



From the Director

February 2014

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Upcoming Activities

[Calendar](#)

[CCC Board of Trustees meetings](#)

3rd Monday of each month, 7 PM, in Moore Laboratory, room 239.

Parents

Here a little information about our STEM Conference in Costa Mesa taken from the conference program.

MISSION

The Children's Center at Caltech in collaboration with The Children & Families Commission of Orange County and THINK Together, are sponsoring and hosting the *Early Childhood Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (ECSTEM)* Conference to promote and increase awareness of the importance of introducing STEM education in early childhood (birth through eight years).

WELCOME

Welcome to the 2014 Early Childhood Science Technology Engineering Math conference. As the shortage of professionals in STEM fields is heading to crisis levels in the US and California, we must act now to change the direction of the future for our children and for our communities. Our immediate goal is to provide the best opportunities for our youngest learners, at an age that is most crucial in developing a strong foundation of knowledge and skills for successful lifelong learning: birth through eight years. To accomplish this goal, we are gathering early childhood practitioners, researchers, business leaders, policymakers, and parents to collectively develop a plan to train early childhood educators to provide the highest quality STEM opportunities for our children, spreading awareness of the importance of STEM skills to families and involving them in the process, and partnering with the community to leverage resources for our educators, children and their families. It's a big order, but together we can make great strides toward equipping our children with the tools necessary to create change, innovate, and be effective and productive individuals – the skilled STEM professionals of the future.

Doug Clements, a Kennedy Endowed Chair and Professor in Early Childhood Learning at Denver University, found that "the development of mathematics skills early on may be an even greater predictor of later school success", including reading skills and language development, than "early reading skills" itself! His extensive research exemplifies why it is critically important that our children are provided with the opportunities necessary to build skills essential for lifelong learning success.

We all must take action now! Thank you for joining us in this movement to strengthen our educational system for future generations to come!

Sincerely,
Early Childhood STEM Conference Committee

Remember that we will be CLOSED February 7. Thank you for your support.

News on the new center - It is time to move the pieces of the Science Lab to their new location. This is necessary in order to License the space both by the State and to be in compliance with the playground safety codes. The building are finished and we are awaiting carpet and furniture for the 3 additional new rooms. Once everything is in place it will be the time for the final walk through by Title XXII agent for our operating License. It is a beautiful space and we are very excited. It won't be long now!

Susan



Bunny Hopping

Hello Bunny Families,

As we enter the new month, we have attempted to transform our dramatic play area into a science lab. The children seem to be excited to play with new materials: measuring cups, balance scale, light table, magnifying glass, and many more. As they explore these new materials, they are continuously building their cognitive and mathematical skills.

You will notice that we have moved our dramatic kitchen area outside. The children are still interested in this area. It's fascinating how they pretend to eat from a bowl and say "yum." It's even more fascinating when you see a child trying to feed another child and both understand what their roles are in the play. Interaction with their peers during this type of play develops social skills.

More objects we incorporated in our classroom are the discs hanging by the window. They capture the sunlight, creating a reflection of light into our classroom. Some children track the light as it moves. Some would repeatedly look at the light and the disc, making the connection that the light is coming from the disc.

We are looking forward to bringing in more new materials to the Bunny room to further enhance our curriculum.

Eloisa Pagsisihan
Bunny Teacher

Dolphin Splash

Hello Dolphin families,

We have been really busy with our curriculum. We are learning about Form and Function. We have heard the Dolphins say: "I see wheels and axles" in the yard and of course on walks. We are continuing to explore levers, pulleys, inclined planes and screws. The Dolphins have explored the wheels on a stroller and they have sat down on a skateboard with Diana and have taken a ride down an inclined plane with Diana. The Dolphins did a great job of peeling apples using the apple master machine. The photos are up for you to see. During music time with Mrs. Dayita, the Dolphins were exposed to shakers, sand blocks and the Stirring Xylophone.

Thank you to all of our parents for picking up your Dolphin early on the days that we had CPR class. Thank you also to Heather and Shawn for planting and making our planters beautiful with their green fingers. We also had fun using rolling pins on the play dough you made for us.

Just a few reminders:
2/7 The teachers will attend a Stem conference
2/17 We are closed for Presidents day.

Retha Jones
Dolphin Teacher



Penguin Parade

Hello Penguin Families,

We are still continuing our curriculum on simple machines with the concept of form and function. The children have been observing and exploring simple machines throughout our daily activities, such as wheel and axles, screws, hammers, pulleys, inclined planes and scissors.

On our walks, the children have been noticing the inclined planes and have been pointing them out. They are also using the blocks to build inclined planes and rolling the cars down them.

We would like to welcome our newest Penguin, Enjolie Rinde.

Reminders:

- Please label all clothing
- Sheets and blankets go home every Friday to get washed
- Please have extra clothing in their cubbies
- Sign in and out

Elise Parseghian
Penguin Teacher

Koala Korner

The Koalas have been bringing in the New Year with a lot of exciting activities. We are continuing our focus on systems and interactions by creating simple and complete, closed circuit systems out of train tracks, Marbalous tubes and marble ramps. We are beginning to introduce maps and board games such as Snail's Pace Race to reinforce directional concepts. Parent conferences went well, thank you to all of the Koala families for your participation and cooperation.

Koalas have enjoyed various food explorations with parents in our classroom over the past few months. If you would like to come into the class to present a cooking activity please speak to any Koala teacher to schedule; this is a fun and easy way to earn some parent hours.

Please keep in mind that the C.C.C. will be closed Friday, February 7 and Monday, February 17. As always, if you have any questions or concerns please contact Olivia via email.

Reminders:

- * Please take home all of your child's bedding (including sheet) each Friday for laundering over the weekend.
- * Make sure your Koala has extra changes of clothes in their cubby that are suitable for the ever-changing weather.
- * Please label all clothes and personal items.
- * Please make certain to sign your child in and out every day!

Gretchen Kammerer
Koala Teacher



Raccoon Roundup

It's 2014! A Very Happy New Year to all our dear Raccoon families! We hope that you had a wonderful time spending the Christmas holidays with your special loved ones and friends.

As we started the year, the Raccoons continued to discover properties of water. Small group activities on absorption, volume, surface tension, and capillary action very much kept the Raccoons preoccupied and engaged during the month of January. Here are some water activities that we have been doing in class. They are simple and easy enough to be duplicated at home so that we can make the connection between school and home and provide opportunities for more bonding moments.

We had ice shape matching, using a thermometer to gauge temperature of melting ice cubes, comparing and contrasting where ice cubes would melt faster (inside or outside) and water droplets on a colored plastic chip and wax paper, observing water and oil mixed together, balancing rocks and water on a scale, predicting what happens when water is absorbed by paper towel and celery, investigating what happens when melted water is put back in the freezer, and observing the effect of water on clay and modeling clay. If you need more details on these activities, the Raccoon teachers are more than happy to assist you.

We are also germinating cilantro seeds once again now that the ones we planted in August 2013 are producing flowers in the garden box. We also have put up on display some of the finished bag pouches.

Here are a few reminders. The ECSTEM Conference is scheduled for February 6 to 8, and you are invited to come and join this event for free. Please make sure that your child has extra clothes and underwear all the time. Have their names on their clothing please. We also would like to welcome Tom Frederick to the Raccoons. Tom has been with Dolphins and the Beavers before moving to our room. We also thank Carol Castellanos for her five years of service at the center and wish her all the best.

Grace Ayubo
Raccoon Teacher



Beaver Tails

Hello Beaver Families!

The Beaver staff would like to welcome everyone back from our winter break. Our team is looking forward to an eventful year of exploration, investigation and discovery with your children. As of Tuesday, January 21st, Tom has become a Raccoon teacher. We were fortunate to have Tom for a short time, but his position in the Raccoon room will be more of a permanent role. We understand that there have been several changes, but we believe the transition will be easy as we will see Tom in the yard often.

Fuller College has begun their study on morals. This will last until the first week of February. The children were responsive and enjoyed the short stories presented to them. Thank you to all the families for supporting the work of our local colleges.

Let's do a quick rundown of what our Beavers have been working on. We are looking at systems and interactions, and the concept we are developing is Ecosystems.

Shain Yann is exploring algae and how it represents producers in the ponds ecosystem.

- Discussion on what conditions are necessary for algae to grow.
- Experiment with four test tubes filled with pond water.
- Observe the growth of the algae.
- Discuss the importance of algae in the ponds ecosystem.

Veronica is looking at artificial habitats (vivarium).

- Discussions about what is needed to create a vivarium (for caterpillars).
- Create artificial habitats. We then record and document the process, dialogue and observations of the children.
- Illustrations of a vivarium.

Cynthia is exploring habitats and discussing what it means, for example, it provides elements essential for survival; food, water, shelter.

- Read books on habitats and create a survey on what different types of habitats are around us.
- With focus on the rock garden in our backyard, the children will search for types of organisms that live under the rocks. A highly favored book which supports our study on habitats is, "Under One Rock" Bugs, Slugs and other oughs By: Anthony D. Fredricks.
- Investigate habitats and predict our findings.
- Children's illustration of rock garden discoveries.

Sowannarin is focusing on trees as a main producer.

- Survey of the types of animals that live in a tree.
- Illustrations of animals based on their answers.
- Exploring why trees are a good producer for these animals.
- Explore and research materials that the trees produce.

In addition to our curriculum, our Beavers will continue working on sewing for our annual Evening Under the Stars quilt. Our "extra-curricular" activities of wire working, origami, cooking, clay, and gardening will continue throughout the year. You may find that our "Cooking" activities are also called "Food Exploration" as we find that we not only cook, but try new fruits and vegetables unfamiliar to the children. Please feel free to share any ideas and recipes you may with the class.

Cynthia Escandon
Beaver Teacher