From the Director

Hello Parents,

There are some upcoming changes in the Infant/Toddler Room staffing that I’m sure those parents are wondering about. Please know that one of my biggest concerns is always that there are smooth transitions when staff changes, with the least amount of disruption for children as possible. Polly’s baby is due April 15; that will be the first major shift in staffing. Veronica (who is now in the room mid-day 3 days a week) will be increasing her hours to cover Polly’s time away. Kiera’s last day will be Friday, May 1st. Sad but true. Wait, there is one more bit: Shawnny has become a Certified Nurse Assistant and, also sadly, will be leaving about a month after Kiera. I know you join me in celebrating the success of these remarkable, caring women.

Change is always tricky and sometimes difficult, but, thankfully, a few of the part-time staff who have been working in the Infant/Toddler Room this semester will be available after the end of the semester and into the summer. Polly vows to return after two weeks, but I’m guessing 4 to be more realistic. The bottom line is that your children will still be in the loving care of Polly, Courtney, Veronica, Jani, Laura and, at least through the beginning of the summer, Michelle; all familiar faces providing loving, thoughtful and consistent care. As we move forward, Polly will continue to work (upon return from maternity leave), and Veronica will begin to work (mid-April) 30-35 hours a week throughout the summer and we have started interviewing for a second benefited staff member in the Infant/Toddler Room.

Please let me know if you have any questions about the pending changes!

Robin

Did you know?

We have a Family Photo Album in the Preschool Room. Please check it out, then take some of the supplies posted on the parent bulletin board and create your own page! It does not have to be fancy. Rest assured that whatever you submit will provide lots of vocabulary building, sharing and language opportunities for the entire classroom! Thank you in advance!

Sunscreen

As summer approaches remember that we sunscreen the Preschool children as they wake up from nap. If you have a particular sunscreen product you would like us to apply to your child, please bring it into the classroom, otherwise they will use whatever the grocery shopper purchases for the class to share. Please be sure to bring your child(ren) to BioKids in the morning with a new coat of goo. It takes us about 45 minutes to get everyone covered, so not having to do this twice a day is a huge time-saver. Also, don’t forget sun hats and lightweight long sleeved shirts.

In the Infant/Toddler Room we ask that parents provide whatever product you would like us to put on your child. Sunscreen is applied twice a day to children in this room.
Teacher Appreciation Week

Teacher Appreciation Week is an annual event to recognize the people who spend most of their waking hours with your children! Briefly, the schedule is as follows for May 18 – 22:

Monday – Thank you cards from home

Tuesday – Flower Day – a few stems from your garden or grocery are combined with others and grow into beautiful bouquets!

Wednesday – Lunch Out! Our staff meeting is replaced with a luncheon somewhere out-of-the-ordinary on campus. Perhaps UMFA this year.

Thursday – Gift Bags! Please feel free to donate chocolate bars, crisp $10 bills, small soaps or lotions, movie tickets, whatever you think might be fun to find in a small package.

Friday – Lunch brought in – always a nice way to wind-down the week.

Please let Robin know if you would like to earn some co-op time and participate in an above-and-beyond way. Suggestions include: bagels or donuts one morning, gift cards for gift bags, fruit or green salad to accompany lunch on Friday, etc. You can also donate money (noted as a donation on your tuition statement) to help cover the costs of the lunches, etc.

Thanks!

Thank you again to parents who do our laundry, grocery shopping, sippy-cup washing, staying with children during staff meetings, and everything else you do to help our program run smoothly. Thanks to our bi-monthly “fruit pickers” your children rarely, if ever, get canned fruit! Thanks to playdough crafters, our children have fresh, germ-free playdough at the beginning of each week!

Sand: Plea for co-op help!

Is there one among you with a truck who would be willing to take on the chore of procuring sand for our sandbox? We had one parent who did it for many years, but, alas his child needed to go to kindergarten! If we get a volunteer to get the sand in their pick-up truck we’ll need another volunteer to help shovel it into the sandbox. Our sandbox is empty!

Television violence and children’s play

In the classroom we see a very different style of play when Super Heroes are invited into the mix; the play is not nearly as creative, friendly or open-ended and tends to be “scripted” verbally, physically and emotionally.

Please take the time to look at the following article related to children’s reactions to watching violent (even cartoon or animated) violence during their television or computer time at home! A very short excerpt:

“Hundreds of studies of the effects of TV violence on children and teenagers have found that children may:

- become immune or numb to the horror of violence
- begin to accept violence as a way to solve problems
- imitate the violence they observe on television; and
- identify with certain characters, victims and/or victimizers”


DECA and Parent-Teacher Conferences

Staff members have begun their work with the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment; thank you for taking the time to complete the parent questionnaires. Conferences will be scheduled for mid-to-late April. Even though this assessment tool may not look like ones we’ve used in the past, it is a research-based approach to assessing school readiness and success. We are excited to be able to access the DECA materials through a grant from the Sorensen Foundation, thanks to our friends at the Child and Family Development Center in the Department of Family and Consumer Studies. This sort of collaboration and cooperation is one of the real benefits of “living” at the U!