



UPCOMING EVENTS...

Remember...

- April 1 & 2...** Parent-Teacher Conferences
- April 10 & 13...** No School—Closed
- April 21 & 22...** Class Photos for Preschool classes
- May 15...** Family Picnic
- May 25...** No School—Closed
- May 28...** Last Day for Infant & Toddler, and Preschool Sessions

Nature Explore Families' Club

- April 3...** Nature Explore Families' Club at Holmes Lake, 6-7:30PM.
- May 2...** Nature Explore Families' Club at Tree Adventure at Arbor Day Farm, Nebraska City, 10:30AM-Noon

Coffee and Conversation

- 9:15-10:15AM, Courtyard Lounge, call 476-8304 for information.
- April 1...** Mother Identity
- April 15...** Centered Parenting
- May 6...** Refreshing
- May 20...** Party

ALL EMERGENCY weather closings of LPS announced on the radio and TV will be observed by our program. If LPS is not in session we will follow the Catholic School weather closing announcements.

Bookshelf

- A Far-Fetched Story*, Karin Cates
- Animal Houses*, Aileen Fisher
- Before I Go To Sleep*, Thomas Hood
- The Big Wide-Mouthed Frog*, Ana Martin Larrañaga
- Birds, Birds, Birds*, the National Wildlife Federation
- Birds of North America West*, Smithsonian Kids' Field Guides
- Birds, Peterson First Guides*, Roger Tory Peterson
- The Birdwatchers*, Simon James
- Finger Rhymes*, Marc Brown
- From Tadpole to Frog*, Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld
- Goodnight, My Duckling*, Nancy Tafuri
- If...*, Sarah Perry
- Look, Look...Spring*, Claire Warden and Niki Buchan
- Lunch*, Denise Fleming
- Mouse Count*, Ellen Stoll Walsh
- Nuts to You*, Lois Ehlert
- Peter's Chair*, Ezra Jack Keats
- Raptor! A kid's guide to birds of prey*, Christyna M. and René Laubach
- Something From Nothing*, Phoebe Gilman
- Vanishing Songbirds*, Elliot Porter
- What's Inside a Frog*, Aimée Bajjeb



Beckham R., age 5



Elijah N., age 5



Erik B., age 5

It's never too early to teach children about self-concept, peace and kindness!

text by Joyce White, teacher; edited by Ann Watt, Art Specialist

In the month of January Miss Williams, our student teacher from Concordia College read the following books to the children in Mrs. White's class during Small Group Time:

- Happy Birthday Martin Luther King Jr.* by Jean Marzollo
- The Peace Book* by Todd Parr
- Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox

Miss Williams asked open-ended questions while she was reading and after she had finished. She asked the children what they thought "peace" and "kindness" would look like. They expressed their ideas both verbally and in drawings while Mrs. White and Miss Williams took notes.

- Comments included the following: "We don't have the same voice."
- "Peace is like when your mom and dad hug you."
- "Peace is a good friend like Carter."
- "Peace and kindness is the earth so I can make friends."
- "Peace is drawing my baby brother. I'm drawing a tree behind him so it makes him happy. He likes to play with me."
- "The earth gives me air. It gives me school. It gives me homes. It has a lot of stories and everything. My earth is very big."

- "I made a rainbow."
- "Peace is having a home."
- Kindness is Millie my dog. She makes me happy. She licks me every time."

The following day, we compared our skin color. We learned that each of us has a different amount of melanin in our skin and that this determines what color our skin will be. The children mixed brown paint, representing melanin, with white paint in individual containers until they had each acquired a color that they thought matched the color of their own skin. As they mixed their paint, we heard these comments: "I need more white to be lighter." "It's not dark enough." "This matches my eyes. They're brown, too." "Hum, hum, hum, swish, hum, hum, hum, swish..." The pattern continued as he stirred.

We talked about filling the white, empty paper with skin-colored paint to make a "positive space" from a "negative space". After the paint dried, the children placed their hands on their papers to determine whether they had succeeded in matching their skin color. Miss Williams asked the class for their opinion each time before asking each artist.

Next, it was time to draw their self-

portraits! The children helped Miss Williams create a list of features. Then they talked about the shapes and placement of the features as they drew them in the air using their fingers as drawing tools. These are some things we heard them say: "I have a big circle." ("head") "Mine's an oval." "No, mine's round." "It's in the middle." ("nose") "It's on top." ("forehead") "It's above my eye." ("eyebrow")

Finally, with total self-assurance, the children used black and red permanent markers to draw their self-portraits on their own skin-colored paper. The children demonstrated their understanding of many concepts including not only peace and kindness but math and language skills, as well.



Lily S., age 5



Zoey P., age 4 and a half



Tristan B., age 4



Sophie C. age 5

NE Families Club recap

text & photos by Chris Kiewra, Nature Explore Families Club Coordinator

Running and rolling on hills, playing hide and seek among the evergreens, finding the Lincoln Safari rubbing post and listening for bird calls were all part of the fun to be had at our Families' Club event at Colonel Densmore Park.



Ella S. gathered grasses and built bird nests. Then, with her mom's help, she placed the nests high up in a tree and sketched the birds she saw!

Maddie H. interpreted her Safari map and helped Henry G.-H. follow the



clues to find the Lincoln Safari post. They also created their own rubbing post on a bridge along the path!

Our next Nature Explore Families' Club event is fishing at Holmes Lake, Friday April 3rd from 6-7:30 p.m. Bring your pole along if you have one and meet us there. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will be sending some volunteers and equipment to help us as well!



Nathan V. enjoyed some tree climbing at Densmore Park. photo by Joy Ritchie

Toddler A happenings

text by Kathy Marshall, teacher

Children spent time creating quilt patterns by gluing triangles, rectangles and squares of various colors onto quilt squares. They used paint brushes and colored glue to attach their fabric while repeating the words "dot, dot, stick."

The children also trimmed wheat grass that they sprouted and grew in small, round containers. This helped them learn how to manipulate scissors. Sometimes the wheat grass slipped out of its container and this gave children the opportunity to see what the root system of the growing grass looked like.

Squirrels and birds often entertain children as they eat from the feeder outside our windows. Enthusiastic voices carry through the window to the animals outside and children exclaim, "Look, a squirrel!" "It ran away."

Toddler Bookshelf:

Random House Webster's Dictionary of Concise American Sign Language by Elaine Costello



Brooklyn P. sorts the fabric by color.



Lucy C. arranges the magnets into a pattern that alternates color.



"Green, white, green, white..." Drew L. says, pointing to his fabric pattern.

Patterns lead toddlers on exploration of visual-spatial skills

text, photos by Kristine Luebbe, teacher

Toddler B friends worked on their visual-spatial skills as they explored patterns. The children were able to identify patterns in the room and on their clothing. As a class, we created patterns with colored felt shapes. On their own, children practiced making patterns using colored magnetic shapes.

Before introducing quilts to the children, they were challenged with a problem. "Hey, they're all rectangles, how can I make a pattern?" Nathaniel V. asked as he looked at his magnets. "Wait, I know..." as he then created a pattern alternating between the green and red rectangles. His thought process showed both early questions and problem solving skills.

Later, some children practiced making patterns using fabric squares. Some children sorted the fabric by colors and others alternated colors as they created their patterns. When they were finished, their pattern lines were hung on the wall to make a quilt.

Toddler Bookshelf:
Lots and Lots of Zebra Stripes by Stephen R. Swinburne



Far Left: Miley G. creates a line of pink squares. Center: Cyrus H. glues the fabric to the paper. Below: The Toddler B quilt



Corn, patterns captivate childrens' interest

text by Kathy Tichota, teacher

Have you heard any "corn" vocabulary at your house during the past month? We recently spent some time in the greenhouse shelling corn for squirrels. The children closely examined kernels of corn and popcorn and noted the differences. They tasted three "corn" foods, canned corn, popcorn and corn chips, and then made a chart showing their favorites. Erik said the corn chips were his favorite; Audrey, Haven, Joaquin, Lexi, Blake, Elena, and Aaron chose popcorn as their favorite; and Tate, Emma, and Trevor said they liked the canned corn the best. We made a chart to see a visual representation of their choices.

The children do a great job of reading and understanding simple charts and graphs which is a mathematical skill. Some of our corn vocabulary included: kernel, ear, stalk, feed corn, sweet corn, husks, cob, sprouts and roots. We learned that when we eat corn, we are eating seeds.

The children curled up on the floor pretending to be a corn seed. Rain fell on them (mist from a squirt bottle), the sun shone on them (flashlight) and soon they grew into tall corn stalks producing ears of corn. We also made corn collages

and a few children made corn cob prints. If you step into the classroom you will see some photos and the chart on our bulletin board. We will soon be planting corn and some other edible seeds in a pocket garden which your child will bring home.

Another mathematical and artistic skill we've been focusing on is "pattern" and how patterns relate to quilts. We each used squares of colored construction paper to create a nine patch (3 x 3 square) which is often used in quilt designs.

In another activity, the children examined different fabric squares they arranged on a flannel board to make their own designs. Soon I heard them saying, "Look, Mrs. Tichota, I made a 12 patch ... a 16 patch ... a 34 patch..." Their designs inspired them to do a lot of counting! In addition to quilt patterns, we've made up movement patterns, dot and line patterns, word patterns, and people patterns.

As we read about quilts, we came across some unfamiliar vocabulary: stitchery, pin cushion, spool of thread, thimble, and tape measure. During small group, we will be looking at some of these sewing tools and actually stitching with yarn and plastic needles.

Quilts engage children

text by Kristi Reitz, teacher

We had a great trip to the International Quilt Museum! Our first experience was led by Mrs. Watt and Mrs. Reebie in the room with the group of quilts entitled "Yikes, Stripes!" The quilts displayed various ways of using stripes to show designs full of pattern, color and geometric forms. The children carefully studied one quilt with the pattern of red, blue, red, blue. Then they studied a quilt with diagonal lines and used their arms to make diagonal lines in the air. They also saw a quilt that had a circular pattern which reminded some of the children of a wheel. In the middle of the room, Mrs. Reebie became the dark blue piece in the center and everyone else became the stitching that led to her. After that the children used clipboards and colored pencils to sketch. Most of the children had a 'favorite' quilt that they sketched the most.

Our next experience was with our docent, who happened to be Logan's grandma, Bev Thurber. She talked with us about how quilters are artists who use needles, thread, and fabric instead of paintbrushes or pencils. We discussed color, texture, value and design. We each did a quilt puzzle, then we colored a drawn quilt on a piece of paper.

Ask your child what he or she liked at the International Quilt Museum!

Nature Explore™ Classrooms are part of a national initiative that we are working with in partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation.

Dimensions First-Plymouth Early Education Programs is a non-profit 501(c)3.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ... www.dimensionsfoundation.org