

The Children's Center at Caltech



February 2009

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Upcoming Activities

Center Closed
Presidents' Day - Feb 16th

Earn Parent Hours

Feb. 9th at noon – Learn about
RAMPS (Raccoon-sponsored)

Feb 18th at 1:30-3 PM, Avery
Library: Science Curriculum 101,
the conceptual approach

CCC Board of Trustees **Meetings**

7pm on the 3rd Monday of each
month in the Moore Laboratory,
room 239



From the Office

I thought this month I would use the newsletter to update you all on the hiring of a new Science Curriculum Coordinator.

Because we believe that inclusion is an important part of the hiring process, and because each person comes with their own unique perspective, we invite you into the process. Our CCC staff work very closely together, so a "good fit" is a very important consideration in the choice.

A hiring committee has been formed and is comprised of two parents (Therese Calegari and Smardar Ben-Tabou de-Leon), a Senior Raccoon Teacher (Hilda Llamas), Beaver Lead Teacher (Veronica Dayag), Susan and myself (Liz).

Background checks are done before a decision is made, and on occasion a second level interview is conducted.

We will meet on Monday, January 26th to formulate questions. Then, on Tuesday, the interviews will begin. We will be interviewing six applicants, four from the surrounding communities and two from our very own staff, Sara Kapadia and Kheng Ly.

We hope to have the new Children's Center Science Curriculum Coordinator hired by mid February. Please stay tuned.

- Liz



Bunny Hopping

Happy 2009 Everyone! The Bunnies are off to a great start this New Year. All of our children returned from the holidays with great energy, ready to embark on their next stage of development. Most of our children have moved into stages of older infancy and toddlerhood as we see them becoming more mobile and independent. The children and caregivers are communicating beautifully by using new vocabulary and sign language.



This past month the children have enjoyed taking walks and strolls on campus. They have also been using their gross motor skills outside in the yard, moving around with ease, exploring their surroundings. Favorite outside activities are rocking on the horses and playing in the sandbox. The Bunnies



have also enjoyed story time using the extra big picture books. It has been great to see all the Bunnies arriving happy and eager to play and explore with their friends and caregivers.

This coming month we will be having parent/teacher conferences. There is a sign-up sheet in the classroom. Please allow 30-45 minutes to meet with your child's Primary Caregiver. You can use this time to voice any questions or concerns about your child.

Bunny Reminders:

- Fill out all areas on your child's daily sheet in the morning.
- Bring a prepared bottle for your child each day (if needed). CCC provides milk in cups during snack and lunchtime.
- Keep 2 sets of clothing in cubby
- Take home naptime blanket to wash over the weekend.

Thank you!!

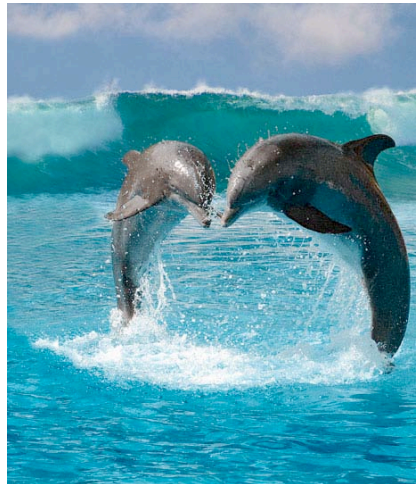
Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



Dolphin Splash

Our theme is now *Scale and Structure*. We are looking at parts of a building. We are paying close attention to windows, doors and stairs on buildings. We are busy building with small and large Duplo and wooden blocks. We have experimented with hammer painting, while wearing our construction hats. We are looking at the materials that the three little pigs used to build their houses. We are learning how to help our teachers make a tent using yarn, string and

parachutes. One of our favorite stories is *Build it Up and Knock it Down*, by Tom Hunter. The Dolphins would like to welcome Dean, Debi and Tom to our classroom. Happy Birthday Congratulations to Rachel and Ellie, our January Birthdays.



Kimberley Clayton Blaine, who is a parent here at our school, has given the teachers some interesting book titles on Discipline (Kimberley is a licensed child therapist). She also teaches a Positive Parenting Lunch Group on Jan. 26th, Feb. 23rd, Mar. 30th, and April 27th, in the staff conference room from 12-1pm. Book titles are as follows: 1) *Discipline Without Distress*, by Judy Arnall, 2) *Kids, Parents, and Power Struggles* by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka, 3) *How To Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk*, By Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (This one is my favorite).

Reminder: Please keep your child's cubby stocked for the changing weather and please label all clothing.

Retha Jones - Lead Teacher



Penguin Parade

After our winter closure everyone seemed to be asking the same questions: "Did you have a good holiday?" or "What did you do for the holidays?" So, I decided to ask the Penguin children what they did on their holiday. Well that was my first mistake. Penguins did not understand what that word meant, so I changed my question to "What did you do when the Penguin room was closed?" They seemed to understand that! And here are their answers:

Survey

Claire: Giggled and said, "I have a Lego on my head".
Seth: "I play with my Mommy. I play with my big brother Ian and my Daddy."
Jesse: "I go see airplane...on big white airplane."
Kasra: He looked at me for a long time and said, "The cars".
William: "I drilled, hammered, and sawed."
Zoe: "I went to Nana's and Papa's house. I had ants on celery."
Paxton: "I got a train table. I got a crane."
Paloma: "I drank some juice on the airplane."
Thomas: "Bus! A yellow bus."
Liong: "Play with Tiger."
Teddy: "I go to Penguins now."
Neeku: "I played with Meena. And I went to Vancouver and Pasadena."
Maayan: "I played."
Molly: "I don't know."
Kaila: Looks at teacher and puts her fingers in her mouth.
Adityan: Smiles and says, "I play."
Isaac: Frowned and walked away.
Houston: "Go airplane."

Penguin Packs are ready to be checked out again, starting Tuesday, 1/20/2009. Dolores took feedback from parents & staff alike into consideration and has reorganized them. Gracias, Dolores. Please remember that these are meant to be one-on-one activities. Please see our web site for rules, objectives, and schedule.



Finally I would like to thank Susan Wood (CCC Director), John McDonald (Dolphins), Jay Walters (Raccoons), Ron Ortiz (Koalas) and David Boyd (Penguins) for rebuilding our deck. They graciously volunteered almost 2 days during our winter break for this project. Now it is better than ever! We moved our mini benches up there and created a reading area. The Penguins love it. Thank You!

Virginia Covarrubias - Lead Teacher



Koala Korner

Hello Koala Families,

Well, we are here again welcoming and wishing the year 2009 to bring prosperity and

happiness to everyone. We looked forward to seeing you all after an enjoyable winter break and would like to thank the CCC Board for providing this relaxing opportunity. Children also were excited to come back, and in no time involved themselves in the daily routine.

We have moved further in our curriculum activities by constructing collaborative building models of bridges with different materials, such as popsicle sticks and clay, building homes with egg cartons etc., and entered into understanding of "What are tunnels?" We read some books to differentiate between "tunnels" and "bridges" and will read and discuss them sufficiently to enhance the children's knowledge. Please spare some time to read the surveys and discussion documentation to enjoy the children's feedback. Also, look at the displayed work on the shelves next to the good-bye window.

Our campus walks are full of fun and learning experiences. We collected some wood scraps from the campus carpentry shop during our walk, and we will walk to the recycling center to collect different materials for future building. In addition, we will be happy to accept donations of materials (e.g., small bricks, styrofoam, small metal pieces, stones etc.) that will support our curriculum.



We would like to welcome Conner Wang and family to the Koala room.

Thanks to all Koala parents for the holiday lunch, to Margit's family and Hanning's family for feeding our fish during winter break, to those parents who participated in Raccoon work Saturday, and to parents who attended the Beavers' Parent Education Workshop about Kindergarten Readiness. I am sure parents were filled with useful information. And last but not least, thanks for bringing ingredients for the salsa preparation - it will be fun! Thanks Miho for your prompt update to all the parents. Good job!

Reminders:

- Please look for parent hour opportunities to avoid last minute stress.
- Please visit the Koala room website to enjoy current activities. Michael-Hans is doing a wonderful job!

Filmeena Amjad- Lead Teacher



Raccoon Roundup

We hope that all of you had an enjoyable vacation. We welcome the New Year with enthusiasm. I would like to thank the many parents that participated in the Raccoon Work Saturday. It was a success. Make sure you get a head start on your parent hours. You will be surprised how quickly October comes around. Please check on how many parent hours you have so far and remember to write them down.

The Raccoons have been continuing to investigate temperature in several different ways. After reading the story *Too Many Tamales*, by Gary Soto, the children made their own Tamales for snack. They spread the masa on a corn husk, added cheese, wrapped and placed it in a pot. Our friends had wonderful predictions on how boiling the tamales would affect them. One child said, "The hot water will melt the cheese." Another said, "The water will cook the tamales, then we need to cool them before we could eat them." During a separate activity, children had some wonderful illustrations of boiling water. By adding heat to water, children captured the bubbles and steam that formed. We also boiled different kinds of rice. The children taste-tested and decided their favorite type. This survey was inspired by the book *Everybody Eats Rice*, by Noah Dooley.



Our friends also used the microscope to take a closer look at frozen lettuce. Afterwards, the Raccoons compared and contrasted a frozen lettuce to a room temperature one. After weighing each, they discovered the frozen one weighed more,

due to the extra water.

We are currently conducting an experiment with strawberries. Will a strawberry stay fresher in a refrigerator or at room temperature? Friends answered the question and will be illustrating the strawberries periodically.

The classroom has a new area... our Raccoon mailboxes. This is an exciting addition to our classroom. Children are welcome to write letters or draw pictures and then place them in a friend's mailbox. We hope this will encourage literacy, as well as forming new friendships.

Gentle reminders:

1. Make sure your child has at least **2** changes of clothes.
2. Children's work will now be placed in the top box of the cubbies. Please take it home.
3. Have children sign in and out at the easel.

***We need stationery donations for the children's desk.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



Beaver Tales

Welcome back Beavers! First, the Beavers would like to thank all the families for the generous gifts for the holiday season. We truly enjoy being a part of the children's lives.

We are saying goodbye to Katharina Fuchs and her family as they return to Germany in late January. They will be missed! A Raccoon child will transition at the beginning of February.

The Beavers returned to focusing on weather, gardening, and cooking (food). We began the month by documenting our December Monday forecasts. The line graph shows a decrease in temperature from the beginning of the month to the end. The declines in temperatures are: Dec. 1st = 69 °F, Dec. 8th = 51, Dec.15 = 42, and Dec. 22nd = 40. Samantha commented that, "The weather is going down because it's winter." Douglas said, "It's going down because it's cold, it can even hail." Phoebe responded, "The rain makes it cold." The experiences the children have in the classroom have contributed to their understanding of weather. In addition, the children did a survey on *How does the sky affect the weather?* Several children discussed how the clouds can sometimes block the sun, causing the weather to get cold.



For cooking this month, we predicted the temperatures of heated water (from the microwave) versus room temperature water. Several children concluded that by heating the water in the microwave the temperature would rise and would result in a higher number on the thermometer. The children also explored the concept of keeping foods fresh. In choosing the freshest

surroundings for our lettuce, six children chose refrigerated lettuce, seven children chose freezing the lettuce, and three children chose to keep the lettuce at room temperature.

We are continuing to come up with fun and exciting ways for the Beavers to learn about our central concept of change (focusing on water). You are welcome to share any ideas that can be useful in the classroom!

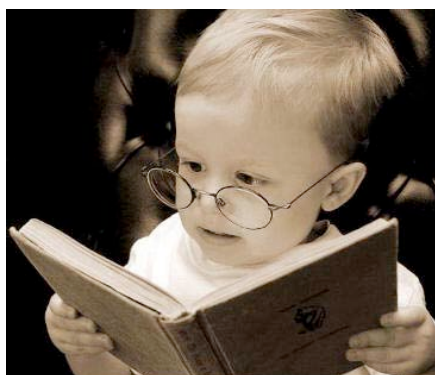
Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



Parenting Tips

Baby Needs a Book

Did you know that it's not the amount of time that you spend at the library that helps your child develop a fondness for reading? The best indicator if a child will be a good reader and writer is if the parents have books available at home along with being read to. So be sure you have many different areas in your home where books can be seen and read.



Here are ways to encourage love of reading:

- Talk to your infant and toddler to help him learn to speak and understand the meaning of words. Point to objects and describe them as you interact.
- Read to your baby every day starting at four months of age. Hearing words helps her become familiar with them. Reading to your baby is one of the best ways to help him learn.
- Spend as much time listening to your child as you do talking to him.
- Take children's books and writing materials whenever you leave home. This can occupy her while traveling or at the doctors.
- Create a quiet, special place in your home for your child to read, write and draw. Keep books and other reading materials where your child can easily reach them.
- Help your child see that reading is important. Set a good example for your child by reading books, newspapers and magazines.
- Having books for children to read spells success for early literacy. Putting a few simple strategies into action will make a significant difference in helping children develop into good readers and writers.
- Reading well is at the heart of all learning. Children who can't read well, can't learn. Help make a difference for a child.

The Go-To Mom's mission is to give parents invaluable

information in a short period of time. A specialist in non-coercive, non-aggressive parenting, Kimberley is both an expert and a hands-on mom. "I teach moms and dads the basics of parenting through relationship," she explains. "Most of us have been taught parenting through coercion which is not only ineffective but is damaging to a child. I advise parents to review how they were parented, so that they don't repeat the same mistakes. From my perspective, parenting through relationship is not a strategy but a philosophy."

www.TheGoToMom.TV
Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT



From the Editors

Do you have some advice for all your fellow CCC parents? We're always looking for contributed articles or announcements for the newsletter. You can e-mail us at colette@asimow.com.

