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Wandering Woodchucks
Judy Labrie, Eileen Ruml, Terri Crane, Kristin Cole, Jenn Murphy

Welcome to the 2016/2017 School Year!
Dear Big Jeff,

Who is this child inhabiting MY child's body? Usually my child is totally thrown off by changes in his routine, but he cruised into his new classroom with confidence and maybe even a swagger. I heard him use "please" and "thank you". What's up with THAT? I was prepared for the worst.

Signed,
My Child is Missing

Dear Missing,

Don't worry; your child is in there. Watching children step up to meet new expectations and challenges is one of the truly rewarding parts of parenting and teaching. Congratulate yourself on having remained calm and strong for your child during this time of change. He has drawn his confidence from yours. Congratulate the teachers, too. His old teachers helped prepare him for the new experience and the new teachers were ready with a program suited to his needs.

Your years of hard work in teaching and modeling good manners is paying off. You may not see this stellar behavior at home, but your son has been learning socially appropriate behavior along. A successful strategy in new situations is to watch and listen, then to match one's behaviors to the requirements of the new setting. But be prepared, once children have learned the rules, it's time for the next stage – objecting!

In the next few weeks, as your child becomes increasing comfortable with his new situation, he'll want to know if he's interpreted the terms of engagement correctly. He may be asking himself, "So, do I have to behave this way all the time? Do all the teachers know these rules? Can they help me manage my behavior and keep me safe? What happens if I can't or don't want to meet these expectations which, by the way, are more exhausting and tiresome than they first appeared?"

That's a head full of things your child needs to know and they aren't easy to conceptualize or express, so he may have to find the answers through action. This entails stretching or breaking the rules to see what happens. Another way to learn about social expectations is to watch others. If your boy is an action oriented kind of guy and prefers to engage in vigorous objection to the new status quo, he will be serving a function for the whole group. If he takes a turn testing a limit, another child can learn what happens from watching, sparing him or herself the aggravation of having to test it him/herself.

You can be confident that we are ready, willing and able to help your child figure these things out. We'll even take pride in his progress through this stage. Don't worry; this stage will pass. As the year progresses, the next stage is Harmony in Group Living. Hang on; it's just around the corner.

Signed,
Big Jeff
Dear Big Jeff,
My son is very rule oriented. Not that he always follows them, but he likes to know what they are. After he changed classrooms, he's been giving me a run for my money when we leave DCCCC in the afternoon. Would you be willing to go on record with a few DCCCC rules for departure time? Frankly, it's a relief to me to depersonalize the situation by referring to The Rule. That way I'm not always the bad guy. It's a little easier on me to be able to say, "I'm sorry honey, that's the school rule."
Signed,
Mother of a future trial lawyer.

Dear Mom,
I'd be delighted! It's a great idea to refer to The Rule rather than argue with your child. That way it's nobody's fault, it's just the rule. If your child doesn't believe you, feel free to have him check with the teachers, with Sunnie or with me. Just a few basic rules should cover the territory.
-Children must be with a teacher to play in the multi. The Multi closes at 5:00.
-Children must ALWAYS be with an adult, in the building and outside.
-Children NEVER leave the building ahead of the adult.
-After children are signed out and leave the building with an escort, playing on the sidewalk, in the driveway or on the driveway island is not permitted. If parents agree (and you are under no obligation to agree!), children may play on the lawn in front of the Grizzly wing.
Good luck,
Big Jeff

PS You may wish to remind your child that school rules are still in effect when you arrive. Home rules will apply when you get home. Children do readily understand the difference, but they may test the waters periodically. A simple reminder should help e.g. "We are still at school. The school rule is you must stay with me. Wait for me to walk into the multi."
ANNOUNCEMENTS

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

-Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25
  Thanksgiving Break

-Friday December 23- Monday, January 2, 2017
  Winter Break

-One day in March 2017 for Staff In-service – TBD

-Monday, May 29, 2017 Memorial day

-Tuesday, July 4, 2017 Independence Day

-Two days at the end of August for transition prep: TBD

Working Mom’s…come meet other working mom’s at monthly lunches…

The Working Mom’s Group is a very casual group that gets together once a month for lunch to talk about whatever is on our minds. We all know how challenging it is to balance a career and a family and it's really nice to have others to talk with and get ideas or just vent. We discuss all types of things ranging from pregnancy, potty training, allowances, child care options, bedtime routines, food, summer camps, etc. Any topic is open for discussion and people have been so helpful in offering advice and assistance when needed. Mom's in the group have all age ranges of kids and everyone is welcome. Typically we have anywhere from 6-12 women at each lunch. It would be great to have more so tell your friends or bring a friend and mark your calendars for upcoming lunches!

Here are the next lunch dates:

Tuesday, November 15
Wednesday, December 14

All lunches will take place at 12:00 at Ramunto's in Hanover

If you have any questions about the group or would like to be added to the e-mail list (to get dates for upcoming lunches and reminders), please e-mail megan.d.sobel@dartmouth.edu.
Policy Updates

The staff at DCCCC has spent a great deal of time over the past six months working on issues of consistency throughout the DCCCC program. There are many things that are appropriately different from room to room in order to provide care and learning that is developmentally appropriate for the children in each age group. There are other things that should be consistent throughout the program. We convened a consistency workgroup with representatives from the staff in each classroom to discuss issues that were raised in the last staff and family surveys. That group met five times and had very thoughtful and informative conversations. We will be updating you on items that might be particularly important to families.

Going outside

It is stated in our family handbook that we play outside every day because we know that fresh air is important to helping children (and adults) stay healthy. There have been questions in the past about whether or not we would be going outside in the rain or on a cold day. We have created the following guidelines to answer any questions. These guidelines are intended to help you make sure that your child has appropriate outerwear for the weather.

- OWLS and older classes should go outside everyday regardless of weather with the exceptions of electrical storms and temperatures below 10°F ambient temperature.
- Chickadees should go outside every day with the exception of electrical storms, hard rain, or temperatures below 20°F ambient temperature.
- Classes can take children outside in colder temperatures if they wish, but they must take them out if the temperature is at or above the guideline.
Nut policy

We will continue our nut-free policy.

*Please continue to send dated notes in your child’s lunch each day. This is very important and, although it sounds dramatic, it really could save a life.*

New updates to our policy:

- Special treats for teachers should not be consumed at DCCCC except for whole fruit, labelled packaged goods or foods prepared at DCCCC
- If families or staff bring in treats for teachers, the item should be wrapped and consumed outside of DCCCC at a later time

We ask families to be aware of this last requirement. If families wish to give food (chocolate, homemade cookies, etc.) to staff members to show appreciation, it will be appreciated if the gift is wrapped so that staff members can take it home.

Inclement Weather – Delayed openings

We will no longer have delayed openings due to inclement weather. We will follow the Dartmouth College policy and our services will only be curtailed if Dartmouth College curtails operations.
Recent Events at DCCCC

Food/Fitness Day
Kids and teachers joined Jenn (Hedgehogs) in the big multi to learn about healthy foods and exercise. Later, each child had a variety of nutritious foods to try for afternoon snack. Each class provided a different taste-delight to share with all classes.
Members of Michele Tine’s (Badger parent) Theories of Education Course came to DCCCCC to observe early child language and behavior development.

Sunnie told interactive stories to two smalls groups of children.

The first group (a few Hedgehogs and a few Otters) enjoyed a story from Sunnie’s story chest. (sorry no pictures of this session.

The second group (a few Badgers and a few Black Bears) participated in a *magic book* which is really just a block that you make up the words and pictures in your own heads.

Michele’s class had the opportunity to see real kids in action and to see differences in development as children grow.
Leaves are Falling… Autumn has Arrived!

Autumn is a personal favorite season of mine- full of beautiful colors, a time to harvest apples and pumpkins, and more! Here are a few ways to connect nature to the Arts this season.

The Spark of a Nature Walk

Go for a walk- the environment around us provides such vivid colors at this time of year! Listen to the sounds of nature, observe various colors, and the motion of the falling leaves of Autumn.

A simple walk outdoors can inspire a variety of different activities:

Nature Bag: Collect leaves and various materials in a bag as you explore the trail. Talk with your child about what they pick up: What made you decide to choose {the object}? Ask them about the size, shape, and color of the objects they selected. Your collected materials can be used for other activities!

Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert

Literature Follow-Up: Read the story Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert either before your nature walk or after. Talk with your child about how the author used natural materials [leaves, acorns, etc.] to illustrate the story. Use the materials that you collect on your walk to make your own leaf man! There is no wrong way to create a leaf man- each is unique and special in its own way.
**Painting with Natural Materials:** Instead of using paintbrushes, allow your child to create a painting using collected materials from your nature walk!

**Still Life:** Bring a clipboard (or hard object) with paper and a few crayons and have your child find an object, such as a leaf. Allow younger children to observe the object and ask about what colors they see and what crayons they might need. Let them color their paper inspired by the object. Older children can be asked more in depth questions [Leaf: “Is the entire leaf just one color or are some parts different?” “What shapes do you notice when you see the leaf?” “Does the leaf’s shape remind you of something else?”].

**Leaf Dancing:** Take time on your walk to observe the way that leaves are falling from the trees with your child. Do they move quickly or slowly? Dance along with classical music as you sway, spin, swirl, and gently fall to the ground like a leaf.
**Song of the Season**  
“Gray Squirrel”  
[Actions are in italics below the lyrics. You might talk with your child about the squirrels they have been seeing working hard to collect nuts for the upcoming winter!]

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel, swish your bushy tail.  
*If you are sitting: Put hands in front of you pointing forward (your tail) and shake your tail on “shake your bushy tail”.  
If standing: Put your hands together behind your bottom (tail) and shake your tail on “shake your bushy tail”.*

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel, swish your bushy tail.  
Repeat the action you chose above- standing or sitting.

Put a nut between your toes,  
*Bend or stretch and touch your toes.*

Wrinkle up your funny nose.  
*Tap your nose with your pointer finger.*

Gray squirrel, gray squirrel, swish your bushy tail.  
Repeat actions from first two lines.
Can you believe October is nearly gone? Soon enough it will be November and soon after holiday time. Let’s not rush though. We have welcomed a great group of chicks to the room.

We began with a full group and currently are missing some friends. We had David leave us in mid-September to set sail on his new journey in London. We always think about him and hope him and his family is doing well. We said bye to Eli who was with us for a short time. Luckily we get to see him still 😊 Goodbyes are never easy!

We currently have seven chicks, and soon enough we will have three other friends joining us. We have Matthew, Caleb, Jonah, Aadhıı, Zora, Adeline, Andrew & joining us soon Avens, Eason and Yaya. We are so excited for this year. The age group is great because we have some younger babies and some that are walking and even talking. We have a very diverse group and this makes it very fun. Some of the younger children watch the older children and even mimic things they see.

The chicks have been settling in to their new room and getting to know one another. We have had such nice weather and been able to spend time outside and truly appreciate the fall colors. We have gone for walks, made some art work, and spent time playing with our chick too friends.

We are excited to say we have Brooke back! 😊 Brooke is our music teacher; every Tuesday we get to spend about 45 mins with her. The babies are loving here and all the wonderful instruments she brings. (pics included)

Coming up we will have our family gathering. It will be in the morning time. Please keep look out for an email with these details.

We always like to remind families that we work on your baby’s schedule. We follow their needs and their routine as best as we can. Know that if your child’s routine is different at daycare then at home that is normal. The stimulation, noise, and the overall environmental difference make mirroring home routines unlikely. We try to keep the room as dark as possible and we use a white noise machine. Always come to us with any questions/concerns, etc. We love getting feedback 😊
Reminders with please & thank you

- Wash adults and infant (siblings too) hands in the kitchen bathroom or the chickadee kitchen prior to entering the classroom
- Sign in and out each day
- Supply a good amount of indoor and outdoor clothing appropriate for the weather (weather is all over the place lately)
- The center provides wipes, sunscreen, desetin, A&D oitnments, crib sheets, light weight blankets, sleep sacks, milk (Co-op from local farms & a variety of snacks appropriate for infants/toddlers eating finger foods. Please let us know if we may use DCCCC provided items or if you would like us to use any of the above that you wish to provide. I have spoke with many of you about the am and pm snack schedule and decided I am just going to post it on the fridge and have you initial next to what snack your child can have.
- Enter & exit the infant room with quiet door & quiet voices as there are often sleeping babies
- Look over our half doors to the chickadee rooms; some of our babies may be playing directly on the other side
- For lunch and snack items please provide a lunch box/bag for the fridge
- Make sure you are putting a peanut/tree nut free note in your child’s lunch box daily. We have allergies and it is extremely important to have this note!

I think that is all for now 😊

Ali, Denise & Deserai
WELCOME CHICKADEE TOO FAMILIES

We are off to a great start in the Chickadee Too room. There is a good group of children, who are becoming friends already. They are exploring their new environment and getting comfortable in the space. Lori, Moya and I are getting to know everyone and working hard to meet everyone's needs. We are enjoying the process!

There is a nice age range, from just 3 months to 15 months, so we have runners, walkers, crawlers and one not quite ready for all that motion. We will have one more friend joining us in November, who will be the youngest of all.

We have been taking advantage of the beautiful fall weather (or should I say Indian summer) and getting outside to play as much as possible. The children are learning to rake up the leaves and play in them. Even the youngest are getting out in strollers to bask in the sun. We are trying to get siblings to visit outside and inside, which makes everyone happy. We will continue to go out as much as we can, so please make sure your child has appropriate clothing and footwear.

The teachers will be choosing their primaries soon and begin to work on Fall conferences. We will contact you to set up times in the beginning of November. If there is anything specific you want to discuss, or any concerns or requests you have, please let me know.

Picture day was a big success, I hope you all are pleased with the results. It takes a great deal of organizing to get it done but is ultimately an enjoyable endeavor.

We have been setting up some projects with a variety of mediums, and are in the process of learning that art is not for eating (although we realize that is how we first learn about things). We will continue to expand our experiences with art and sensory learning.

Music classes have begun again and we love having Brooke back on Tuesdays. The children really enjoy the singing and movement and especially the instruments they get.
to play. Check out the display in the hallway from our first music day. We share this, as well as outside and multi time with the Owls, so we are making lots of new friends to play with. The Owl children, having recently graduated from the Chickadee rooms are very kind and giving companions, and are eager to show the "babies" the ropes. It is a joy to see friendships blooming in the school!

Teresa for Chickadee Too
Dear Parents,

Here is a typical day in the Owl Room:
7:15am-The first teacher arrives to set up the room, get snack for the morning, get paperwork ready for the day and, most importantly, get the coffee maker ready for April and Debbie! Wendy is an early bird and often has time to rearrange the classroom or the little multi before her time officially starts.
7:30-8:30am-Children start to arrive. Maya checks out the activity we have set out and collects some small books for us to read. Louisa gathers up a baby and wants us to wrap her baby in a blanket. Other children watch out the window to see the birds, chipmunks, and if we are lucky, deer and the lawnmower. Some need a hug as they say goodbye to mom and dad, but all are easily comforted now and the sadness ends quickly. We read lots of books, sing songs and follow the lead of the children. If they are interested in a certain activity we will join in and invite others to join us.
8:30am-Snack. Cole starts saying, "eat, eat, eat" as soon as he notices we are fixing snack! As soon as he sits down, others join him asking for bibs.
9:00-9:30am-One teacher cleans up snack while the other teacher changes diapers. Diaper time is a one on one time that we take advantage of. We speak to each child and try to get them to interact with us. We encourage back and forth conversation and ask them about their night, their family and their pets. Charlotte takes this time to stand up in a chair and smile at us, waiting for a teacher to come help her get down.
9:30-11:00- This is activity and outside time. Whenever possible we do activities outside. Outside time gives children more freedom to explore and make decisions on their own. We observe nature each day, counting leaves, noticing colors and sounds. Nicole goes around on her own, pushing a shopping cart. Jack goes to a car, but often checks in with Nicole to make sure she is still close by. Charlie likes to go off by himself on his own adventures, often ending up by the fence watching big kids or at the water hose. Ada prefers the sandbox and "cooking. As soon as a teacher sits by her she offers them something to eat.
11:00-11:30am-One teacher goes inside to prepare lunch for up to ten children. We check for nut free notes, see if any food needs to be cut or warmed and move warmed items from glass dishes to plastic once it is warmed. When lunch is set we bring in everyone to wash their hands.

News from the Owls
Debbie Burnham, Lead Teacher
Wendy Irwin, Teacher
April Buchanan, Assistant Teacher

Debbie Burnham, Lead Teacher
Wendy Irwin, Teacher
April Buchanan, Assistant Teacher
Libby will immediately start chanting, "yogurt, yogurt, yogurt". We let her know she can have her favorite once she eats some other food. We encourage independence, but will help to assure that everyone gets enough to eat.

12:00-12:45pm-One teacher cleans the kitchen, one does a round of diapers and one plays in the multi. Joshua immediately goes to the CD player in the multi letting us know he wants music. He has a smile and starts to sway as soon as the music starts. Julia gets a puppet on her hand and goes around to show everyone it. Zoe starts going up the stairs and down the slide, over and over.

12:45pm-Nap. Everyone lays down. Torin starts in talking quietly saying to cover him up, rub his back and various other requests. Once everyone is asleep we sterilize dishes, get afternoon snack and work on daily sheets.

1:15-3:30pm- Ada stirs and we go into the multi. She says, "books" and we read books until other children join us. Often the Chickadees and even the Hedgehogs will come into the little multi with us.

3:30-5:30pm-We have snack, do a round of diapers and then play. Soon we will be unable to go outside due to the dark and we will offer activities such as play dough, coloring, dancing and lots of reading. We reassure worried children that they parents will come for them as soon as they are done work.

5:30pm-The last teacher cleans up the room to get ready for another morning.

Our days have a flow to them and we divide our time checking in with children individually, observing groups, smiling and laughing at what a child said, and sharing information with each other. If a child is having an "off" day, crying or being upset, we will spend time with them, helping them through their day. We give and receive hugs throughout the day and we truly delight in spending time with your children!

We have received one set of family photos and the children are enjoying looking at them. Please email me photos of your family including extended family and pets. Also include what names you want your child to use (mom, daddy, nana...). No more than five photos please.

Thank you all for sharing your child with us.

Fondly, Debbie, Wendy and April (and Judy)
Hello Families,

What a wonderful start to the year we have had! All the Hedgehogs have settled right in to their new classroom and are doing wonderful. The Hedgehogs have started to master the routine of when they come in to start their day (lunchbox away, wash their hands, and find an activity). We have started practicing to roll up our long sleeves now that colder weather is here before we wash our hands. We started the year off exploring apples, apples, apples! The Hedgehogs really got into all of the different apple activities from painting with apples, baking with apples, and picking apples off of an apple tree! We love giving them lots of different activities to be able to explore and discover new things at their own pace. We look forward to having a wonderful year together and watching how much these Hedgehogs grow!

News from the Hedgehogs
Jennifer Sprague, Lead Teacher
Jenn Boudro, Teacher
Kimberly Smith, Assistant Teacher
We have had a great start to our year in the Otter room. The group is getting to know each other (if they weren't together last year). They are learning how to interact and socialize with one another. This does indeed cause some friction at times. It can be so hard to wait for a turn with a favored toy and it can be much easier to just take it and in a young child's eyes, immediate gratification is really, really important to them! We are working with each child to help them verbalize their needs and wishes. It is important for a child to take time to understand when another is sad or angry and what may have caused that feeling. Even if they are not making eye contact with the other child, they are aware of a variety of emotions that may be displayed. This helps them identify emotions and learn how to empathize with one another. I am sure this will be an on-going process this year as it is other years. This is also an age where kids may imitate each other. You may notice a variety of behaviors that make you wonder..."where did that come from?!" Children often witness a behavior that another displays and want to try it on for size. I'm thinking about how many times a day that I may ask one child to stop doing something like sitting on a shelf and re-direct them to another area only to turn around and the rest of the crew is practically lining up to try sitting on a shelf! It doesn't automatically occur to them that it's not ok for them as well just because I asked another child to stop. You may see some testing behaviors as well and perhaps a feeling of regression as children try different ways of behaving that they may have seen in the classroom. We'll continue to encourage acceptable behaviors and give lots of verbal praise when we see them. We will use positive re-direction and positive guidance techniques daily!

As we move into cooler weather, please be sure your child has boots as we often go on a walk or hike. I'm betting mittens and hats are close by so please send them in as well. We have a variety of Sharpies so please be sure to label everything. Thanks.

I wanted to talk a little about our policy for snacks and lunches. We offer a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for snacks, often paired with a carbohydrate which children also need. Morning snack may resemble a light breakfast and is often available to children when they are hungry. Snack is pretty much wrapped up by 9:30 or so. At lunchtime, whatever is in your child's lunch box is offered unless you tell us otherwise. We encourage your child to eat but will never insist on a certain food be consumed before another is offered. We want to encourage healthy choices and offer varieties. During afternoon snack, your child may be offered leftover lunch or a prepared snack. Please keep us posted if this isn't working for you and perhaps your child isn't eating much for dinner if they ate snack at 4-4:15 after their nap.

We will be planning on family conferences towards the end of November to early December. If you would like to meet prior to then, please let me know and we'll set a time up. I will be sending home a questionnaire to check in with how things are going, anything you'd like to address at our meeting, etc.

We will be sending out a calendar for November with some activities and special days. We will be talking about families as the holidays approach and through out the year.
Please send one of us some photos of your family including extended family as well as pets. We'll set up an area where these can be viewed daily. It provides great verbal and social opportunities as children love to tell us about their families..... which person is a cousin or grandmother, etc. It is sure to provide good conversation as the year goes on.

Happy Fall!

Susan for the Otter team
Greetings Badger Families,

We are at the time of year when teachers are already looking back and realizing that your children have taken a leap in their development. As I mentioned the other day in a note home how heartwarming it was to see your Badgers cheer other friends up the hill, and some took it as far as running back and taking hands of others to help them physically finish what was challenging. This is an example of how they are learning to be members in a group, accepting others also have needs. Teachers are seeing moments like this throughout the day. Whether it is sticking up for a friend that they feel had something first or suggesting ideas of how to fix something we are seeing more and more of this type caring behaviors.

Another notable difference is the period of time the Badgers like and are able to focus on doing different activities. This is great because it allows teachers to expose them to different activities that help encourage growth (in a way that they are unaware is learning). A lot of cutting practice with scissors has been happening. Give them brightly colored strips of paper, an envelope with their name to put all the pieces in, and they are good to go for several strips of paper. This is when we show them if they hold this way, low and behold they can feel the success and want to do more.

These Badgers are big on learning new songs and are figuring out to listen for the Rhythm. Picking songs and chants that have repeat rhythm is important. We have been learning about different animals and what they do when the cold comes. A favorite animal to think about always seems to be the Bear. Your children love and learned the next chant very quickly. Let's just say the words AGAIN, AGAIN were expressed. It goes as follows:

What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
Over there
Papa Bear (growl a big large growl)
What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
Over there
Momma bear (growl a medium growl)

What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
What lives in the deep dark woods?
Over there
Baby bear (growl a little growl).

So all is well in the Badger Room. We are continuing to learn each and every day. It is such a learning experience to play all day. Your Badgers are doing just that with a great deal of enthusiasm.

Until next time
On behalf to the Badger Team
Terri
Welcome to Black Bears!

All of our friends from the Otter and Badger rooms, as well as a brand new friend to the center, have been settling in together in the Black Bear room. This has been a time of transitions and new beginnings. We are having a terrific time learning about new routines, materials, classroom space, teachers, and new friends. We have been learning about caring for ourselves, caring for one another, and caring for our environment. We have started new traditions; signing in each morning at the easel, answering the question of the day, morning meeting, lunchtime song, and ringing the bell at departure for a fun way to end the day! Mommies and daddies have begun to ring it on their way out the door in the morning as well!

Some of our favorite spaces inside our classroom include the Bear Cave and the Loft. The Bear Cave is a cozy space for one or two friends to chit chat, look at books, or snuggle with a comfy pillow and some stuffies. It is a quieter space where Black Bears can take a break from the busy classroom environment.

In the Loft, Black Bears feel like they’re in a completely different space where they can build tracks for trains, construct with Legos, listen to story tapes, and participate in teacher directed activities such as board games or music and movement.
We love the natural playground outside our back door, and spend lots of time there. We take advantage of this open space to play group games such as; Duck Duck Goose, Octopus Tag, Freeze Tag, and What Time is it Mr. Fox? We also use the natural loose parts (bark, stones, sticks, tree stumps) to build campfires, fishing spots, and Fairy houses. We have taken a couple of long nature walks to investigate beyond our fences. We walked quietly along and listened to the sounds of wind blowing through the branches, birds singing, and even some trucks far off in the distance.

The garden is a quiet space outside our Block Area windows where we can go to slow down and smell the flowers, water the plants, play in the space between the bushes, and explore under the stones. We notice how it’s changing with the season.

We love special visitors in the Black Bear room! You’re always invited to stop in to read a story, help with a craft or activity, or just sit on the floor and play!

We have celebrated some very important birthdays this month. Happy birthday to Arabella, Dory, Elliot, and Soroush!