



Dartmouth College Child Care Center Newsletter

February 2017

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Office: Jeff Robbins, Sunnie McPhetres, Dawn Cote, Karen Small, Janene Robie

Floating Assistant Teachers
Eileen Ruml, Terri Crane, Kristin Cole, Judy Labrie, Stephanie Cummings, Angelica Morrison, Jenn Murphy

Staff News

Wendy Irwin (Owl Room)



Wendy was recognized for 20 years of service at Dartmouth College – all of those years have been here at DCCCC!

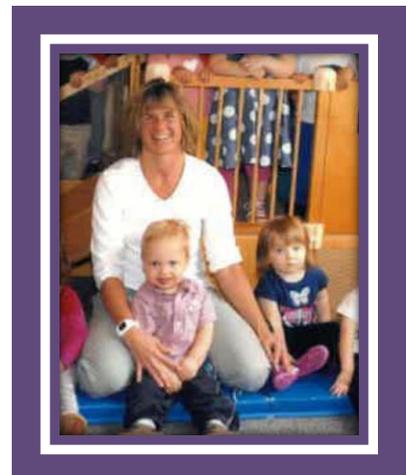
Wendy has worked with preschoolers, infants, and now toddlers! We're happy that she has been so dedicated to the kids at DCCCC.

Jenn Boudro (Hedge Hog Room)

Jenn was recognized for 25 years of service at Dartmouth College – all of those years have been here at DCCCC!

Jenn started working at DCCCC right out of college and has never left. She worked a brief time with three year olds, but has dedicated most of her career to toddlers.

How lucky are we that she is still with us?



Jeff Robbins (Director)

Jeff has been selected as the next recipient of the Steve Shuman Award for the work of Men in Early Care and Education.



This award was established in 2009 to honor the men and women who support men working with young children in a variety of roles. The award was created by the Men in Early Education group of the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children and the Northeast MenTeach and is given to an individual or group in the New England area.

The award is presented to a man or woman who has:

1. Worked in early care and education as leader and role model.
2. Promoted the role of men in the lives of young children.
3. Worked for gender balance diversity in the field of early childhood.

I can't think of a more worthy recipient! Jeff will be presented with the award at the Massachusetts AEYC conference on March 24, 2017.

Sunnie McPhetres

In December of 2016, Sunnie completed an M.S. in Leadership at Granite State College. (Sunnie completed this degree in 15 months). Her degree enabled her to receive the following NH Early Childhood Credentials:

- NH Early Childhood Master Teacher, Level 3 (highest teaching credential)
- NH Early Childhood Administrator, Level 4 (highest administrator credential)
- NH Early Childhood Master Professional with the following endorsements:

- Workshop trainer
- Faculty
- Individual Mentor
- Program Consultant



From the Director

Dear Big Jeff,

When I drop my Owl off in the mornings, my Badger doesn't want to come in the room. She wants to wait in the hall. Is there a rule about that?

Signed,
Going Solo

Dear Solo,

You betcha there's a rule for that! Children must be under the supervision of an adult at all times. Period.

Simply tell your child that it's a safety rule. No discussion, no negotiation. Big Jeff says.

Signed,
Big Jeff

PS That goes for big brothers and sisters, too.

Dear Big Jeff,

I have two kids to pick up in the afternoon and I have every intention of arriving home peaceably and in good humor.

Unfortunately, my children have developed a game (and not a fun one) of "Who Gets Picked up Last." If I show up alone, Kid One wails "I wanted to be last." Then Kid Two says, and not in a nice way, "But I wasn't done yet." And so on and so forth. Honestly, I don't care which one is first and I'm not sure how this got started or what I did to perpetuate it, but I want out. Still I'd like to get my kids out without a major family meltdown. What do I do now?

Signed,
Wish I Hadn't

Dear Wish,

I agree. The game is over. It's time to hit the reset button. Sometimes kids get a "thing" in their heads that's hard to change, just like we do. It sounds like this behavior has become a "thing." It's OK, things can change. The situation calls for leadership. Children want to know who is in charge. They may not like it, but it saves them a lot of time and aggravation in trying to figure it out. Like most things in parenting, once you get this straightened out, your child will need similar information another time in a slightly new and different way. But, each time you all add skills and understanding to your repertoire and that's good news.

If things haven't gone too far and your children already have skills in problem solving, you may certainly use that approach: "I notice that when I pick you up, we often argue about who's first and last. We all get frustrated, then we are unhappy with each other. Does anyone have an idea what we could do about that?"

Get several possible solutions on the table before editing them. Be patient. Give the children time to generate ideas and then to evaluate them. If an idea works for one party, but not the other (just like grown-ups' needs don't always coincide) ask, "Well, what could we do about that?" You may certainly contribute ideas, which can be particularly helpful when the children have run out of ideas or can't find one that works. In an ideal world, you will find a solution to try together. Evaluate it after a few tries. If it's working, congratulate yourselves and notice together how peaceful it is. Reward yourselves for the success – perhaps a few more moments to play before dinner, a joint cooking project or something that logically results from your newfound harmony and extra time. Following this line of thinking, it's not a time for an unrelated reward (might I say, bribe?). This is a time when everybody wins and good things happen. It's a natural, happy result of working together. If you want to talk about rewards and punishments, we can do that in a separate conversation. If the problem solving approach doesn't work, read the next paragraph.

If things are simply too out of hand for problem solving, don't despair. Just take charge. Here's one possible solution: "I notice that when I pick you up, we often argue about who's first and last. We all get unhappy with each other. None of us want to be unhappy, so here's what we are going to do about it. We'll alternate

days. One day I'll pick up Kid One first, then next day I'll pick up Kid Two first and so on and so forth. It may work right away! If there's a day that you wish were different, I understand. Still, a plan is a plan and we'll keep doing it. One day, we won't even need a plan anymore!" Alternating days is only one possible solution, of course.

Either way, there will be days when the plan doesn't work well. Be calm, be patient, be firm. Stick with the plan. If the plan needs an adjustment, it's generally best to plan ahead, not to capitulate at the last moment. Your child's teacher can provide valuable insights, but I'm guessing that if you are following a reasonable plan and you have to leave with an unhappy child it won't be worse that it was before. Visualize yourself as the loving, benevolent parent that you are, then pick 'em up and leave.

It might help to keep a few basic principles in mind:

-Behaviors can be hard to change for children and adults

-Change takes practice.

-It's OK to disagree.

-We can talk about how we feel.

-We're a family. We can do this.

-We don't have to spend a lot of time rehashing this. We have plenty of other fun things to do.

-I'm an adult. I'm a role model. My children are learning from how I handle myself. I want my children to learn to be kind and thoughtful and patient. I want to provide my children with the security of knowing that when they can't manage themselves, I can help.

Signed,
Big Jeff

Closure Dates

DCCCC Will Be Closed On The Following Days:

-Monday, April 10: Teacher In-Service Day

- Monday, May 29, Memorial Day

-Tuesday, July 4, Independence Day

**-Two days at the end of August for In Service
and transition –date to be announced**

-Monday, September 4, Labor Day

**-Thursday and Friday, November 23 and 24,
Thanksgiving Break**

-December 25-January 1, 2018, Winter Break

Events for Families

Occom Pond Party in Hanover

February 11 - 12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Occom Pond
10 Hilton Field Road
Hanover, NH

Free. Includes family Skating, ice castle, couch potato race, "banathalon," music, food, tube slide, sleigh rides, snow sculptures, roasting marshmallows, sugar on snow, penguin bowling and parade.

Park at the Maynard and Dewey Lots only.

Contact Info

Liz Burdette

Hanover Parks and Recreation

liz.burdette@hanovernh.org

[603-643-5315](tel:603-643-5315)

More Info

[Occom Pond Party in Hanover](#)

Valentine Crafts in Wilder

February 11 - 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Wilder Club and Library
78 Norwich Avenue
Wilder, VT

Decorate paper and cookie valentines.

For more information, Contact the Quechee Library

director@quecheelibrary.org

802-295-1232

Hanover HopStop: Brendan Taaffe in Hanover

February 11 - 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Alumni Hall,
Hopkins Center for the Arts,
4 E. Wheelock St
Hanover, NH

Free. Vermont's own Brendan Taaffe offers up a blend of traditional songs, compelling stories and crankies — magical scrolling illustrations in a puppet theater. A multi-instrumentalist (banjo, guitar, fiddle, Zimbabwean mbira), Taaffe has traveled the world with his songs and stories and has been featured on NPR's Wait, Wait, Don't Tell Me and The Thistle and Shamrock. For children age 3 and up and their families. Free.

Contact Info

[603-646-2422](tel:603-646-2422)

More Info

[Hanover HopStop: Brendan Taaffe in Hanover](#)

101st NEWPORT WINTER CARNIVAL

February 4-8

For 5 days, the small town of Newport, New Hampshire will be transformed into a winter wonderland landscape of outdoor fun, games and family-friendly activities. This year marks the 101st year for the event and highlights include: winter carnival parade, Axe Man Challenge, horse-drawn wagon rides, broom hockey and a sliding party.

[More info >](#)

Story Time and Marshmallow Roast in Hanover

February 19 - 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Dartmouth Outing Club House
10 Hilton Field Road
Hanover, NH

Free. Stories will be read to children ages 3-8 with their parents, by the fireplace in the main room of the Dartmouth Outing Club House. We will roast marshmallows by the campfire afterwards.

Contact Info 603-381-9993

The Arts Corner

By: Liz Harrington

Wonderful Winter

Don't let the wintertime "blues" get you down- here are a few ideas for activities that you can enjoy outdoors (and indoors too).

Rainbow Snow



Did you know that snow can be a great canvas for colors? Grab a few spray bottles and fill them with water. Try to find bottles that can be manipulated by your child while using gloves if outdoors. Use a few drops of food coloring to alter the color of the water- the more drops, the darker it will be. [Don't add *too* many- you're more likely to stain clothes with more drops!] Shake them up and then they're ready to go! Try experimenting with the different spray settings- will they always look the same? Will the colors mix like they usually do when sprayed on the snow? Spray the snow on the ground, a snowperson, or bring a big bowl inside and color the snow indoors.

No spray bottles? Use an old squeeze bottle like a mustard bottle instead!

Ice is Nice

Ice Art



Turn ice into an all-in-one paint and paintbrush! Get an ice tray, food coloring (or liquid watercolor), popsicle sticks, and aluminum foil. Fill the ice tray with water and color each compartment with the food coloring. Cover the entire tray with aluminum foil. Gently place a popsicle stick into each compartment so they stick out upright- when you put the foil on, the ridges between each “cube” should become visible. For warmer winter days, place the tray into the freezer overnight. [For especially cold winter days/nights, place the tray outdoors instead. You could ask older children what they believe will happen to the water outdoors. How long will it take? They can help you check on the progress of the ice.] When done, remove the foil and remove the cubes. Use the “paintbrushes” on white paper and see what colors show up!

Feed the Birds

Winter can be a very difficult time for birds- many of their food sources are either hiding under the snow, previously eaten, or dormant. There are many different ways to create bird feeders- but this one relies on **ice**! For this activity, you will need water, bird seed, whole cranberries [optional], twine, and either small paper cups or a flat bottom bowl and drinking glass.



Cup-Based Feeder

Before starting, cut twine and knot them into loops. Fill your small cup about 1/3 of the way with the cranberries and then add the loop knot down (so it is inside the cup). Fill the rest with birdseed and then add water until a thin layer covers all of the contents. Freeze in the freezer (or outdoors if cold enough) overnight.

Ice “Ring” Feeder

Place the drinking glass in the center of the flat-bottomed bowl. Fill the side of the bowl with about an inch of water and then add the bird seed/cranberries. Freeze in the freezer (or outdoors if cold enough) overnight. When frozen, remove the ice and tie some twine through the center so it can hang.

Tracks, Tracks, Tracks!



Snow gives us a wonderful opportunity to observe the tracks of various creatures in our environment! Go for a walk- even if just around your home- and see what kind of tracks you can find! What kind of tracks do *we* make in the snow? What animal do you think left this print behind? Take a picture of the prints and bring them back home or bring a guide book with you [older children] and see if you can figure out who they are from!

Afterwards, offer some playdough and toy animals and observe what kind of prints they make. What kind of imprints will other toys/materials make- try it out! Make an imprint in the dough with an object and see if your child can identify what made the print!

Song of the Season

“A Chubby Little Snowman”



[Actions are in italics below the lyrics!]

A chubby little snowman,

Hold your arms in a circle in front of you to make a big belly.

Had a carrot nose.

Point to your nose.

Along came a bunny,

Make a “bunny” with your fingers and let it “hop.”

And what do you suppose?

Turn palms upwards and shrug shoulders.

That hungry little bunny,

Rub tummy.

Looking for some lunch,

Put a hand above your eyes to shade the “sun” and look around.

Ate that snowman’s carrot nose.

Take a bite out of your carrot.

Nibble, Nibble, Crunch!

Take little bites of your carrot and a giant one on the word “crunch.”

News from the Chickadee Ones

Ali Wachunas
Lead Teacher

Denise Ayers,
Teacher

Deserai Stone,
Assistant Teacher



Greetings from Chickadee one,

My oh my how much has changed in the last couple of months! We now have a full room with a total of ten babies enrolled. We have five walkers, 4 crawlers and one about to go. We have some new friends joining us, as we have said goodbye to some. Our chick one friends include: Avens, Matthew, Jonah, Aadhi, Adeline, Zora, Andrew, Jasper, Eason, & Vartan. It is very exciting that we are now a full class. This is a magnificent group of children.

In the last month we have been fighting off illness and trying to get back to a healthy classroom. This weather doesn't seem to help, although it is fun for our children. We have been trying to get out in this snow and go sledding, make snow angels, and simply spend time outside. Now that we have lots of mobile children it makes it easier to go outside, spend time in the multi, and go for walks.

We all had a wonderful, relaxing holiday break and came back ready to roll (not expecting sickness to set in like it has). The burst of language after the break was amazing. A lot of the older children are saying multiple words now. It makes it very exciting for us as teachers to see the growth & development.

Tuesdays are still our favorite day as we have music with Brooke. The chick ones are always excited for Tuesdays and cannot wait to learn new songs and play with all of the wonderful instruments Brooke brings for us. As a whole this New Year is off to a great start and these illnesses are not going to stop us! We chicks are a strong group!

As always email any of us with any questions ☺
I wanted to attach this interesting article I found on language development. I found it very helpful, interesting, and a good read ☺
<http://www.human.cornell.edu/hd/outreach-extension/upload/casola.pdf>



News from the Chickadee Toos

Teresa Hahn,
Lead Teacher

Lori Higgins,
Teacher

Moya Stevens,
Assistant Teacher

Greetings from Chickadee Too,

There are a lot of changes going on in our end of the building. First the sad news, Joe has left D.C.C.C.C. and consequentially left us missing his smiling face and charming personality. His family has found a situation that works better for them and we are glad for them.

We have a new addition to our room. Lucy Galletti has joined us on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She is adjusting beautifully and having fun with new toys and new friends.

Another friend will also be with us, starting later in February. Samuel will be our youngest child to date and we are very excited to have him join the class.



Maxwell has started to walk and is quite proud of this accomplishment. He is working hard to keep up with our older Chicks. We have 3 more on the verge of walking independently and will soon be running with the pack.

Zelda is rolling and scootching all around the room getting herself to the toys she wants. We are Chickadees on the move!





All the children have been enjoying some gross motor play in the little multi. We are learning to safely climb steps in the climber and maneuver our way through the tunnel (which is an awesome spot for peek-a-boo). The older friends have been taking some trips to the big multi, where we share space with older classrooms to watch, explore and learn. The big climber is a big hit! Just the vast amount of space is so much fun for these guys, and we are learning to use our muscles and our minds in new way.



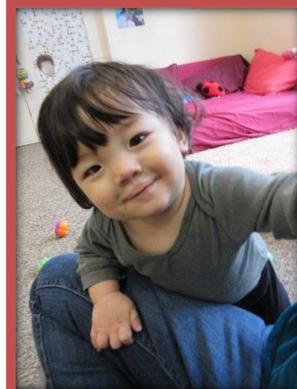
There is a lot of emergent language happening in the Chickadee Too room as well. We are working on new words each day and even beginning to say some names of friends and teachers. This is such an exciting development for the children, the teachers, and of course the parents. There is an increasing interest in books, stories and songs, which promotes this language acquisition naturally and enjoyably.

We continue to enjoy our music class with Brooke on Tuesdays. If your child does not come to school regularly on Tuesday, please feel free to join us from 9:15-9:40 in the little multi and have some musical fun (an adult will need to stay with the child for the class).

We are getting to enjoy some outside winter fun now that there is a little snow cover on the icy surface, so please remember to send your child with the appropriate outside gear.

Enjoy the rest of winter and think spring!

Teresa for the Chickadee Too Team



News from the Owls

Debbie Burnham,
Lead Teacher

Wendy Irwin,
Teacher

April Buchanan,
Assistant Teacher

Math and science and literacy, Oh My!!

We have been extremely busy in the Owl Room since winter break. Toddlers love to learn and are usually open to anything we offer for them to try. We continue to watch our snowman get skinnier on warm days and then we add snow back on snowy days. They have learned that ice crunches as you step on it and that it can be slippery. We have even tried to catch and count snowflakes as they come down.

In February we are exploring books by Jan Brett. We have read "The Mitten", acted it out with paper animals and then acted it out with our own bodies. Everyone crawls into the mitten (a large white sheet) and then a mouse tickles our noses and we sneeze. As we sneeze the mitten goes flying up in the air. And the air fills with "again, again" by some of the Owls!

If your child has a favorite book at home think of ways that you can enhance the story by acting it out. After your child has gone to bed put the book and related items in an area they will see in the morning, such as at the breakfast table. Watch to see their eyes pop open and a big smile arrive. For "The Three Little Bear" you could have three size bowls and spoons. For "The Big Red Barn" you could arrange small animal figures around the table. You are sure to start the morning off happily!

We will have more birthdays this month: Libby, Ada, Jack and Nicole will all turn two. Joshua and Charlotte will follow in March!

We want to thank our parents who helped with Chinese New Year. Our room looks so festive still. If you ever want to share a talent or special event please let us know. We love to have parents join us. Not only do we learn, but you get to see parts of the day you might otherwise not see. If you come at lunch you can see what everyone brings and it may give you new ideas.

You probably have noticed our new afternoon helper. Autumn was here before and has rejoined us. She is a Dartmouth student interested in early education. She is a wonderful addition to our room.

As more children approach their second birthday we see more temper tantrums. When a child screams and falls to the floor we make sure they are in a safe place and then leave them alone until they stop. Then we go to them, give them a cuddle and gently explain the situation. If you would like suggestions for at home, there will be a book reprint from "Touchpoints" by Doctor T. Berry Brazelton next to the sign in sheet.

We hope that you continue to have a wonderful winter with very few temper tantrums. 😊

Fondly,
Debbie, Wendy and April



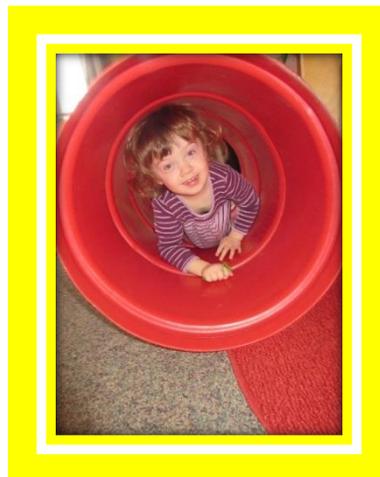
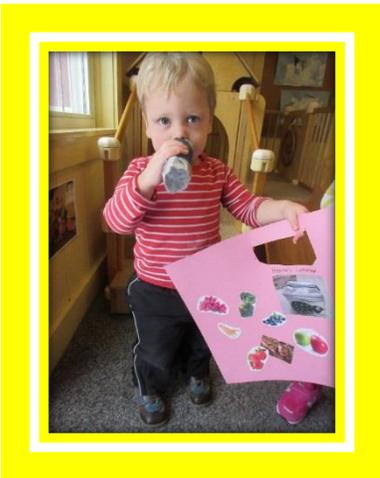
News from the Hedgehogs

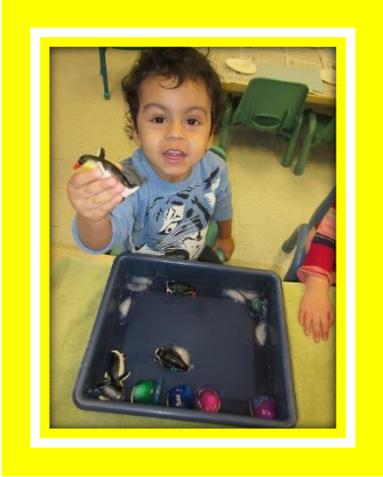
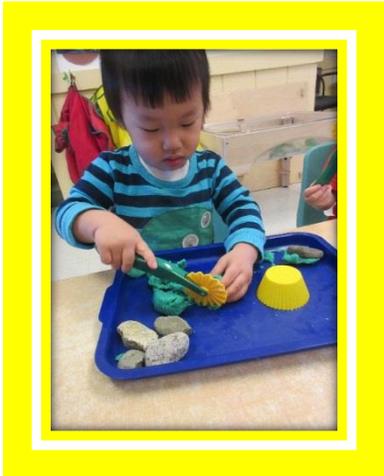
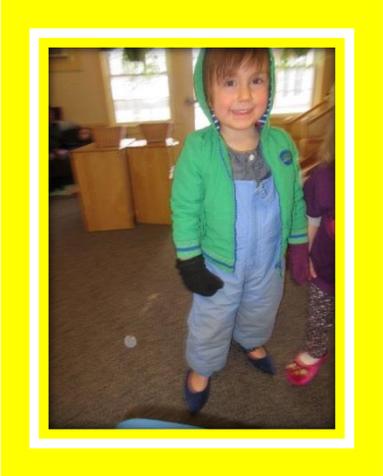
Jennifer Sprague,
Lead Teacher

Jenn Boudro,
Teacher

Kimberly Smith,
Assistant Teacher

Hello Hedgehog Families,
Wow I can't believe your child has been a Hedgehog for almost 6 months!! It seems like we were just meeting you for the first time at our Meet and Greet. We sure have been busy Hedgehogs...coloring on the snow, backwards day activities, hiking on the trail, toothbrush day activities, and celebrating Chinese New Year. Now we are writing letters to friends and family using our Hedgehog Post Office. We also talk about what letters are in our name and in our friend's names. We have learned about how our mail system works and really have enjoyed putting stamps on our mail. We talk lots about caring for others and we have noticed how much the Hedgehogs help each other. Asking a friend to help open the refrigerator, giving a friend a turn with a toy/book, or helping a friend put their shoes on the shoe shelf. We look forward to watching your special Hedgehog continue to grow these next 6 months!





News from the Otters

Susan Quimby Young,
Lead Teacher

Teacher

Katie Robinson,
Assistant Teacher

We've had lots of fun outside this winter. I see children using snow shovels every day. Sleds are always a hit and kids are learning to walk up by the fence and pull their sleds up all by themselves. I see some kids immediately go to the ski bucket when they burst through the door to the big playground. We've used the Infant/Toddler playground on occasion where kids are using the playhouses, running down the hill, getting stuck in the Fisher Price cars and trucks with bulky winter gear on and working on maneuvering how to extract their boots to get out!. We've gone sliding on our stomachs and bottoms on crusty snow. We've seen lots of tracks in the snow as well. We went on a Groundhog Day hike to where we know there are a few holes in the woods. We saw some footprints around one hole that appeared to be a squirrel. We talked a lot about shadows and made rabbit shadows with our hands in the sun that streamed in the greenhouse. That brought us right into "Little Bunny Foo Foo!" One day I was watching kids using flashlights to make their own shadows. It was entertaining to say the least as they worked to figure out how to hold and shine the light in order to get the shadows to appear. Outside we noticed how our shadows were really long. We jumped and waved our arms to make them move and dance.





We have been getting ready for Valentine's Day with a lot of art activities. We have painted and glued with a variety of materials. We are letting the clay hearts harden this weekend for thumbprint necklaces before we paint them. We are looking forward to a heart hunt on Monday and we've decided to have a Valentine lunch for the kids on Tuesday. We are making spaghetti with meatballs (optional), homemade garlic bread with red fruit and

veggie options. You are more than welcome to send in a lunch if you think your child may prefer a lunch from home. We will sing some songs and talk about friends. I have been hearing a lot about friends lately with some talking about play dates and who their friends are. Some kids will say "I love so and so" and I also hear "I like you" often and in frequent conversations. There is something wonderful about a child coming to you saying "I like you." It is spontaneous and REAL! We are talking often about using friendly words instead of at times yelling. We are using verbal skills to help solve problems. This is an on-going process and will continue for years!!

I am excited about doing some tracking with the kids in a week or so. I have talked with the Black Bear teachers and we are going to do some activities with them. There will be tracking matching games, excursions in the woods and fields as we try to identify some basic tracks. I am in hopes of getting a game camera so we might actually be able to see what animals make some tracks. While we see the tracks and talk about how a deer made those tracks with their hooves, it may seem a little abstract to digest! But.... if we can put an animal's body with the tracks....I also think it will be very cool to see what exactly is in our woods!! We have been reading "A Stranger In The Woods" which has beautiful photographs of woodland creatures who discover a "stranger" that is actually a snowman built by a couple of children. The children have spread birdseed on the snowman's head for chickadees to eat. Other animals like the corn and deer like to nibble on the carrot nose. I talked with some of the Black Bear kids and they are going to help the Otters build a snowman in the woods the next time we get sticky snow. We will decorate it just like the 2 children did in the book and maybe if we have the game camera up by then, we'll be able to see what animals may have come to check out "the stranger in the woods"!

Please check your child's cubby to extra clothes as kids often have wet socks, sleeves, etc.

Happy happy winter!!

Fondly from the Otter team
Susan



News from the Badgers

Terri Hollis,
Lead Teacher

Miranda Arruda,
Teacher

Courtney Temple,
Assistant Teacher

Hello Badger Families,

As you know from our letters home we have been very busy in the Badger Room. This particular unit has been rich in ideas, concepts, and stimulation of children's curiosity. Many times as teachers set out to expose your children to the world we do it with a thought of what direction it may take, and plan accordingly. Much of the time this is how it plays out. There are other times, such as this time, when we introduced our Roxaboxen unit that the kids take us, and we go. This is when we know they have an interest, they are wondering, they want to know more. A great example of this would be that when a teacher shared with the children that the story took place in a place called Arizona. This



prompted questions from the children. Where is that? What's it called? Next step get a map and show them. Okay that might have been the end of it but it wasn't. Hanging the map up continued to stimulate many more questions from the children. What is the place called in pink? Where is my house on the map (lol)? Explanation of what a map does show, and does not followed. Random questions about the map were asked during different times of the day for several days.



Again and again this same scenario played out. We as teachers continued to put thoughts forward, not truly knowing what ones would be thought of as fun enough, stimulating enough to expand on. What are the ideas we are going to need to let go of, that we saw as fun and the kids did not. Arizona is different in many ways like the weather, this did not interest your children so much. Arizona has different snakes, and oh now here is a topic the kids were okay





to have fun with. Here are some smaller stones and blocks to make your own small Roxaboxen town with. This was okay, but not overly exciting. Making flags of our own like the children did in the story, pretty fun. Who could predict that learning about plants would be a hot topic? The word Succulents was really silly to learn about.

So I guess the point behind this is to say that children have not had a long enough life to even know what exists and what to ask about. So as the adults in their life, we should just be ready and willing. Be willing to have an open mind, and not assume that children are beneath your adult oriented knowledge. Be ready to expand and make their new awareness fun. Take the time when able to enrich by conversation, materials, and create experiences. Consider it an adventure in learning for all.

On behalf of the Badger Team
Terri



News from the Black Bears

Amy McLellan,
Lead Teacher

Barb Merchand,
Teacher

Liz Harrington,
Assistant Teacher

Hi All,

We are excited to tell you about the two new centers that we've opened in our room; The Black Bear Print Shop and a newly carpeted stage for Dramatic Play.

In the Black Bear Print Shop, the children can practice skills associated with writing such as correct sitting position and proper pincher grasp for holding a utensil. At the writing center, Black Bears are encouraged to explore various writing implements such as pencils, pens, crayons, and markers. They also use fingers in sand trays, Wiki Stix, play dough, and wet sponges on chalkboards to practice the shape and size of various letters. We write books and send important notes to mommies and daddies. We use clipboards and name tags to make lists and record important information. With Valentine's Day approaching, this will be an excellent space to write Valentine's cards for friends and family. As an extension to our writing center, we will become pen pals with the pre-K programs at The Center for Young Children and Families at Plymouth State University and Sandwich Children's Center in Sandwich, NH. We will begin by sitting down together and brainstorming about what we want to share about ourselves and our Black Bear community. As this project progresses, the Black Bears will write their very own letters, and look forward to receiving responses from our new pen pals around the state. We would love to involve our Black Bear families in our love of writing and receiving mail. Whether on vacation, or on a working trip, please take a moment in your travels, and mail us a postcard from wherever you are, so that we can record it on our world map. Send postcards to Dartmouth College Child Care Center (c/o Black Bears) 21 Reservoir Road, Hanover, NH. We can't wait to hear from you!





This month, our Dramatic Play space is dedicated to Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The children have helped to make costumes and collect props to put on this play for us over and over again! Although inspired by the story, the Black Bears love to improvise alternative endings and storylines! The role of actor in the story is fun, but Black Bears also really enjoy being part of the audience as well.

Although we are looking forward to Spring, this winter has provided the Black Bears with the perfect amount of snow for sledding, snow shoeing, and skiing on the hill outside. We have enjoyed snowball fights, building snow forts and snowmen, and taking long winter walks beyond our playground gates!

The month of January has been hard on the Black Bears, and we are still trying to get to feeling 100% healthy. The best thing we can do to help prevent the spread of germs is get outside every day and wash our hands A LOT. Please be sure your child comes to school ready for outside play (winter coat, hat, waterproof mittens/gloves, snow pants, and winter boots), and an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing in their cubby for especially wet and muddy days on the playground. Please help us reinforce the importance of keeping little fingers out of noses, using tissues and throwing them away, and washing hands with soap and suds. Thank you for helping to keep our Black Bears healthy and safe through these long winter months.

Until Next Time,
The Black Bear Team
Amy, Barb, and Liz





Celebrate Mardi Gras with Creole and Cajun favorites

By Susan Nye (as seen on the Parenting NH website <http://www.parentingnh.com/February-2017/Celebrate-Mardi-Gras-with-Creole-and-Cajun-favorites/>)

A New Orleans-style Mardi Gras bash is perfect for chasing the winter blues away. Mardi Gras falls in the days leading up to Lent, which begins March 1, making this the right time to don some glittery beads while you and your kids cook up Cajun and Creole dishes.

Let Louisiana's wonderful cuisine inspire you. A melting pot of French, Spanish, Italian, Native American and African cultures, New Orleans has earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the food capitals of the world. Louisianans have a passion for food and take joy in cooking and eating together. With their flavorful gumbo, spicy jambalaya, wonderful red beans and rice, sweet bananas foster and beignets, who can blame them?

Call up a few of your favorite families, put on your dancing shoes, turn on some jazz, and laissez les bons temps rouler!

Creole Chicken

Serves 8

Olive oil

1 lb. andouille sausage, finely chopped

8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs

1 large onion, chopped

1 carrot, finely chopped

1 stalk celery, finely chopped

1 red bell pepper, finely chopped

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

4 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp. dried Italian herbs

1/2 tsp. smoked paprika

1 T. (or to taste) hot sauce

1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

1 c. dry white wine

1-2 c. chicken broth

1 bay leaf

Garnish: fresh chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.



Heat a little olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausage and cook until lightly browned. Remove sausage from pan, drain and reserve.

Working in batches, if necessary, and starting skin-side down, brown chicken in the skillet, about 3 minutes per side. Remove from pan and reserve.

If necessary, add more olive oil to the pan. Add onion, carrot, celery and bell pepper; season with the herbs, paprika, salt and pepper, and sauté until the onion is translucent. Add garlic, hot sauce and Worcestershire sauce and cook for 2 minutes more. Return sausage to pan and toss to combine.

Put chicken in a single layer in a roasting pan or large casserole. Arrange vegetables and sausage around and over the chicken. Add the white wine, chicken broth and bay leaf. Transfer chicken to the oven and roast at 375 degrees until cooked through and golden, about 30 minutes. Garnish chicken with fresh, chopped parsley and serve with a spoonful of cheesy grits.

Cheesy Grits

Serves 8

2 c. instant grits or polenta

2 T. butter

1/2 c. half & half

3-4 oz. grated cheddar cheese

Make grits according to package directions. When grits are done, add butter, cream and cheese. Stir until melted and well combined.

Red Beans and Rice

Serves 8

1 lb. dried red beans

Olive oil

1 lb. andouille sausage, chopped

1 1/2 onions, peeled and finely chopped

2 stalks celery, finely chopped

1 carrot, finely chopped

1 red bell pepper, finely chopped

4 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 tsp. dried Italian herbs

1/4 tsp. (or to taste) cayenne pepper

Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

5-6 c. chicken broth or water

1 bay leaf

2 c. long-grain white rice

Pick over beans and discard any stones or shriveled beans. Rinse well and soak in 8-10 cups of water in the refrigerator overnight.

Heat a little olive oil in large casserole over medium-high heat. Add sausage and sauté until lightly browned. Remove from pan, drain and reserve.

Reduce heat to medium and, if necessary, add a little more olive oil to the casserole. Add onions, celery, carrot, bell pepper and garlic. Sprinkle with herbs, season with cayenne, salt and pepper and sauté until the onion is translucent. Add garlic and sauté 2-3 minutes more. Add sausage back to the casserole.

Drain and rinse the beans. Put beans in the pot with vegetables. Add broth and bay leaf and stir to combine. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to very low, cover and simmer until beans are very tender, about 1 1/2 hours.



While beans simmer, cook rice according to package directions.

Spoon white rice into bowls, top with beans and serve.

NOTE: The beans are even better if made ahead. Cool to room temperature, cover and store in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight. Gently reheat on low.

Bananas Foster

Serves 8

8 T. (1 stick) butter

1 c. brown sugar

1/4 tsp. allspice

1/2 tsp. cinnamon

1/4 tsp. nutmeg

1/2 tsp. salt

Pinch cloves

4 bananas, peeled and cut on the diagonal in 1/2-inch slices

1/2 c. dark rum

Vanilla ice cream



Melt butter in a large, heavy skillet over low heat. Add brown sugar and spices and stir until sugar dissolves. Raise heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer. Add bananas and cook for 2-3 minutes, carefully spooning the sauce over the bananas.

Remove pan from heat and add rum. Ignite the rum, then return the pan to the heat and continue cooking, swirling the sauce until flame dies out and the sauce is syrupy – about 1-3 minutes.

Spoon warm bananas and sauce over vanilla ice cream and serve.

Susan Nye writes for magazines throughout New England. She shares many of her favorite recipes and stories about food, family and friendship on her award winning blog, [Around the Table](http://www.susannye.wordpress.com), at www.susannye.wordpress.com.