



**2009 Summer Sessions
Just Fun & Games
August 3-7**



**First-Plymouth Early Education Programs
Dimensions Research Classrooms
2045 E Street, Lincoln, NE 68510
(402) 476-8304 • Fax: (402) 476-8060**



Left: Yeju L. sketch; right: colored pencil drawing by Sophia S.

Just Fun & Games

Everyone enjoyed a week of games, some old and some new. Children made up their own games, played group games, enjoyed games outside and even brought some of their favorites from home. This was a week to play, just for the fun of it.



Left to right, top to bottom. Preschoolers play Musical Chairs. Brooks B. made origami paper boats. Mrs. Maack and the K-1 group play "Sorry." Preschoolers build with Magna Tiles. K-1 boys get twisted up in "Twister." Preschoolers play the Leapfrog ABC game. Photos by Beth Pauley



Alumnus volunteer makes lasting impression

text by Kathy Marshall, photos by Beth Pauley

Throughout the summer, K-1 children have enjoyed the companionship of Nic Torracco. Nic, who will be a junior at Lincoln Southeast High School, has been volunteering during the afternoon Summer Sessions.

An alumnus of our program, Nic brings a variety of talents (art, music and athletics) to share with the K-1 group. He has played Brahms for us, created artwork and built block and marbleworks projects. Nic has left his imprint on the Nature Explore Classroom, too. During the summer of 2005, Nic, along with two other alumni (Eve DiMagno and Cady Gallagher), helped create the Digging Space. (Michael Morgan also assisted.) "It was a long, hot project!" he remembered.



Eve, Cady and Nic work on the Digging Space design. Nic and Eve dig out the space during the summer of 2005.

Nic's time at Dimensions goes back to when he was a Preschooler at what was then known as First-Plymouth Preschool and Discovery Days. He continued as a kindergartner through the kindergarten afternoon program and then attended Discovery days during Lincoln Public Schools' days off. He was part of the summer program through sixth grade and began volunteering as a seventh grader.

Right: Kit Hatch and Nic discuss their project. Below: Kit and Nic work with children on the house project.



Nic has always loved to build. Some of his favorite memories included helping to design and build a

house-like structure out of natural materials in Director Nancy Rosenow's back yard under the direction of the late Kathryn Hatch during the summer of 2002. He also remembers trips to Shadowbrook Farms and a trip to the Lincoln Landfill. Some of his best memories in the

Preschool Classrooms focused on making cars in the Block Area and sometimes combining that with play in the House Area where he would dress up as an Emergency Medical Technician and pretend to drive an emergency vehicle. He also built sand cities in the NEC Sand Area. "I love building things," Nic said.

When asked what he brings to the classroom as a volunteer, Nic said he can relate to what the children are saying. "They speak in half sentences and I can understand what they are saying when to others it might not be that clear," Nic noted. He also had a special gift for making sure that he spent time during the afternoon with each child. Some of the highlights for him this summer included making Wall-E with Connor N. and building marbleworks. "I started using jumps that I adapted from watching Will L. and Atticus W. play with marbleworks," he said, and "I helped Owen H. make more than bathrooms with Magna Tiles. I will definitely volunteer again. I need something to fill up summer with." Nic, thank you for making this a special summer experience for the K-1 children. You are truly appreciated!



Nic worked with Connor N. on his Wall-E structure. Also pictured is Joshua W. photo by Kris Van Laningham

The K-1 children were asked "What is the best thing about Nic?" Here are some of their replies:

Claire E. When I was the last person eating lunch, he let me have some of his granola.

Sarah H. I like best making towns with him in the sand box.

Talley W. He's fun to play with. He does stuff like we do.

Josh L. I like playing with him outside.

Josh W. Sometimes he plays with me. He plays tag with me.

Zachary R. He's fun to play with. He helps a lot. He helps you guys take care of us. What's really fun with Nic is making sand cake.

Kennedee H. He's nice. Everybody likes playing with him. I think he could be a teacher. He says "yes" to everything. If someone says, "Can you play with me?" he'll do it.

Atticus W. Playing with him with Legos.

Emma W. Playing with him. He helps make stuff.

Lewis R. That he plays with us. He helps us put all the animals on our boat during Music & Movement. Andrew P.



Nic and Emily P. play a game during Just Fun & Games Week.

Remember...

August 10-21...Closed

August 24...First Day of Fall Sessions

Summer Sessions Bookshelf

- A Bad Case of Stripes*, David Shannon
- The Cow That Went OINK*, Bernard Most
- The Day Jimmy's Boa Ate the Wash*, Trinka Hakes Noble
- Dream*, Susan V. Bosak
- From Head to Toe*, Eric Carle
- If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, Laura Joffe Numeroff
- Imogene's Antlers*, David Small
- King Bidgood's in the Bathtub*, Audrey Wood
- Whose Toes Are Those?*, Jabari Asim



Just fun and games through the eyes of toddlers

text, photos by Katie Mezger

We began the week by reading Head to Toe. All the children acted out the different moves that animals made in the book. Cody H. stomped his feet like an elephant. We brought out more stuffed puppet animals and the children talked about the sounds and movements that animals make. Drew L. mooed and walked like a cow. Soon all of the children were moving and making noises like various animals. We also hid the puppets in Toddler B and the children went on a hunt to look for them.



Miss Nicole helps the children become more animal-like.

Another fun activity this week involved using a colorful parachute. The toddlers held on with both hands and waved it up and down in the air. The infants joined the fun by laying under the the



Toddlers holding onto the parachute and making it move.

parachute while the teachers made it go up and down. They had fun watching the movement and colors of the parachute.

We also made "footprints" this week. We used the footprints to lead us to a special place!



Toddlers lay under the parachute while Cody H. helped the parachute go up and down.



Miss Denise helps the infants experience a parachute game.

photo by Katie Mezger



Danny G. learns to stand while playing in the kitchen area.

Infants experience their own Fun & Games Week

text, photos by Denise Topil

Whether joining the Toddlers for parachute games or crawling as fast as they can across the room, the infants' days are filled with "Fun and Games."

This week we paid extra attention to the body parts we read about in the books *From Head to Toe* and *Whose Toes Are Those?* We played "where's your nose? (or eyes or mouth)" and peek-a-boo while hiding under scarves. We even took our shoes off and wiggled our toes.

It's amazing to think about how much "work" is involved in infant play! Maybe we, as adults, would all be better off if we remembered each day to play while we work.



Keller J. ... "and after a hard day's play "take a nap every day," from the book *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten* by Robert Fulghum.

2-5 Group share some of their summer memories

2-5 musings of what they liked best this summer:

Madisyn S. I liked the art and learning how to jump from the tall Antelope creek wall into the water.



R. Wiese captured this photo on his cellphone.

Brayden M.

When we made the "ponds" out of tissue paper; the experiences of the summer – it's really helped me grow; Antelope Park; I learned that sweat is a good thing 'cuz it cools your body down and makes you live longer. I'm also not as scared of rats anymore.

Sunho L. When we made the "water lily pad ponds."

Alyssa S.

During water week when we decorated the play structure to look like a jungle (with leafy branches).



The "Jungle."

Both **Henry R.** and **Logan Z.** said Antelope Creek. Henry added, "You can find more things in the creek."

Yeju L. Helping Ms. Murdoch cook.

Jarrod S. Talking about Pokémon with Jackson B.

K-1 Group talk about favorite themes of summer

by Kathy Marshall

The K-1 Group was asked "What has been your favorite part of the summer?"

Kennedee H. The Messy Area on the Nature Explore Classroom (NEC). Jumping from the stumps and large tree cookies. The Block Area in the classroom. My favorite themes were the water and game weeks.

Zachary R. The NEC structure. The Block Area. Favorite themes were water and game weeks.

Sam H. Playing with Luke M., making sculptures out of class (on the NEC), Legos in the classroom. My favorite theme was the nature week.

Kate W. Chasing the boys, the Messy Area on the NEC, jumping stumps with Kennedee, the House and Block Areas, babies and princesses, seeing all of the colors in the air. My favorite theme was the game week.



Janie X. The trip to the Sunken Gardens (you

can explore), the Messy Area (you can build tents with sticks, you can jump over on wood things and you can build houses with sticks). I like to do the House Area. I like my classmates and the Art Area. I liked the theme this week.

Will L. Playing outside, playing on the structure.

Emma W. My favorite part of the summer has been going to the Sunken Gardens, the NEC Messy Area (got to climb on things) and the Block Area (got to build things every single day).

Owen H. self-initiated during Work Time the creation of his mini-book based on an insect fact and description wipeoff sheet.



Wet weather provides lots of fun in the sand with sandcastles!

text by Katie Logan, photo by Beth Pauley

We've had a rainy week. Our sand area got very wet but that was perfect for sandcastle building! A group of K-1 children (Kennedee H., Cole D., Andrew P., Talley W., Abby C., Connor N. and Anna S.) have been enjoying the building process. Ms. Logan showed several of the boys and girls how to fill up a bucket halfway, pack it, level it off, and then turn it over to dump it.

Some of the comments overheard after building their second sandcastle:

Kennedee H. exclaimed, "Look, I made a flag!"

Connor N. said, "Look, I made a watchtower."

Cole D. wondered, "Can we leave it forever? I want to leave it forever so it can grow more beautiful. Everyday we can build a new one!"



K-1 group add a moat to their sandcastle.