



CHDCC Newsletter



The teachers will continue to work the rest of that Thursday, Friday and the following Monday to close out their old classrooms and prepare their new rooms to welcome children and families to a new school year. When the children return on Tuesday, August 26th, they will be in their new classrooms. We will also have about 25 new children joining the Center the first couple of weeks. It's a lot of change to prepare for!

Each year the move varies depending on the development of the children currently enrolled, the number of children leaving to go to kindergarten or other adventures, and the ages of the children on the waiting list.

Some children will move from their current group to another group. Changes for these individual children are made based on the needs of those children, recommendations from the teachers, Kate and me, along with input from the parents of those children. Individual discussions with those parents have already taken place. Teachers have been encouraged to make discussions of these transitions a part of their parent-teacher conferences. If you have questions about your child's transition please

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The Transition to a New School Year

Now that fall re-enrollment is complete and I know exactly which children will be staying I can finalize plans for the end of the summer transitions.

For those families who are new to the Center let me explain how we make the transition from one school year to the next. Our current school year will end at 12:30 on Thursday August 21st. That will be the last day at Chapel Hill Day Care Center for kindergarten bound children and those who did not re-enroll for the new school year.

talk to your child's teacher or me or Kate.

The basic move this year looks like this:

- All the children in the Grasshopper room will move to the oldest classroom currently occupied by the Manatees.
- Some Eagles who will be going to kindergarten in fall 2009 will join the Grasshoppers. Discussions with those families have already taken place.
- The remainder of the Eagles will move to the classroom of 16 where the Grasshoppers currently are.
- Most of the Dolphins will move with the younger eagles to the group of 16.
- A few of the Dolphins will move to the current Eagles room where there will be 12 young preschoolers.
- A couple of Butterflies will move to the group of 16 with Eagles and Dolphins. (Currently the Grasshopper room.) Discussions with those parents have taken place.
- Most of the Butterflies will go to the classroom of 12 where the Eagles currently are located.
- All Starfish will move to the room beside the kitchen where the Dolphins currently are.

- All Penguins will move to what is currently the Starfish room and we will add two new children to the group.
- Five Bunnies will move to what is currently the Starfish room and three new children will be added to this group of older toddlers.
- One Bunny will move to the very front classroom and will be joined by 7 new young toddlers who will come in during the last week in August and throughout September.
- The infant room will be filled with siblings of children currently enrolled.

The teachers and I are still discussing room placements for teachers next year. Historically our teacher turnover has occurred primarily during the summer. In determining teacher placements the number one priority is meeting the children's needs. Other things that are taken into account include: 1. each teacher's strengths and challenges, 2. how the current teaching team has been working, 3. teachers' 1st and 2nd preferences if they have been shared, and 4. NAEYC and licensing education requirements. Most children will have at least one teacher remain the same. Final decisions will be made and shared in July.

Please join us for a parent orientation meeting on Thursday, August __ at 6:30 in the church's education

building. We will review some items in the parent handbook, discuss parent involvement opportunities, talk about the roles of the Board of Directors and the parent planning committee and offer an opportunity to meet other CHDCC families. Representatives from the board will be there as well as some members of the parent-planning group. If you are interested in participating on either of this group you are encouraged to come. This is not just for new families! All CHDCC parents/guardians are welcomed to attend.

A Very Special Thank You

To Corey and Martha Newport for the new Mac!

Attention Parents:

The parent workday has been rescheduled for Saturday, June 21st from 9am to noon. Please sign up in your child's classroom.

Letter from Parent Committee

Adding to the Center's Website: We Need Your ideas!

Over the past year, in an effort to better meet the children's special dietary needs,

the food allergy parent sub-committee has worked hard with the center to (1) standardized center-wide food allergy/restriction procedures; (2) promote staff training in food allergy and anaphylaxis awareness; and (3) improve parent-teacher communication. As a means to continue this work and further disseminate the information to current and prospective parents, we would like to create a Special Dietary Needs section to be added to the CHDCC website.

Our current thinking is that this section would include the center's food allergy/restriction procedures, and standardized forms/contracts, as well as a list of resources on common food allergies and anaphylaxis. **WE NEED YOUR HELP!!!** We could use your input and ideas on the following:

- Food allergy websites
- Literature for both children and adults (books, articles, etc.)
- Special recipes
- Ideas for alternative foods (e.g., Earth Balance instead of butter/margarine)
- List of local grocery stores that sell alternative foods
- List of local restaurants that are food allergy friendly (e.g., they provide allergy information for their menu, etc.)
- Other ideas for this section???

The plan is to have this new section up and running in late August/early September for the start of the new school year. Any ideas you may have can be emailed to Pam (chdcc@bellsouth.net).

Math is Puzzling to Me!

From "The Well-Centered Child"
April 2008; By Angela Andrews

It's easy to know how to help your young child prepare to read. Just read to them! It's a little more puzzling to figure out how to help your child prepare for the rigors of mathematics--especially if you are a bit "math anxious" yourself. You may be relieved when I tell you that one of the best things you can do to help your child develop the skills necessary to think mathematically has nothing to do with numbers at all! A major part of mathematics is geometry and one of the most important skills of geometric thinking is the ability to mentally manipulate objects and shapes. One of the best ways to prepare a child's mind for this sophisticated task is to teach them how to construct puzzles. The best puzzles are sturdy wooden puzzles with frames such as those found in many preschools. These puzzles have from 5 to 10 pieces each. Even though children often quickly learn to put these puzzles together, there is great value in the repetitive nature of turning, sliding, and flipping the pieces in order to get them to fit. (In fact, these moves are mathematical in nature and are the very moves the child will do in geometry class!) Often parents hesitate to purchase these simpler puzzles, thinking the child will outgrow them too quickly. However, there are many challenging ways children can continue to use the sturdy puzzles. For instance:

- * Can the child put the puzzle together without the frame?
- * Can the child put the puzzle together on its plain side, without color or picture clues, using only shape clues?
- * Can the child put two puzzles together when the pieces have been mixed up?

- * Can the child put two puzzles together, without the frames, when the pieces have been mixed up?
- * Can the child put two puzzles together on their plain sides, when the pieces have been mixed up?
- * Can the child put the puzzle together blindfolded?
- * Can the child put the puzzle together when it is revolving on a small turntable?

When children are ready to graduate to larger puzzles, join in the fun! Be sure to suggest or model ways to organize puzzle work with a few simple strategies, such as:

- * Turn all the pieces over so the picture side shows.
- * Construct the border second, looking for straight edges and corners (more math here--there will be lots of straight edges but only 4 corners, or right angle pieces.)
- * Once the border or frame is complete, look for color or subject clues and sort the pieces into piles accordingly.
- * Ask yourself before discarding a piece "Will it fit if I rotate or slide it a bit?"

Help your child find a place where the puzzle can be left out for a few days. It's important that your child understand that a puzzle, like a challenging math problem, doesn't have to be completed in one sitting. It can be returned to with fresh eyes and renewed enthusiasm later.

But Aren't They Going to Teach Him Anything?

*From The Park Bench School of Parenting:
The Well-Centered Child, April 2008*

Blocks, toys, clay, and the sandbox.
Stories, songs puzzles and friends. Aren't

they going to teach him anything at that preschool? Your next door neighbor's child is working on the letter of the week at her school. And what do you hear about from your son? Stories, songs, puzzles and friends. It's hard not to worry.

But you really don't need to. Young children's primary pathway to learning is play. Play supports development in all areas--physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Quality preschools take play seriously because they take children seriously. They understand how children learn.

When hearing your neighbor go on about the letter of the week becomes too much, take time to talk with other parents who also believe in play for young children. Some of them are sure to proudly mention their grade school age children who played as preschoolers--and are now doing just fine academically, thank you.

In the meantime, here are some examples of how the play materials in your child's preschool center or kindergarten help prepare him or her for later academic learning.

* Before a child can hold a pencil firmly and use it for long periods of time, he or she needs lots of opportunities to strengthen those pencil-holding muscles. Playdough, Lego, beads, and even the buttons and snaps on dress-up clothes can all do the trick.

* Before a child can understand that a combination of letters stands for a familiar object, he or she needs lots of experience in making one thing stand for another. In play, a block can be a cup, or a slide can represent an icy mountain. Using objects as symbols in play is good

preparation for later use of symbols in reading and math.

* Before a child can see any reason for studying hard, he or she needs to know that the world is filled with important and interesting ideas. Hands-on exploration and discovery makes children want to learn more. Problem-solving through play builds habits of thoughts that children will use throughout life.

* Before a child can relax and learn in a classroom filled with other children, he or she needs lots of experience in the give and take of getting along with others. Feeling at ease in a group and knowing how to ask a teacher for help can go a long way in helping your child succeed and be happy in grade school.

Blocks, toys, clay, and the sandbox. Stories, songs, puzzles and friends. And time and encouragement to learn from them. If that's what your child has, don't worry. He's in a good place.

A Fond Farewell

Dear Parents:

I'm Liz Ragin. Hopefully, you know me, but don't feel bad if you don't! The other day I was in a classroom providing some release time for Gloria when a parent picking up his child asked me if I was new to CHDCC. I realized that being here only two days a week has limited my ability to get to know everyone, even though I have been here since August 2007!

Having said that, I'd like to explain just a bit about my experience. I have been the center's part time T.E.A.C.H.

EarlyChildhood Americorps volunteer, which entails a number of things. We, as corps members, provide release time for educators on the TEACH scholarship,

enhance classroom ratios, develop literacy projects, and recruit volunteers for outside-center work. Throughout the year I have provided release time for Gloria, Candice, and Nahija. I have also worked with all of the classrooms, mostly the Eagles, Dolphins, Bunnies, Butterflies, and Starfish. I help out with projects in the Resource room and have been putting the newsletters together. The Americorps program here is amazing. I have been able to go straight from college (Appalachian State) right into a work environment, where I've learned so much from the children and staff, even only being here 2 days per week.

I've learned so much from the staff, children and parents in my short time here. I know that I'll take the lessons with me for the rest of my life. Child care is truly an amazing process that takes time, dedication, and an intense amount of patience! I have a respect for the teachers and parents that I couldn't have known without my experience here. I also want to comment on the quality of the day care. Since you have a child here (or more than one), you already know how wonderful it is. But, just to remind you--this center is absolutely a fantastic place for children and teachers. It has more than anything else restored my faith in the future, because I know that if there are places like this that always put the child first, then I'll have a place like this to bring my children.

As far as I know, CHDCC will continue to utilize the TEACH program, and I know that it will continue to be a mutually helpful relationship.

I will be wrapping up my time here at the end of June and heading off to Honduras for the Peace Corps. Thank you all for the wonderful time I've been so fortunate to spend here--it's been

great! I'll always have a special place for CHDCC in my heart!

Liz Ragin