



February 2012

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Upcoming Activities

February 18, 2012 : Raccoons workday

February 20, 2012 : CCC closed for Presidents' Day

February 23-24, 2012 : CCC closed for Staff Development Days

[CCC Board of Trustees meetings](#) 3rd Monday of each month, 7 PM, in Moore Laboratory, room 239.

From the Director

Hello All,

Next month we will be co-hosting the 2nd annual Early Childhood Math and Science Institute. Below is a short article citing Greg Duncan, our key note speaker, and his research on the importance of math in the preschool years. In addition to Greg you will also see the California Foundations in which we, the CCC, will be featured as examples of best practice. The article also points out the importance of good training for teachers in math instruction.

We know that it is difficult to find alternate child care for the days that we will be closed. We hope that you will see the long term benefits for your children in properly preparing our teachers. In the future we will try and choose dates that won't impact your work schedule so drastically, but for now if parents have already made plans to stay home and wouldn't mind a play date with another child from the room, please contact the Lead in your room.

Susan

REMINDER!

February 23-24, 2012 : CCC closed for Staff Development Days
2nd Annual Early Childhood Math & Science Institute

Experts say math preparation should begin in preschool

January 26th, 2012

By Matthew Rosin ~ EdSource Extra

Education leaders in California are turning their sights to ensure students have a strong foundation in mathematics when they enter kindergarten, and that means introducing students to math in preschool.

Preschool math was the focus of a meeting of leading educators and researchers from around the state at Stanford University last week. Participants included Michael Kirst, the president of the California State Board of Education, Catherine Atkin, president of Preschoolm California, and Kris Perry, executive director of First 5 California.

The meeting was lead by Deborah Stipek, former dean of the Stanford University School of Education, and Alan Schoenfeld, a professor of education at UC Berkeley.

Historically, there has been little coordination or discussion among the numerous California organizations, educators and researchers involved with early childhood education about how to develop strategies for incorporating math into the preschool experience. Last week's convening was intended to start that conversation.

Stipek told EdSource that while reading and writing skills have gotten a good deal of attention in preschool, math has not gotten the attention it deserves.

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The Children's Center at Caltech



In fact, research led by Greg Duncan, currently at UC Irvine found that mastery of math concepts in preschool are "the most powerful predictors of later learning."

A 2009 National Research Council report called lack of high-quality preschool math instruction a major problem, particularly for disadvantaged children who will begin school already behind.

The report underscored the capacity of preschoolers to master early math skills. "In fact, well before first grade, children can learn the ideas and skills that support later, more complex mathematics understanding," the report noted, with basic understanding of number, geometry, and measurement being especially important.

Those concepts are often absent from or underdeveloped in the preschool curriculum. "Math for the most part is not done very much in preschools," Stipek said. "When you look at what is typically done, it's things like the calendar and counting."

One goal of last week's meeting was to share draft findings and recommendations from an earlier meeting at UC Berkeley last fall. That event convened national experts to discuss existing research on early math, what makes for quality instruction, the preparation and support early educators need, and policy actions that States and the Federal Government should consider. The Stanford meeting last week was designed to initiate a conversation about these issues in California.

According to the conveners, a compelling reason to take on these issues now is that new state assessments aligned with the Common Core State Standards are likely to make new demands on California students. That will mean students will need a stronger grounding in math concepts early on.

California's current math tests are multiple-choice. But the tests being developed by the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium, assuming they are implemented as envisioned, will include items that require students to explain their reasoning and performance tasks that require students to plan a response to a real-world scenario.

A major challenge for California in introducing students to math fundamentals is that the quality and settings for early childhood education vary across the state. Caregivers and teachers have widely different educational backgrounds, and may have little background in math. And as Lynn Karoly and her fellow researchers described in a 2008 RAND Corporation report, early education settings range from public and private childcare programs and preschools, to care from a parent or from another adult in a home setting.

California has already taken some steps to promote preschool math.

The California Department of Education's extensive Preschool Learning Foundations publications describe, among other things, what four-year-olds and five-year-olds should be able to do mathematically if provided a high-quality preschool experience.

In addition, the State has developed assessment tools like the Desired Results Developmental Profile that can help educators at a pre-school level observe and document each child's growing mastery of various early math skills.

(Note: EdSource's Matt Rosin was an invitee to last week's Stanford gathering.)

For more background, see the following resources:

Success Begins Early, an EdSource brief, July 2011.

Mathematics Learning in Early Childhood, by the National Research Council, 2009.

School Readiness and Later Achievement, in *Developmental Psychology*, by Greg Duncan et



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Bunny Hopping

Hello Bunny members,
We hope that you had an amazing winter break. The bunnies came back full of energy and ready to continue their exploration of new material, activities, and the environment. We have designated one area of our room with nesting cups. The area will expand the children's interests, and allow us to observe how the children respond and achieve different strategies of problem solving.

Max was drawing on a paper on the wooden fence with a crayon, and while drawing he put his left hand on the wooden fence and felt something sticky. He pulled his hand away and noticed another texture; there was a piece of contact paper on the fence. Max put his hand back on the contact paper and pulled it back again. After experimenting, he started to draw on the contact paper, using his left index finger to trace over the lines. While Max was drawing on the contact paper Erin observed him, then Erin moved closer to Max and started drawing on the contact paper as well.

Daniel is expanding his communication by using gestures to communicate his interests. Daniel came inside and saw a big clear bowl and as he walked towards it he showed off the bowl and said "uh, uh, uh". After that, he put it back on the floor, turned around and started to pick up the soft animal rings. He then started to put them inside the bowl and when there were no more rings around him, he looked back at the caregiver and gestured to ask where the other rings were. The caregiver asked "where do you think the other rings are?" Daniel looked around again and spotted two more rings by Violet's side. Daniel walked towards her very carefully, stepped between her legs and went over her to pick up the two rings. After that Daniel did the same procedure of going really carefully over Violet and dropped the two rings inside the bowl. When he finished Daniel gestured again to the caregiver to ask "where are the other rings?" The caregiver responded again, "Where do you think there are more rings?" Daniel smiled and walked outside. A few minutes later he came inside with another ring that Lexi had taken outside during the time that Daniel had come inside for the first time.

The flu season is here, please consult the parent handout under sick policy if you have any questions. Please take the proper measures to avoid passing on any illnesses. The bunnies are still holding parent conferences and if you have not yet schedule one there is still time to do so.

Veronica Espinosa
Associate Teacher

Dolphin Splash

Hello Everyone!
We welcome Yannay, our newest Dolphin, who joined our classroom after Sophia transitioned to the Penguins. The Dolphins are growing and increasing their verbal skills as we spend time talking to Ariana, Leo and Sophia over the Penguin fence every day.

Our curriculum this month will continue to learn about "Simple Machines" and how they work. We will continue learning about wheels as we introduce kitchen tools such as a hand mixer and the sifter. Our Dolphins will learn how to turn the handle on the mixer to make the wheels turn and mix things like flour for baking. Things you can do to help your Dolphin explore simple machines at home is to make play dough and use a hand mixer to mix the dry ingredients together.

Dolphin Reminder:

- ❖ Keep your child's cubby stocked with an extra change of clothing.
- ❖ The Dolphin's parent conferences will begin on Monday, February 6th. Please see your Primary Care giver to schedule a time to meet.
- ❖ The Dolphin room is looking for rest sitters on Wednesday, February 15th from 1:30 to 3:00. Come and spend some extra time with your child in the Dolphin environment!

Have a wonderful February!
Stephanie Daniels – Lead Teacher





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Penguin Parade

Hello Penguin Parents!

Now that the winter holidays have come and gone, it is time to get back to our normal routine. Well, almost. Our class just went through its first group virus. It hit some harder than others, and the adults responded in many ways. After almost twenty years of childcare experience, I was lucky enough to have only experienced a week long headache. But somehow I passed it on to my sister who lives with me. I am not her favorite person right now.

I want to thank those who followed our sick policy and kept their children home. I understand it was difficult for us to be closed for a week and then come back and have your child come down with this virus. But I also want to remind others that the only way to prevent the spread of a virus is to stay home. We do our best to keep ourselves healthy, encourage hand washing, and enforce the sick policy. I am sure this will not be the last time we will see a virus go through our room. So be prepared. Make sure your emergency contacts are up to date and have fall back childcare if you cannot miss work.

In the month of January we will be having parent teacher meetings. The objective is for teachers and parents to meet and discuss the child's developmental stages. We cannot emphasize the importance of not comparing children. Every child develops at his or her own pace.

In our curriculum we have decided to take some steps back. We have realized we are not following the pace of the children. Therefore we are currently looking at size: small, medium, and large. Using literacy is a great way to illustrate this concept. So we have introduced the story of the Three Billy Goats and its props. The children seem to enjoy retelling the story using the props. I have seen many "reading" the book or retelling the story on their own or to an audience. We also have compared our own height and the children's height using a non-standard form of measurement: large plastic blocks. It is interesting to see how children stop and think about what we are asking them. Depending on their stage of development, they will communicate their estimation to us through actions or words. Either way, they are thinking critically and that's what is important.

Virginia Covarrubias
Lead Teacher

Koala Korner

Hello Koala Families,

During the month of January many of you might have noticed our classroom undergoing some changes. We have attempted to transform our dramatic play area into a cozy home in which "The Three Little Bears" live in as well as having Goldilocks come for a visit. We have done this to continue to foster each child's individual development. As they play here they are continuously building on their social, cognitive, language, and mathematical skills. Doing this has opened the door for us to continue working on our curriculum on Habitats. We will be looking at where animals live as well as comparing the differences and similarities between a pond and our very own fish tank where both have fish. If you look around our classroom you will notice the children are starting to create both their own stories and also different things with clay. Some are very interested in the letters of their names and they have also started noticing that they can create letters with different materials like blocks and string. We will continue to explore their interest on this and have been taking some pictures, some of which we'll be sharing with you on one of our boards, so watch out for this in the coming weeks.

We would like to welcome Adi to our classroom. She is coming from the Bunny room where she has worked for four years. She is currently expecting her second child sometime in April. Her first is currently enrolled in the Dolphin classroom.

Reminders:

- ❖ Please make sure your child has enough clothes in their cubby, at least two full changes of clothes.
- ❖ Label clothes to prevent any articles from being lost.
- ❖ Parents are required to attend at least one work day. The next one will be held on Feb 18.
- ❖ Please make sure to sign in and out every day.
- ❖ Please try and keep toys at home. We are trying to avoid any toys being lost at school.

Important dates: Feb. 10th Bike day Feb. 14th Picnic Feb. 22nd Library walk

Olivia Garcia
Lead Teacher



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Raccoon Roundup

Hi Raccoon Families!

We hope you all had a nice and restful holiday. The teachers really appreciated the lovely gift card to Vroman's Books. Welcome to Sam & Yarden and their families to the Raccoon classroom. We hope that your experience with us will be a memorable one.

The Raccoons are continuing to investigate scale and structure with an emphasis on ramps and pathways. The children have been working very hard on trying to make a sphere turn a corner, using cove moldings. While working together with their friends, some used blocks to create a barrier at a corner, while others used their hands to block the spheres from flying off the corners. We have also been using toy vehicles on the cove moldings. They enjoyed predicting which vehicle would descend first to the bottom of a ramp.

Our cooking activities have been successful. We have made such foods as california rolls, fruit popsicles, pita sandwiches and onion soup. The teachers are making an effort to cook in the classroom at least 3 times a month. The children like using real tools, measuring, and actually having their food for afternoon snack.

We have received great support with our efforts to incorporate wordless books during our classroom circle time. Children are enthusiastic to incorporate their imagination into the stories. They have become also challenged to create their own wordless book. A few raccoons have shared their wordless books during circle time. Thank you to Shreya's mom Vijiya for sharing story dice. They have been so fantastic in practicing how to tell stories. It gave each child a chance to extend a story, yet having to incorporate a symbol from the dice.

Lastly, have you seen the classroom alphabet branch? We think it is so beautiful. The children worked very hard for the past 2 ½ months creating letters from twigs, beads, and wire. Thank you, Jason, Lily W.'s dad for putting the tree branch up.

❖ Sign up for a conference in the classroom next to the sign in and out sheet.

Thank you,
Veronica Hendricks
Lead Teacher

Beaver Tails

Greeting from the Beavers,

The month of January said hello to a new lead and as with any new teacher there are bound to be some changes. Overall, the Beavers have responded in a very positive manner. This month the Beavers have continued to experiment with light. With Grace, the Beavers have explored how to make a reflection using a mirror and a flashlight. All of the Beavers illustrated this phenomenon, and some of their thoughts about it blew us away.

Here are some of their comments. Dean: "I was holding the mirror and Thomas was holding the flashlight. He aimed the flashlight at the mirror. It made a reflection on the wall!" Luciana explained, "I aimed the flashlight the right way turning a little side and then the mirror straight. And then it made the light a different way. It looked the same. And it doesn't just need to use the mirror directly straight."

With Shan Yain the Beavers have been experimenting on what happens when they shine a flashlight though differently colored paddles. With Cynthia the Beavers are observing shadows and their relationship on how they change throughout the day. Elise is working on different types of lenses that are used during light experiments as well as looking at how different objects react with light.

In the middle of the month the center received their fall order for the school and the Beavers noticed a ton of cardboard boxes in our driveway. When asked what we should do with these boxes they all decided that they would build trains with them. As you all know the Beavers created a train book, which has been used as a foundation to this new adventure. Elise has been working with the Beavers and they have all decided this will be an ongoing project. The Beavers have already made a blue print and all they are doing now is collecting materials. The month of February looks very exciting and full of further explorations!

Thanks,
Nancy Jinon
Lead Teacher