From the Director’s Desk…

Thanks to all of you for your warm welcome to the CDC community. As I settle into my new role, I am eager to hear from you about your perspectives on the CDC. What do we do well? What could we be doing better?

When I interviewed for this position, my task was to present my vision for the CDC. As someone from outside the organization, I cannot pretend to know where we are now and where we need to go. I have strong thoughts about elements that should be included in any high-quality early childhood program, but for the CDC in particular, your feedback is so important! Staff members, teachers, and families all have valuable insight gained from your lived experiences at the center—and I look forward to hearing more about those experiences so that we can use a collaborative approach in planning for the program.

During our inservice days, our staff participated in an internal strategic planning session (more on p. 7), and we will be offering times for survey and focus group feedback for families as well. Although we’ll have formal times to meet, I encourage you to reach out to chat with me one-on-one as well. I am looking forward to learning as much as I can about the past and present of the CDC in order to work with the community to chart a path for the future.

In the meantime, as we work to forge new ways of working together, please take a peek through this edition of the newsletter to find out some of the goings-on at the center. From diaper recycling and a new way of looking at curriculum, to a zoo trip and upcoming accreditation news, I hope that this issue of the newsletter leaves you as excited as we are about the upcoming months.

Please feel free to get in touch.

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G1 is ready for some warm weather while we prepare for our Spring Time unit. We will explore how the wind moves the trees and kites in the sky, and also look at seeds that sprout from the ground and transition into beautiful flowers. With spring come little critters. Our class will explore insects that crawl outside (and maybe inside too) and take buggy rides to look at different insects that crawl throughout the neighborhood. Finally, we will explore zoo animals as we prepare for our annual trip to the Richmond Metro Zoo. Parents are encouraged to volunteer throughout the months especially if any of our themes spark interest to do a special activity with our class. We welcome all ideas to keep our G1 friends’ minds captivated while learning! Happy Spring!
Room G2, Toddlers, Ms. Karen Turner & Ms. Brittany Dix

In the upcoming months at the CDC, G2 will discover new topics related, but not limited to, the Spring Season. The future lesson plans will cover “Flowers & Rain”, “The Color Green” and “Ladybugs”. In preparation for the upcoming fieldtrip to the Richmond Metro Zoo on April 30th, we will also explore “Zoo Animals”. The goal of this lesson plan is for the children to be able to identify some of the animals they see at the Zoo. G2 will also learn about caterpillars when reading The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle (a two week lesson plan will explore the Butterfly Life Cycle). The children will be able to witness the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly in their very own classroom! We are excited for the spring season to arrive, as we will have more time to spend outside on the playground. This warmer weather and sunshine will also allow for us to go on “Buggy Rides” with the children. We venture a few blocks around the neighborhood riding the buggies. The children enjoy the buggy ride adventures! As you know, summertime will bring back Water play on Fridays. We will inform parents of a date when the summer season begins to arrive. Let’s hope sooner than later!

Room 102, Older Toddlers, Ms. Juil & Ms. Emily

The past several months have been wonderful to us in Room 102! We have enjoyed themes varying from “Winter Weather” to “All About Me” to “Music” to “Dr. Seuss!” We have welcomed several new students to our class and are very excited for the arrival of more new friends as the weather starts to warm up! We are getting all geared up for Spring! In the coming weeks, we are planning lots of fun activities and lessons! Several of our themes will be focused on the outdoors with lessons surrounding the arrival of Spring, wind and kites, the zoo, and eggs and chicks. We are also planning a unit on healthy eating! As always, we welcome parents, friends and relatives to join us whenever they can!
ROOM 101, Younger Preschoolers, Ms. Lori Do & Ms. Benita Thompson

Room 101 is looking forward to the wonderful season of spring. We are so excited that the warmer weather is working its way back into our days ahead. We will focus on the weather of spring and watch all of the changes that will happen in our environment with the trees growing buds, flowers blooming and the birds chirping. We will enjoy studies on birds, mice, and the season of spring, Earth Day and Recycling, and The Week of the Young Child. We will also have weeks of study with the request of the children following their interests. We want the children to learn what they are curious about and provide the opportunity to expand on what they know. We are very excited for the upcoming months ahead.

Room 202, Pre-K, Ms. Marilyn Alston

Spring has sprung and the Jewels will welcome it by participating in the annual spring relay races. The Jewels will also enhance their kindergarten readiness skills when they explore the responsibilities of our community helpers. Some of the community helpers that the children will explore are teachers, doctors, police officers, postal workers, and fire fighters. Our annual multicultural celebration will take place in the month of May. Trips are also being planned for the children. I hope to provide you with the necessary information as soon as possible.

Room 201, Mr. Chris & Ms. Sally

First of all, I would like to thank all of the 201 parents for their warm welcomes. I feel like this transition has been very seamless and it is largely due to all the support that I have been receiving from the parents. I have never written a spring newsletter before, so let’s get right down to business. In room 201, and eventually the center as a whole, we are attempting to implement emergent curriculum into our weekly lessons. Ms. Sally and I have already held an open discussion on the topic of spring. From there, we asked the children what they already know about spring and what they want to learn. After this special circle time, we came up with five topics to cover: plant life, weather, holidays, bugs, and physical fitness. These topics came from the children with only a small influence from myself and Ms. Sally, we simply acted as guides during the discussion. These topics will become themes for our weekly lessons to come. Since these lesson are all about spring, what better way for the kids to learn then to experience these topics first hand! We have a few small trips in the works that will compliment these themes; such as, a visit to the dance studio, a trip to the Cary St. Field, a spring walkabout, and many more. Well I think I have rambled on long enough, please feel free to contact me at vanbuskirkcj@vcu.edu if you have any questions regarding the class. This is Mr. Chris, signing off.
NAEYC Position Statement on Kindergarten Readiness

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation’s leading organization advocating for research-based practices with young children, has issued a position statement on kindergarten readiness.

Of key importance is their assertion that “Children are ready to enter kindergarten when they reach the legal chronological age of entry. The use of readiness tests to exclude children from school or to make other high-stakes decisions is indefensible.”

Read the entire position statement here:

Kindergarten Transition Roundtable

Join Dr. Azria-Evans and parents of former CDC preschoolers to discuss the transition to kindergarten. All rising kindergarten parents are encouraged to attend.

(Time / Location TBD)
Green Diaper Project

Feel terrible about all the disposable diapers that end up in landfills? So do we… we’re excited about our upcoming partnership with Zynnovation, a company that will be recycling our used diapers to turn them into green planting mats for trees and rooftop gardens.

From Zynnovation: “Zynnovation LLC technology converts disposable diapers, negative solid waste, into green products which results in a positive environmental impact. In addition, the valuable polymeric materials used to produce disposable diapers are re-cycled and used in producing our green products. All the products have unique features such as super water upholding, drought resistant, light weight, low maintenance cost. Our technology is based on 100% recycling and is an environmentally benign process.”

Stay tuned for more info!

PAC Updates

New PAC Officers:
Rosalyn Hargraves, President
Brad Bradley & Jennie Bradley, Co-VPs
Desiree Draper, Treasurer
Melanie Goodman, Secretary

Itty Bitty Yoga visited 3/19.

The Story Lady
Visits Us on April 9 @ 9:30
On March 13 & 14, the CDC Staff participated in several excellent professional development opportunities.

On March 13, the entire CDC staff participated in an internal strategic planning workshop. Laura Rasar King, an organizational consultant / non-profit director, came to lead our session. We spent time discussing our center’s current strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats to our organization. Because we rarely get time to have these conversations during the course of our typical work days, this was so very important for us. We will be extending opportunities for families to join in these strategic planning sessions soon.

On March 14, all of the center’s full-time teaching staff traveled to Roanoke, Virginia, to attend the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education conference. This was a full day devoted to each teacher’s individualized training needs, and an excellent opportunity for teachers to network with other early childhood professionals from around the state.

Ms. Marilyn Alston (Room 202) presented a workshop on engaging a diverse parental population, and Dr. Alyson Williams (Director) presented a workshop on exploring the natural world with infants and toddlers in an urban setting.

We were all tired after the busy couple of days, but also inspired and excited to work toward a common goal together.

Thanks to the PAC for providing lunches during our March 13 training day! We appreciated it!
NAEYC NEWS

From Muriel Azria-Evans, Curriculum & Accreditation Specialist

NAEYC visit happening SOON!

We are hard at work finalizing the classroom portfolios. Teachers have been documenting their great work to ensure that classroom activities and practices are reflected in their portfolios. The program portfolio is complete and I hope to begin classroom observations in early April. This entails observing classroom interactions between teachers and children, teachers and parents, and among children. More specifically, some of the things I will be assessing include:

- Relationships,
- How teachers address challenging behaviors,
- How different areas of development are supported (e.g. physical, language, etc.),
- How the curriculum is implemented and modified based on children’s individual needs (literacy, math, science, etc.),
- How teachers create a community/climate conducive for learning,
- Classroom management (e.g. how time, groupings and routines achieve learning goals),
- How teachers make instruction meaningful for ALL children,
- How teachers assess children’s progress,
- How teachers promote children’s health and nutritional well being,
- The physical environment (indoors and outdoors).

We are well on our way to a successful NAEYC visit! If you have any questions or would like to assist me in classroom observations, please contact me at mrazriaevans@vcu.edu. Thanks!
Coming up…

April 6   Week of the Young Child
April 9   The Story Lady; Begins @ 9 a.m.
April 30  CDC Zoo Trip (VCU Reading Day)
May 16    CDC Closes @ 12 for Family Conferences
May 26    CDC CLOSED for Memorial Day
July 4    CDC CLOSED for Independence Day
Aug 14    CDC CLOSED for Professional Development
Aug 15    CDC CLOSED for Professional Development

**Spring CDC Field Trip:**

 mús " IS IT ZOO YET " 🐘 🐘 🐘 

METRO RICHMOND ZOO

Wednesday, April 30, 2014

Depart CDC @  8:45 a.m.

Plan ahead:

♦ Picnic Blankets
♦ Water bottles
♦ Walking shoes
♦ Hats, sunscreen

Requesting Family Chaperones and Volunteers to Drive
(Stay tuned for more info…)