

Whistle Stop's

Parent Connection

May-June 2009

Looking Ahead to Summer

Water Play Items to Bring

The children do a lot of water play at Whistle Stop during the hot summer months. **Please bring the following items (that you can leave at Whistle Stop) for your child:**

- swimsuit
- towel
- water shoes (optional)
- insect repellent

These should each be **labeled with your child's name**. Whistle Stop will provide the sunscreen – **please sign a permission slip** if you would like your child to use it.

Summer Program

We still have openings in our **summer school age program**. This program offers a variety of fun and interesting activities for children ages 6-12. The program begins on **Monday June 8** and runs through **August 14, 2009**.

It is offered 5 days a week, and participants can attend either full- or part-time. Please contact Toni if you would like to register. Also, if you refer someone who registers their child for the

program, you will receive a one-time 10% discount from your tuition that week.

Summer Activities

The ice cream truck visits will begin **Tuesday, June 16** (for all rooms except Sweet Peas). The ice cream truck will come every other week in the afternoon throughout the summer. The average cost of treats will be about \$2.00 each. A sign up sheet will be coming out soon.

We are also looking into doing **catered lunches** again on Wednesdays. We'd like to start these on **Wednesday, June 10**. We're considering a pasta theme and would like the cost to be about \$3.00 per child. If you know of anyone who is able to do the catering for us, please contact Toni.

Also, **Pizza Mondays** will continue through the summer for all rooms.

On the rest of the days your child comes to Whistle Stop, please **pack a picnic-style lunch** for him or her (sandwiches, fruit, etc.). Many times during the summer the children go on hikes or bring their lunches with them to the meadow. Picnic-style lunches

make these outings more fun and easier for everyone!

Summer Staff

Returning to work at Whistle Stop this summer are **Lindsey Addington** and **Katie Tyson**. **Lindsey Vedder** will also stay on to help out. **Jen Metz** and **Marian Russell** will oversee our summer school age program.

Position Open

We are in need of a **lifeguard** for the school age program this summer. Days and hours needed are: **Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12:30 to 3:30 PM**. Please contact Toni if you or someone you know is interested in this position. Applicants must be 18 years of age.

Staff Birthdays and Anniversaries

May Birthdays

Lisa Freybler – May 3
Sue Zimmerman – May 10

June Birthdays

Amy VanDerMeulen – June 19

June Staff Anniversaries

Lindsey Addington – 2008

Welcome New Families

We welcome the following new children and their families to Whistle Stop:

Sweet Peas

Diego Medina (Derek & Sarah)

Roman Nelson (Richard & Sara)

Andrew Owings (Mark & Francesca)

Catherine Rizor (David & Molly)

Dylan and Wyatt Stein (John & Katie)

Jelly Beans

Emma Akulli (Alex & Amy)

Young Explorers

Emma Risinger (John & Tracy)

Arriving soon to the Sweet Peas room will be **Anna Collins** (Stew & Emilie). Her brother **Joey Collins** is a Jelly Bean.

New Siblings

We are happy to announce that the following children have a new sibling:

Rex Blakely (Sweet Peas) has a new baby brother Harry.

Nate Hart (Jelly Beans) has a new baby sister Teagan.

Charlie Seufert (Jelly Beans) has a new baby brother Henry.

Staff Training Update

In April, Kathleen Reeves attended a training seminar held at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital. She attended two sessions – one entitled "Helping Children Cope Through Play" and the other entitled "Disaster Preparedness".

In May, all staff received their **annual CPR/First Aid training** and re-certification.

Great News!

Whistle Stop has just received word that our annual report was received by the **NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Accreditation** and that we have successfully maintained our accreditation for the year. We will continue to make ongoing improvements to our program in order to provide high quality care and education for the children and families we serve.

FYI - Parent Handbook

Toni is also in the process of updating our parent handbook in order to maintain our NAEYC accreditation. We plan to have the parent handbook eventually posted on our website.

Thank You

A special thank you to all the parents who helped out with our **spring garden project**. Thank you to all who donated plants, tools, and supplies. Be sure to stop by and check our progress!

Staff Appreciation Week

Thank you also to all the parents who are taking part in our **Staff Appreciation Week (May 11-15)**. Your contributions, help, and support are so very much appreciated. Thank you!

Reminders

Please note that Whistle Stop will be closed on Friday, July 3rd for Independence Day. Please make alternate child care arrangements for that day.

Also, if you have any **changes** in your home address, cell phone number, e-mail address, or emergency information, please notify Toni via e-mail at toni@whistlestopchildcare.net.

High/Scope Program Highlights

The following is the next segment in our High/Scope Program highlights.

Cleanup Time

When work time is over, children participate in cleanup time. Putting materials and toys away provides children with many learning experiences as they sort, match, classify and solve problems. The adults in the classroom assist the children by pointing out labels and pictures of where the items should go. This process helps the children become more aware of their environment and more familiar with the work areas in the room.

Article

"Fun In The Spring Time"

Caterpillars and Butterflies:

On your walks outside, look for caterpillars. Let them be, but follow their life cycle if you can. You can find a non-fiction book at your library to read and learn more about the caterpillar's life cycle. Then read the book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle and compare the story to what you have learned from your non-fiction source.

You can also make butterflies with the following materials:

Get one clothes pin (not the pinch type), one black pipe cleaner, and one circular coffee filter for each child. Mix a very watery paint and let the child use an eye-dropper to "paint" the butterfly's coffee filter body. When dry, scrunch the coffee filter in the clothes pin and twist the pipe cleaner around the top for the antennae. Hang from a window and enjoy.

Changes in Spring

Use your digital camera to capture the changes in trees and plants from bare winter branches to buds to leaves to flowers. Print out the pictures and post them in a sequence. Talk about the changes with your child.

Plan and start a vegetable garden. Even if you don't have a good-sized plot of land, you can garden in containers. Find a book, nursery catalog or look

on-line for directions to plant the different types of vegetables. One on-line resource is www.gardenersnet.com.

Of course, harvesting and eating what they have grown is the highlight of the project. Children can learn:

- the parts of a plant
- what it takes to grow a vegetable
- how to use their fingers and tools when planting, weeding, and harvesting
- the satisfaction of having planted and grown their own vegetables
- basic math and science principles in planting the seeds and cooking the vegetables

Article adapted from:
News & Views, April-June 2009
Kent Regional 4C
233 E. Fulton, Suite 107
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Article

Developmental Benefits of Sand/Water Table Play

Cognitive: Children play with a purpose and build cognitive skills like sorting, problem solving, investigating, exploring, explaining, critical/creative thinking, classifying, comparing, volume and measurement properties at the sand/water table. Dig for treasure, pour water/sand through funnels and mills and watch the brain work begin!

Physical-motor: Standing at the sand/water table facilitates the use of fingers, hands, arms,

and trunk while maintaining overall balance and coordination of the body. Playing and digging with shovels, funnels, and scoops in sand or water provides resistive activity, which improves body awareness. Skills of eye-hand coordination and grasping skills needed for future writing are practiced at the sand/water table through play.

Sensory: Playing in sand, birdseed, or water allows children to feel different textures through their hands. This in turn gives the brain the opportunity to process a variety of tactile experiences to help understand different sensations (i.e. grainy, smooth, dry, wet, etc...). The ability to comprehend an item by touching only develops when children feel and identify items that they cannot see (i.e. toys hidden in the sand).

Social: Interactive and pretend play is how children learn and develop the social skills of verbal communication, sharing, helping, compromising and requesting, offering, and friendship building. Consider the sand/water table a smaller version of the beach!

Speech and Language: The gathering of children around an emotionally engaging activity like sand and water promotes the use of spontaneous speech and language – a must for all young children for reading and writing!

From: Gibbs, Marianne, MOT, OTR.
"Hands-On Tips for Teachers and Parents – Developmental Benefits of Sand/Water Table Play". Write Out of the Box. 21 Apr. 2009.