



UPCOMING EVENTS...

Remember...

Month of May... "Piecing It All Together," a reflection of Dimensions' teaching/learning process, Lied Center Exhibit
May 15... Family Picnic
May 25... No School—Closed
May 28... Last Day for Infant & Toddler, and Preschool Sessions

Nature Explore Families' Club

May 2... 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.

Preschool Bookshelf

An Egg is Quiet, Dianna Hutts Aston & Sylvia Long
The Family Book, Todd Parr
First the Egg, Laura Seeger
The Seed is Sleepy, Dianna Hutts Aston & Sylvia Long
The Tiny Seed, Eric Carle

Toddler Bookshelf

Bear's Busy Family by Stella Blackstone
Daddy and Me by Neil Ricklen
From Seed to Plant, Delta Science Readers
It's Spring! by Samantha Berger & Pamela Chanko
Seeds! Seeds! Seeds! Nancy Elizabeth Wallace
Ten Seeds, Ruth Brown
What Does Bunny See? Linda Sue Park

Tender moments

text by Kris Van Laningham

Throughout the year I've watched Chris Heinrich drop off his daughter, Sophia, to the early morning group. Each morning before she heads into the classroom, he takes a few minutes to sit down in a chair in the hallway and draw Sophia into his lap. They've already hung up her coat and delivered her lunchbox to the basket. Now it is time for dad and daughter.

I don't know what they talk about for the few minutes he holds her on his lap but I do see the connection that is enjoyed, the unhurried moment that is part of their routine.

With Chris's permission, I'm sharing his story about the time he connects with Sophia. This is a special opportunity for a parent to share his wisdom with other parents.

We don't always think about the importance of an unhurried moment with a child. Those moments may not happen as you drop off or pick up your child at school, but they happen at some point every day...everyone's schedule is different.

Find that unhurried moment with your child. I encourage you to create a connection that lasts into the future.

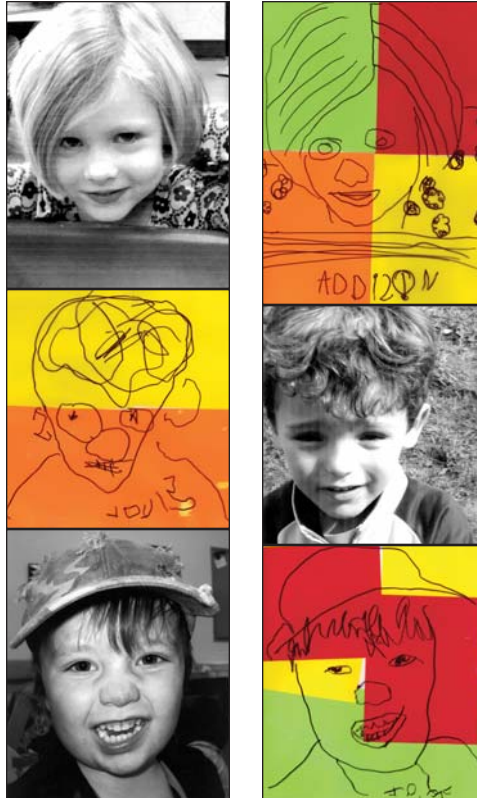
Children practice drawing self-expression

text by Donalyn Katt

We recently talked about similarities and differences that we all have when it comes to how we look.

Children traced the outline of their face and all of the parts (eyes, ears, mouth, nose, etc.) with their fingers. Each child was then given a piece of transparency and a marker to use to trace their face in a cartoon-style. Next we placed color paper behind the fun, cartoon faces to make striking self-portraits!

Addison E., age 5, top
 Lou A., age 5 1/2, middle
 Jack P., age 4 1/2, bottom



Top 10 Tips for Dealing with Picky Eaters

It is really common for kids to be picky about what they eat and to turn their nose up at healthy foods. These top 10 tips will help even the pickiest eater enjoy healthy mealtimes.

you don't buy them. Kids will moan at first but soon they will get hungry and reach for the apple instead of the chips.

6. Add healthy food when you can:

Find ways to add healthy foods into foods your child already likes. You can put blueberries in pancakes, chopped fruit on cereal, or small pieces of broccoli in macaroni and cheese.

7. Help them learn:

Encourage your kids to draw or doodle pictures of healthy foods or write a poem. Post on the fridge and make sure they know you are proud.

8. Sit down together:

Try to set aside your meals as family time. Turn off the TV and enjoy eating together.

9. Keep healthy snacks on hand:

Bring healthy snacks when you pick them up from school, after sports practice, and at other times when you know their stomachs will be grumbling.

10. Make healthy food and meals fun:

Try cutting up food into fun shapes or making faces out of fruit and vegetables. Putting healthy snacks such as oatmeal cookies or dried fruit into a fun bag can turn healthy foods into a cool snack for your child.

1. Get them excited about healthy food:

Let them smell, touch, taste, ask questions and try fruits, veggies, yogurts and other healthy foods in the kitchen. Ask them what they think of the foods and let them know their opinions count.



2. Get them involved in the kitchen:

Let them help you with small, kid-safe jobs in the kitchen such as mixing ingredients. Be sure to thank them for their help.

3. Give them a say in what they eat:

Help your kids make the right food and drink choices from an early age. If they have a say in decisions they will be more excited about what they eat. It's a great way to get them to take charge of their health.

4. Take them grocery shopping with you:

Get your kids involved in shopping decisions. It may take a little more time in the supermarket but it is likely to lead to less tantrums at meals.

5. Keep the junk food out of the house:

Your kids can't eat unhealthy snacks if

NEFC Family fishing fun at Holmes Lake

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

Doug Larson said, "If people concentrated on the important things in life, there'd be a shortage of fishing poles."

Several Dimensions' families concentrated on the important act of fishing (or at least playing beside the lake) earlier this month at Holmes Lake. Greg Hartel, an aquatic education specialist from Nebraska Game and Parks, brought a trailer full of poles and equipment for families to try their hand at.

Children first practiced casting. Then they went down to the water's edge in search of the perfect spot. The fish were pretty elusive but a few children got lucky. In true fishing lore fashion, one boy credited his luck in catching a fish to his face paint. "I think the fish just like it!"

exclaimed Rory. Another family in search of the Loch Ness Monster came up empty handed but their children happily left with bobbers and photo booklets of Nebraska fish in hand!

Be sure to join us for the next Families' Club adventure in Nebraska City on May 2nd!



Infant and Toddler Gym Time indoor alternative for children to explore and move

text by Kathy Marshall; photos by Beth Pauley

During the time when weather does not allow us to be in the Nature Explore Classroom, the children use Mayflower Hall (the general purpose/large meeting room) for “gym” time. The gym is set up with four defined spaces to engage childrens’ bodies in different ways. The “open space” encourages gross motor movement. We currently have a truck “driving” space. This space has also been set up with bikes, scooters and a variety of balls at different times. The “small, blue rug” has a long, low box with four pillows covered by a two-sided tent. This is a reading space. It is a place for children to go to for a quiet, calm area.

The “tan rug” has two rocking snails. During other times of the year this space has a balance beam and sit-and-spin toys for the children to enjoy.

The “green rug” has a work bench, hard hats and tools for children to “work on and repair items.”

The “big, blue rug” is a favorite place which encourages children to climb and explore space with their bodies. Sometimes we have two slides in this space. Cushions are in this space now. We have three old couch cushions, a wedge-shaped cushion, and two “home-made” cushions that were created by covering large styrofoam shapes with fabric. Children stack the cushions in various levels. Sometimes they create “roads” to travel on or they roll down the wedge. This space uses items often discarded, but with a little duct tape and fabric it becomes a space filled with the squeeks and giggles of moving children as they jump on the recycled furniture.

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Toddler A children also enjoyed Easter egg hunts with their own small basket to collect plastic eggs in from around the classroom. A discussion about Easter bunnies and egg hunting prompted Poppy B. to comment, “Easter bunny blew away!” We later learned that her home



Above: Poppy B. joins her friends in sliding down the wedge-shaped cushion. Top right: Friends take turns jumping on and off of cushions that they stacked. Right: Poppy tugs a cushion on top of another cushion while Henry W. climbs up on the last cushion.



decoration had blown down!

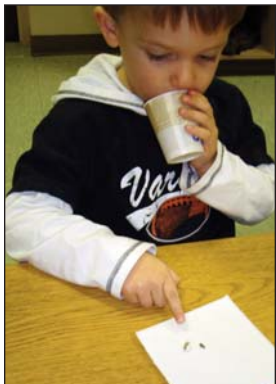
A grandmother dropping off her granddaughter commented on the involvement several children had with the texture table where they were playing with shelled corn. Lucy C. filled a container with another container. When it overfilled, Ms. K. Jo explained, “she just learned about

volume and measurements.”

The Toddler A texture table also contains tubes, re-used formula scoops and baby food containers. Children can experience corn trickling through their fingers here, and that “splashing” the corn can cause it to spill onto the floor.

How does Toddler B’s garden grow?

captions, photos by Kristine Luebbe, teacher



Cyrus H. points to his seeds. “One, two three! (counting)”



Hudson W. fills his cup with dirt. (experiencing volume)



Cole S. puts his seeds in the cup of dirt. (using fine motor skills)



Lazlo W. pushes his seeds down in the dirt. (using body as a tool)



Drew L. waters the seeds. (experiencing space)



Bella M. is a seed in the ground.



C.J. acts like the rain pouring on the seed.



Ben E. is the sun, shining on the seed.



Hank H. is a seed growing into a small plant.



Brooklyn P. grows and grows into a tall flower.

Not just your ordinary egg

text by Barbie Jensen and Joyce White

Spring is a time for new life. Some of it hatches from an egg. Using that traditional “oval” shape, the children designed and “decorated” their own shapes on paper with watercolors.

The children looked at different birds and eggs

in the book, *An Egg is Quiet*. We also remembered different small group times we talked about shapes, patterns, lines and dots. Some children talked about decorating eggs at home.

Each child used all of the information they gathered in their own unique way

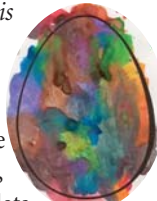
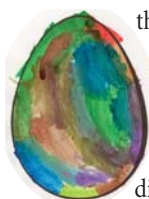
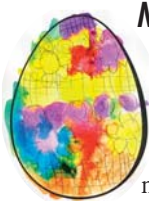
to create an extraordinary egg from an ordinary shape.

Top left: Savannah M., age 5, used a lot of detail and incorporated a “nature” floral design. The flowers appear to burst open on paper.

Bottom left: Logan T., age 3, quietly focused while he used a lot of brush strokes to paint his egg with intense colors.

Top right: Howie T., age 3, was mostly interested in how the color of his water changed each time he dipped his brush in (to change colors).

Bottom right: Kennedy B., age 5, chose polka-dots and lines to cover her egg. She seemed to really enjoy drawing and painting.



Several weeks ago our class planted zinnias in egg shells. Did you know that egg shells can be planted directly in the ground instead of transplanting just the zinnias?