



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

May 2018

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Office: Jeff Robbins, Dawn Cote, Karen Small

Floating Staff

Terri Crane, Kristin Cole, Jenn Murphy, Megan Wheeler, Sue Downey, Maya Lopez

STAFF NEWS

Sue Downey is our newest floating associate teacher . Before her work as a substitute child care aide at DCCCC which began in September 2015, Sue was a Kindergarten aide in East Windsor, Connecticut for 25 years Sue took courses at Asnuntuck Community College. She is a CT certified school paraprofessional . She is now a very welcomed member of our regular staff.



Please welcome Maya Lopez as the newest member of our permanent staff. Maya will serve as a floating child care assistant.

Maya graduated from St. Michael's College in Colchester, VT with a BS in Mathematics and a BS in Spanish. She is interested in pursuing a career in ECE and is exploring taking classes in the future. She has experience working in child care, restaurants and retail.





From the Director

“DCCCC closes promptly at 5:30. Parents leaving the building after 5:30 are subject to a late pick-up charge. Once you have checked your child out for the day please keep him/her with you. Siblings must stay with their parents and may not be left to play independently in the building or on the grounds. If you are visiting with your child and his/her teacher in the classroom or on the playground, your child may be confused about which behavioral guidelines apply: home rules or Center rules. Testing behavior is not uncommon. You can help by reassuring your child that Center rules still apply. To make it easier for parents to encourage their children out of the building in the afternoon, the multi closes at 5:00. Please do not stop to play or visit in the multi after 5:00.”

-Pearls of Wisdom from the DCCCC Parent Handbook

Dear Big Jeff,

Wait. We have to be out of the building by 5:30? I thought if I got there by 5:30 it was OK.

Signed

It's 5:00 Somewhere

Dear Jimmy,

Correct. DCCCC **closes** at 5:30. The teachers go home at 5:30. Plan ahead so you can go home at 5:30, too.

Big Jeff

Dear Big Jeff,

It's so hard to get my child to go home at the end of the day. Sometimes after I've used all my best techniques and she still doesn't want to go I feel like just picking her up and carrying her out. Is that OK?

Signed

I've Tried Everything

Dear Tired,

Yes.

Big Jeff

Dear Big Jeff,

It's so nice at the end of the day now. After I've been cooped up in my office all day, sometimes I'm the one who doesn't want to go home. Is it OK to play on the island in the middle of the driveway?

Signed,
Island Guy

Dear Guy,

No, don't play there. There's a troll that lives under the big tree and it's waiting to gobble up a stray child. Also, your child *Could Be Seriously Injured* (a Robbins-ism) if he or she steps into the melee of traffic at the end of the day. What you could do is play on the west lawn that overlooks the rugby field. There's room to run and you can supervise from the top of hill. Do supervise though, though, there is years of walking trips to the rugby fields have confirmed that there is another troll living under the bridge on Girl Brook trail at the bottom of the hill.

Big Jeff

PS Please treat our plantings with love – no tree climbing or bush smashing. Or I'll have to recruit more trolls.

Tis the Season to Garden

In keeping with this month's article, I am remembering my first garden as a child. I remember that I really liked picking out the seeds, putting the seeds in the ground and I liked spraying the garden with the hose too, although not all the water went in the garden. My enthusiasm lasted all the way until the boring business of weeding began. My parents could do it for hours, it seemed. Playing in the dirt with a shovel, a pail and a dump truck was infinitely more interesting to me. I admit that I put my children through the same routine, but now I am smarter! When my grandchildren are old enough to garden, I plan to keep my expectations appropriate to their age. Just a few minutes and a just a few weeds! After all, the most important thing is for them to enjoy the world of garden plants, dirt and bugs.

By contrast, I was fascinated by the indoor garden on the kitchen windowsill when I was a child, probably because I helped invent it. My mother put an avocado seed in water and it grew! When we planted it, it was a real tree. When she noticed my interest, she put a sweet potato in a jar of water and that REALLY grew. I asked if we could try a “regular” potato and that worked too. From there we experimented with carrot tops in a saucer of water and orange seeds in a pot of dirt. Then turnips tops, watermelon seeds and so on. Some things grew, others didn’t. It was interesting, it was close at hand, we did it in short spurts and we used my ideas. Eventually I lost interest and we stopped doing it. Now that was good teaching, Mom!



Get your shovels and buckets and the dump truck kids, we’re going to the garden.

Jeff was selected as a 2018 Early Learning NH Champion for all you do on behalf of New Hampshire's youngest citizens!



JEFF ROBBINS RETIREMENT PARTY

Save the Date

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20 FROM 3:00 PM
TO 5:30 PM

Jeff Robbins, Director of Dartmouth College Child Care Center
is retiring.

Join us at the Top of the Hop
for a farewell reception in his honor
and his many contributions to Dartmouth.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DCCCC is a great place to work! Do you have a high school or college age child, student, babysitter, friend, neighbor, funcle* or favorite aunt ? We rely on our cadre of part-time staff to round out our PM staffing schedules and to fill in where needed. Because many of them are Dartmouth students or Hanover kids returning from their respective colleges, our line-up changes every turn. Our recruiting efforts are ongoing. We appreciate your referrals. Nice people who are great with kids may apply at jobs.dartmouth.edu. We also have full and part-time permanent opening for people with more experience.

*Fun uncle

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

**-Wednesday, July 4, 2018,
Independence Day**

**- Monday and Tuesday,
August 27 and 28, 2018,
Transition Days**

Save the date – Bike Parade

Monday, July 2

Rain date: Tuesday, July 3

DCCCC kids only – Big brothers and sisters are welcomed to cheer their siblings on.

2018-19 DCCCC fee scale

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~dcccc/fee/>

News from the Chickadee Ones

Ali Wachunas
Lead Teacher

Denise Ayers

Deserai Stone

Phewwwww

We have made it through this long winter! We chickadees are looking forward to the warmer weather and getting outside more to explore.

Our chickadees have grown so much since last letter. Andy & RJ (two oldest) are now the mascots of the classroom and are even helping with the babies and the routine. Both RJ & Andy will be moving to the owls shortly for the remainder of the summer. We have had Andy since he was three months old and are extremely sad to him go but know that he needs the extra stimulation. We are going to miss RJ dearly as well. He is the class clown and is always making us smile & laugh. Good thing they will be right next door.

Angela is now walking and beginning to talk. She has developed a wonderful personality and we are looking forward to the summer with her. Aiden has picked up days here and is adjusting very well. He is happily playing with other children. His favorite time of the day is lunch. He thoroughly enjoys his chocolate pudding. Fallyn is a busy girl and beginning to take more and more steps. She is always making us laugh. Dorothea & Sonia have become great friends. They are both so close to crawling. They enjoy tummy time with one another and talking back and forth. Harvey is now on the move and we never know where we will find him. He does the army crawl and is able to get into all sorts of trouble (not really). He has grown into his personality and we just adore him. Jack joined the chickadees and has become part of the family. He is so sweet & snuggly.

Last newsletter we said bye to Lucas. He arrived safely back home with mom and they are doing very well & enjoying the warm weather. We keep in touch and plan to skype with them soon. Simon and his family are away until June. They are in Argentina. Simon just celebrated his first birthday earlier this month. We are looking forward to having him back for the summer in the chickadees. About a month ago we welcomed Jack to our classroom. He is already changing so much and such a pleasure to have. He has developed connection with Harvey and Sonia and Dorothea. In a few weeks we will be welcoming two more children to the chickadees. With the sad departure of RJ & Andy to owls we are very excited to have Maia & Benjamin joining us.

The week of April 16th-20th we celebrated the week of the young child. It was a blast! We welcomes Andy's mother Erin on Monday for music Monday. She sang

songs with us and played some instruments. We had instruments in the sensory table for the children to explore and found other ways to make sounds/music. For tasty Tuesday we explored all different kinds of foods and payed closer attention to the foods we are eating. Some of the children helped make apple muffins and for PM snack we joined the chickadee toos and enjoyed the muffins. For work together Wednesday we joined other classrooms and did activities together. The younger babies worked together in the classroom discovering new toys we put out. For artsy Thursday we painted with bubbles. Our amazing afternoon helper Millenah was part of this and the children loved it. Friday was family Friday. We invited the families in for an AM snack. This was a great time to mingle with everyone and talk about their wonderful babies.

Upcoming:

We as a class have decided to not take a trip to billings farm this year. Many of our babies are still young and we are planning on going next year. We are however going to plan for an animal week later in the spring/early summer. With warm weather approaching (and hopefully staying) we are looking forward to getting outside on the climbers & swings and enjoying nature.

*If you haven't already please make sure to send sunscreen in for your child if you do not want them using the center sunscreen (equate brand).

*Please send a sun hat as well

- Spring conferences will begin in July and go through August. Your child will have the same primary doing this conference. Please let us know any questions/concerns you may have.

April 25th we celebrated Administration appreciation day. Dawn & Karen do so much for this center & we cannot thank them enough. The children made them some art work and visited Dawn & Karen to give it to them.

Thank you families for all you do & trusting us with your beautiful babies

*Make sure to check the bulletin board in the hallway for important information!

Chick One Team

~Ali, Denise & Deserai



News from the Chickadee Toos

Teresa Hahn,
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins

Moya Stevens

CHICKADEE TOO WELCOMES SPRING

We are so happy to have the snow melt, the grass green up and flowers poke up their heads! There is plenty of mud to explore and puddles to jump in. We love Spring !

Our Chicks are growing in leaps and bounds. Everyone is moving around the classroom in some manner. Words are emerging on a daily basis... it is so exciting to have our Chicks chirping all their new language!

The week of the Young Child was fun. It is so rewarding to spend time with other classrooms and teachers. The kids learn a lot from watching and playing with the older children. I really enjoyed cooking with some of the children in the big kitchen and all the children enjoyed the muffins we made.

We are winding up our beach theme. The Chickadees loved playing with the big beach balls. We had beach blanket dancing to the Beach

Boys, which was fun for all of us. The sand and shell table was a big hit , as was the water and fish play.

Gardening and outside exploration are next on our list. We will work the soil as soon as it warms up enough. Flowers and vegetables will be planted in the ground and in pots. Hopefully we can outsmart the woodchuck and be able to reap what we sow.

As we will be spending more time outside and in the dirt, it is important to make sure your child has plenty of season appropriate changes of clothing. A sun hat is needed for each child and shoes that can go outside. Mud boots would also be appreciated. If your child uses his or her own sunscreen, please make sure it is here, we have begun the process of suncreening each time we go out.

We will be saying so long to Brielle at the end of the month, she will be away for the summer , but will return as an Owl in the fall. We will really miss her! We have a new friend starting in July, an 8 ½ month old boy.

Lori will be vacationing in the beginning of May and also in July. Teresa will be travelling in the end of May and also in June. Moya and our very capable subs will keep the children healthy and happy.

We will also be starting the transition process .Throughout the summer we will spend time in the new classrooms and with new teachers. The oldest children will be transitioned to sleeping on nap mats to prepare for the change. Jeff is working on Fall enrollment , and we can hope to know more in June.

The second round of conferences will happen in June and July. Feel free to come to us with any questions or concerns you have at any time.

Enjoy the returning sun,
Teresa for Chickadee Too



News from the Owls

Debbie Burnham,
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin

April Buchanan

Almost all of our Owls are now two years old. This is that wonderful age when children start to have conversations, can dress or undress parts of themselves and can fully engage in activities. This is also that wonderful time when children start to realize that they are their own person, complete with their own opinions about what to wear, what to eat and when to go to sleep! Buckle up parents: You're in for a bumpy ride!

Your two year old is definitely more independent now and has started to develop self-regulation. We work on helping them to calm down when upset by remaining calm and gently offering suggestions to them. When arguing over a toy we may suggest asking a child, "Can I have a turn when you are done". If another toy is available we will offer that to them. We will also distract a distraught child with another activity.

You can help your toddler by being consistent with routines and telling them in advance of any changes. You know your child and what can trigger their tantrums. Planning in advance is the best way to go. If your child gets hungry on the way home, keep a small snack in the car. If your child is upset in the mornings, set up an activity the night before at the breakfast area. This could be as simple as a small container of blocks or paper and crayons or a toy they have not seen in a while. When you are in a stressful situation with your child, think like a toddler. Validate their feelings, "I know you don't like to get into the car seat, but we have to be safe". Give them choices, "Do you want the red or blue shirt today?" Remember they are driven by emotions, not logic and, while they have strong feelings, they cannot manage them yet. They rely on adults to be firm, but understanding. I'm sure you have heard the saying, "Pick your battles". For each family this is different. Know what you feel strongly about: bedtimes, sitting at meals, safety issues and teach consistently on these issues. Other items you can let go of. If your child doesn't want to get dressed we don't mind pajamas in the Owl Room! If your child refuses breakfast we have snack here.

There are also those times when your child just needs to be removed to a quiet place to regroup. In the Owl Room, if a child is repeatedly being aggressive we will set the child aside for a minute and then quietly talk to them about being gentle while showing them an alternative way to interact with friends.

During this stage of normal development you have the opportunity to guide your child in a calm, positive manner. So buckle up, remain calm and plan ahead!

Classroom notes: Owls are growing quickly so please check your child's basket for clothing sizes.

We will be starting sunscreen soon. If you prefer us to use your own sunscreen please send in a tube.

At the beginning of June Ada will be leaving us and Andy from Chickadee One will join us!

With summer arriving we will be spending more time outside and will introduce water play. Most days we will be outside when you arrive in the afternoon.

For those of you who could join us for Family Friday, thank you! We enjoy seeing whole families together!

Fondly,

Debbie, Wendy and April



News from the Hedgehogs

Jennifer Sprague,
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro

Angelica Morrison

Happy May Families! We have been enjoying the rain and the puddles and boy we do love to jump in all the puddles! We have been doing a variety of activities on our Hedgehog calendar. We just had a wonderful trip to the fire station. The Hedgehogs are very busy during the day learning about new topics as well as socially interacting with peers/teachers. They are sharing materials, waiting for turns, and communicating their wants and their needs. Below is a great article from the Zero to Three Website about how to set limits for children and help them develop self-control.



In order to follow rules and understand limits, children need to develop self-control. Self-control is the ability to cope with strong feelings and stop one's self from doing something that is not allowed. Developing self-control begins at birth and continues throughout childhood. Young children learn self-control through interactions with peers and guidance from parents and other loving adults.

Two-Year-Olds and Self-Control

Older toddlers are making great strides in developing self-control but still have a ways to go to learn to manage their impulses in appropriate ways. While they are beginning to understand what is and is not acceptable, they still do not have the full ability to stop themselves from doing something that's not allowed. Here is an example:

A 2-1/2-year-old wants the toy that his friend is playing with. He grabs it. His friend grabs it back. He hits his friend. They both begin to cry. His mother calms him and then helps him return the toy to his friend. She explains that hitting is not okay and helps him ask for a turn with the toy.

At this stage, setting and enforcing rules consistently becomes very important. Age-appropriate rules let children know what to expect, which makes them feel safe, secure and in control—key ingredients for their healthy social-emotional development. Experiencing consistent responses to behaviors also helps children make good decisions.

Everyday ways to nurture self-control:

Suggest ways to manage strong emotions. When a child is really angry, suggest that he jump up and down, rip paper, cuddle up in a cozy area for alone time, paint an angry picture or another strategy that you feel is appropriate. Teach children that there are many healthy, non-hurtful ways to express their feelings.

Look for ways to practice self-control. Turn-taking games such as rolling a ball back and forth require children to wait and control their impulses. Take turns hitting a soft foam ball off a tee. Play “sharing music” where each of you chooses an instrument to play and set an egg-timer for 1 minute. When the timer goes off, switch instruments and set the timer again.

Give choices to head off misbehavior. For example, when a child is having trouble sharing a ball, you might say, *You have a decision to make. You can choose to take turns with the ball or put the ball away.* Keep your language firm while positive, simple and at the child's level. Help him understand he has choices, and that every choice has a consequence.

(Continuing Zero to Three article)

Offer alternatives. Help toddlers meet their goals in acceptable ways. *It's not okay to throw blocks. Someone might get hurt. Let's throw these foam balls into a basket instead.* Offering an alternative is important because toddlers need help identifying more appropriate activities.

Be consistent. Consistency with rules is key to helping children learn to make good choices. If every time a child throws a toy it gets taken away, she quickly learns not to throw toys. But when the rules keep changing, it is hard for young children to understand which rules are “for real.”

Give children a visual to help them cope with waiting. If you'd like children to brush their teeth for 2 minutes each day after lunch, use an egg timer so they can watch the countdown. Need 10 minutes to call a parent? Set a timer so that children have a concrete way of understanding how long they have to wait. This helps them feel more in control and therefore able to cope better.

Look for patterns in children's behavior. Sometimes you can identify patterns that signal a child is likely to “lose it.” Anticipating these breakdowns can help you prevent them. For example, if you notice that a child has a hard time coping with transitions, such as going from lunch to nap, you can give him a warning 5 minutes before. It can also be very helpful to establish a ritual that helps him make the change, such as reading a book or starting a drawing together that you finish when he wakes up.

Don't do something, just stand there. If a child is having a tantrum, take 15 seconds to stop and think before reacting. *Ask yourself: What is my goal here? What do I want the child to learn from this experience?* Taking the time to think it through can help you respond in a calmer more thoughtful and more effective way.

ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

News from the Otters

Stephanie Cummings,
Lead Teacher

Jordan Rosenzweig

Vipasha Oza

Jane Wolfe

Greetings from the Otter Room,

Spring has finally arrived and boy are the children excited to get outdoors. The children have been waiting with anticipation to look for the changes that Spring brings to our outdoor environment. We have rescheduled walks and activities due to the lack of spring like weather we have been experiencing recently. However, on our last walk the children were finally able to notice the changes. The Otters saw buds on the trees, the grass becoming greener and the beautiful daffodils and crocus' growing outside DCCCC.

Although the Otter enjoyed the Winter months, they were excited to see the changes that Spring brought back to the yard. In particular, the opening of the climber and the return of the swings. These are the first things the Otters run to when we go outside. We have been teaching the children to pump when they are on the swings as we are not always able to push. On the climber, they enjoy using the slide and like to hold hands with friends when they go down. They also use the climber to play chase games with the Hedgehogs and Badgers.

We have also had a new member join the Otter class: Diya Kashyap. Diya has made a quick and smooth transition into the room and although she has only been in the room a few weeks it seems like she started with the rest of our friends in September. She has already made great friendships with all of the children and teachers.

The Otters had a lot of fun for the Week of the Young Child (WOYC). We focused on activities that we do every day but tried to use different methods and materials to do them. For example, the Otters painted with their heads, tried different fruits and vegetables, played with a variety of musical instruments, cut out pictures of books and made colored toast for snack. The Otters thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the activities during this week and enjoyed collaborating with the other classrooms.

Stephanie's chicks have been an important learning focus for the children and the children are very attached to them and ask questions about them regularly. The children loved interacting with them when the chicks were aged 2 weeks and 5 weeks. They watched Stephanie take care of the chicks, spent hours observing the chicks and their behavior and ALL the Otters enjoyed petting a chick and some

friends felt comfortable enough to hold them. Even though the chicks have moved out of their brooder and into the coop the children watch the progress of the chicks as Stephanie takes a picture of 'Polly' weekly for the children to track her development.

"Same, same but different", is a very common and popular phrase that we hear regularly in the Otter room and we find that this such a fantastic phrase for 3 year olds to understand. The saying originated after reading the story 'Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw during our India week. As teachers we hear the children use it daily to describe food items, clothing and personal appearances. For example, the children might have the same branded yogurt but is a different flavor, two children might have pasta but it is a different style. They recognize that Stephanie and Libby have curly hair, it's the same but slightly different or how all the teachers where necklaces but are slightly different in their appearance. It is amazing that they understand items and people might look the same but not everything or everyone is created equal.

We have a fun-filled program to fill the remainder of your child's year in the Otter class. In our 'People Who Help Us' theme we will look at professions that help us. We will be visiting the fire station, having a police officer and his cruiser visit the classroom and a FedEx driver talking about delivering packages. The children are always excited to see sirens or different trucks come past the class so it will be great for the children to understand more about their jobs.

The children will also spent time looking at a theme on food and farming and as part of that we will be visiting Billings Farm and Museum. The children will have the opportunity to learn about Stephanie's childhood on the farm and her expertise in this area. Making butter and 'milking the cow' are also popular activities that accompany this theme. As the Summer weather starts we will do an Ice-Cream week and walk to the Co-op to get Ice-cream. If the weather cooperates we will do a camping week and spend an entire day at day-care outside (apart from necessitates).

We are getting to enjoy some warmer weather outside and sometimes we get dirty, so please remember to check your children's cubbies regularly to see if they have additional clothes in case they need to change. On warm days, the children love water play to cool down and some children loved to get soaked from head to toe. Please ensure that has clothing in their cubby that you don't mind them

getting wet. Either a bathing suit or clothes suitable for wet play. If they get dirty or wet, we will wash and dry them ready for the next water play day.

A date for your diary: our next parent snack will be May 29th at 4pm.

On behalf of the Otter team,
Stephanie



News from the Badgers

Terri Hollis,
Lead Teacher

Miranda Arruda

Judy Labrie

Hello DCCCC Families!

Oh boy! Have the Badgers been busy! We made it through those long winter months and are now enjoying the springtime weather! Just yesterday we enjoyed a beautiful walk to the rugby field! We've really engaged with our Spotlight Books and the children have enjoyed the learning and activities that have come from them. We did a unit on Dr. Seuss around his Birthday in March. We read many of his stories and centered the learning on them. We made crazy Thing hair by cutting paper in strips, which takes a lot of fine motor control! We tried new foods when we ate green eggs! We also made paper Mache hot air balloons!



Through our Spotlight Books we've created opportunities like dancing through paint, playing Cat and Mouse with the parachute, doing yoga, having community helpers visit our classroom, learning about each other with About Me Bags, doing science experiments with bubbles and freezing temperatures, creating structures from marshmallows and toothpicks and stacking cups, and "frosting" cakes. It really opens the door to creativity and fun!



We've also been busy learning sign language with Kelly. The Badgers are getting pretty good!

We have done so much and yet have so much more to look forward to! We have started taking small group Library trips and will extend that to local performances. We are planning on thoroughly appreciating the warm summer weather and helping our kiddos get comfortable with their, soon to be, new classrooms.



On behalf of the Badger Classroom,

Miranda

News from the Black Bears

Liz Harrington,
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand

Heather Wittman

May Forecast



This month, the Black Bears will focus on:

[Note: We are always following emergent interests in addition to these topics!]

Black Bear Walking Club

- Taking walks within nature and our community- they can happen at any time!
- Using various materials as we travel, such as binoculars, clipboards, and writing/drawing materials to observe and document our observations.

Continuing our Pen Pal Program

- Responding to our Pen Pals as they send us letters.

Exploring New Spring Life

- Beginning to explore a variety of types of new life that we see in spring:
 - Vernal Pools and the Life Cycle of Frogs
 - Collecting and observing frog spawn [eggs] within our classroom, as well as in their natural environment.
 - Discussing the Life Cycle of Chickens
 - Caring for chicken eggs within our classroom.
 - Observing the new growth and begin to identify plants within the Black Bear garden space.
 - Beginning to plant seeds for our raised beds.

Starting to Work on Howe Library Art Project

- Creating artwork using a variety of mediums for June.

Working on a Surprise for a Special Someone for June

- More info soon- it's a surprise!

Sharing our Kindergarten Visits with Friends

- Encouraging Black Bears to share with their peers about the things that are the same/different from the Black Bear room and schedule.
- Starting to read stories about Kindergarten.

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

DCCCC Closed for Memorial Day

May 28th

Sign Language with Kelly

Thursday, May 10th and 24th

Teacher Time Off

Barb Out: May 14th and 15th

Liz Out: May 7th-11th and May 23rd





Codes and Questions

A whole lot of us who speak English don't realize that we speak English in a coded form. The principal code we use involves questions being used for actual directions, statements and explanations instead of straight-out declarative statements being implemented to communicate.

I mention this because while adults take the code for granted, small children don't understand it at all. This gap in English understanding creates a fair number of problems, at least until the children are older and learn code. Young children are very straightforward. They understand "telling it like it is" both for their own speech and yours. When you ask a small child a question in code, they are going to respond to the question, not the code.

Here is a classic example:

Adult: Shall we go home now?

Child: No.

Adult: Well we have to go home now.

Child: No! (plus some acting out)

So here we are, stuck. The Question Code is really not a question, it's a statement: It is time for us to go home. The child says No! to the question. What happens next? Generally the doors to the bribe warehouse open and the adult starts to pick and choose stuff from the shelves in order to bribe the kid into the right answer. Or the adult switches to negotiation mode, still in code.

Adult: I have a snack for you in the car! /Guess what's for dinner tonight?
Pizza! / Etc.

Child: Starts sifting through the bribes but is clearly upset. You asked a question, you got an answer. Now we need bribes to get the right answer.

Or Adult: Two more minutes? Okay? (negotiation statement in code; "Two more minutes." no code. Better!)

The code/question problem is complicated by the reality that a lot of adults don't realize they are speaking code but think they are giving small children choices when

they ask questions. The difference is clear when you think about the questions: “Shall we go home now?” When you ask this, you aren’t really giving the child a “choice;” you are setting yourself up for a bribe situation, or putting yourself in a situation where you have to negotiate a compromise (two more minutes), or simply exhibiting the fact that you don’t mean what you say if and when it turns out you simply pick the kid up and leave.

“Do you want to wear the blue socks or the green socks?” is a non-coded question with a firm base: You are wearing socks today. It’s also a little bit closer to being age appropriate: The child can learn colors and make a choice about today’s socks.

One thing that would be helpful and a good discipline would be for adults to learn to speak English without code when it comes to small children. This is more difficult than you think. We are embedded with code. If you are an adult, you actually have to “think about what to say” if you aren’t going to speak in question code. Nap time! Time to put on a hat! One of the great things about learning how to speak un-coded English is that you learn to ask real questions (sock color) not false ones (Shall we go home?).

Anyway, you will often get acting out even if you speak un-coded English. We are going home now! No!

“Yes we are. Put on your hat.” Boo-hoo! Boo-hoo! Loud, indignant noise, but at least no confusion!

Jane Wolfe
(Otter Room)