



# The Children's Center at Caltech



## November 2009

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## Upcoming Activities

### CCC closed

Nov 13<sup>th</sup> - staff development  
Nov 26-27 - holiday

### CCC Board of Trustees

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



## From the Director

On November 13<sup>th</sup>, the CCC will be crossing town to Santa Monica for Staff Development Day. We will be touring The Growing Place, an innovative infant, toddler and preschool program, where we will participate in a co-inquiry of math and science facilitated by their teachers. The Growing Place shares many of the same beliefs that we embrace at the CCC. Their curriculum is based



on a firm foundation of theory. They believe that children are active participants in their own learning. They support children's thinking by providing beautiful materials and have built an arts and science studio in their play yard. Both our centers share the vision that science, art, literacy, and math are not mutually exclusive and can be integrated into the social and emotional context of children's lives.

Brian Greene wrote, "Science is the greatest of all adventures stories, one that's been unfolding for thousands of years as we have sought to understand ourselves and our surroundings. Science needs to be taught to the young and communicated to the mature in a manner that captures this drama. We must embark on a cultural shift that places science in its rightful place alongside music, art, and literature as an indispensable part of what makes life worth living."

I know we are in for a wonderful experience and we thank you for your support in making these staff development days possible.

Susan - Director

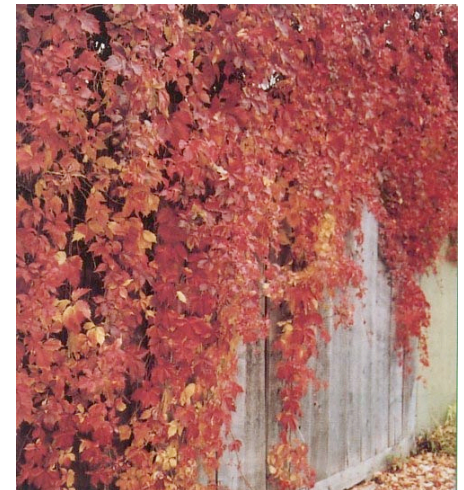


## Science Lab

Thank you Bunny parents for donating baby food jars. They are perfect for mixing paint! Thank you Alon Zaslaver, Daniel's (Bunny) father, for donating agar plates (Petri dishes) for germ experiments that we will be conducting in November. I think this

experiment will be perfect for this season. Our main goal here is to better understand why we wash our hands. Thank you Rob Strittmatter, Ryan's (Beaver) father, for fixing the glass cabinet door in the science lab.

This past month, I have attended two workshops related to food and gardening. The first was a 2-day workshop called Fresh Fruits and Vegetables: A Centerpiece for a Healthy School Environment. I received so much information to take back that I created a resource folder for the center. What I learned most from this workshop was how to look for and utilize the resources in our community in order to support or enhance our school environment and curriculum. There's so much to do, but there isn't enough time. I will have to take it on one at a time.



The second was called Smart Gardening and was funded by the County of Los Angeles department of Public Works. More information can be found at [www.smartgardening.com](http://www.smartgardening.com). I went to this workshop because I am interested in composting and wanted to learn how to bring it back to the center and maintain

it successfully. I will add this information to the resource folder. The presenter was really knowledgeable and clearly had decades of experience in the area. It was better than what I had expected. I learned a lot and enjoyed every minute. So much so, I bought two composting bins! One for regular composting and the other for vermicomposting (worm composting). The children (all three preschool classrooms) and I will be adding to the compost bins on a weekly basis. The compost will not heat up properly and may get moldy if we add or feed too much. Just like any of our other experiments, we will start by discussing what goes into each of the two composting bins. Wish us luck with composting!

Kheng Ly-Hoang  
 Science Curriculum Coordinator  
[lkheng@caltech.edu](mailto:lkheng@caltech.edu)



## Bunny Hopping

Hello to all,

We hope everyone is doing well and finally enjoying the fall weather. The Bunny teachers want to thank all the parents who attended Back to School Night. Fun was had by all. We also want to give a big thanks to Frederique (Chloe's mom), for burning the class photos onto a DVD for all to enjoy. Another thanks goes out to Kelly (Evelyn's mom) as she's working to spruce up our classroom webpage!

This week we said "See you later" to Daniel, as he

transitions to the Dolphin room. My, how fast the children grow! We wish Daniel and his family the best.



This month the children have been exploring with tempera paint. We painted with different size brushes, used cars, plungers, and of course our fingers! We also moved the furniture around in the main room to make space for more movement. The children have been using the low shelves and risers to pull up, cruise, and even to climb. Some children are balancing their own weight and challenge themselves as they walk on top of the risers. Out in the yard the children are exercising their large motor skills by scooting themselves along on the push cars, pushing other friends on the cars, pulling and pushing toy trains, dogs, and cars by a string. These Bunnies are all very busy and moving around quite quickly these days.

Lastly, we appreciate your patience as we implement the new shoe/foot cover policy. We provided some outside seating that should help make it easier to get those covers on. Thank you again, as this is all for the best interest of your children.

### **Bunny Reminders:**

- Please keep extra clothes in your child's cubby.

- Label all items brought to school (clothes, lunch boxes, bottles)
- Fill out the entire top half of the daily sheets.
- Closing time is 5:30pm.

Jasmin Alvarez - Lead Teacher



## Dolphin Splash

Welcome Daniel and his family to the Dolphins. We also welcome teacher Jenny to our classroom. We said goodbye to teacher Manisha - we wish her well in her future endeavors. Happy Birthday wishes to Shreya, who celebrated her second birthday.



We are increasing our culinary skills! We practiced using an Apple Master machine to prepare apple slices for a delicious apple pie that we made. The Dolphins also made pizza. The Dolphins helped prepare and roll the dough for their very own pizzas. Teachers helped to grate the cheese, but the children were able to spread the pizza sauce on their own individual pizzas and they also sprinkled cheese on their pizzas. Lily could not pass up the opportunity to taste the cheese that she was trying to sprinkle

on her pizza. After the pizzas came out of the oven, Mila tasted her pizza and said with a smile, "yum yum!" We also introduced potato mashers, measuring cups, spoons, and the word ingredient to our class. We are having fun practicing our culinary skills. Thank you to all parents for participating in our curriculum by bringing apples and potatoes from home. The children really enjoy cooking activities. Next month our focus will be small machines. The next machine we introduce is a blender.

Home to School Connection activity: Bring in a family recipe to share and we will make a cookbook.

#### **Dolphin Reminders:**

- We still need plastic bags.
- Nov. 13, we are closed for staff development day.
- Earn 2 parent hours by purchasing ink for our classroom printer.
- Keep your child's cubby stocked with clothing for the changing season.

Retha Jones - Lead Teacher



## Penguin Parade

Emperor Families,

I want to thank everyone who attended the BTSN. Our class had the highest attendance. For those who stayed home with your child, I want to briefly share with you our discussion of the night. This year our class will be older as a group. Most children are 2.5 years old now

and will be three years old in the coming months. Due to this unique situation, we have changed our name to Emperor Penguins. Emperor penguins are the biggest penguins. Ask your child what kind of penguin they are and they will say "emperor penguins!"



This also means we will have to modify our curriculum, so that we are able to challenge your children. Before coming to the penguin classroom, I was a Raccoon teacher for about four years. So I will be taking some of that experience and implementing it into our class. Our staff will work closely with the Koala staff and do site visits in the preschool classrooms. Kheng, our science and curriculum coordinator, will be guiding us and attending our curriculum meetings. Kheng will also visit our class and introduce various items that are found in the science lab. The children will have an opportunity to use such materials in the practical life

shelf and eventually in the lab. Lab visits will probably begin sometime after December. Our license requires all children must be at least 2.5 to be on the preschool premises, so we may have to split the group, depending on age. The preschoolers walk to Hill library for story time, but we will have storyteller Lori come to our class instead. She will visit us once a month. We will introduce and use journals for documentation just like the Koalas. We will also have tricycle/bike day once a month. Helmets are mandatory. We will be gathering information from the children via surveys, estimating quantities, and encouraging critical thinking through story starters. Of course we will not neglect the importance of their need to assert their independence. I think you have all experienced the "I can do it myself" attitude. We will continue to foster self-help skills, which will include mastering the skill of using the toilet! Yes, it is going to be a busy year for the Emperor Penguins!

Our focus for the coming months will be *reality vs. fantasy* through children's literature. The idea for our curriculum came directly from the children. They are fascinated with monsters. This is very common at this age. Night terrors are also common, however. It is easy to assume that one comes from the other, but they may not be related at all. If they are, having this type of focus as our curriculum will only help the children understand and deal with their fears. The African folk tale of Abiyoyo has been our focus in the past weeks. Gretchen has asked the children important

questions in understanding our focus: Who is Abiyoyo? Is he real or pretend? What is real? The story also gives us the opportunity to look at size, personal grooming, and the ukelele. Charlotte's grandfather showed us what a Ukelele looks like and what it sounds like. The children were simply mesmerized by how he told the Abiyoyo story and played the ukelele. Thank you Michael for coming in and taking part of our curriculum. Abiyoyo has become



a critical character in their outdoor dramatic play as well. Initially, I was the only one who could be Abiyoyo, but after some time, they were comfortable taking on this role. They run from one end of the yard to the other, yelling, "I am going to eat you up!" while others say, "Run, run for your life". This type of play is empowering to children. They need this type of play. In the article titled, "The Grotesque in Children's Literature" written by Susie Stephens, a child

psychologist (Bruno Bettelheim) argues that children find meaning in literature that deals with grotesque themes. He goes on to discuss how this type of literature is actually cathartic. I find this is true with the children and Abiyoyo. Nevertheless, if you have any concerns, please see me.

Virginia Covarrubias  
Lead Teacher



## Koala Korner

It's great to be a Koala! We have continued looking at *forms and functions*, focusing on how things work. Beginning in the month of November, the Koala class will have a change in their curriculum - it will be *cause and effect* with a focus on merging elements. Just in case you haven't made it to our classroom, here are some surveys showing the children's thoughts:

\*Practice using a baster:

Alex: "Squeezing the baster the water is going in."

Peter: "The water is going out."

Seth: "Squeezing the water out."

\*What do you know about an eyedropper?

Vikki: "It's a squirter, you squirt into a tube."

Teddy: "It's for squeezing when you play with the water."

Houston: "A squeezer, we squeeze water."

The Koalas have also found an interest in gardening. Some of the items planted are: radish, lettuce and broccoli. Take a look at our growing garden box in the preschool yard (it's the third

one from the left). Need parent hours? Feel free to set-up a day and time where you can share your gardening skills with us!

Speaking of parent hours the Koalas want to send a big "Thank you" to the following parents: Usha (Peter's mommy) for reading three wonderful books on pumpkins and for adding a pumpkin to the room. Laura (Jude's mommy) who came in and read a funny book called, "The day the babies crawled away." The Koalas love story time, especially when a "special someone" comes in and reads.



If interested, the classroom is running low on photo paper. Feel free to make your contribution. \$25=1 parent hour

\*Canon Selphy CP compact photo printer

-color ink/paper set KP-108 IN  
-100x148mm/4x6in/4R

Back to school night was a HUGE success! Thanks to all the parents who showed their participation.

**Friendly reminders:**

- \*Please keep gate CLOSED in between classroom and restroom.
- \*Plastic bags are always needed.
- \*Morning snack begins at 9:00am and ends at 9:30am. Please arrive with enough time for your child to enjoy!
- \*Log in your parent hours.
- \*EXTRA clothes! Along with sweaters and jackets.
- \*CCC is CLOSED on Friday November 13th and November 26-27

HAPPY NOVEMBER : )

Cynthia Escandon – Koala Teacher



## Raccoon Roundup

Hello Parents,

Help us welcome a couple of new families into the Raccoon Room. If you haven't done so, say "hello" to Mina, Ellie, and Ian's families. We had a wonderful farewell snack for Pascale's last day at the CCC. It was quite a fest. The Raccoon teachers would also like to thank those who attended our first of many Raccoon Family Lunches. I know it's sometimes hard to escape work or you may have other obligations. We appreciate your efforts to come and have lunch with us.

The children are studying the insides and outsides of fruits and vegetables. There was great participation in our classroom seed collection. The children were very proud of their seeds that they added to our

collection. Later the children illustrated the inside of gala apples. They examined the inside with a magnifying glass. Our friends also estimated how many seeds are in the gala apple. The Raccoon estimations were very close to the actual amount. The children also predicted what will weigh more - the inside of a pumpkin or the outside. This central concept has led to changing the dramatic play into a supermarket. Children have really enjoyed taking on the roles of a cashier and a customer. They have also learned to weigh their produce and sort the produce into the right baskets. We will be planning a trip in December to Trader Joe's.



As we talked about at Back to School night, we would like to start reading poetry to the classroom before lunch. So, during the month of November, can you please drop off a copy of one favorite poem to a Raccoon teacher? We will put the poems in a binder. We will choose one poem to read each day right before lunch. We are also starting our *beautiful stuff* collection soon. Be on the look out for a note to be sent home with a bag (during the week of November 9-12). Children will be asked to collect things that they think are beautiful. In the past, we have received such things as bolts, keys, seashells,

or bells. The beautiful stuff collection will be sorted by the children and will be used for classroom projects throughout the year.

\*\*\* Donation Alert: We are in dire need of tin boxes for mystery box time. So if you have some tin boxes lying around please donate them to the classroom.

**Raccoon Reminders:**

1. Label sweaters/jackets
2. Closing time is 5:30. 5:30-5:45 is a GRACE PERIOD.
3. Please sign in and out.

Veronica Gama - Lead Teacher



## Beaver Tales

Welcome Chicco Rossi and family to the Beavers. We're glad to have you! Back to School Night was on Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>. It was huge success! Our icebreaker activity for the night was to design a page for your child that will be put into a Beaver scrapbook. Look for the finished project, which will be displayed in the classroom soon. Thank you to all the families who participated and brought a dish to share.

This year, the children wrote their own biographies, which are hanging in our middle room. If you have not had a chance to read them, please do so. They're great! Children's self-portraits are located in the front room. They were done by giving a child a mirror to look at their reflection and choose crayon colors that represented their skin, eyes, and hair color. They

had a fun time looking in the mirror and drawing themselves.

A Beaver family generously donated tickets for the class to attend the Barynya performance at Beckman Auditorium on campus. Established in 1991 in New York City, the Russian music, dance, and song ensemble Barynya is a world-renowned group that enjoys stature as the premiere Russian folk ensemble outside of Russia.



It was a great cultural experience and the children were fascinated by the dancers' swift feet! Thank you to the parent volunteers for taking time out of your day to join us.

Our central concept of *form and function* has been winding down. We have been working with clay and clay tools. The Beavers have been learning the names and proper use of each tool. We even explored how to join two pieces of clay together. We have been discussing eating and cooking utensils, their use, similarities, and differences. We have continued gardening; we harvested two eggplants from our garden box, picked tomatoes that the kids enjoyed eating, and investigated the various gardening tools. We have also begun to sew and lace with basic over/under techniques and explored

threading needles. We will be continuing our work into November, as well as introducing health and hygiene.

The children were excited to discover a praying mantis in our yard. From there, the children made their own terrarium and provided all the essentials that a praying mantis would need. A few days later another praying mantis was found and added to the terrarium. The children were able to observe the cycle of a female praying mantis eating the male mantis. Documentation about the praying mantis is posted on our hallway wall.

A few important reminders... It's starting to get cooler as we enter into the Fall season, so please be sure your child has a jacket or sweater in their cubby. Please check our dry erase board for daily messages and reminders so your child does not miss out on any events. In addition, there is a curriculum calendar placed in parent mailboxes every month, posted in the classroom, and accessible online. You can find Mystery Box Themes for the month at the bottom of every curriculum calendar. We also need your support on **leaving toys at home**. Items are being lost or misplaced and friends' feelings are being hurt due to sharing issues. We encourage sharing of items such as books, nature discoveries, or pictures of trips. Thank you for your help and support. We'll see you next month!

Veronica Dayag- Lead Teacher



## Parenting Tips

### Baby and Toddler Tooth Care

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

By the time your baby reaches 6 months old you can begin clean their gums with a wet washcloth or a piece of gauze. By the time his back molars have come in (around 18 months), you can switch to a soft bristle infant or toddler toothbrush.

Because tots like to walk around and brush it's a good idea to start out with the triangle safety brush.

As soon as you begin to brush your child's teeth you'll notice his desire try to brush them himself. Dentists advise that parents should continue to thoroughly brush their children's teeth until they are six years old. Brush your teeth while he's doing his, and then "check" each other's teeth to see if they're clean.

If he resists your help tell him he's done a good job but he "missed a spot" and finish the job for him. That way you'll have done a complete cleaning. Both my boys fussed when it was time to brush -- it is surly a challenge but the job has to get done to avoid tooth decay...

If you have a resistant brusher, it may help to buy him a toothbrush with a special cartoon character on it. You can also let your child have several brushes in different colors so that he can choose the one he wants when it's time to brush.

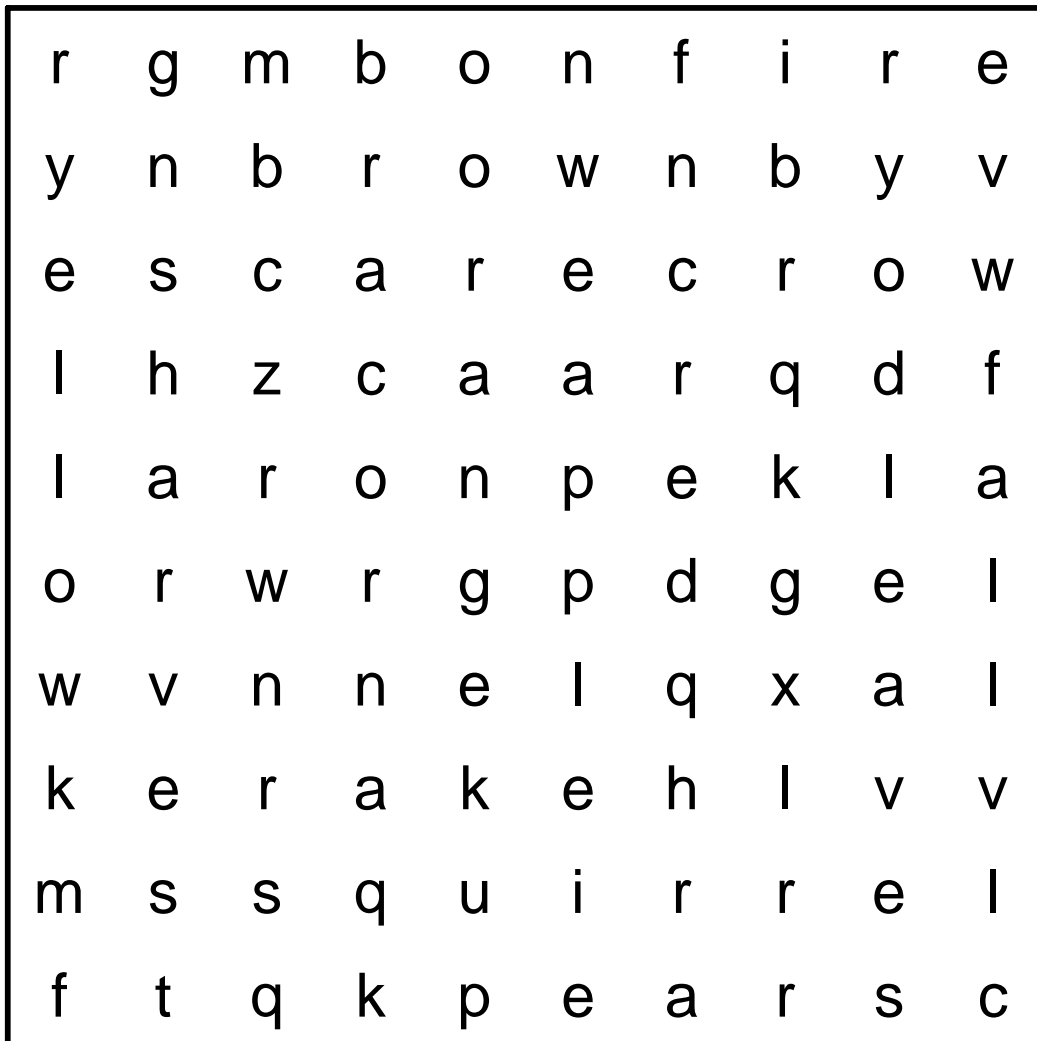


## From the Editors

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



# Autumn Word Search



rake

leaves

fall

scarecrow

apple



pear

brown

red

orange

yellow

bonfire

acorn

squirrel

harvest