



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

January/February 2011

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Office: Jeff Robbins,
Sunnie McPhetres,
Terry Chase, Amy
Potter

Winter Is Fun at DCCCC



From the Director

Big Jeff's administrative announcements

Summer and fall enrollment

Toward the end of March, I'll survey currently enrolled families to determine your scheduling needs for summer and fall. This will give me the first look at fall enrollment and the opportunity to think about fall age groups. Generally speaking, age groups are divided as follows.:

Grizzlies – attending kindergarten

Polars and Woollies – three by Sept. 30

Koalas – two's and three's

Pandas – one and a half's to two and a half's

Teddies – under 18 months

Please note that these are guidelines and vary from year to year. There is usually some overlap between groups. Placement decisions are made based on space available and with input from teachers and parents.

Financial agreement

Reminder:

One month's notice of a child's withdrawal is required. Parents will be liable for the balance of a full month's tuition if inadequate notice is given. One month's notice is also required if parents wish to reduce the number of days a week their child is enrolled.

New for this year:

- 1.) A \$100 non-refundable enrollment fee for new enrollees will be charged at the time enrollment is confirmed. The deposit will be applied to the first month's tuition. Any tuition balance must be paid by the date of withdrawal.
- 2.) Absences of 4 consecutive weeks or more may be arranged in the summer for a holding fee of 50% of tuition. A thirty day notice is required.

Dear Big Jeff

Big Jeff had so many letters this month that some topics including naptime and whining are to be addressed in future newsletters. If you have questions that were not answered this month, be sure to talk them over with your child's teachers.

Big Jeff's readers are a great resource. Several folks asked about sibling rivalry. If you'd send along your successful strategies for a harmonious household of children and adults, I'll put the responses together for next month. Send suggestions to Jeff.Robbins@Dartmouth.edu In the meantime, here are some thoughts from the American Academy of Pediatrics:

www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/pages/Sibling-Rivalry.aspx

www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/family-dynamics/pages/Dealing-with-Sibling-Rivalry.aspx

Dear Big Jeff,
How can I get my toddler to let me brush her teeth?
Signed,
Cavity Fighter

Dear Cavity,
Role modeling is good, so be sure that your child sees you brush. Don't be fussy about technique right away. If she'll chew on her toothbrush while you brush your teeth, make note of a good start, "Look, you are brushing your teeth just like Daddy." Using the theory of successive approximations you can make small refinements one at a time: opening wider, getting the back teeth, brushing back and forth, etc. Don't forget the positive reinforcement: "We are really getting your teeth clean!" "Your wide open mouth made that easy!" "We did it!" "We are quite a team, aren't we?" If you have discovered that your child doesn't like the taste of the toothpaste you are using, let her pick out a different one or go without for a while. Remember that children's taste buds are pretty sensitive.

If you've been trying to pry your child's mouth open or having World War Three in the bathroom, back off for a while. Stating the obvious, tell your child "This toothbrushing thing really isn't working for us right now. Let's take a break. Next week when you are older, it will be easier.

If there is a Big Kid (simply defined as older than your child) who would do a demonstration, that might be impressive. Other resources include your child's teacher, of course, as well as your dental hygienist. And don't forget to check your library for picture books on the topic.

Smile (and show me those pearly whites)
Big Jeff

Dear Big Jeff,

My son is an only child. How should he respond when other kids ask, “Why don’t you have any brothers and sisters?” For that matter how should I respond when their parents ask me, “Oh, is he your only child? Did you want more kids?”

Signed,

It’s None of Their Business

Dear Nonesuch Mom,

People who ask intrusive questions may indeed be rude and improperly socialized or they may assume a closer relationship with you than you do with them. They may not realize that you are very tired of answering the same question. They may not even have stopped to think that is really a rather personal question akin to asking the parent of more than one child, “Why do you have so many kids? Didn’t you know what was causing it?” If you are a naturally funny person and can pull off something witty, you might go for something like, “My other children are invisible.” Or “Oh my goodness, did I lose one?”

Here are some other lines you could try:

“Well, how did you decide to have the number of children you did?”

“You know what? I love my family just the way it is!”

“Oh my, now THAT’s a personal question.”

“I know you don’t mean to pry.”

“How about those Red Sox?”

As for your child, keep in mind that the question probably doesn’t have the same effect on him that it does on you. Even if he has had a troublesome interaction about it, he probably won’t hold on to it unless you do, so using one of the major Rules of Parenting, don’t over react. Listen to his concerns and respond accordingly. It’s like talking to your child about sex – just answer the question he asks. If your child would like some choices of things to say, you could make up a list together: Maybe:

“Well, that’s my family.”

“I don’t know. Ask my Mom and Dad.”

“Because my mother said so.”

“Why are there two children in your family?”

“Let’s go play.”

Whatever you choose to say, I’m confident that you will demonstrate your kind heart and good upbringing.

Big Jeff

Greetings From Sunnie:

What an amazing winter we are having! As you can see by the pictures in this issue, the children and staff at DCCCC are having a great time in the snow! It is our policy to get children out every day unless conditions are unsafe. Getting outside in the winter is very important to staying healthy and growing strong! There is so much to do outside in the winter. Here are a few things that I have observed children doing here at DCCCC this winter:

- Sledding on the hill
- Making snow sculptures
- Building igloos and snow forts
- Shoveling
- pulling sleds on the level ground
- climbing on small play structures
- packing snow
- moving snow
- playing ball
- running in the snow
- creating ice sculptures
- looking closely at ice and snow
- watching the snow blowers
- catching snowflakes on their tongues
- playing in sheltered areas
- taking walks
- digging tunnels
- watching x-country skiers

And that's just what I have observed! This certainly isn't "bad" weather as far as the kids are concerned – just the weather that happens this time of year and gives us great things to do outside! Happy Winter!

For more ideas of things to do in the winter with young children check out these websites:

http://www.netmums.com/winter/Fun_things_to_do_outdoors_this_winter.1767/

http://singleparents.about.com/od/havingfu1/a/winter_fun.htm

ANNOUNCEMENTS



DCCCC Alumni Family is clearing out some of their little kid items. All items in good condition. If you're interested in any of these, please e-mail holly.taylor@tufts.edu. All items are in Hanover and/or we can arrange transfer at the Ray School or DCCCC.

Peg-Perego Prima Pappa High Chair: \$25

Pack N' Play: \$15

Spring Horse: \$25

Train Table for wooden train set (just the table, not the train set): \$20

Little People sets (includes garage, playground, school bus, and train): \$20 for all

(or make us an offer on an item of interest)

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.

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

- March 21, 2011 – In-service Training Day**
- May 30, 2011 – Memorial Day**
- July 4, 2011 – Independence Day**

Did You Notice?

There is a display on the front foyer wall of three years' worth of group photos.

Take a look and see how much the kids have grown!

Here Comes Tax Time

Dartmouth College's EIN

#02-0222111

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

Resources for Families

VINS Summer Camp registration now open:

<http://www.vinsweb.org/index.php/discover/nature-camp>

Information about Hanover Recreation Summer camps (including Circle H camp)

[http://www.hanovernh.org/stories/storyReader\\$674](http://www.hanovernh.org/stories/storyReader$674)

Events In the Area:

Friday, February 4, Community Dinner in Hanover: 5 to 6 p.m., Our Savior Lutheran Church, 5 Summer St. Free. Sponsored by Students Fighting Hunger of Dartmouth College. 914-523-7383 or sfh@dartmouth.edu.

Friday, February 4, Free Friday Family Movie in West Hartford, VT: 7 to 9 p.m., West Hartford Library, 5133 Route 14. Free. 802-295-7992 or whartfordlibraryvt@gmail.com

Wednesday February 9, 9:30 AM- At the Chandler Music Hall, Randolph, VT: Huun-Huur-Tu – Tuvan Throat Singers, all seats \$6, suitable for all ages
http://www.chandler-arts.org/daytime_series.php

Huun-Huur-Tu come from the former Soviet Autonomous Republic of Tuva, a sparsely settled region of grasslands, boreal forests, and mountain ridges that lies 2,500 miles east of Moscow, situated at the center of Asia, north of Mongolia. This indigenous music highlights rare instruments and preserves some of the world's oldest form of music making. The best known genre of Tuvan music, xöömei (throat-singing), comprises what might be called a lexicon of musical onomatopoeia in which natural sounds are transformed into musical representations. <http://www.huunhuurtu.com/>

Friday, February 11, Books and Beyond, Montshire Museum of Science

This program combines great children's literature and hands-on activities for fun science learning and exploration. Each day features a different book and activity. For children ages 3-5 and their parent or caregiver. Free with museum admission. 10:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.

Saturday, February, 19, Igloo Build, Montshire Museum of Science

Join local expert Dr. Bert Yankielun to learn the structural secrets of building igloos and other snow dwellings, and then try building your own! The event begins with a demonstration by Dr. Yankielun at 10:30 a.m. Igloo building takes place until 2 p.m. Free with museum admission, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

Recent Events at DCCCC

Pajama Day, Dec. 22, 2010



Winter Snack Buffet Hosted by Woollies



December Sing-a-Long With Jeff



News from the Float Team

Eileen Ruml

Teresa Hahn

Moya Stevens

Gladness Msumanje

Sunnie made a big mistake in the last newsletter by forgetting to include the most fun thing that Eileen has in classrooms. So here it is! The most fun that Eileen has had in a classroom:

The most fun I have had in a classroom was when
Wow, only one?? These stand out in my mind, among MANY, MANY, MANY more... .

Mud surfing on boogie boards with the Grizzlies during a particularly rainy early summer.

Dancing with the forest fairies on a Polar walk.

Experiencing gardening and worm composting from a child's perspective.

Sharing mindfulness with children in all the classrooms -
Breathing, simple yoga, tai chi and qigong, bells and chimes, guided visualizations, etc..



News from Teddy One

Debbie Burnham,
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin,
Teacher

Keri Wolfe,
Assistant Teacher

Wendy, Keri and I have discussed how we have two distinct groups within Teddy One this year. As of right now we have equal parts babies/young toddlers that still take morning and afternoon naps plus older toddlers that take one nap right after lunch. While this is sure to change, for right now we are enjoying spending lots of one on one time with each group.



Once the morning nappers are sweetly sleeping we provide Amelia, Roxana, Harper, Leilani and Guillem with varied activities according to their interests. Recently Keri introduced clay to them and the next week added cotton balls to the clay for snowmen! They have glued white circles for snowmen pictures, explored snow in the sensory table and spent time stomping outside.

This older group has shown an interest in letters, colors and shapes. Wendy remembered a shape rug that had been stored away and it now is a focal point in our room. I made some letter cards with fabric pieces to use at quiet times.



Once the "big kids" are down for naps we turn our full attention to the next group. Annabel, Greta, Katharine, Nate and Kirsten love music and movement. Pat-A-Cake is a current favorite. We put on music or sing and

they shake their bodies and smile. They love exploring the toys we put out for each week. The washer/dryer is a big hit. Some can open the dryer door and put wash cloths and hats in to dry.

This younger group is wonderful at cheering on their friends as they learn to roll and walk. They clap for each other as new milestones are reached.

When dusk comes we have been turning down the lights and getting out small flashlights. We put on soft music and watch the lights move around the room. Everyone gets a turn holding the flashlights and making them dance on the walls and on our clothes.

Keri, Wendy and I love watching how these two groups interact and develop. The younger group definitely watches and learns from their older classmates. Each day is a new adventure and we love being a part of it!

Fondly,
Debbie B.



News from Teddy Too

Terri Crane,
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,
Teacher

Denise Ayres,
Assistant Teacher

We have been enjoying all the snow. Most of us are getting used to getting all the snow gear on and off. We have some toddler snow troopers that love to get out there in the deep stuff.



They love the sledding and being pulled around in a sled. We do have a few that need some coaxing once we get out there, but once they are being pulled around in a sled they seem to have fun. Thanks to the snow

blown path the cars and trucks still get ridden in and the little log cabin and house get played in. We have some who like the kitchen set up in the gazebo and will play there the whole time we are outside.



We are looking for extra snow pants or snow suits 12 months-2T our supply is low and occasionally we need back up for a forgotten pair. If you have any that your child has outgrown and would like to donate them we would greatly appreciate it. We do love to get everyone out so if you have snow clothes for your children please bring them in every day.



This month we are planning to do family conferences. We'll plan a time to sit down with each of you and go over your child's growth and development. Watch your email for conference dates and times.



Faith Taylor is our newest baby in the Teddy room. The Taylor's are no strangers to DCCCC having had their 3 other children go through the center. Welcome to the Teddies Faith and the whole Taylor family.



At the end of February we will say goodbye to Emma and her family. We wish them well and will miss them.

Enjoy the snow.

Terri, Lori and Denise

News from the Panda Bears

Susan Young,
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro,
Teacher

Angie Terino,
Assistant Teacher

Can you believe it is almost February??? (and it will be by the time you get this) And yet another storm is on the way! We are getting out as often as we can except when the temperature dips into that subzero area. It is a challenge for the group to walk in this stuff but we've had a few paths snowblown or packed for sliding to help them navigate the playground. We've got a long way to go before spring so we'll just tough it out and do our best to move around. I am bummed out that we'll never find the groundhog's hole out in the field with all this snow. I'll be sure to show them when some of the snow melts!

We will be gearing up for family conferences, hoping to meet with you by the end of february. If there is anything in particular you'd like to address at the conference, let us know and we can put our heads together and see what we can come up with for potential solutions or things to try.

I also wanted to let you know that a toilet training workshop will be held by mid-late spring when interest is often high!! . Terri Hollis and i will put a date out there with plenty of notice and hope you can make it. Meanwhile, ask us anything!!

Here are a few things we've been noticing about the Panda crew!

-Alistair arrives happily and ready to play! He always seems to gravitate to the "free play/toy" area and most likely finds some kind of vehicle to play with... anything with wheels!! He also loves music with Brooke and circle times.

-Brendan has shown us his eye for detail and worked hard at finding the nose on a paper groundhog to put glue on. And he was successful and quite happy about it! Brendan seems to enjoy most activities as well as the big multi. He is talking more and more these days as well!

-Cooper loves the sports scene. He likes pretty much anything to do with a ball (or puck!!) and loves to throw and kick them. he makes us smile when he calls out to his brother saying "buckett, buckett" !!! It's been fun for him (and us) to have his brother visit.

-Gael seems to enjoy most activities. He loves the big multi in particular but is often spotted looking at books with a teacher. He is starting to label some letters as well. He also loves music with Brooke.

-Grace- moves with ease all around the classroom being a social butterfly. Her interests range from babies to fire engines to painting to whatever else is going on! She displays a wonderfully empathetic side and worries if someone is hurt or crying.

-Jadon loves books!! He has become very verbal and is quite capable of letting us know what he does (or doesn't) want. He too has a wide range of interest when it comes to toys. His face is all smiles when he runs down the hall to the big multi as well!!

-Mary also is very expressive verbally. She enjoys painting, gluing and all sorts of art activities. She too loves books and music. She is quite a role player and has been spotted holding 2 little gingerbread people facing each other that are having a conversation, her face scrunched up with expression!

-Tejasi loves music and is often seen close to the CD player. She also enjoys the big multi and the climber out there. Tejasi also loves books and can be spotted either holding one turning the pages or sitting in a teacher's lap looking at one.

-Tony is talking so much these days.. We hear a big 'YUMMMMMM' at lunch almost daily!! He loves going to the big multi where he can climb.. one of his favorites things to do. He loves small cars and trucks too.

-Ramin seems to be enjoying his Panda time as well! He immediately gravitates to guess what?? Cars and trucks!! He had fun with some in the little multi letting them go down the big ramp mat and laughed when they bumped at the bottom!

-Zachary is a happy guy! He loves circle time!! He works hard at following actions in songs and games. he loves the music class with Brooke as well! He loves being outside too. He is quite content with his group of friends in the Panda room and often greets them by name.

So... what a great bunch of children we have in the Panda room!!

Fondly.

Susan for the Panda team.

HAPPY GROUNDHOG'S DAY!! hmmmmmm i smell a cake!!

News from the Koalas

Terri Hollis,
Lead Teacher

Bobbie Lynn Stone,
Teacher

Jessica Lambert,
Assistant Teacher

Hello Koala Families,

So..... We are all back and settled. Some children took rides on trains, others on plane, and yet others took long drives to faraway places. I think children are like adults in that it is always fun and exciting to go away and do something different, but yet it is just as nice to come back home and return to our comfort zones and routine.

Perhaps another routine we have returned to is having to fight off those nasty winter bugs. We have had coughs (which I can best describe as a room full of barking seals), along with runny noses, and low energy hovering in the room for the last couple of weeks. We have of course implemented good hand washing for teachers and children alike. Washed pillows and sterilized toys. This too shall pass!

Now that we have discussed germs and bugs, let's move onto a pleasurable topic. The Koalas have had a wonderful time discussing the topic of hibernation. Although bears are not "true" hibernators, they are too fun to imitate and we can't pass over talking about. So we have created a snow covered cave or den in our room. We have created beautiful paw print animal paintings and made bear ears to wear. We have learned new finger plays about bears. Bobbie-Lynn told the children an Alaskan Bear tale while eating bear shaped cookies that they help make.

We have tried to use the outside winter elements for inside play and exploration. The children had a wonderful time creating colored ice and snow sculptures inside the classroom. They showed how patient and persistent they can be by chipping out objects that were frozen inside ice cube shapes using various tools. I have seen such a shift and increase in their ability to stick with a project and see it through till the end.

In the next few weeks we will begin to explore the meaning of Chinese New Year. The teachers are no experts and rely on what we can research. So if anyone would like to share parts of that tradition with us please feel free to let us know. We will also be creating a classroom post office area. This will lead in nicely to creating individual mail boxes (shoeboxes). This will be a nice time for friends to make each other notes, and for those who wish you may send in valentines to be delivered as well.

Cheers to Good Health and Happiness
On Behalf of the Koala Room
Terri Hollis

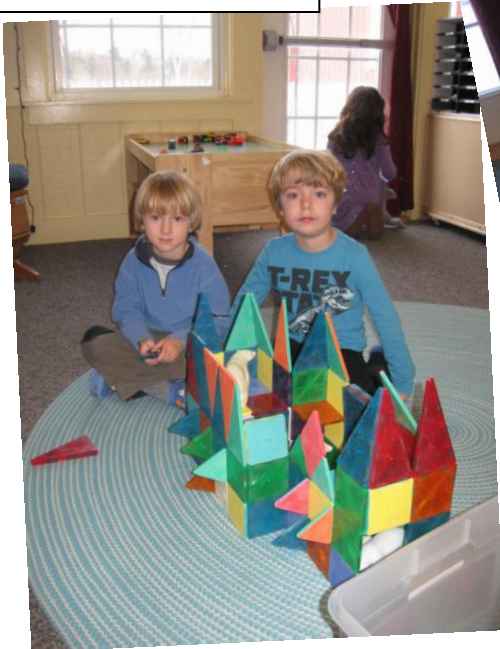
News from the Woolly Bears

Deb Girdwood,
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand,
Teacher

Kristin Ball,
Assistant Teacher

Arctic Fun In The Woolly Room







Warm Wishes from the Woollies



News from the Polar Bears

Radoyka Garcia,
Lead Teacher

Tatyana Bills,
Teacher

Raquel Fluette,
Assistant Teacher

The Polar Bears began the winter of 2011 with excitement! We got right into play and explored a new set up in the classroom as well as new puzzles, toys and games. Polar teachers also planned and organized meetings with parents for conferences. That allowed all of us to get to know each other better and share all the wonderful experiences about your children as they develop new skills as preschoolers.

We started out the year playing in beautiful, fresh snow that fell during the holidays. Snow volcanoes, pulling sleds, building small forts and eating snow and icicles, and bringing in snow for our sensory table-- have been some of the most popular activities. We discussed and made projects about ocean life, hibernating animals and cold weather animals. We played Bingo, memory games, Legos and have been learning letters and numbers. Some Polars have been reading words! We have been experimenting with "Sink or Float", making ice paint, watching jelly-ice cubes grow, discovering how to create patterns, and exploring many 'sorting' activities. The older Polars have requested activity sheets like, "Hidden Pictures," "Mazes", "Letter tracing," and counting in multiples of one's, two's and three's...fantastic!



On the very cold days when we cannot go out, Polars really enjoy dancing! We move some furniture out of the way; turn down the lights and play some of our favorite songs. Some children prefer just playing instruments as others take over the dance floor! Polars also love audio books and finger-plays, which they request throughout the day. We also look forward to spending time with Brooke during music every week!

Last week we began ‘woodworking.’ We talked about the rules of woodworking, primarily about safety...children responded very well to these rules! It is so exciting to watch them so focused and working so hard on the beginnings of their structures.

We are looking forward to our next field trip at the Lebanon Opera House on January 31, to see a play, ‘If you Give a Cat a Cupcake’, book by L. Numeroff! It’s going to be great!



Wishing you all a *healthy* year!

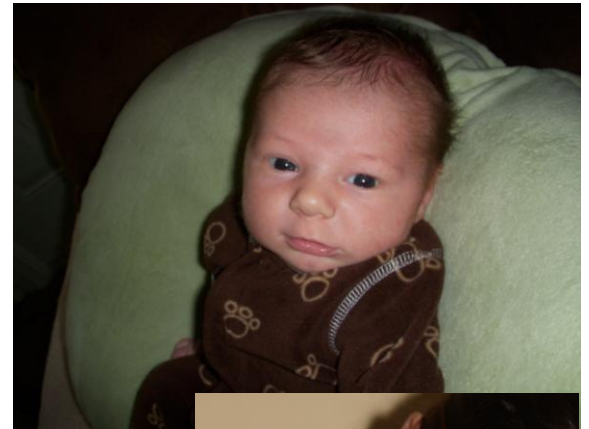


News from the Grizzlies

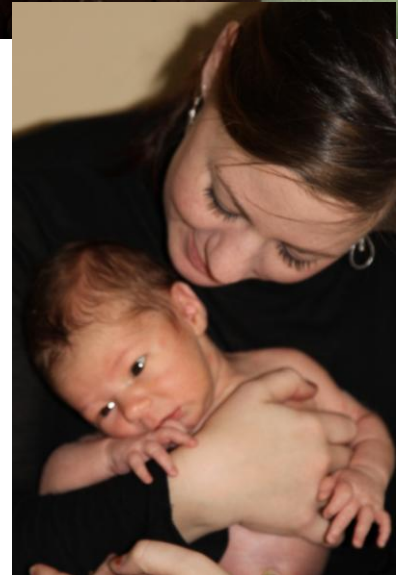
Karen Gray,
Lead Teacher

Joelle Wyffels,
Teacher

Happy New Year! Grizzlies are excited to be back together! We returned with the wonderful news of the birth of Joelle's son, Edison Joseph Wyffels. He was born on 1/1/11...now that's quite a birthdate! We all miss Joelle. She keeps us updated and sends pictures frequently and the Grizzlies can't wait for her to visit!



We have been most appreciative and excited to have April Buchanan take over Joelle's maternity leave. April brings many great ideas and commitment to the program. She has a caring and responsive approach and keeps one step ahead of the Grizzlies.



Fun has been had in the snow...particularly pulling each other around in sleds, shoveling, and beginning to construct a cooperative fort. Soon you'll be hearing about our adventures of sledding on the BIG hill! We have been reading stories and talking about what different animals do in the wintertime. We have also shared our favorite wintertime



activities and get the thrill of watching the cross country skiers zoom by our windows! We await the arrival of our winter birds to discover the food we have strung for them that adorn our garden. We are also getting ready to hang our berry sun catchers for our eyes to enjoy and the birds to feast on.

A new favorite game we play together is “Mystery Word”. The Grizzlies will state that they beat the teachers every time and it’s true! The children are becoming great readers! Many of them have made a breakthrough in discovering that they have the skills required to read and write many words independently and they are willing to take more risks. The mystery word is our version of hang man- the Grizzlies try to solve the word/phrase before we draw a snowperson. Often, the mystery word is connected to a story/lesson that we are introducing. Other current reading and writing interests are solving word searches, creating lists, and working on the “computers” and in the workbooks in our pretend office area.



So much has been going on...I’ve decided to just highlight on some of the other activities of interest this month:

- *Fun with penguins (especially enjoying many silly stories of Tacky!)

- *Playing new games- card flipping, Don’t Break the Ice, Marble Solitaire

- *Learning about snowflakes and making snowflakes

- *Many new paper strip crafts such as “springs”, braiding, and stars

- *Constructing with K’NEX

- *Cooking: Making whole grain muffins (from the wheat flour April makes),

- Friendship Fruit Salad,

- Mini caramel rice cake & soy nut butter sandwiches

- *Lots of singing and performances and prop making

- * Enjoying our first Snow Day School Closing and another All Day Grizzly Day



Next week we will be celebrating the 100th day of Grizzlies and doing many activities with numbers! We will also begin a unit on money in February too. Can you believe your children are past the half way mark of Kindergarten already? Next week also marks the beginning of the Lunar New Year...the year of the rabbit!

REMINDER: A week of All Day Grizzlies (7:30-5:30pm) February 14th-18th

We will be welcoming a new Grizzly friend joining us in February- Janina Li (she attends Mrs. Alberta’s Ray School class).

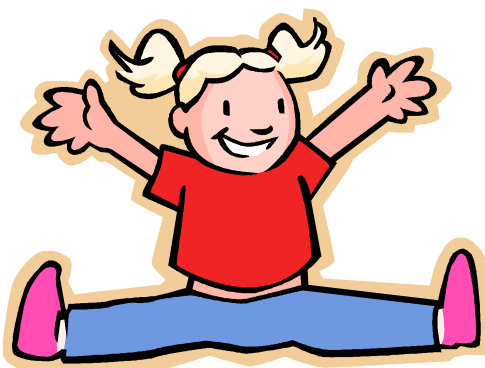
All the best,

Karen

Positive Behavior Support

Presented by:

Mia Coffing, M.Ed., BCBA
Board Certified Behavior Analyst



Positive Behavioral Support (PBS) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBS decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change.

PBS can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, curriculum, instructional pace and individualized reinforcement. Thus it is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviors.

For: Everyone (Educators, Parents, Community Members)

Location: Bernice A. Ray Elementary, Hanover NH

Date: February 22 and March 8th

Time: 7:00-8:00pm

Cost: FREE!

Drinks and light snacks will be provided

Sponsored by Bernice A. Ray Elementary PTO Grant

Please RSVP by February 11th, 2011 to: Katie Roach, Bernice A. Ray School
Preschool Coordinator, Katie.roach@rayschool.org

The Daily Parent

A NEWSLETTER FOR WORKING PARENTS

CARING AND SHARING TO LAST A LIFETIME: Helping Children Develop Positive Social Skills

Getting along with others is an important social skill for everyone. Babies show social skills from the time they are born. From the first time a baby turns to the sound of his mother's voice, or when a young child willingly plays with another child, their social skills are being developed.

Developing Positive Social Skills

It may seem like common sense that children need to get along with others. However, nurturing positive social skills takes time and practice. Skills grow when children have ongoing and steady relationships with their parents, caregivers, teachers, and friends. These skills continue to develop and grow throughout their lives.

Research has shown that a child with positive social skills is more likely to succeed in school and in life. Some children need a lot of help to develop these skills. Research also shows that a child who is not able to interact positively with others tends to be unable to make and keep friends, and may have problems in school (such as acting out, and showing aggressive or violent behaviors).

A child with positive social skills:

- Plays well with others;
- Feels comfortable in her environment;
- Shares and cooperates;
- Takes turns;
- Identifies and expresses his feelings;
- Shows concern for others.



Getting Children to Share

Parents of young children know the importance of having good social skills. Play groups and play dates are popular ways for many parents to make sure their

young children have the chance to be around other children their own age.

Even though sharing is an important social skill, toddlers and young preschoolers are not developmentally ready to share or wait for long periods of time. Not until the ages of four and five are most children ready to share toys and materials with others. Although you may want your child to share a toy or take turns with other children when she is very young, she may not be ready. Don't force it.

Your child goes through many social, emotional, physical and mental developmental stages and milestones. Before expecting certain behaviors from your child, check to make sure your expectations are appropriate for his age.

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Getting Children to Care

Caring about others and having the ability to understand another person's feelings (empathy) are also important social skills. The first step in a child's ability to care about the feelings and well-being of others is to first be able to be aware and label his own feelings.

You can help your child to identify how they are feeling by using "feeling" words to describe their emotions. ("You seem a little grumpy this morning. Are you tired?") Facial expressions are also a good way to help children learn how certain feelings may look. ("Your mouth is turned down. Are you sad?")

You can make a chart of different facial expressions and label them. This can help your child identify basic emotions, such as: happy, sad, mad, surprised, scared, and tired.



The best way to encourage caring skills is through action. Model caring behavior to your child.

- Let him child see you helping your neighbor carry groceries;
- Take her with you when you volunteer at the community center once a week;
- Let her help you gather glass and plastic items to recycle and explain why you are doing it.

Helping Babies and Toddlers Care and Share

The idea of babies and toddlers sharing may bring a smile to your face. Parents know how unlikely it is for babies and toddlers to share with others, much less care for others. It is much too early to have those kinds of expectations of them. However, you can show them through your words and your actions

AGE	DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES	WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ENCOURAGE SHARING
2 to 3 years	Able to show awareness of own feelings and those of others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using words that encourage sharing: "I'll cut this sandwich in two pieces so that both you and Jeremy can have a slice."• Modeling sharing: Let your child see you share on a regular basis. Talk about sharing too. "I'm going to let Mr. Ray use my extra umbrella so that he won't get wet in the rain."
3 to 4 years	Able to talk about feelings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not requiring long periods of waiting, if possible: Plan trips to the store when there are likely to be less people there. Have toys or other items for your child to play with if waiting is needed.• Having duplicates of favorite toys: Have two or more copies of popular toys for toddlers and young preschoolers to avoid struggles. Child care providers and teachers already use this strategy.
4 to 5 years	Ready to share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providing experiences and materials that encourage creative or pretend play: Social skills take practice, practice, practice. Give your child open-ended materials such as play dough, finger paints, dolls, and safe items around the house that they can use in pretend play. Children love to act out real-life situations, such as going to the doctor or writing and mailing a letter.

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what caring for and sharing with others is about. Babies and toddlers will imitate the important adults in their lives, and that is you – the parent. So everytime you tell your baby “You are very important to me,” or “Let me help you put your shoes on,” you are teaching him what caring is about. Remember to talk with your baby and toddler as much as possible when you are doing things together or doing even the smallest things. Little ones absorb everything they hear and see, so your words do not go unheard.

When It's More Than “Just a Phase”

Being able to manage your feelings is an important part of social and emotional development. Some children have a hard time understanding and controlling their feelings. Children who do not know how to talk yet or how to self-regulate their feelings and behaviors may bite, hit, threaten others, throw things, and so on.

If your child consistently behaves in ways that go beyond the typical tantrums or



meltdowns of a toddler, you may need to see your pediatrician to rule out any physical causes. There is a lot of research and support available for parents who have children with challenging behaviors. Your pediatrician or family doctor should be able to help you get the support you need.



Learning to care and share are lifelong social skills that grow as we do. Remember, all children do not develop at the same pace, but they all have the capability to learn how to get along with others and develop positive relationships. Helping children develop positive social skills could be the most important skills they'll ever learn, and the most rewarding.



Reading to Your Child

Knowing how to identify feelings is important. You can help your child to learn to identify feelings by reading to them. Point to the pictures and characters and say, “He is sad. He lost his bunny.” Comment on the character’s feelings and show empathy. “He is so sad. Aw, I hope he'll feel better once he finds it.”

“USE YOUR WORDS”

Giving Children Words to Describe Their Feelings

HAPPY

Glad
Pleased
Cheerful
Joyful
Calm
Peaceful



SAD

Gloomy
Down
Disappointed
Upset



MAD

Angry
Frustrated
Irritated
Annoyed



SURPRISED

Shocked
Stunned
Shook-up
Amazed
Startled



SCARED

Frightened
Afraid
Anxious
Worried



TIRED

Sleepy
Drowsy
Weak
Exhausted
Grumpy



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For More Information

- **PBS:** Their website has a parent section with information on many childhood issues, including social and emotional development and children with challenging behavior. www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents
- **Brazelton Foundation:** Website www.brazelton.org explains T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints model of care that focuses on positive relationship between infants and young children with their parents – starting from focusing on social and emotional development.
- **Zero to Three:** www.zerotothree.org has a parent section with a lot of good information on the social and emotional development of infants and toddlers, as well as information on getting help for children with challenging behaviors.
- **Center for Evidence-Based Practice:** Young Children with Challenging Behavior, <http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/index.html>

- **Parents' Action for Children:** Parents' Action for Children is a national non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the interests of families and young children. Parents' Action develops and provides parent education materials, connects parents with one another, and helps parents advocate for issues such as early education, health care, and high quality and affordable child care. Their website is: www.parentsaction.org; phone (202) 238-4878.



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