote

Floating Assistant

Teachers: Eileen Ruml,
Terri Crane, Kelly
Bosma, Gladness
Msumanje, Joel King,
Liz Harrington

Big Changes = Front Page News

Terri Hollis Moves to the Polar Room

Terri joined our staff in 1994 as the assistant teacher in the “Pooh Bear” room (3 year olds-in the classroom that is now the Woolly Room). While in that room, she experienced the change to multi-aged classrooms. In 2003, Terri was selected from a group of very qualified applicants to create the Koala Program. She has been there ever since! Until now that is! After nine years in one classroom, Terri has decided that after 9 years of being a Koala, she is ready for another change. She has moved into the Polar Room to reunite with old friends! The kids are all thrilled to have Terri as a teacher again. She is bringing fresh ideas and loads of energy and fun!



Susan Young Moves to the Koala Room



Susan joined the staff at DCCCC in 1987 when this building opened for business! She was the first and only Lead Teacher in the Panda Room. You probably don’t need your calculator to figure out that she was a Panda for 25+ years. What a surprise it was when she told us that she would like to move to the Koala Room. Susan has seen many staff change classrooms over the past 25 years, but this is the first time for her! Koala children are thrilled to be with Susan again! She has been enjoying getting the kids outside of the playground, buying a pet (fish) and just having fun with the kids!

So Who Works Where Now?

Teddy One: no changes: Debbie, Wendy, and April continue to provide care, love and fun for their infants and toddlers.

Teddy Too: no changes: Ray, Lori and Denise continue having fun and giving lots of hugs to their infants and toddlers.

Pandas: Jenn B and Teresa have been joined by Liz, a Floating Assistant Teacher, while we search for a new Panda Lead Teacher. They continue to be silly, have fun, and play, play, play! We are into the search process and will keep Panda families updated as we go along.

Koalas: Susan has joined forces with Jenn S and Loey to create fun and excitement for the Koalas.

Polars: Terri Hollis joined as the Lead Teacher, Tatyana continues steadfastly, Miranda has been hired as the Assistant Teacher. They are very energized to make the Polar Room a great place to be.

Woollies: While Deb is still on leave, Barb and Moya are quite pleased to have Joel (a Floating Assistant Teacher) temporarily join their team! They have been working extremely well together to provide the Woollies with consistency and great experiences!

Grizzlies: No changes: Karen and Kristin continue to walk to the Ray School every day and escort those Grizzlies to DCCCC for an afternoon full of fun, friends, and learning!

Other Important Staff: Eileen has returned to the role of floating after being assigned to the Polar Room while we selected the permanent lead teacher. Terri Crane is in a different classroom every day to provide time for classroom staff to plan their great programs. Kelly is a strong support in classrooms each afternoon. Gladness is in New Zealand until the end of March.

This is the current line-up! More changes may occur as we work toward filling the Panda position. We are fortunate to have opportunities for staff members to move around and experience different age groups without having to leave DCCCC. The children love being able to have the same teacher more than once. It is great that the familiar faces are everywhere!

From the Director

Dear Big Jeff

My son is a Teddy. My friends are enrolling their children in nursery school for next year. I can't believe it happens so early in the year. When do we have to decide about next year?

Signed,

Don't Want to Be Left Behind

Dear Behind,

Good news! Once your child is enrolled at DCCCC, you are all set until he goes to first grade. If you decide to withdraw or reduce the number of days he comes, just give me a minimum of 30 days' notice – more whenever possible. I will, however, send a survey in March to currently enrolled families to determine your child care needs for the summer and fall. If you have questions about enrollment, I'm the guy to ask.

Big Jeff

Dear Big Jeff,

I have a daughter in the Panda room. This is first year at DCCCC and we love it. I'm hearing other people talk about what group there child will be in for the fall. Does this mean she won't be a Panda forever? We're not sure we are ready for her to grow up!

Panda Parent

Dear Panda Parent,

You are correct. In September your daughter will be exactly one year older than she was last year and ever so much bigger, stronger and wiser. Congratulations! It is true that many children will move to different groups in the fall and that is true for all the Pandas. It is also true for some Teddies, all the Koalas and some Woollies and Polars (the ones that go to Kindergarten). The Grizzlies will go to first grade and, gasp, graduate from DCCCC. There's more to say about this and it applies to everyone, so I'll write a separate article in this newsletter. In the meantime, marvel at your child's growth and enjoy every new skill and concept she acquires. It doesn't go too fast – it goes at exactly the right pace. Happily our children only get older one day at a time, so we have plenty of days in which to enjoy their present developmental stage. Really!

Big Jeff

Fall class placements at DCCCC from Big Jeff

This is a secret because I don't want everyone to start worrying about it yet, but I have begun to think about fall groupings of children for September 2013. I have taken a very preliminary look at how children might flow through the building and move up to other classrooms. If I weren't keeping this a secret, I'd tell you that I really don't know which children will be in which classes for the fall. Well, actually, I do know a few things for sure and some other things maybe. And I know that there are always some exceptions. I also know that things keep changing right up to the last minute and, as Buzz Lightyear says, beyond.

In the Almost For Sure category:

- ❖ Grizzlies will go to first grade and graduate from DCCCC
- ❖ Woollies and Polars who are going to Kindergarten, will be Grizzlies
- ❖ The Woollies and Polars will be children who go to Kindergarten in one or two years.
 - Four year-olds will remain in the same room.
 - New three year-olds will join both groups
 - The new classes will be multi age groups of 3-5 year olds.
- ❖ Koalas will move to the Woolly and Polar rooms. I really, really don't know which. It depends on a variety of factors, the most compelling of which is space available.
- ❖ Pandas are the swing group. Most will go to Koalas. I'm thinking about the others.
- ❖ The younger Teddies will remain in their groups for another year.
- ❖ Older Teddies (about 18 months – it varies from year to year) will move up to Pandas or Koalas, depending on space, age and various intangibles.

Feel free to talk to your child's teachers and to me, but remember that I'm not actually thinking about it yet. April will be the month in which I have enough information to study the situation. It's one of the most important things I do during the year and I give it very serious consideration. I'm in charge of worrying and obsessing about it, which is good news for anyone thinking that they have to do it.

I will officially start thinking about this in March when I send you a Summer/Fall Child Care Needs Survey to get the information I need to progress to the next step of planning. At that time I'll ask you what your schedule needs are for summer and fall. I start with the premise that everyone will have an auspicious fall placement with the schedule you request. This is a massive jig-saw puzzle in which the pieces keep moving. It's a cognitive challenge and actually one of my favorite tasks.

Last note: "leaves of absence" are permitted only in the summer and only for absences of four consecutive weeks or more. In these cases a 50% holding fee is required and I need at least a month's notice. This give me time to plan accordingly.

Questions? Ask me.

2013-14 tuition rates

It's nearly budget season at Dartmouth, so I'm beginning to think about the upcoming fiscal year. Historically DCCCC tuition has risen annually by just enough to cover the cost of salary increases for staff. All other budget lines have been level funded. In the recent lean years when the College's salary increases were lean or absent, tuition did not increase. Last year was the first increase in a few years. We are all hoping for salary increases and I will let you know what affect they may have on DCCCC tuition.

Handyperson needed for trike repairs

DCCCC is seeking a discerning eye and a clever pair of hands to assess the mechanical health of our fleet of trikes and to perform the necessary repairs to restore them to their happy lives on our playground. There are 8 -12 vehicles waiting to receive a bill of good health, to have minor repairs or to be sent to trike heaven. If you are the sort of person who can operate a socket wrench and a wrecking ball, will you help? Sign up for one trike or more. Our place or yours. We'll order the parts and supply the coffee.

Greetings From Sunnie:

If you are looking for a great e-newsletter about parenting, check out the Connective Parenting Newsletter created by Bonnie Harris, Author of *When Kids Push Your Buttons* and *What You Can Do About it* and *Confident Parents, Remarkable Kids*, *8 Principles for Raising Kids You'll Love to Live With*. Along with the newsletter, Bonnie also sends her 8 Principles, one a week, to subscribers. Over the next 8 months, I'll look at the 8 principles and tell you how they translate to your child's life here at DCCCC. Bonnie's website can be found at www.bonnieharris.com.

Connective Parenting: Principle #1 — My Child Wants to Be Successful. All children want to do the best they can and please the most important people in their lives. No child is happy being manipulative or out of control. Trusting this principle means that when you see your child behaving unacceptably, it is because right now he can't do anything different; it's not that he won't. The "misbehaving" child is dealing with an obstacle that prevents successful behavior. Understanding that children want to be successful implies a trust in the child's capability, which is fostered by encouragement and connection, never by disapproval and blame.

Sunnie's take of what this means for children during their time at DCCCC:

It is our responsibility to provide children with an environment where it is safe to try new skills, fail, try again, fail, try again and ultimately succeed. Teachers at DCCCC understand that children need to be able to try things over and over. They understand that "being successful" looks different for each child. They understand that children sometimes get frustrated when they feel like things are not going as they had planned. They know that being successful can mean so many things.

- For the youngest infants it can mean receiving attention when needed. If their needs for human interaction, sleep, food, or a clean diaper are not met, they become "out of control." For an infant that might look like uncontrollable crying. At DCCCC, we believe that children's needs should be met. We give them the opportunity to express their needs and respond in a way that helps them to see that they were successful in letting an adult know that they needed something.
- For the older infants, being successful can mean being able to wait a minute or two before their physical need is met. It also might mean, learning to move around by themselves, by rolling, scooting, crawling or walking. Learning these skills can be quite frustrating and we give them the support and encouragement that they need in order to feel that even their first attempts are successful because they are trying.
- For toddlers, being successful can mean learning to communicate in many situations. Learning the social rules can be a tricky undertaking that provokes a great deal of

frustration. The teachers at DCCCC understand this and patiently help children find ways to express their needs and negotiate with others. The adults understand that children need many opportunities to practice skills and they often do things over and over again before they really feel successful.

- To a two-year-old, being successful may mean learning to play with another child rather than simply playing beside someone else. It may mean learning that they might have to wait to play with a toy that looks oh so inviting. It might mean having to find a different seat when they “can’t see” the story. The teachers at DCCCC know that they are instrumental in helping children look at situations from the point of view of others as well as from their own point of view. They help children to think of a different plan. They get involved and play with children in order to model and monitor skills. They show children how to play together rather than simply telling them.
- To a three year old, being successful might mean taking charge of his/her own body: learning to use the toilet independently, dressing alone, choosing the foods that they like eating, resting quietly. These things might interfere with more important things in life such as playing, so learning to master them can be a real challenge. Teachers recognize that children do not hold these things as high priority and they help children to see how balance can be achieved. They remind children that they will always have time to play after they have done the things that are important to their physical wellbeing.
- Success to a four year old might mean knowing that their opinions count and that they can make decisions on their own. They are preparing for that magic step of moving into “the big school” all by themselves. Teachers do all they can to recognize that four year olds are very helpful and have a great deal to offer for ideas and activities. They show children that they value their opinions. They help them to be assured that they are ready to move on.
- Success to five year olds can mean demonstrating skills in many areas. The five year old wants to be great at writing and reading and playing ball and building and making friends. Feeling accomplished can be very important to a five year old. Teachers help the five year olds by structuring a variety of activities that give them the chance to feel mastery but also have just enough challenge to keep them ever moving onward. They celebrate successes and point out the successes of all.

This is just a sampling of the ways that we recognize children’s desires to be successful. There are so many different ways. What are some of the ways that see your child’s teachers helping your child succeed? I love to hear about them!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- March 18, 2013 – In-service
Training Day**
- May 27, 2013 – Memorial Day**
- July 4, 2013 – Independence Day**

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)

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.

TAX ID NUMBER

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02-0222111
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News from Teddy One

Debbie Burnham,
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin,
Teacher

April Buchanan,
Assistant Teacher

Teddy One says goodbye to Madelyn and her parents on February 13th. We have loved watching Madelyn grow and become the spunky, fun toddler that she is. They all will be greatly missed.

We are also welcoming a new family: Jack Hafner and his parents, Jeff and Elizabeth, started on January 31th. Please introduce yourselves to our newest family.

With the addition of our new babies you may notice more adult help in our room from time to time. We want to give the infants the one on one time they need while keeping our toddlers stimulated. Wendy, April and I talk each week about balancing the needs of each child and we confer on planning activities. Our curriculum planning book is the red notebook on our sign in shelf. Please take a peek from time to

time to see our plans.

Milestones for the month:

Charlotte and Jillian turn one!

Scarlett W is a proud walker.

Hans and Xaxi are new crawlers.

Eva is scooting.

Kallen loves art projects.

Anne is starting to say names and easily says, "Holly", but refused to say the rest of our names!

Elliot, Conrad and Scarlett L. are settling in and getting to know us.

The children love to look at their family photos. If you have not done so yet, please send Debbie 4-5 photos by email. Please include the names you want your child to use for the people in your photos. We love to see their pets also!

We look forward to more winter fun along with Valentine's Day activities.

Fondly,

Debbie, Wendy and April



News from Teddy Too

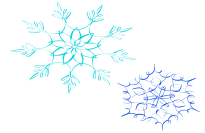
Radoyka Garcia,
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,
Teacher

Denise Ayres,
Assistant Teacher



¡Hola! Hello from the Teddy Too Room!
Happy New Year to all!



We are off to great beginnings as many have returned from vacations and got right into the groove of things! All have learned new skills and we are so excited to watch their every move. Some are showing more independence in doing things on their own, our older toddlers have easily transitioned from cribs to nap mats and developed incredible language skills, other little ones began eating solid foods, are stronger sitting up with little support and many crawlers have begun to walk! So many talents in such a short time, amazing.

Children who are very active during the mornings have quite a few choices: free play or a variety of art projects, playground time (especially with the beautiful snow), or gross motor time in the Little Multi—sometimes we get to join in the fun with Teddy Ones or Pandas. Singing and story time continue throughout the day and Tuesdays are a hit with *'Music with Brooke'*!

Our Eleanor will be away for quite some time and Teddies still recognize her pictures on our walls—we miss her! We are welcoming Gates Jones who has joined our group of older toddlers. He's a 'natural' here as he went right into the daily routine without any tears, *Wow!*

Also, come take a peek at our *Valentine* décor—we are so ready to celebrate this one as we consider that it's really Valentine everyday as we Love our Babies all the time!!!

Stay tuned for more adventures from our Infants and Toddlers!

Ray on behalf of the Teddy Too Team



News from the Panda Bears

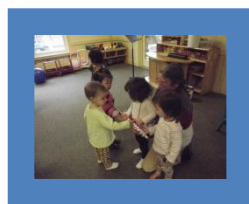
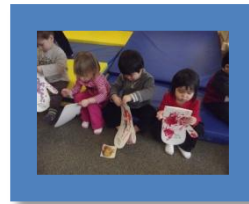
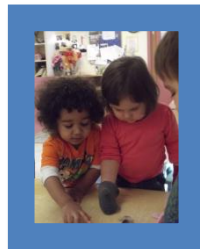
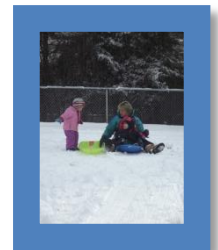
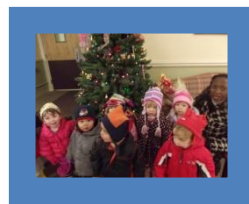
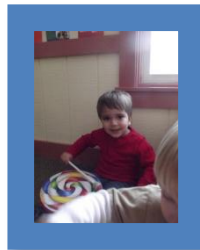
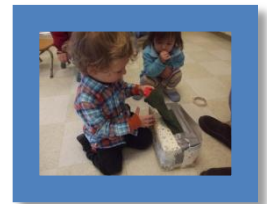
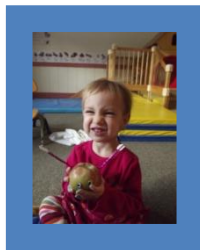
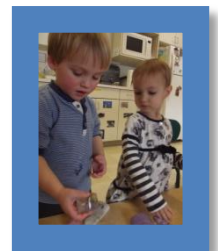
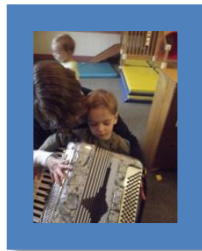
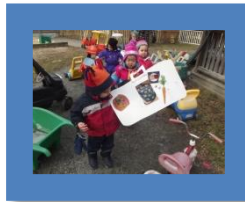
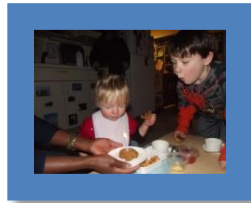
Jenn Boudro,
Teacher

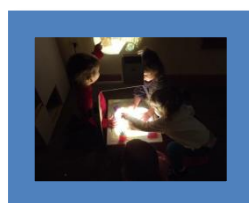
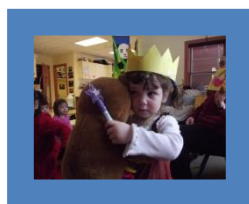
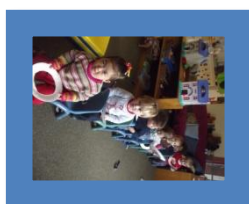
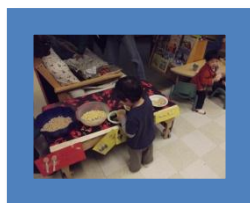
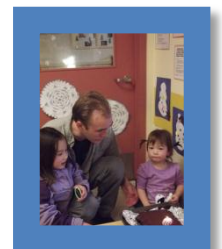
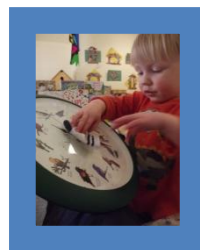
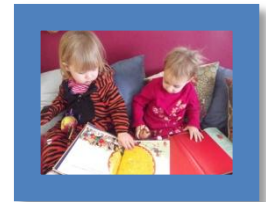
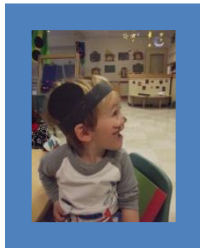
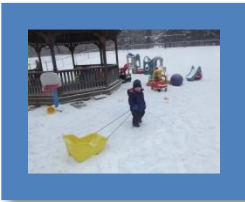
Teresa Hahn
Assistant Teacher

Liz Harrington,
Floating Assistant
Teacher

Pandas Just Want to Have Fun

The pictures say it all!





News from the Koalas

Susan Young,
Lead Teacher

Jenn Sprague,
Teacher

Loey Crooks,
Assistant Teacher

Hellllloooooo Koalas!!!

It has been so great to see so many faces that were Pandas last year as well as those Teddies that i got to know last summer. It has so warmed my heart to see so many smiles and get so many hugs! I will always miss those Pandas but the Koalas really have helped get my feet back on DCCCC ground. I know you all miss Terri so buzz on in that Polar room and say hello!

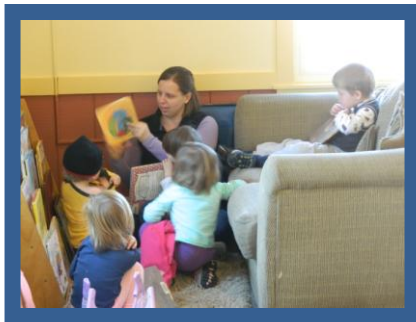
We've gone on several walks in the last week and the crew seems excited about that. We have gone across the bridge all the way to the rugby field (and deck !!) and to see a school bus in the parkinglot. I've told a lot of you but it was so cool to have the "trumpet playing school bus driver" play a couple of tunes for us. (how random is that?!!) We have explored the community gardens, found lots of pinecones to make bird feeders out of, the Woolly bear canoe and a ton of deer poop! I am looking forward to lots more timeout in the field and maybe flying a kite!

I have been thinking about how big this group has gotten. They are way faster out in that field than they were last year!! One thing that I love doing is storytelling. These guys are old enough now to gather around and listen to a few favorites

like Abiyoyo. They all know the book pretty well so can follow along listening. I try to use my voice in a variety of tones which gets a variety of reactions. It's amazing to watch when I start to whisper, their eyes get big and they lean forward so they don't miss a word. And of course when I get excited it kind of shows and spreads like wildfire! I am going to expand my repetoire of stories over this year. Another big kid thing I watched them do at circle was figuring out what song I was doing with only hand motions and no words! They looked at me like I was crazy as I looked at them (no words) and opened my hands, closed my hands, gave a little clap, etc etc. I've never done that before and it didn't take long for them to get it! It was the silence that struck me as they intently watched me and their minds were churning as they figured out what I was doing.

Ok folks.. here ya go,.. my first Koala newsletter! I'll be writing more about the big kid stuff we're doing as this is new to me and I am excited to explore the possibilities! I want to thank Jenn and Loey for their support in this transition for me and to all of you as well. It's going to be a great year!

Oh so fondly and happy to be here!
Susan for the Koala team



News from the Woolly Bears

Deb Girdwood,
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand,
Teacher

Moya Stevens,
Assistant Teacher

Joel King,
Floating Assistant
Teacher

Fun with WB Friends

As Valentine's Day approaches it is natural to think about children and their play friendships. Some relationships are in the moment and others will last a lifetime. In Woollies: *friends share, friends care, and there are friends everywhere* to.....

- Build with Legos: big structures, little structures, or intricate structures.



- Try the hop-step-step polka dance with partners 'round the multi.

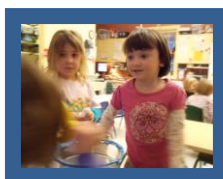
- Count and create patterns with cubes, stickers, and big body poses.



- Slosh in the snow puddles on the playground.



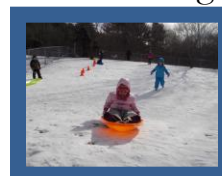
- Examine the polar bear that grew BIGGER and BIGGER in a container of water.



- Stir the batter and bake WB goodies.... yum.



- Choose different table activities.
- Coast down the sledding hill.



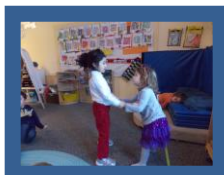


- Strum the guitar and sing a song.

- Punch a ticket for dinner on the WB Polar Express Coach.

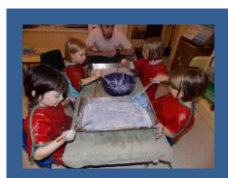
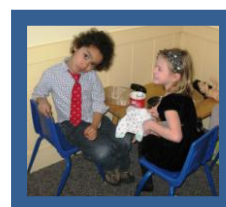


- Dance with friends.



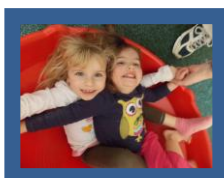
- Read a book from cover to cover.

- Care of the sock babies in the house corner.



- Investigate a gooey mixture of rainbow shaving cream in water.

- Take a turn playing the board game Dinosaur Bingo.



- Spin inside the top with giggles and feet dangling in the air.

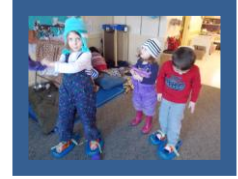
- Ski on the long wooden blocks with poles in tow.





- Do the belly scooch down the multi mats connecting with hands and feet.

- Snowshoe along the trail but watch out for the moose!



- Slide all the way down the hill on snowsuits, and then trek to the top again for another bumpy ride to the bottom..... 3-2-1 way to go!

Fun with Woolly friends where memories happen!



Barb for the Woolly Bear Team

News from the Polar Bears

Terri Hollis,
Lead Teacher

Tatyana Bills,
Teacher

Miranda Arruda,
Assistant Teacher

Hello Polar Families!

This is the last Polar Newsletter that I will ever write! We are very happy that Terri has moved into the Polar Room! While it is great to be able to concentrate on my “office” work and pay attention to other classrooms, I sure miss being a Polar two days a week. I stop in from time to time and look through the window often. It does my heart a world of good to see the freshness and excitement and activity that is occurring in the room. The children look so happy and engaged. Life is good when you are a Polar!

In my current position, I know who all of the children in the center are and they know me. We can say hello when I walk through their classrooms. I can sit down and do activities with them or share a snack or play with them in the multi, but it is not the same as the time that I spent in the Polar Room. I feel so blessed to have had time to get to

know this group in such an up close and personal way. I want to leave you with my fondest memories created by your children (in no particular order).

- Nunu is always engaged in music class and his soul sings out with his whole being.
- Steven wants to know everything; he is always questioning and always wanting to know more.
- Guillem loves to sit in my lap and sing songs together or just watch what others are doing.
- Alice is a true friend and knows what she thinks is important.
- Elan can light up a room with his smile and his eyes twinkle when he thinks that he might be mischevious.
- Zavi is always open for a snuggle and can just melt into your body.
- Calvin laughs from his belly and loves to play the stinky feet game.
- Harper has amazing physical expression and loves to tell and hear stories.
- Olivia loves tiny things and can play with dinosaurs for a very long time.
- Gael enjoys words: using them, listening to them, and playing with them.

- Anaya thinks that living life is so important that she just has to do everything without slowing down.
- Roxi wears life boldly; she knows what she likes and what she doesn't like and she makes her feelings known appropriately.
- Brendan can either lie still and watch others for a very long time or he can move, move, move and laugh – it all depends upon his mood.
- Zachary thinks very deeply and seriously about things, but still lets his four year old boy self shine through.
- Grace has an amazing world inside her mind; she shares that world through stories.
- Cooper loves creating his own music and has the moves to go with it.
- Brennan loves to dig deeply into every subject; he has a question for every situation.

There you have it, impressions of the Polars that will stay with me for a lifetime. Thank you for welcoming me into your children's lives for the past few months – it meant a great deal to me! Have fun with your new Polar Team – it will be amazing!

Fondly,
Sunnie

News from the Grizzlies

Karen Gray,
Lead Teacher

Kristin Ball Cole,
Teacher

Happy New Year and Happy 6th birthday to Ezra Kleinbaum on January 12th, Lauren Evans on January 18th and Avery Brooks on February 17th! We want to officially welcome two new Grizzlies and their families into our program. Lauren Evans joins us on Mondays and Fridays. She is in Mrs. Landry's Ray School kindergarten class. Her older sister, Olivia, used to be a Grizzly. Her parents are Michael and Nicole Evans. Another new friend is Jasper Holtzheimer. Mrs. Schimke is his teacher at the Ray School. Jasper attends Grizzlies Tuesday-Thursday and has a younger brother, Sebastian, at La Petite Creche. His parents are Paul and Andrea Holtzheimer. We are enjoying getting to know both Lauren and Jasper and Grizzlies have been very enthusiastic in accepting others into their play in addition to being helpful in teaching them about the Grizzly day.

We are excited to have both Brian Goodness and Dartmouth student, Becky Kimball back working another term with us. You have been seeing new faces at the end of the day and hopefully have had the opportunity to meet our new Grizzly afternoon assistants. Please introduce yourself if you haven't met them yet. Their pictures are posted by the Grizzly attendance clipboard and their schedules are as follows:

Monday: Julia Roper (student) 1-4:00 and Becky Kimball (student) 1-5:30

Tuesday: Eric Mead (sub.) 1-5:30

Wednesday: Carol Curtis (sub.) 1-4:00 and Kelly Bosma (float) 2-5:30

Thursday: Bergina Francois (student) 1-4:00 and Becky Kimball 1-5:30

Friday: Brian Goodness (sub.) 1-5:30

Can you believe your children are past the half way mark of Kindergarten already? You are probably aware of the countdown happening at the Ray School to mark the exciting 100th day of school. By the time you receive this newsletter, we will have already celebrated the 100th day of Grizzlies on January 29th! We'll be doing lots of math and counting activities involving this big number. Beginning a new year is a great opportunity to talk about the form of measurement called time. We've looked at calendars and have talked about days, weeks, months and years. We'll get into learning about seconds, minutes and hours, and working on learning how to read a clock and tell time by the hour and half hour. Following this unit, we will introduce money and learn about coins and their values while recognizing the presidents represented on them.

Winter discussions and activities have begun now that it looks like and feels like winter. We've been busy making snowflakes, learning about penguins, doing experiments with ice, going on walks and searching for tracks in the snow and having fun sledding on our new sleds! Only one extremely cold and windy day has kept us indoors thus far. It is crucial for

your child to be well layered and dressed for the snow and cold everyday. The cold weather can limit our outside time on some days so we do our best in the winter to have additional multi days to provide more active time.

February 10th marks the beginning of the Lunar New Year- the year of the snake. We will be learning about some of the traditional ways this fifteen-day festival is celebrated in China and Korea. We will be celebrating by making snake crafts; dragon masks and puppets along with blow painting fire breathing dragons; making Chinese lanterns; assembling tangram puzzles; baking Chinese moon cakes and learning about the cycles of the moon as well as the animal zodiacs. We also hope to ring in the new year by making some homemade noisemakers. These spin drums, also called pellet or rattle drums, are found throughout Asia. In Japan they're called den-den daiko; in India, damaru; and in China, bo lang gu. **Please save and send in your empty oatmeal/bread crumb type canisters with lids to make these drums.** Thank you to Bella's mother, Jean Liu, who will join us on February 13th to read a story and tell us about her family traditions as well as share some dumplings with us. If your child was born in 2006 then they were born in the year of the dog and that makes Grizzlies born in 2007 a boar (pig).

We look forward to celebrating Valentine's Day (more information will appear in cubbies soon) and will be sending you highlights of special events taking place for the February vacation week- All Day Grizzlies on Feb. 18th-22nd. Please let us know if your child will not be attending some of or all of the vacation days.

All the best,
Karen

Miriam R. Osofsky, Ph.D., Licensed Psychologist

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Tips for Fostering the Mental Health of Children with Special Needs Sibs

By Miriam R. Osofsky, Ph.D

1. Your child will have complex feelings about his or her sib – love mixed with anger, tenderness mixed with frustration,, protectiveness mixed with a wish to distance. **Validate the full range of feelings your child has about his/her sib**, including feelings that are painful for parents to hear (anger, embarrassment, even a wish that the sib would “disappear” or “were never born.”). Validating your child’s anger, frustration, and embarrassment fosters communication and a strong parent-child relationship, gives your child emotional support, and fosters your child’s self-esteem and coping mechanisms. Tune in to your own reactions, and **get the support YOU need so that you have the ability to “hear” your child.**
2. Honesty is validating. **Be honest about and do not try to minimize the trauma or difficulties the child and your family are experiencing.** Honesty builds your child’s trust in and attachment to you, and this, in turn, fosters your child’s resiliency.
3. Create as much **normalcy** for your child as possible. Use your resources – family/friends and paid respite providers – so that so that you and your spouse can have experiences with your child that would not be possible if the sib were to attend. Give your child lots of attention at these events. Help your child find outlets that bring him or her great joy – whatever your child loves – arts, sports . Create a safe, quiet place in your home for your child to study, relax, and have “shelter “from the storms” that may occur.
4. **Model a brave and honest way to cope with adversity.** Model how one enjoys and appreciates life at the same time that there are worries or stress (moving between joy and pain is the human condition). Teach how to balance compartmentalization and enjoying the moment, with expression of painful feelings, and problem-solving.

5. Remember that it is normal for your child's attitude about his or her sib to shift over the course of a day – your child's feelings about his or her sib are complex (love may be mixed with anger, compassion and tenderness may be mixed with frustration), It is also normal for your child's feelings about his or her sib to shift developmentally. A child who has been protective or warm toward a sib at age 5 or 6 sometimes become a teenager who is more distant from the sib, or worried about being embarrassed by the sib's behaviors, if they are challenging,
6. Protect your child from “parentification” (assuming responsibilities or making sacrifices beyond his/her age or maturity level) -- make sure your kid can be a kid. Encourage your child to express needs and dreams, and ensure your child has the opportunity to work toward personal goals.
7. Model self-care (maintain time for yourself and your marriage/significant other, as well as your own interests and dreams)
8. Model how to talk to others about your unique stressors, and how to ask for help or accommodations with self-respect