

Whistle Stop's

# Parent Connection

December 2008

## Welcome New Faces

Whistle Stop welcomes three new staff to our center.

**Karla Dominguez** is a student at Aquinas College who is working part-time in the Jelly Bean room. Karla is from Traverse City and enjoys reading and listening to music.

**Sarah Rivers** is working part-time in the senior building as a floater. She is a student at Grand Valley State University majoring in special education. In her spare time, Sarah enjoys activities with her sorority, dance, and spending time with young children. Sarah is from Leland, Michigan.

**Amy VerMeulen** works full-time in the Sweet Peas room. Amy graduated from Hope College with a degree in elementary education and enjoys reading, traveling, and music.

Please extend a warm welcome our new staff.

## Holiday Schedule Forms

On Monday after Thanksgiving, holiday schedule confirmation forms will be posted in each room. Please fill in these forms

with your child/children's holiday schedule. These forms will give us the enrollment information needed to make staffing and open/closing decisions for the holidays.

## Severe Weather Closing Information

If Whistle Stop closes due to severe winter weather, **the closing information will be posted on TV channel 8 and TV channel 13.** Please check these stations for Whistle Stop's closing information in the event of severe weather.

## Outdoor Play Policy

Whistle Stop's outdoor play policy is for all children to go outdoors 2 times per day, once in the morning, and once in the afternoon. Children who come to Whistle Stop need to be healthy enough to follow this policy.

**If a child is well enough to come to Whistle Stop, they must be well enough to go outdoors.** We are not able to adequately staff for children who might otherwise need to stay inside for health reasons.

If the temperature is above 20

degrees, children will go out as usual. If the temperature falls below 20 degrees, staff will use their best judgment.

We encourage the daily outdoor playtimes because they keep everyone healthy!

## Reminder

Please remember that the weekly **tuition payments** are due each Friday (or the last day that your child attends).

If for some reason your payment is late, **you have until Monday afternoon at 6:00 PM before a late fee will be charged to your account.** A late fee of \$3.00 per day will be charged to your account until the payment is made.

## Staff Birthdays and Anniversaries

### **Happy belated birthday to:**

Marian Russell – November 2

Toni Tyson – November 8

Barb Groendyk – November 12

Karla Dominguez – November 14

### **December Birthdays**

Kathleen Reeves – December 29

There are no staff anniversaries in November or December.

## Welcome New Family

We would like to welcome two new children to Whistle Stop: William deVoest (Ben and Peggy) - a new Young Explorer and his brother Patrick deVoest - a new Jumping Jack. Welcome William and Patrick

## Staff Development

**Sue Zimmerman** and **Barb Groendyk** attended an early childhood conference at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. They attended two sessions, one on social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment of preschoolers, and the other on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia in the preschool setting.

Also, our staff attended a **classroom portfolio work session** on Monday, November 10, 2008. In order to maintain our NAEYC accreditation, we must show evidence of criteria that we have to meet, and this is done through pictures and materials which are put together (scrapbook style) in a portfolio. We will be doing these once a month as required to maintain our accreditation.

## High/Scope Program Routine

Whistle Stop follows the High/Scope program that was developed by the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation of Ypsilanti, Michigan. This High/Scope curriculum is based on

child-centered, active learning methods that are combined with trained staff who can provide a safe and secure environment. Whistle Stop uses a predictable but flexible daily routine that allows the children time to reflect on the activities of each day.

The first element of the routine to start the day is the "**Greeting Time**". Once the children have arrived and are settled, the teacher gathers the children in a circle. She greets everyone and talks about the day. (For the older children, they also mention what day yesterday was and what day tomorrow will be.) The older children also discuss the weather and put up a symbol to represent it for that day.

They then use message boards to draw symbols which represent the different activities that will take place during the day.

The greeting time is a very helpful tool for children who don't attend the center every day. It also helps organize the day and get it started in a familiar way each day.

Keep your eye out for the next segment of the High/Scope program routine in the next issue of the Parent Connection.

## Holiday Hours

Whistle Stop will be **closed** on the following days:

**Christmas Day, December 25**

**New Year's Day, January 1**

**Whistle Stop will be open (or closed) on the following days according to the number of families signed up:**

**Wednesday, December 24 -**

If open, we will **close at noon** and **no lunch** will be provided.

**Friday, December 26 -** if open, it will be **regular hours**.

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Other dates to note:

**Wednesday, December 31 - open until 3:00 PM.**

**Friday, January 2 - open regular hours.**

## Holiday Gift Ideas

Toni has received some phone calls and e-mails from parents inquiring about holiday gift ideas for staff.

Given the current economic climate, please do not feel obligated to provide gifts for the staff. Instead, if you desire to do something, you might consider a gift for your child's classroom or one gift that all the staff can enjoy (baked goods, etc.)

## Absences

Thank you to those parents who call us in the morning to let us know their child will not be in attendance at Whistle Stop. Sometimes one child can make a difference in staffing. If you know in advance that your child will not be in on a certain day, please let a staff member know.

## Cold and Flu Season

As the cold and flu season approaches, we wanted to take a few minutes to talk about Whistle Stop's sick policy and clarify it for everyone.

Throughout the winter season, the staff at Whistle Stop try their best to keep their rooms germ free. They take extra precautions with the sanitizing of toys, extra hand washing, keeping children's noses wiped, and getting the children outside to let them get fresh air to help keep Whistle Stop as germ-free as possible.

We are asking that **if your child is running a fever of over 101.3 degrees** and is showing symptoms like fussiness, extra tiredness, runny green nose, loose stools, continuous cough, vomiting, or loss of appetite that you keep them at home for a good day of rest and recuperation.

Please remember if there is a fever involved that **your child must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of Tylenol before returning to Whistle Stop.** If they come down with a fever while here at Whistle Stop, we ask that **they be picked up from care within one hour** of the phone call.

If your child is in need of medication during the day, please remember we need **medication in their original containers** labeled with your

child's name. We also need a **medical form filled out for each medication.** These forms are good for three months, and are available in the classroom.

All these things are in our parent handbook, but it's important to mention it to all so we can keep our staff and kids as healthy as possible. Thank you.