

Children's Circle Montessori

Established 1981

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Love of Language in Primary 1...

Almost everything we do during our day involves language. In our classroom, our language area has three basic types of work: language solids, language cards, and letter sounds.

Language solids are objects in a basket that have a theme: fruits, vegetables, animals, objects that begin with "b" sound, etc. The children love to play language games with the objects.

Game 1: The child takes an item out of the basket--the adult gives the correct name for the object. When we are choosing items for the basket, we choose

objects that are accurate presentations of specific things. For example, if we choose to put a bird in the basket, we know the specific name of the bird and give it to the child: bluejay, cardinal, robin. It is important to be specific when you are working with young children--they soak in names so quickly. Not doggie, but the labrador! Not choo-choo, but the train.

Game 2: Take the item (let's use cucumber in this example) and place it in your hand. Say "cucumber". If child doesn't repeat it on his own, ask him to repeat it. Place object on different parts of your body, repeating the name each time, encouraging the child to do the same. Give the cucumber to the child and use command statements, telling him to, "Put the cucumber on your knee." After you have given several different commands, ask child "What is this?" When child knows the object, do another one. Always check to see if child remembers first object taught--

follow up with the child and give them time to absorb the new vocabulary! **Game 3:** Give the child commands to put the objects around the room. "Put the horse by the tissue box." Put the cow by the biggest plant." Then have the child bring the objects back to the basket as you direct her. "Bring me the cow." (Child retrieves cow.) "What is this?" (cow) "Bring me the horse." (Child retrieves horse.) "What is this?" (horse). This is usually done with 5-8 objects.

There are many different types of **language matching cards**. Children can match pictures, mothers/babies, animals/tails, opposites, things that go together, etc. We also have pictures of different classifications: flowers, birds, fruits, vegetables, things in a house, things at school, etc. Language matching cards give the child an opportunity to discuss the items pictured and to problem solve.

Alphabet puzzles are one tool to introduce sounds. As the child takes out a puzzle piece, give the SOUND of the letter, not the name. We do sing the alphabet song and a "Sound Song" to help the children become familiar with the sounds of the letters. The I SPY game (which is also played in the Primary 2 classroom) is introduced to the older children in Primary 1.

Singing songs, reading books, and talking to your child will greatly expand the love of language. Turn off the TV and talk to your child in the car and at the dinner table! These are important times for the child to learn about conversation in real life.



WELCOME!

Primary 1:

- ~Tobias Pfeifer, son of Tony Pfeifer and Gwen Krueger
- ~Echo Hand, daughter of Barry and Ambrosia Hand

Primary 2:

- ~Aiden Graff-Hannah, son of Jessica Graff and Michael Hannah
- ~Cooper Fink who has completed his transition to the Primary 2 community

MARK YOUR CALENDERS!

Thursday, December 24th–Friday, January 1st:

SCHOOL CLOSED—Holiday Break

Monday, February 15th:

SCHOOL CLOSED—Staff Planning Day

Correction to school calendar ...

Monday, June 28th–Friday, July 2nd:

SCHOOL OPEN—Not Summer Break

Monday, July 5th–Friday, July 9th:

SCHOOL CLOSED—Summer Break

Please remember that if Lincoln Public Schools close due to snow, Children's Circle will also be closed.

Peace Education ~ By Kathleen Crosmer

We started off the year as teachers with a lovely workshop led by a woman who is a Montessori teacher in Omaha. Dorothy Carrera taught us many things about the peace education part of the Montessori curriculum, and she gave us many good ideas for our school which we have begun to put into practice.

One of the most obvious things are our “love lights”. Perhaps you have heard your child talk about them at home, and are wondering what they are. The idea comes from Sonnie McFarland’s book “Honoring the Light of the Child”, *Activities to Nurture Peaceful Living Skills in Young Children*. In her book, Sonnie describes a love light as “a representation of the love that lives within everyone.” We talked to the children about this, and explained that they can feel this love when they are happy, or doing a good job, or when they help someone else. At these times, we say our love lights are large. When we are sad, or mad, or afraid, our love lights get smaller. They never go away, but they are harder to feel. We discussed some things that make our love lights get big, and some things that make them get small. We also talked about what we could do to make our love lights larger, like making silence, or spending some time by ourselves, or getting a hug.

We have seen a huge response from the children to this idea, especially after we brought out some felt “love lights” and pins in the classroom. If a child feels that his love light is particularly large, he can go get one from the basket and pin it onto his shirt. If he is feeling sad, he can get a small love light. This practice has led to many good conversations about our different feelings, and why we feel the way we do. I have included some particularly interesting quotes from some children regarding love lights.



“His love light is *this small* right now” – child, showing a small circle with his fingers, and referring to his brother who was unhappy.

Child: “When my sister wouldn’t give my stuffed animal back, it made my love light really small. Then she did, and it made my love light really big”

Child: “Two cars crashed into each other, that made my love light really small”

Teacher: “Why is your love light small today?”

Child: “Because I miss my sister”

Teacher: “What made your love light big today?”

Child: “Coming to school!”

Another important part of our peace education is our sharing time in the morning. This is a new practice for us, and the children really enjoy it. We talked with the children about what would be good things to bring to school to share, and we came up with a long list: things from nature, things that they made or got from another state, interesting things from another country or culture, CD’s of music that they like, photographs, and occasionally (with permission from a teacher), pets. We talked about things that need to be left at home, like toys and dolls, or other things that we play with. This time gives the children who are sharing a chance to share some of their lives with the other children, and it is an excellent chance to develop speaking and thinking skills. We then have the chance for children to ask 2 questions about the item that our friend shared, and this is a great time for the children who are listening to practice formulating questions, and active listening. In light of this, we ask that you bring your child to school by 8:45 each morning so that he or she can take part in this great beginning to our day.

It is our hope that as we continue to work with different aspects of the peace education curriculum we will see more peaceful relationships develop between the children, and a deeper understanding of how we as people relate to one another.



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

November:

Paige Farber	2 nd	2 nd Birthday
Ava Foster	17 th	4 th Birthday
Cassidy Bell	21 st	4 th Birthday
Delaney Bell	21 st	4 th Birthday
Cooper Fink	26 th	3 rd Birthday
Eloisa Swinehart	29 th	3 rd Birthday

December:

Avery Kirkland	5 th	3 rd Birthday
Grace Pearson	29 th	5 th Birthday
Leo Goldberg	29 th	4 th Birthday

As you may recall, we're adding another part to our special birthday celebration. On your child's birthday we would like you to write a short narrative for your child. Each year write one or two sentences about your child which we will read as they walk around a candle (representing the sun) holding a globe (representing the earth). An example was sent home with fall contracts.

Children are invited to give a book to the school in honor of their birthday. We love it when the birthday child includes a picture of themselves inside the cover! We remember the child each time we read the book! If you need suggestions for books, ask a staff member.

~SCHOOL CLOSINGS~

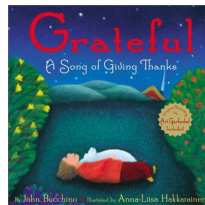
The school will be closed for a holiday break December 24th-January 2nd. Tuition remains the same for December despite the break. Because we charge monthly, not weekly, the days off are made up in other months that have more than 4 weeks.

Please remember that if Lincoln Public Schools close due to snow, Children's Circle will close also. LPS tries to make a decision by 10:35PM the night before closing, but there are times they will make the call after that time. Be sure to listen on the radio/TV in the morning if you are not sure. Or you can call Andrea at home 423-7390.

HOLIDAY GIFT GIVING AT CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

The staff certainly does not expect holiday gifts, but we also know that every year several families want to give them! The main staff members at Primary 1 are Diane, Kristen, and Kendra. The main staff members at Primary 2 are Andrea, Kathleen, Heather, and Samantha. Part time staff who spend time with the children in both classrooms are Lia and Sarah.

If you prefer to give the school a gift instead of individual staff gifts, educational gifts for the classroom are appreciated. One example would be age appropriate puzzles for either classroom (sending the receipt with a puzzle would give us the opportunity to exchange if we already have it). Books are always welcome—just look for books with a good story and remember we do not read books about movie or TV characters. Playdoh would be great for either building as well as washable markers—and P2 loves the new twistable crayons and twistable colored pencils. Both buildings enjoy foam stickers for adding to pictures. A gift of money with the note "Christmas gift" will be used only for new items for the classroom. These are just a few classroom suggestions.



WINTER IS NEAR!

The first snow of the winter will be here before we know it! Please be certain you send snow pants for your child to wear outside on cold and/or snowy days. You may want to leave a pair at school for your child so you do not have to remember them every snowy or very cold morning. (The snow pants can really make a difference on cold days in keeping your child warm). Be sure to label all items!!

We will go outside on most days and your child should always be prepared with hats and mittens. Tights alone are not enough; send a pair of pants to wear over the tights to keep their legs warmer outside. Also, your child should have a pair of long pants as extra clothes during the winter.

If you are needing to purchase winter items for your child, please be sure to have your child try them on for correct fit and ease of getting on and off. Some boots are certainly more difficult to get on and this is frustrating to a child trying to do it on their own. Also, please show your child how to take off their boots (some children seem to think kicking their foot to get their boots off is okay!). Remember that what they are allowed to do at home carries over to school and this is dangerous in a group of people.

We are working with the children to put their hats and mittens in the correct place at school so they do not get 'lost' (marking them with your child's name is a necessity!). Having a basket near your door where they can place their belongings upon entering your house will help with this, too. We are trying to discourage the 'drop and leave' method!

THANK YOU!

...Anna Armstrong for the birthday book we received in October, *Berenstein Bears, Trick or Treat*

...Eloisa Swinehart for the birthday book, *Families*