



# The Children's Center at Caltech



## AUGUST 2009

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## Upcoming Activities

### CCC Board of Trustees

meetings are held at 7pm on the 3rd Monday of each month in the Moore Laboratory, room 239.

### **CCC closed for Labor Day** September 7, 2009



## From the Director

Gone Fishin' – Summer is almost over!



## Science Lab

First, I would like to thank parents again for the furniture, specifically the light bank for the science lab. I love it! It looks amazing in



the lab. The children have already germinated mini basil and the Beavers are also using the science lab light bank for their gardening projects.

As transitions are taking place, August and September will be "How-To" months for the entire center. Our focus here is to introduce or reintroduce tools, instruments, or equipment that we use at the school so that our children will learn or continue to have safe practice when using them. The new curriculum web is posted in the classrooms.



I would also like to thank Maya's father, Matt, for setting up a visit to the Huntington Botanical Gardens for some of the teachers and me! This is about the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> time I've been there and each time I was in awe. I plan on taking my daughter, hopefully soon. We all enjoyed ourselves, especially in the conservatory. I highly recommend the Huntington Gardens children's garden; bring a swimming suit or extra clothes for your child(ren). We saw the conservatory, the children's garden, and, with little time left, we also saw the Chinese Garden. Pictures will be posted up on the lab webpage soon.

If you are in need of parent participation hours and know something about glass doors with wooden frames, please see me or email me at: [lkheng@caltech.edu](mailto:lkheng@caltech.edu).

As a friendly reminder, please put away the materials that you take out in the lab during closing time. The teachers who close clean up the lab at a specific time and they may not see if anything is out again after they have already cleaned up. Thank you!

Kheng Ly-Hoang  
Science Curriculum Coordinator



## Bunny Hopping

Hello Friends,

I hope everyone is enjoying the summertime! The Bunnies have been enjoying the weather and the fun water activities. We have been watching rubber ducks, boats, balls, and turtles floating and sinking in our water table. Another favorite thing to do is splash the water. The children have also enjoyed mixing water and sand together in the sandbox. Some of the children like the texture while others preferred to play with the dry sand. We added two big tires to the sandbox, which has created a new place to climb into and sit.

Parents, thanks again for our new furniture! The climbing stairs have been a great



addition to the room. It's so exciting to see the children either crawl up or walk to the top and then back down again. Some children pause at the top and clap or dance because they are so proud they did it on their own. The hideaway cube has become a nice, cozy place to sit and rest. The children have become fascinated by looking at their reflections in the mirror.

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held this month. Please check the bulletin boards and sign up. This is a good chance for you to meet with your primary caregiver to discuss your child's progress in the room.

We extend a warm welcome to Evelyn and Luc, who joined the Bunny Room. We had three children move to the Dolphins: Kiri, Meena, and Lily. We wish you the best and will see you over the fence!

**Bunny Reminders:**

- Please bring extra clothes for your children.
- Label all items (clothes, pacifiers, bottles, containers)
- Check your child's cubby soiled clothing at the end of day

Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



## Dolphin Splash

Welcome to all the families and children: Liat Ofek, Logan Park, Kiri Hoard, Shreya Kumar, Ayla Greer and soon-to-be-Dolphins Meena Capak and Lily Waggoner.

We also welcomed our new staff, Adi, who joined us from the Bunny room, and we said good-bye to Olivia, who joined the Bunny staff. Thank you for all of your hard work and contributions.

We said farewell to our Dolphin Families and children: Emily Soto, Rachel Nave, Itamar Lewinson, Dean Capellari, Ellie Stevens and Joanna Harrison who joined old Dolphin friends in the Penguin Room.

This summer we have been investigating the concept of energy by exploring things that roll (balls, cars, rolling pins, paint rollers and item brought from home). Thank you for sharing those items with us.

For the months of August and September we will be investigating the concept of "Form and Function" where we will introduce the use of materials, classroom rules and expectations within the classroom.

Many thanks to all of our classroom parent volunteers (room parent, web master, scholastic book orders) and to all of our parents for their contributions this past year. Thank you Dayita for the wonderful instruments you

share during music time - the children are enjoying them. Personal Thanks to the Dolphin staff for their hard work and teamwork, all the classrooms, administration and Elena for their continuous hard work.

I hope everyone is enjoying the summer...

**Dolphin Reminders:**

- Bring an updated family photo.
- Label all clothing.
- Rest Sitters needed Aug 12<sup>th</sup> from 1:30-3:00.
- Sign in/out daily.
- Check parent board and files.
- Update your parent hours.
- Music Schedule will soon be posted; all are welcome to join.
- We have a new room parent: Vijaya Kumar (Shreya's mom).

Adi Botvin - Dolphin Teacher





## Penguin Parade

In the past few months we have explored the form & function of simple machines. In the next two months we will continue to focus on form & function but will we look at how things are done in the Penguins.

Now that the majority of the class has moved on to the Koalas, we have many new friends who have not had certain experiences. For example, a few weeks ago Rachel helped me set up the table activities in the morning. On one table I set up a variety of transferring opportunities. I set out red training chopsticks (they look like the letter M and you squeeze them like tongs), tongs with handles, and small wooden/medal tongs. Rachel was simply fascinated with the small tongs. Every five minutes (I exaggerate of course) she asked me what they were called. Then I finally asked her if she had used them in the Dolphins and she said, "Yes I did but only for serving snack." At this point I realized that we need to introduce some things to the new Penguins. So that will be our focus in the next two months. We are simply going to get familiar with what is new in the Penguin classroom. Our curriculum focus will begin with practical life. This will include things like transferring with tongs, eyedroppers, and spooning. You may wonder, "what will the experienced Penguins get out of this?" Well, they will be the role models of course. Someone has to show the rookies how it is done. I

have observed how the reserved children have simply bloomed now that they are the ones who are the eldest. They are showing the new Penguins how to take off the cot sheet from the cot on laundry day or how to thread those containers in the dramatic area. It is a big responsibility to be a role model. Nevertheless, it gives children an opportunity to gain confidence, and it increases their self-esteem.



Well, we are about half way through our transitions. Almost all of the Dolphins who are supposed to move have transitioned and so the rest of our class will consist of new families to the center. Make sure to introduce yourself and help them feel welcome.

Virginia Covarrubias – Lead Teacher



## Koala Korner

Please welcome the following children and families to the Koala room:

Molly Eck      Elise Taylor  
Hadar Kaspi   Paloma Moser  
Claire Adkins   Maayan Zadok  
Jude Ready      Camryn Do  
Paxton Liong

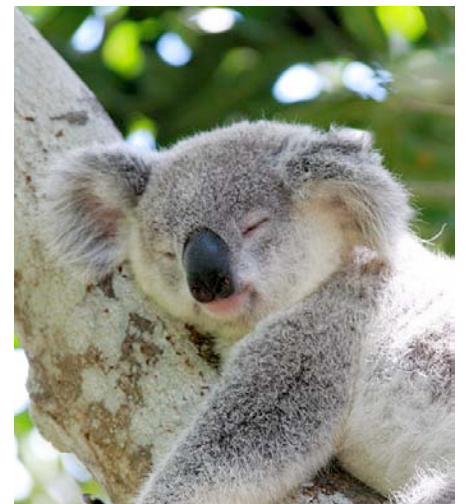
And we say good bye to:

Hiroto      Sarah      Dante  
Phoebe      Estelle      Dana

who have transitioned to Raccoon classroom. We will see you in the yard. We appreciate parents' understanding and patience in this matter.

Along with these transitions there is a new addition to the Koala staff. We welcome Hilda Ilamas, who has moved from the Raccoon room to our classroom. We also welcome our new room parent Ann Taylor (Teddy's mom) and new webmaster Tuan Do (Camryn's dad). The Koalas website will be updated soon.

We have started our new curriculum theme with great enthusiasm and the children are actively involved in the planned activities. They have experienced planting cucumbers and observing the change in growth over time of Zinnias, Tavera beans, and flower seeds. The new light bank is providing hands-on experience to document and observe *change*. Music and movement is playing a vital role in children's literacy and they have learned two new songs, "I am a little seedling" and "Here is



a leaf" to tie in with the curriculum theme. Inspired by the song "Down by the Bay" the children practiced creating their own rhymes as well.

Please take some time to look at the surveys, journals, and other charts that are displayed in the classroom. In connection with change in growth, we are working with children's growth as well and have measured their own bodies. The children are enjoying observing and matching their own and their friends' baby pictures, which are helpful for them to understand how everyone grows and changes. Along with our current theme, we will be introducing another curriculum theme for August and September: *Form and Function* with the focus on *How things work*. This will provide exposure and introduction to all new materials, which the children will be using in the near future.

Thanks to everyone who participated and contributed to new classroom furniture through fundraising. This effort has benefited the classroom very much. Thanks to Sharon (Conor's mom) for donating a new cassette and CD player.

#### **Koala Reminders:**

- ° As the weather has become quiet hot, please make sure your child has an extra change of clothes for water play and please check your child's cubby for wet clothes to take them home at the end of each day.
- ° Please check your parent hours and make sure you have all your hours completed by September 2009.
- ° To all the new Koala families, please complete your family BIOS and bring them, along

with family pictures, to the classroom ASAP.

° We need help to shred compost collected by children. Another opportunity to earn parent hours!

° Please remember to close the wooden gate between the Koala hallway and bathroom when you come in and out.

Please feel free to communicate with me any time or via email at: [fiamjoad@caltech.edu](mailto:fiamjoad@caltech.edu)

Filmeena Amjad- Lead Teacher



## Raccoon Roundup

Hello Everyone,

The teachers would like to say a great *Thank You* for our new furniture. The room looks wonderful with new shelves. We would also like to say, "See you in the yard," to Hilda Llamas. The Raccoons welcome Carol Castellanos as the newest teaching member in the classroom. Carol was my mentee student during Spring '09. She completed 200 hours of fieldwork, and the students love her lively circle times and her warm smile.



We are wrapping up our form and function of living organisms. The Raccoons have used the light projector to outline butterflies, ladybugs, and pill bugs. Afterwards they mixed

their paint on pallets and filled in the areas of their living organisms. They have also worked thoroughly on the light table with transparencies.

Our friends have estimated "How many Snails in the Vivarium?" Children later drew the snails with permanent marker and painted them. They enjoyed observing the snails move their bodies across the vivarium. They noticed that some of their heads were inside their shells and some not. The children have been playing the Snail Pace Race (Lakeshore). This wonderful non-competitive game encourages turn-taking and counting.

We went on walks on campus and in our own back yard to discuss the similarities and differences between the living organisms we discovered. Later we gathered the Raccoon responses onto a survey. We also looked at beetles through a microscope and were amazed at how much we can observe through a microscope. The children documented their findings in their journals.

I know it is easy to forget what time it is during these beautiful summer days, however we have a closing time. Gentle reminder: *The center closes at 5:30*. There is a grace period if unforeseen things happen, 5:30-5:45. There is a \$2 fee for every minute afterwards. The teachers need to have all the parents out of the room and the back yard by 5:45. If you are still in the room or the back yard after 5:45, you will be charged by the closing teacher. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



# Beaver Tales

The Beavers would like to welcome our new friends, Christina Feng, Zachary Loo, Cindy Lu, and Sean Walters-McDonald. Transitions are going well as the children transfer over with excitement and curiosity. We have said goodbye to Spencer DeClercq, Olivia Maya, Kylie Oh, Sophie Ann Taylor, and Victor Perez.

As our curriculum still focuses on growth and change with an emphasis on gardening, we have brought in a different component of fusing art and nature. The children explored making paper from everyday materials such as recycled paper, newspaper and jacaranda flowers. The children saw the transformation firsthand as they put the paper into to a blender, added some water, sieved it, and let it dry! The Beavers also observed nature through children’s photography as they captured beautiful pictures of our garden area. We have begun a leaf collection from trees in our yard. This promoted literacy and writing skills as the children would identify the tree and spell its name by using our CCC Tree Guide Booklet. Along with this, they have made tree



rubblings and drawings from the familiar trees in the yard. One of our Red Dent corn and a few of our carrots harvested early, so we documented the growth outcome. Several children responded that there was not enough sunlight for the carrots and the bugs attacked the corn. We will continue to document the remaining corn and carrots still growing. Our garden is thriving and we recently added another bean garden and flower garden to our front driveway!

We have taken advantage of the summer heat by adding water play to our weekly curriculum. Don’t forget to bring your child a *swimsuit, towel, extra clothes, flip flops, and apply sunscreen in the morning.*

Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



# Parenting Tips

## Guidance not Violence

### *Good Reasons Why Children Should Not Be Spanked*

Do you want your children to listen to you because they love and respect you or because they fear you? In our growing society of new and experienced parents many are coming to grips with the fact that hitting their children as a form of discipline does not work. Although spanking may work in the short run, parents are questioning if the long-term effects are worth it. Can children be taught a lesson in a non-aggressive manner? Will it last? The child development experts are still saying that spankings teach

short-term lesson, but long-term violence. When polled, (Children’s Institute, Inc. 1999) American parents said that they resort to hitting for lack of other effective alternatives.

The following provides helpful information on why children should not spanked and how teaching your child a lesson is based on the relationship that you have with him or her and less on the physical punishment that instills fear.

### **Children's optimal development occurs in nurturing and violence-free environments.**

Remember when you were a little child and everything was so exciting to you. You may have felt that world was a fun place to be. No judgments, no responsibilities, no jobs to tend to and you were free to do what ever was fun and interesting. During that time is when you probably learned the most. Spanking impairs the ability to learn. When a child is in a calm and non-threatening state the brain is in its prime to learn. However, if spanking a child makes him or her feel angry or scared they become hyper-vigilant, and learning comes to a screeching halt. Children who are taught to fear regular spankings tend to live in a semi-agitated state that is not conducive to optimal learning (Perry, 1999).

### **Spanking teaches children that it is okay to hit and that violence works and children who hit learn to be hitters themselves.**

You can't tell your child to not hit his or her siblings if you are hitting him or her yourself as a source of discipline. This only confuses

your child. If your child does what they're told because of the spanking, the lesson you've taught is, "violence works." And you can bet that they will learn from your actions, and as a result, use force to win in other situations. When your child grows up do you want him or her to discuss problems with their spouse or use force to settle conflict?

**Children learn good behavior by imitating good behavior.**

This concept is no different than you telling your youngest child to watch how his big brother takes such good care of the family pet. Children learn morals, values and compassion from their parents. If you were to pull the dogs ears, chances are your child will also pull the dogs ears. You are teaching a lesson by example. If you hit your child, your child will learn to hit others. To prepare your child to enter into a healthy adult life with valuable skills, practice teaching him or her how to negotiate, how to compromise, the value of self motivation, and how to successfully and non-aggressively resolve conflicts.

**Hitting can lead to injuries.**

Research (Straus 1999) shows that over time a parent who spanks tends to hit harder each time. When spankings lose the desired effect parents tend to be at risk for using too much force leaving children at risk for injury.

**Hitting destroys self-esteem.**

Do you remember how you felt after you were hit? You probably felt anger, sadness, confusion and may have even felt unloved. Although parents do not intend

for his or her child to feel these things most often they do. There are better ways of teaching children to behave. Fear is not an effective way of teaching a lesson. The true meaning of the word discipline means to guide. Guidance means to teach. When we punish children, we've leave out the guidance. The following includes a variety of non-aggressive alternatives that parents can use to guide their children.

- Begin providing guidance and limit setting as early as infancy
- Keep communicating your words to your baby and young child
- Show mild disapproval of undesirable behavior
- Discuss your feelings about what you see
- Empathize by putting yourself in their shoes
- Offer alternatives
- Redirect your child's attention
- Be consistent and follow through (do what you say)
- Offer encouragement when your child follows through
- Thinking time - have your child sit with you and think about their actions and have him or her decide what they could do differently next time.
- Offer solutions and ideas with your child - sometimes they don't know what to do and need your guidance.

Excerpt: "When parents use guidance to teach their children about how the world works, they are being mindful. Mindful Parenting is being conscious about the importance of the parent-child relationship. A new-school parent is mindful; mindful of how influential they are to their child. A mindful

parent thinks before they speak, does not act on their first emotional impulse, and seeks input from their child when challenged. It is the ebb and flow of the relationship that teaches children how to be mindful."

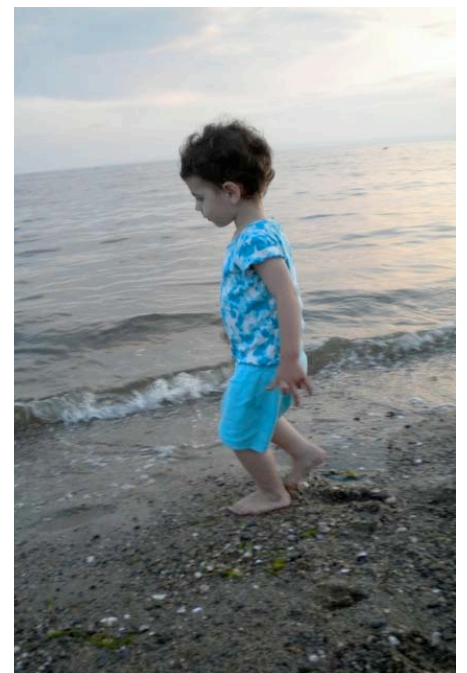
Excerpt from Kimberley's book, due for release in December 2009. Copyright 2008 all rights reserved.

Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT  
[TheGoToMom.TV](http://TheGoToMom.TV)



## From the Editors

... and Dante and Molly Asimow (in Rhode Island):  
See you in Beavers and Penguins, respectively, in early September.



As always, you can e-mail us at [colette@asimow.com](mailto:colette@asimow.com)