



# The Children's Center at Caltech

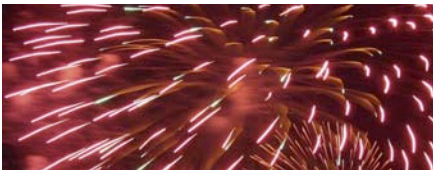


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## Upcoming Activities

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

### Summer Vacation!



## From the Director

The following was posted on the Science Life Style blog (<http://sciencelifestyle.blogspot.com>) on June 21, 2009:

### Children's Center at Caltech

One of the best things about science is teaching children about science. It should be no surprise that Caltech does this very well. The Children's Center at Caltech (CCC) is a fully accredited, private, non-profit organization that

offers childcare to the Caltech/JPL community and is also open to children from the surrounding area. CCC has a website at

<http://www.its.caltech.edu/~ccenter/>

CCC is a delightful experiment in introducing science to preschool age children. Much more than an ordinary preschool, CCC invites kids to take part in a science-based curriculum during that period of intense curiosity in a child's life that is so important to nurture. The emphasis is on active, hands-on learning, with pre-math activities such as shape identification, shape and quantity of numbers and pre-reading activities such as alphabet bingo, dictation, and storytelling.

I arranged for a tour of CCC with the center's director Susan Wood who I found to be very engaging and entirely passionate about the CCC mission. I didn't anticipate what I was in store for, but it turned out to be wonderful. The children are grouped together by age; e.g. the Koala group has the three year olds. They were busy with a unit called "Dead or Alive," in which their assignment was to figure out how to decide if something is living or nonliving. Observations and hypotheses are noted in their journals, a routine task for budding science investigators. One child reported "the strawberry is alive because it is green." CCC emphasizes collaboration and the group's observations are distilled into posters. Another experiment

involved water play, specifically comparing natural loofahs to manmade sponges. The four-year old Raccoons were learning about energy by estimating how far a paper airplane will go, throwing it, and measuring the result. Another experiment was to put a thermometer in a shaft of sunlight to see what happens. Their workroom has all kinds of quantitative tools such as cups, rulers, a kitchen scale, etc. The Beavers, age five, study the six simple machines – the wheel and axle, the wedge, the lever, the inclined plane, the screw, and the pulley. The underlying lesson is about form and function and about tools in general. The Beavers use their journals to record full drawings of machines seen around the Caltech campus – a telescoping construction crane (pulleys), electric carts (wheels), a cherry picker trimming tree branches (levers), and even a washing machine (gears).

My favorite area at CCC is the Outdoor Science Laboratory. Under a slanted corrugated steel roof, a central U-shaped work island has a built-in light table, white-boards that flip over to reveal overhead mirrors for



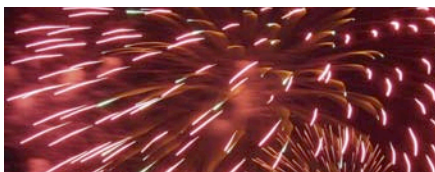
better views of things on the counters, and portable electrical power from a pair of overhead cable reels. There are also microscopes for looking at bugs and leaves. The walls are lined with cabinets, sinks, and a whiteboard. One of most endearing aspects of the lab is a coat rack with a number of tiny white lab coats the children are encouraged to wear during their experiments.

At the culmination of my tour, I was brimming over with enthusiasm for CCC's obvious success at introducing science to very young children. To my knowledge, there is no other science-oriented preschool anywhere. I was impressed by the excellent ratio of teachers to students and how unusually well-behaved the children were. The kids truly seemed to be interested in the science principles being presented.

I asked director Wood about what lasting effect the preschool science curriculum had on the children as they progressed on with their education. It seemed to me that introducing the scientific method early on in life would necessarily induce great things later on. Alas, director Wood indicated there was no funding for such tracking efforts.

Anyone out there reading this post that is in the field of preschool education, please consider taking a closer look at CCC as a model for a school in your area. This is an idea that should spread.

*-(Posted by Physics Groupie)*



## Science Lab

While in San Francisco, I visited the Academy of Sciences building in Golden Gate Park. It had a planetarium, aquarium, 4-story rainforest, natural history museum and other exhibits. You can find pictures of my trip in the science lab webpage under June pictures.



Here is an excerpt from the journal of Science and Children I thought may help your family in supporting your child(ren)'s learning experiences.

*Your child's experience with the natural world is very important. At this age, we want children to notice patterns in nature (such as the changes in the seasons, movement of the Moon, etc.) and to develop an appreciation for the kinds of plants, animals, rocks, and other features in their environment. Here are some ways you can help:*

- *Encourage your child(ren) to play outside.*
- *Accept items they may bring inside, such as flowers or other objects and display them prominently.*
- *If children wish to make "collections" (e.g., rocks,*

*flowers, etc.), encourage their efforts.*

- *Try not to show disgust or fear if kids bring insects or worms indoors. Instead, ask questions about their discovery and encourage them to make sure the creature is returned to its home.*
- *Support childrens' questions. You don't have to have the answers, but maybe together you can try to find out. Look for answers in nature, and if necessary, try a book at the library or information on the internet if it's available. Or, you can keep a journal of "I wonder..." questions. The answers may take a long time (perhaps a science career?) to figure out!*
- *Science-related magazines make for great reading. We recommend Ranger Rick, National Geographic Kids, Kids Discover, and Birds & Blooms. All have beautiful pictures, articles, and ideas that engage children in learning more.*
- *If you own a magnifying glass or hand lens, make it available for your child to use (supervise this outdoors, especially in sunlight).*
- *Involve your child in the care of family pets (with supervision).*
- *Grow a garden outside, or grow plants indoors. Encourage children to be involved.*
- *Make and hang a birdfeeder outside. Watch and learn about these wonderful animals.*

Kheng Ly-Hoang  
Science Curriculum Coordinator



# Bunny Hopping

We want to say a big THANK YOU to our Bunny parents for supporting the teachers to attend the RIE Conference in San Francisco. The entire Bunny staff along with Susan and Angie (Dolphins) participated in a series of workshops all based on Magda Gerber's basic RIE principles. The teachers are all very excited to share what they have learned and we will be preparing a parent education workshop for all those parents and teachers who want to learn more.



The seven basic principles of the RIE Approach are:

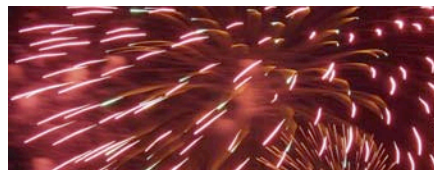
1. **Basic Trust** in the child to be an initiator, an explorer, and a self-learner.
2. An **environment** for the child that is physically safe, cognitively challenging, and emotionally nurturing.
3. Time for **uninterrupted play**.
4. **Freedom to explore and interact** with other infants.
5. **Involvement of the child in all care-giving activities** to allow the child to become an active participant rather than a passive recipient.
6. **Sensitive observation** of the child in order to understand her needs.
7. **Consistency and clearly defined limits and**

**expectations** to develop discipline.

This past month the Bunny Room has been experiencing transitions. We extend a warm welcome to Sofia and Gali who have joined the room. We also wish Shreya and Ayla the best as they move to the Dolphins. We have said our farewells to Adi, who will be a new Dolphin teacher. We will miss you and appreciate all your great contributions to the room. We are happy to announce that Olivia Garcia will be a new Bunny Teacher. Olivia is no stranger to CCC; she has previously worked in the Penguins and Dolphins and her daughter, Emily, is now in the Penguin Room.

Have a delightful Summer!

Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



## Dolphin Splash

The Dolphins are busy working with Energy by looking at things that spin. We compared different objects that roll and spin. We worked with dreidels, tops, pinwheels, car wheels and more. Our dramatic area is the Dolphins' Auto Repair Shop.

Transitions are starting: Charlotte, Emily and Catalina are going to the Penguins. They will be missed. Shreya and Ayla are new Dolphins – Welcome!

We are continuing to enjoy the fruit of our strawberry plants in the large pots on our deck.

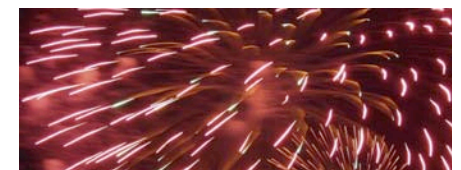


Teacher Olivia is moving to the Bunnies, and she will be missed. Adi is coming to the Dolphins – Welcome! And finally, if anyone has been missing Dhruv, he is on a leave of absence.

### Dolphin Reminders:

- \* Please remember to sign in and out daily.
- \* Label all clothing, including socks, underwear, and shoes.
- \* Keep your child's cubby stocked with extra clothing.
- \* Label lunch containers and specify if anything needs to be heated. Please do not send breakable containers.
- \* Make sure you have a current family photo for the classroom.
- \* Write when you will be out on the Vacation Calendar.
- \* Each day, please check parent and art files for new items.

Retha Jones - Lead Teacher



## Penguin Parade

Hello, Penguin families. We have just about finished another fiscal year, which brings up certain questions. Have I

finished my parent hours? When will my child move to the next class? Well, all the questions can be answered – just meet with your child’s teacher.

So far, our transitions have gone fairly well. We said goodbye to Neeku. Shortly thereafter, it was our friend Molly, who truly never looked back. Next went Jesse, and the list will continue ... but as we waved goodbye, we welcomed with open arms Charlotte, Emily, and Catalina, who are doing such a big job of adjusting.

Our first bike day went really well. The children were so eager and proud to show off their bikes and helmets that day. When the time came to go abroad, it was a breeze! Everyone who wanted to participate pedaled their way around the rose garden. We are looking forward to the next BIKE DAY.



We will continue to have our many walks around campus (unless it is super hot) and lots of water play. So please remember **hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and safe walking shoes.**

WANTED: Tree stumps for our SAND AREA ... thank you!

Starla Richardson - Penguin Teacher

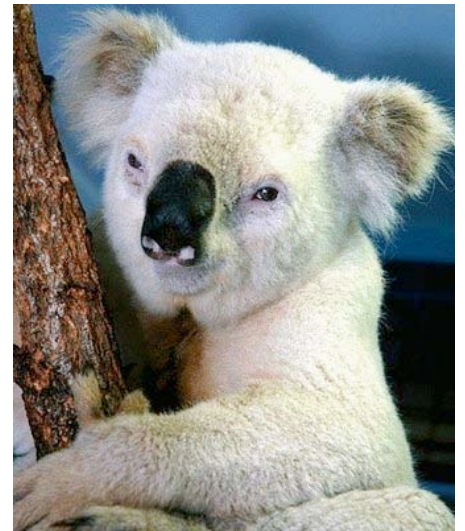


## Koala Korner

Please welcome Polina Kopylov and family in the Koala room. Polina is in the process of transitioning. We miss all those children who are on vacation for the whole summer.

We have started working on our new curriculum theme and the children are enjoying the initial stages of gardening by watering plants, having discussions about different kind of plants and seeds, soil, and observing and discussing the function of gardening tools. Some of their answers about gardening and seeds were.... "You put soil and grow plants." "You water, then it grows and it's spring time." "Put a scarecrow in the garden." "You dig dirt and put seeds." "Plant leaves and grow pink flowers." "Some seeds are small and some are big." "You water and seeds start sprouting." Following children's interest about planting flowers, we started on by planting Zinnias and will observe their growth over time. Inviting children to make predictions and estimate the growth process is a learning experience and fosters their development. We are planning to prepare compost with the children and will take several walks around campus to collect nature items to add in.

With the change of curriculum theme and from children's continuous interest about babies, some changes have occurred in the classroom environment. We have



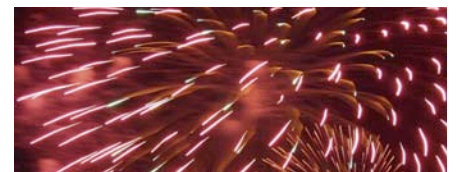
transformed our dramatic play area into a baby's room. Please feel free to donate items for the Koala baby room. Another addition to our classroom is a desk, which is next to the window. The children are excited to draw and pretend writing letters while sitting at the desk. Music time with Dayita has become a delightful experience for the children and their favorite song is "O'Rosalina" and "This is the way we billy billy."

We would like to congratulate Michael Muller and Sharon Wong on becoming CCC Board members.

### **Koala Reminders:**

- \* Please check your parent hours and try to earn hours if you need any.
- \* Please latch the small gate between koala bathroom and hallway while coming in and out.

Filmeena Amjad- Lead Teacher



# Raccoon Roundup

Summer is here and we have slowly started transitions. We say good-bye to Yonatan, Ori, and Yoav, who have moved on to the Beavers. See you in the yard! The Raccoons welcome Pascale, Hanning, and Abby and their families. We hope it will be a great experience.

We continued our curriculum by investigating pill bugs. We have compared and contrasted the pill bugs and stink bugs. Some of the Raccoon responses were, "A pill bug likes to eat decayed leaves and a stink bug doesn't," ... "They live in different areas in the yard."... "They both crawl." The Raccoons have also dramatized how a pill bug would molt. They acted out the process with music. They understand the pill bugs molt their exoskeleton in two parts. The children are such fantastic hunters they have found the actual old exoskeleton. We journaled it and discussed the segments we saw through the microscope.



Since the children now knew where to find the most pill bugs, we created maps. The children took their clipboards and drew

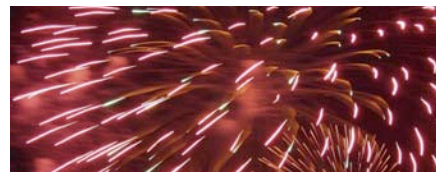
their own maps of the yard. Afterwards, children who really enjoyed it were drawing maps to their lunch and cubbies! We also estimated "How many rocks are inside a jar?" Now that the class is starting to transition to the next room, we have noticed that their estimations have been really close to the actual number. Finally, their work on the projector has been amazing. They have traced the structure of a pill bug and painted it. Come see it in the room!

The Raccoons thank Nimisha (Anjali's mom) for coming in during circle time and teaching us the Chicken Dance. The children enjoyed it.

## Raccoon Reminders:

- \* Silvia will be on vacation
- Thursday July 9- Friday July 17.** We are asking you to bring in cold lunches. We will **not be heating up lunches** during this period of time.
- \* Make sure your child has a swimsuit with their name on it.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



# Beaver Tales

Summer has arrived! That means plenty of water play, summer recipes, and walks to the park. We will continue to work on our central concept of change with a focus on growth. Be sure to check out our garden as it continues to flourish throughout the summer season! The Beavers wish farewell to Jason Mayo, Phoebe Dickinson, Martino Porcu, Nicholas Flach,

and Lucas Flach. We would also like to welcome Yonatan Zaslaver and family to the Beavers.



Below are a few summer recipes that the Beavers have recently made in the classroom...

## Fruit Yogurt Popsicles

- 1 c. plain yogurt
  - 1 sliced banana or any other fruit
  - 1 tsp. vanilla
  - 1 c. fruit juice
- Blend ingredients together and pour into small paper cups. Freeze. Place popsicle stick in each cup when half frozen. To serve, turn cup upside down and run hot water over it until popsicle slides out.

## Roasted Garlic Potatoes

- 1 bag potatoes
  - 10 garlic cloves or garlic powder
  - Olive oil
  - Salt & ground pepper
- Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Cut potatoes into wedges. Lightly coat baking pan with olive oil. Place potato wedges on pan. Season generously with garlic powder or garlic. Sprinkle pepper and salt to taste. Pour olive oil over potatoes. Bake to a crisp or when potatoes are brown.

From our herb garden (lemon balm)...

### **Lemon Balm Pesto**

2 cups fresh lemon balm  
1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil  
3 or 4 cloves garlic  
Blend all ingredients together in a food processor until chunky, but not too well blended. Serve pesto over pasta. Makes about 2 cups.

### **REMINDERS:**

- Keep an extra change of clothing in your child's cubby.
- Apply sunblock in the morning. We will reapply throughout the day.
- For water play, bring a bathing suit and a towel.

Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



## Parenting Tips

### **The Run Away Toddler Teaching Personal Safety**

At any given moment your toddler can take off and run into a potentially dangerous situation.

*Here are some gentle tips on how to keep your little one safe from harm:*

Set the expectation before you go out: "we are going to the park, no running away from mama"

When you get to your destination, plan a few minutes for your child to run around to release some energy.

While at home in the yard, practice saying "stop" with your

child and let her know that when you are out and say, "stop" her body needs to stop.

Always supervise your child no matter where you are.

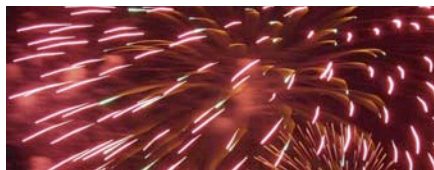
If your child begins to take off, catch up and let her know that you need to keep her close. Don't get angry, running is a normal stage of development.

Let her know if she can't refrain from running off, then she can either hold your hand or go in the stroller and have a snack.

Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT

### [TheGoToMom.TV](http://TheGoToMom.TV)

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## From the Editors

Dante and Molly are enjoying a change of local culture and weather (WOW! The thunderstorms and quickly changing temperatures have us guessing and changing outfits all day long.) Dante is feeling a little homesick and wishes to send greetings to all. If any of you have the urge to send snail mail (at your school desks or from your home), we (especially Dante) would love to hear from you. See you in September.

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