March 2015

Dear ELC Families,

Every way families engage with their children at school contributes to a better school for everyone!

On February 11, the Bellevue College Planetarium hosted 28 Preschool children and their families for a special evening.

In April we will have two opportunities for Families to connect at Kids Quest Museum.

In May we will invite Infant and Toddler families to come back in the evening for some simple family friendly activities at a Spring Open House.

Whether you come to a family event, parent meeting, or complete a survey (look for our Spring Survey in April) your participation makes a difference. We all have a better chance to learn and grow in community!

Warmly,

Kelly
Director, ELC

Dates to Remember

3/10/15
NO BC Classes, ELC OPEN

3/13/15
Due date for BC Student Spring Break Discount Request

If you are a qualifying BC student who will continue in 6 credits or more for Spring Quarter, you have the option to discontinue child care services over the break and not lose your spot. Notify Lo- anne so she can adjust your account.

3/25/15
Last Day of Spring Quarter

3/23-2325
BC Finals

3/26-4/3
Spring Break

4/6
Spring Quarter Begins

4/7 & 4/14
Family Night at Kids Quest Museum
5:30-7:30

4/9
S&A Fees Budget Request Hearing 12:30-12:45

5/13
Infant and Toddler Room Families
Spring Open House 6:30-7:30
Infant 1:
During the last month our babies in Infant 1 showed lots of interest in sounds, both what they heard and what they could create! They experimented and mimicked sounds, sometimes with their mouths and sometimes using some toys and clacking together or banging over other surfaces. They also enjoyed listening to some songs, and show they recognize the songs we repeat regularly by making the actions of the songs, or clapping their hands following the song.

We noticed that our younger babies are moving in different ways now. Some of them are crawling, some are rolling and others moving backwards. We are planning with our older infants to take more outside time interacting with T1 teachers and children; extending the possibilities of exploring new environments and having new experiences. **We will be so grateful if you send warm jackets and some extra clothes for our outside time.** Along with more outside times with them, we are planning to create activities and introduce new elements in our classroom that stimulate our babies to balance and discover other possibilities of movement. Thank you.

**Teachers: Lisa Ann, Liliana, Ghousia**

Infant 2:
For the month of February our children really enjoyed playing with the big boxes that Mahboobeh brought in our classroom. They were putting different materials inside and taking out at first, and then some managed to get in the box and explore more from the inside.

For the month of March we will be welcoming and building relationships with the two new babies and their families, while we also provide lots of physical activities for older children who are working on beginning or mastering walking. We will take them outside when T1’s children’s are outside so they can enjoy walking in the bigger area and they also get familiar with T1’s teachers and children.

**Teachers: Mahboobeh, Parisa, Ghousia**

Young Toddlers – Toddler 1:
We recently welcomed four children transitioning from Infants to T1. The children (and families!) adapted well to the brief relocation of our class while the T-1 water heater was being repaired. The new space afforded some new play opportunities and experiences, including the toddler-sized journey from the preschool side back to the toddler side for outdoor play! Our class has been really exploring and experimenting with slides lately and have been practicing how to move their body to get up to and down the slide. In March children will be exploring and building more large motor skills as we continue to practice on low to the ground balance beams and climbing up onto safe mats and climbers.

We have favorite songs that we sing at school but if you have any songs you know that you sing with your children at home we would be happy if you could share it with us. Also, to let all parents know, you are more than welcome to visit in the classroom when you come for drop off and pick up, we want you to feel welcome as well as the children.

**Teachers: Yen Chiu Brian, Ghousia**

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**Infant and Toddler Classrooms**
**Spring Open House**
**Wednesday, May 13, 2015**
**6:30-7:30pm**

Come celebrate the end of Winter Quarter and the coming of Spring by enjoying some simple family friendly activities with your child’s teachers, classmates, and their families.
March 2015

**Toddlers Classroom Clips ~ Bonnie MacGregor and Vanessa VonPapp, Specialist 3s**

**Toddler 2:**
Whenever our children have been delighted and charmed by a story, they often applaud and shout, “Read it, again!” They LOVE stories! In last month, we used a lot of stories to extend our activities that helped our enthusiasm for books. The combination of cooking and books are successful. We made blueberry pancakes with the story “Guri and Gura”. “The Big Hungry Bear” brought children’s interest in cutting fruits. We cut bananas for our breakfast oatmeal and sliced apples. The children enjoyed retelling the story “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” in the dry sensory table by singing the song. They also pretended to walk on the bridge using the balance beams at playground while saying, “Trip trap, Trip trap.” “Who is that tripping over my bridge?” We will continue to bring stories to life for children. **At home, you can try to act out what the characters in a book. The stories will come alive for them!**

Reading will become more meaningful, more memorable, and more fun!
We start feeling the arrival of spring by daytime being longer day by day. We will create more variety of activities outside and start to develop our toddler garden. We will learn about world around us and observe changes in plants and the differences in the seasons and watch living things such as worms and spiders. We will also bring classroom equipment outside to enrich the outdoor environment. The time spent outside is valuable part of our daily schedule. **“Let’s Go Outside!”**

_Teachers: Chisaki, Naghmeh_

**Toddler 3:**
The children have enjoyed moving to music, and recently their favorite song is Silly Willie. Ask your child about it! **Parents can contribute in the classroom by sharing their child’s favorite book or song at story time— if you play any kind of instrument it would be a wonderful experience to share—even at pick up or drop off!**

Another favorite activity this month was sticking a variety of tissue paper circle shapes on contact paper, what fun did they have. We may try experimenting with other sticky surfaces and shapes. In the coming month of March we hope to do a little indoor Gardening and going on a bug watch. **Teachers: Rita, Annie, Naghmeh**

**Toddler 5:**
The children have had the opportunity to explore textured art activities. They have been able to express themselves through these experiences. We used tear free baby shampoo and watercolors, this allowed the children the opportunity to use their senses of smell, see and touch. They helped to pour in the ingredients, smell the mixture and observe with their eyes of the changes that happened. And for the final process they had fun painting with the mixture they created using a paintbrush or their hands if they choose to do so. This experience was very fun! The children expanded on their vocabulary skills. They were able to identify the color blue by name.
We have been truly enjoying the weather and all the wonderful changes around us. We will continue to explore the world around us by taking more walks around the center describing what we see, hear and smell. The children have begun to notice the changes such as the trees, blossoms and the warmer weather. **Do you have braches with blossoms you could share with us to examine in the sensory table?** Stay tuned for the new vocabulary words, new ideas and thoughts from the children through various books and activities that will be enjoyed in the classroom. **Teachers: Karen, Diane, Wendy**

**Toddler 6:**
We were very busy exploring the various aspects of being a “handyman” during the month of January, and we continued with the idea of changing the dress-up area with the activities we are planning for the children in the classroom during the month of February. The dress-up area was changed to a Bakery and with baking in mind we made a banana bread in our crockpot in the classroom. Some of the comments the children made while eating the bread was: “Yummy in my tummy”, “I want more!”, and “Mmm, I like it!” The children mixed the ingredients and it cooked while they were taking a nap ready for them to taste when they woke from their nap. **We encourage families to extend this activity at home and to cook/ bake with their children.** Children learn about the different ingredients, the science behind baking/cooking, and they get to taste their creations. Finally, **we would love for families to share their favorite crockpot recipes so we could try it out in the classroom!**

_Teachers: Marlize, Donna, Wendy_
March 2015

Preschool Classroom Clips ~ Vanessa Von Papp, Specialist 3

Preschool 3:
February was yet another BUSY month in P3! Most notably, with the lengthening days and warm, dry weather, our thoughts have started to turn to the outdoors and all things spring! Page and Megan have tried to facilitate this interest by offering activities that have the kids getting dirty and diving into the study of seeds and plants. We have started sunflower seeds, and are observing the sprouting and growth of tulip bulbs in a bed of clear marbles!

Recently the children have started noticing other signs of spring such as worms and birds. We are excited to extend the learning about these subjects in March and have plans to help the children build a worm tub so we can study them at length and over time. We will also spend more time in the classroom's grassy backyard observing local wildlife and collecting natural objects that will bring the outdoors into our classroom.

You can extend your child's learning at home simply by enjoying our nice weather and getting outside with them. Take time to listen to what they are noticing about nature, weather and the outside world, and point out interesting things they may miss. If your child finds a beautiful rock or pinecone or a spectacular stick, please bring it in to add to our growing collection! You can also bring in interesting items to add to our creation station. This area will be filled with natural items, (pebbles, sticks, etc..) as well as reusable items such as paper towel tubes, lids, packaging, and food containers. We're so excited to see what amazing creations we can make! 

Teachers: Page, Megan, Margarita

Preschool 4:
Throughout February we had a lot of interest in building creatively with Legos. We built robots, houses, towers, vehicles, and more. This month we are excited to delve deeper into the experience of building, by using a variety of unique materials. We will learn how to brainstorm ideas before beginning a project and how to draw blue prints to help us plan.

At home your children might enjoy watching you draw what they are building, to see what it looks like on paper. They might want to try the same idea, drawing and labeling their buildings once they have finished them! Teachers: Mala, Lindsay, Margarita

Pre-K 1:
During the month of February we worked together building many structures out of a variety of materials. We introduced the wood working bench into the classroom environment and it has been a huge center of interest, creativity and discovery! If you have any pieces of wood that you are not using please feel free to bring them in to add to our new area. Outdoors we have been experiencing beautiful weather and have been able to climb on our "Big Climber" on the far side of the playground. The warmer weather has also prompted us to begin to plan more field trip fro March to explore the community and nature around us. We look forward to extending our exploring and learning out into many parts of our college campus!

Teachers: Linda, Elyse, Khazal

Pre-K 2:
Last month we concentrated on different ways to build using several kinds of materials. We took pictures of some structures, other structures were drawn by the children or used as props for pretend play.

Next month, the children are excited to be planting seeds in containers and watching the changes unfold. At the same time we will start a scientific journal to represent what they see happening to the seeds and areas around the center. If you go on a family walk or stroll around your yard point out the signs of spring, it's just around the corner! Teachers: Robin, Sarah, Khazal
Can we ask you a few questions?  
**Spring Survey coming up**

We would like to get some more specific feedback from families in a few specific areas as we plan for our programming, budget and operations next year.

For example, at the Health, Nutrition and Sustainability meeting we heard interest in gardening. Is there enough interest to carry this forward?

Other areas we plan to ask about:
- Family volunteer opportunities
- Program additions and tuition options
- Types of Family Events offered
- Transitions between classrooms and to kindergarten
- Integrating photo and video into parent communication

Do you have other suggestions? Questions? Areas you would like to be more involved in, or you would like to know more about?

Please let any staff member know as we put the survey together.

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**How it All Adds**

**S&A Fees Request for 2015/2016**

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015**

12:30—12:45 IN C-225

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You are Invited to participate in a presentation to the S&A Fees Budget Committee.

Has the ELC made a difference in your ability to attend and complete classes at Bellevue College?

*After tuition, our largest source of revenue comes from S&A Fees that are paid by and voted on by BC students.*

Would you be willing to provide written or spoken testimony to support continuing this essential funding?

Please sign up in the front office or stop by, call or e-mail Kelly to participate!

kelly.davidson@bellevuecollege.edu

(425) 564 –2226
Notes from Community Conversation: Health, Nutrition and Sustainability

This topic was chosen for a community conversation in response to results from the ELC Fall Family Survey, which showed a lot of interest in these areas. Ten families attended and were a mix of student, staff, Costco and community families.

Patrick Green, Bellevue College’s Director for the Office of Sustainability started off the meeting by sharing an overview of sustainability initiatives going on college wide, which include transportation programs, waste reduction efforts, communications campaigns, and student development programs. The efforts of this program saves the college over $300,000 annually.

Patrick also shared that Bellevue College suggested that there are ways for the ELC to participate and contribute to these efforts on many levels, and that some projects may be good candidates for a request from the Student Environmental Sustainability Fund. The purpose of this fund is to provide sustainability resources for students, promote sustainable education and help create a sustainable learning environment.

Next we reviewed the results from the Fall Family Survey. Based on 54 responses for the question: How satisfied are you with the ELC Food Program?

74% Satisfied

19% Dissatisfied

7% Neutral

Survey Comments included:
- “Impressive in it’s variety and effort to expose children to new food”
- “Quality and standard is outstanding”
- “My children love to eat there”
- “We like to plan our menu around yours”

Survey Suggestions included
- Switch to organic milk, foods
- Reduce use of canned foods, GMO foods
- Less carbs, grains, starches
- More nuts, seeds, avocados, cheese, yogurt
- More warm foods/less soup
Notes from Community Conversation:
Health, Nutrition and Sustainability (cont.)

We also looked at the regulations under Child and Adult Food Care Program (CAFCP) which currently funds 67% of our food costs, (chart will be attached to this months menu) and recommendations from a report I requested from Katy Levenhagen, MS, RD., the PSESD Nutrition Coordinator who monitors our food program and practices through our Head Start Program,

Katy’s overall impression was positive, especially pointing to the variety and attention to combinations of foods. She noted that it was great that we were serving a legume/bean meal once a week, and not relying solely on cheese as a protein. Along with some specific dishes to consider, her ideas for improvement were:

- Move to a protein food being offered twice a week at breakfast**
- Juice no more that once a week or not at all*
- Limit and consider alternatives to crackers, use mainly wholegrain.**
- Omit milk at early snacks when 2 other components are served.*

Families discussed these and other specific menu changes:

- Moving to organic milk was something all families at the meeting have chosen to do at home. For the entire ELC program to move to organic milk, (based on last years prices and volumes used), would add and additional $4854 per year to our food costs. (further review needed)***
- Families had a discussion about late snack, and especially a concern that milk and crackers or bread were affecting children’s appetite for more nutrient dense options at dinner time at home. After much discussion the consensus seemed to be that a serving of fruit and water would be an option that would likely be satisfying for the children and yet still leave them with an appetite for a healthy dinner at home. Because we do not receive CAFCP reimbursement for the second snack, this is an option.**
- Families requested smaller and limited amounts or no condiments be served, especially ketchup (currently only served with baked fish dish) and ranch dressing.*
- Families preferred oatmeal to cold cereal, mentioning some less-preferred cereals.**
- Families suggested that they were more concerned about fruits and vegetables being fresh or frozen over canned then they are about variety.***

Based on all this information, our cook, Angela Hargrove, is making adjustments:

*Already in place or beginning this month
**Transitioning to this over the next two months
***Budgetary impact significant, will be added to Spring Family Survey

- Families and staff also offered some ideas to integrate sustainability:
  - Increase gardening, especially the idea of a shared family garden being a school project.
  - The difference it would make for families to transition to cloth diapers
  - Having families come in to cook with children as a way to connect them to engage with food in a creative way, and to expose them to foods from a wide variety of cultural traditions. Could be during class time or at a family event in the evening.
  - Integrating nature into more of our curriculum as well as recycling, gardening, cooking, composting, recycled art supplies

Do you have an interest in this topic? Look for a follow up meeting in Spring Quarter!
You are invited to an ELC Family Night at

Tuesday, April 7th and Tuesday, April 14th
5:30 to 7:30pm

Please sign up at the front desk for this FREE fun way to learn through play with your child while you connect with other ELC families!

Here are the details:

⇒ Due to limited space, we will offer this opportunity for a limited number of ELC families on two separate nights, but ask that each family attend on only one night.
⇒ Families will provide their own transportation to meet at the museum in Factoria Mall.
⇒ Families will remain with their child at all times during the event.
⇒ Children must be currently ELC enrolled and at least 2 years old.
⇒ Older siblings may attend with the family, but must be signed up.