

The Children's Center at Caltech



March 2009

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Upcoming Activities

Earn Parent Hours

March 9: Parent Education Meeting: *Dolphins -- Lead Poisoning*

March 14: Koalas Work Saturday

March 21: Dolphins Work Saturday

CCC Board of Trustees Meetings

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

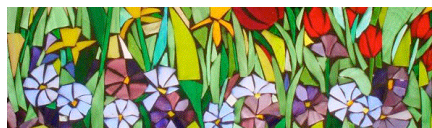


From the Office

We are happy to announce at long last that the position of Science Curriculum Coordinator has been filled. The committee (two parents, two teachers, Liz and myself) interviewed six candidates. From that pool, it came down to two candidates. I have decided that it would be a benefit to the program to have a morning and an afternoon teacher in the Lab so we have created a co-teacher position. Ghia Johnson and Kheng Ly-Hoang will be working together as the new Science Curriculum Coordinators.

-Susan

Read on to learn more about these exceptional and dedicated women.



Science Lab

Ghia Johnson - Science Curriculum Coordinator

My name is Ghia Johnson and I look forward to working at the Children's Center as the Science Curriculum Coordinator. Having come from a background of veterinary medicine and biological research, I chose to utilize my talent and love of science with young children; I have been working with children for well over twelve years, specifically enriching programs with scientific concepts for children ages 2-16.

When very young, my own children (now 18, 17, 15, and two 10 year olds—I am a foster mother of one of the 10 year olds) sparked my interest in becoming a science teacher. Disappointed with the curriculum in their day care center, I began a comprehensive science program that initiated from the child's innate interest in their world and how it works. This program was a huge success, setting a solid foundation for my journey of enriching children's lives through science. This new venture sparked my interest in teaching young children; I decided to center my educational journey in Child and Human Development. This May, I will graduate with my Master's Degree in Human Development and Social Justice from Pacific Oaks College in Pasadena. In the fall of 2009, I will begin my final academic journey working on my PhD with a similar emphasis—educating children by means of science exploration and self-discovery. This endeavor supports much of my diverse science experiences.

Some of my experience includes early childhood and school age curriculum planning and implementation in private and public schools/ centers, primary and secondary high school science fair coordination, and workshop presentations pertaining to science for young children.

I look forward to learning with your children at the Center. Please feel free to visit the Science Lab at any time.



Kheng Ly-Hoang - Science Curriculum Coordinator

My name is Kheng Ly-Hoang. I am a mother of a 2½ year-old who is in the Penguin classroom. I have a Bachelor's degree in Child Development and a Master's degree in Early Childhood Education. I have had years of experience with young children, and it began with changing diapers since I was 8 or 9 years old. I have some experience in the preschool classroom since high school, although I was never a teacher.

I started here at the CCC in 2004 as an intern or an apprentice in the office and a floating substitute for the classrooms while I was pursuing my bachelor's degree. Susan was and still is my mentor. I left for a year and a half to care for my newborn child in 2006 and to pursue my master's degree in 2007. I came back to the CCC in 2008 because I felt, after observing so many schools through my educational career, that the CCC had the highest quality service and expertise with qualified and overqualified staff in early childhood education. I wanted to learn from the best and be the best educator I can be. I hope, through my skills, experience, and knowledge, I can assist the teachers and the children in enhancing their learning experiences here at the CCC.

News from the Lab:

I would like to say a big thank you to Eyal Feigenbaum! He is Yoav's father and he studies optics here at Caltech. He presented a light experiment for the preschool children and teachers. The experiment was just amazing and the children and teachers were in awe. We

learned so much about light and how it refracts and reflects from different objects. This light experiment also came with perfect timing because the Raccoons changed their curriculum to investigating energy with a focus on light and its properties. This will allow the children in the Raccoon classroom to further explore light and do in depths study on light.



Some of the observations during the experiment were:

Eyal: This is a laser, this is a flashlight. What is the difference? (pointing the laser and then the flashlight at white paper)

Zachary: They didn't match. The blue one and the red one don't match.

Amber: The white don't match. The white is not a pencil to the paper.

Jason: The laser makes a thin line on the paper.

Jack: The laser is red on the paper and the flashlight is white on the paper.

Eyal: Can you see the line of the laser? (pointing the laser in the water tank before adding milk)

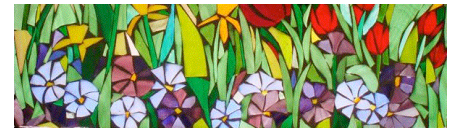
Zachary: It disappears...when there's no dust, there's no line.

Eyal: Can we see the laser through the water?

Jason: Yes, because it's water that you can see through.

Jack: No, because there's no powder.

To follow up with this study of light in the Raccoon classroom, children were given the opportunity to further explore light with the addition of the shadow concept using the light projector. Late in February, children were introduced to the flashlight, mirror, and water tank so they could have hands-on exploration of what Eyal presented. To extend the Koala curriculum into the lab, I provided the children with magnetic tiles, magnetic sticks, and craft sticks to build with.



Bunny Hopping

Hello Everyone! The Bunnies have been exploring their surroundings and loving the outdoors. We have been taking many strolls on campus to visit the turtle ponds. The children get very excited to see the turtles basking in the sun. After the turtles, we stop for juice time on the grass. We have also been enjoying great times in our yard. One new favorite activity is throwing, rolling and retrieving balls. The Bunnies have been fitting the balls in holes and carrying them around in purses and baskets. We have pulled out balls of different sizes, types,



and textures for some added fun. Another favorite outside activity is the sensorial experience felt touching the "goop" made of cornstarch and water. Dramatic play has become a popular area as the children pretend to sit and eat meals with the baby dolls. We have also seen the children patting the babies to sleep. We will continue to explore our central concept of *cause and effect* with a focus on *movement* next month. A current favorite song we sing while watching bubbles is:

I'm a bubble, I'm a bubble,
and I'm floating all around.
I'm a bubble but I'm in trouble
I'm about to touch the ground!
*(Melody - Oh My Darling
Clementine)

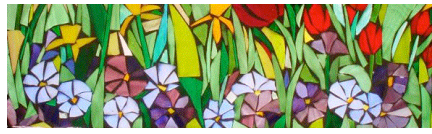
We said "See you later" to our friend Kira, who recently joined the Dolphin room. Some of the older children have had the chance to play in the Dolphin room. We encourage them to visit in groups in hopes this will help for a smooth transition in the future. We extend a warm welcome to Max Moser who is new to the Bunny Room. We also thank Starla for helping in our room while Nora was out on vacation.

Parents, have you been keeping up with your parent hours? If you are looking for any opportunities, please see Jasmin.

Bunny Reminders:

- Please remember to sign in and out daily.
 - Keep cubbies stocked with extra clothing.
 - Check cubbies for soiled clothing at end of each day.
- Thank you!!*

Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



Dolphin Splash

Well a lot is happening in our classroom. The Dolphins are learning more and more words. The latest words are: Architect, Bird's Nest, Squirrel's Nest, Towers, and Bridges. If you'd like to take a look at a squirrel's nest or a bird's nest, come and check it out in the Dolphin class. We have to put them away in the classroom because they are pretty fragile.

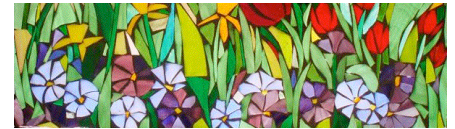


This month the dolphins welcomed Kira Chen and Caroline Holdsworth to our classroom. Happy Birthdays to our Dolphins: Joanna, Itamar and Molly. Lastly, we must mention that we will say goodbye to Julian, Caroline and Marcus. We hope that you will like your new home, Julian. We will miss your smile.

We will continue to build and draw our own blueprints as we continue to learn more about buildings and building materials. The Dolphins are steadily learning more and more songs from our music teacher. For parents who are interested in joining us for music class, our March Music schedule is as follows: March 3, 9, 17, 23, and 31 at 10:30-11:00am. *Please* join us!

Dolphin Reminder: Our home to school connection activity is to bring in a photo of *your child in rain gear*.

Retha Jones - Lead Teacher



Penguin Parade

In the month of February we wrapped up our focus on kitchen tools under the *form and function* concept. We explored a wide variety of tools including a potato ricer, lemon and orange pressers, and a grinder. While discovering the form and the function of these tools, we were also able to experience a variety of flavors. Penguins made gnocchi, pumpkin pie, and pizza. Cooking provided the Penguins with many opportunities use of math concepts (measuring), social interaction (taking turns), and a richer vocabulary. In the month of March we will begin to explore the *form and function* of simple machines like the screw, pulleys, and gears. You are more than welcome to contribute to this new curriculum we are about to embark into.



Many of you have expressed concern for Sharon and her absence. Her leave of absence is a medical necessity and she will be off an additional month. In

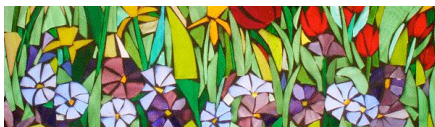
her absence, we will have the support of Starla who is now a floating teacher. Many of you already know her and I am sure you will find her presence reassuring. For those of you who do not know her, I will make sure to post a bio and her picture.

Penguin Reminder: Please make sure to sign in and out everyday.

Top Ten Favorite Penguin Books (as you will see we have a thing for the number ten)

1. Stone Soup
2. Mine-o-saurus
3. The Boy who wouldn't Share
4. There was an old lady who swallowed a fly
5. Goldilocks and the three bears
6. Baa Baa Black Sheep (inspired by Molly)
7. Ten Yellow Rubber Ducks
8. Inside a barn in the country
9. Ten ladybugs
10. Ten in the bed

Virginia Covarrubias
- Lead Teacher



Koala Korner

Hello everyone,

February was full of rain, hail, and clouds, and Koalas enjoyed the weather by splashing in the puddles, touching worms and trying to catch rain drops. *Music and movement* also played a vital part, and children practiced several songs while we stayed indoors on rainy days. During the past few months we have been working

on the central concept of *scale and structure*. The children have explored and observed arches and bridges around campus and also have discovered some arches in the Koala classroom, as well as in other areas of CCC. In addition to our central concept, children have extended their mathematical knowledge by estimating the length and height of their own constructed structures using different measuring tools such as measuring tape, rulers, and protractors. Children have gained a meaningful understanding about bridges and tunnels after building and constructing them with different materials and repeating the process again and again daily. Ava said, "You can drive under it and you can drive on it (bridges)". Margit stated that you can go under the bridges and drive a car over the water.



Here are some other highlights of children's prior knowledge about measuring tools, as documented by the teachers:

Daria: you draw lines with it (ruler)
Dante: the measure, you measure walls with it (ruler)
Ian: A measuring thing to

measure something, you count how many are they.
Pascale, after comparing ruler to measuring tape, stated that ruler is short and measuring tape looks long.
Colum: you put it on your toe and measure on your toe (measuring tape)

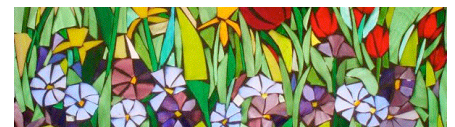
Please spare some time to look around for your children's work display. Thanks to all the families who participated and attended our Koala fiesta day. It was great fun and a wonderful opportunity to mingle together and get to know each other more.

Thanks to Stacey (Dante's mom) for donating the Bandaroose toy for building. Thanks to everyone for rest sitting on Wednesdays for all center meetings. Thanks to Jennifer (Sasha's mom) for sewing the classroom quilt, now on display.

Reminders:

- Please remember to latch the little door between the Koala bathroom and hallway at pick-up and drop-off time for the children's safety.
- Please consider earning parent hours by attending Koala work Saturday - March 14th.
- There will be upcoming parent conferences starting the 2nd week of March (Please sign up on the posted sheet.)
- Please donate generously for evening Under The Stars and earn parent hours.
- The Koala classroom microwave has been relocated and is available to use in the kitchen.

Filmeena Amjad- Lead Teacher



Raccoon Roundup

Hello Again,

We would like to say welcome to Sara Kapadia, who is the newest teacher in the Raccoon room. Sara has been at the CCC for the past two years. She has worked in the Beaver room and recently was a sub in the Koalas. You are welcome to read her bio in the classroom.

Thank you all who attended our family Tostada picnic. The weather was perfect. It was a wonderful time to get together with the Raccoon families. Look out for the next one to come in April. We also thank Nimisha (Anjali's mother) for joining us for circle time and reading stories to the children. We also give a big thanks to Eyal (Yoav's dad) for coming in and demonstrating a light experiment. This is a great way to earn parent hours!

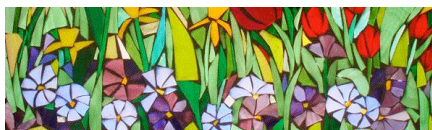


The Raccoon class has been investigating *light vs. dark*. We have been looking at shadows. The class discovered all sorts of shadows on campus, from people to cars. We discussed why we saw shadows on some things and not others. We introduced flashlights into the classroom. We have flashlights in the block area. We hope this will encourage the children to build enclosures and use the flashlight to see inside. We cast shadows in the

classroom. Friends liked how the placement of the shadow could be changed with the flashlight. We also have a water tank in the small room with mirrors and flashlights. The children have enjoyed experimenting, and watching how the light changes direction with a mirror. It was also interesting learning about translucent and opaque items. Our investigating of light has really been successful we will continue it throughout March.

Raccoons have also been stitching. They are mastering the techniques, so during the second week in March, we are collecting buttons. I will post a letter in the room. So look in your drawers for buttons. We will sort them and start sewing buttons.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



Beaver Tales

First, we would like to welcome Ella Blain to the Beavers! We would also like to thank Johanna (Gabriel's mom) for cooking Rosemary Cheese Bread with the children.

As the year has progressed, we noticed the increased interest in mathematics and literacy among the children. To support their learning experiences, we have added a few activities to the classroom.

Mancala has been a favorite among the Beavers as they increase their strategic skills and practice patience. The game includes two players.

Each player begins with four stones in each of their cups. The purpose of the game is to get the most stones in their main cup. This concept of fours has led the children to count by fours, and now they are beginning to count by two's, five's, ten's and even hundred's!

We have also re-introduced the "Fruit Pie Fraction" game. Each player takes a turn rolling the dice, then choosing the slice of pie that represents the fraction rolled, then placing it on their pie game board. The object of the game is to fill both of their pie tins with any combination of slices. On one side, there are six types of pie: blueberry, peach, strawberry, pecan, keylime, and cherry. On the reverse side, each slice represents a fraction: $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{6}$, $\frac{1}{8}$. The children build on taking turns and begin understanding fractions.



Lately, the children have been asking the teachers to spell words for their stories, letters, or notes. Since spelling has sparked in curiosity, we have introduced The Cat in the Hat beginner book dictionary. Children knew what letter each word began with, and then were able to locate it alphabetically in the dictionary. IMPRESSIVE!

Please check out the new surveys we have posted throughout the classroom. We have a tally chart on the areas each child likes outside, a bar graph on their favorite area in the classroom,

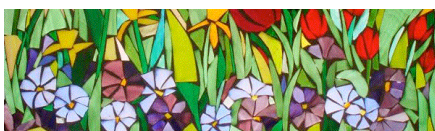
and a survey on which Goldilocks and the Three Bears story they liked better and the differences between the stories.

Gardening has been a success! Our lettuce garden has produced a wonderful salad for our afternoon snack. Finally, after two months (9 weeks) our freesias (front porch) have sprouted. We re-visited our past survey to see the length of time it would take to sprout. A few children predicted ten weeks and one child said the start of February. They were right on the dot! Our squash, lunaria (money plant), and cucumber have sprouted in our indoor light garden. They will soon be ready to be transplanted to our garden.

Gentle reminders:
Please...

- *Read the daily notes and reminders on the dry erase board located next to the sign in sheet.
- *Check your parent mailboxes daily.
- *Check your children's art files daily.

Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



Parenting Tips

Annoying toddler behaviors that are normal development

Toddler behaviors that may seem utterly annoying may just be your child's natural way of growing into his ever-expanding mind -- which is filled with excitement and endless possibilities.

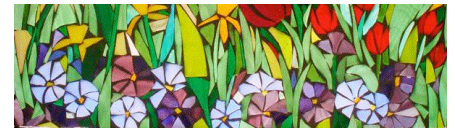
Toddlers are curious, stubborn, strong willed and highly exploratory. They are also learning about their role in the world and what capabilities they have. They love to say "NO!" run away, resist requests and try to do everything their way. This can be frustrating for parents, but no need for strict discipline or harsh requests.

Each day allow your child time for free play both indoors and out. Give them opportunities to try new things that are challenging and intriguing. Talk with your child about their feelings and empathize.



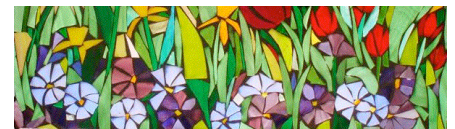
If you find your toddler is always frustrated, re-evaluate your daily activities. Do you have enough physical time, quiet time or activities that challenge your child's mental and physical abilities? Children need to regularly learn new tasks - when children learn and master new tasks they spend less time feeling frustrated.

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Kimberley Clayton Blaine, MA, MFT

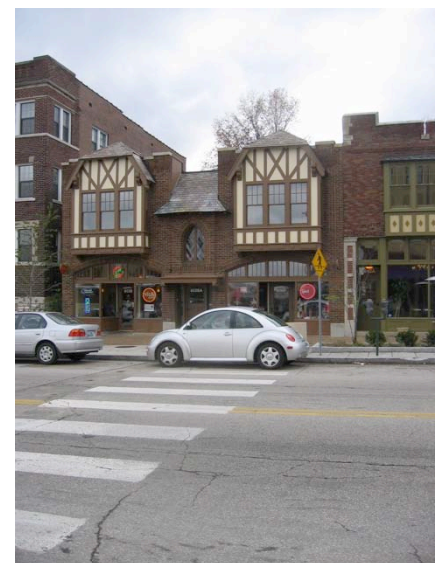


From the Editors

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.



Please don't park in the Crosswalk!



When you park in the crosswalk between the sides of the Children's Center, you make it impossible for children and parents to cross the street safely. Pedestrians can't see cars coming and cars can't see pedestrians stepping off the curb. Yes, parking is in short supply and everyone is in a hurry at pick-up time, but this is also when many children are crossing the street and safety is most important. Thanks for your help!