

Letterman Digital Arts Center

April 2014



From the Director

Hello to all!

First of all – we want to thank you for taking part in the Awards of Excellence nominations. We are having our Awards dinner on Friday, April 4th when we will announce the winners. We will put that information out to you on Monday, April 7th.

Secondly – a reminder to everyone that the Parent Partnership Group has designated April as Teacher Appreciation month. You should have received a letter from them outlining what they need from you. A box will be put out in the lobby on Tuesday, April 1st with a file for journal pages for the teachers in your child's classroom. If you have questions about the rest of the month – please get in touch with your PPG rep. Thank you for your support!

Most of you already know but Paula (our Toddler Classroom Lead Teacher) had her baby this month. Paula and Lizzie are doing fine – she has already been back to the center twice to visit. Congrats to them!

Have a wonderful month and take time to smell the roses!

Important Dates

April 2014 - Teacher Appreciation Month

April 1st – April Fool's Day

April 4th – Awards of Excellence Winners announced at awards dinner!

April 8th – 11th – Week of the Young Child - CENTER WIDE ART SHOW!

April 14th – Passover

April 20th - Easter

April 22nd – Earth Day celebration! Garden Planting Party!

April 22nd – Raffle Baskets distributed to faculty

April 30th – Pajama Day



Reasons to Celebrate

We celebrate the Week of the Young Child each year by having a center wide Art Show! The display will go up on the afternoon of Monday April 7th and you will be welcome to take your child's art work home on Friday, April 11th. Make time to see everyone's special art!

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Classroom Highlights



Infants—Honeybees

Our Honeybees have all met great milestones this month. All of our Honeybees have now learned to sit without support, some learned to crawl, and others learned to stand without support. We even have two that just learned to walk! As they begin to become more aware of their environment, we noticed they were taking particular interest in food and nature. So, we expanded these ideas into our curriculum. With the food topic, we introduced kitchenware to the children by inviting them to paint directly on muffin pans and make imprints of their painting. We also did two “cooking projects” with them by making fruit salads and yogurt parfait. We read books about food of various cultures and signed with them using baby sign language during meal times as part of their language building experience. It’s been an exciting month for the children in the Honeybees room.

Infants—Butterflies

There have been lots and fun exciting things the Butterflies have been doing this month. One of their favorite things to do is going on a buggy ride. They get to see various types of birds – and they especially like seeing the ducks! They babble, laugh and point to the ducks swimming at the pond. We even fed the ducks some of our left over goldfish one morning, which the babies loved as they saw the ducks waddle their tails and jump back into the pond after they were done eating. Our Butterflies also did a fun art project where they used the colors of their favorite baseball team and finger painted a baseball. The Butterflies really enjoy their paint projects: they have so much fun that they crawl back to the table for more fun painting experiences. Our Butterflies also really enjoy sitting in small groups to read books, sign, and do puppet play. The babies love to try imitating the different noises each animal makes - they are really big on trying to imitate the noise the elephant makes. It’s a lot of fun watching them try and then hearing them laugh.

Toddlers—Penguins

The month of March has been very adventurous for the Penguin Class. For St. Patrick’s Day this month we made green shamrocks and introduced the word, “shamrock”. The children put pinches of green and orange sand on the shamrock cutout. Another interest for our Penguins this month was **BABIES!** A lot of our children have been interested in babies and everything related to babies! Using this interest as our jumping off point we created a diaper changing station. The children were able to put on gloves, use wipes and change our baby doll’s diapers, just like we do! They also got a chance to “feed the baby” oats, with a spoon. It was awesome to see our children interacting with the baby, and using “baby talk” with the picture baby! We would also catch our kids putting their hand under the spoon making sure all the oats went into the baby’s mouth. We are looking forward to introducing more fun activities in April that will stimulate creative art and language development.

Toddlers—Monkeys

This month has been highlighted with many **Language Works** experiences! Some of our favorite stories this month have been written by Eric Carle such as “The Very Hungry Caterpillar”, “The Very Grouchy Ladybug” and of course our favorite “The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse”. After reading these books; we have been bursting with creativity while creating open ended **Art Smart** caterpillars, bumble bees and lady bugs! Literacy and language has also made its way into our **Science Rocks** area of the classroom! We have been reading many stories and talking about the different types of spring weather. Some of our favorite weather books are “What’s the Weather Like Today?” by Rozzanne Williams and “Let it Rain” by Maryann Cocca Leffler. The Monkeys have also been learning new vocabulary that describes the weather such as “Cold” “Windy” “Wet” “Warm” “Sunny” “Cloudy” “Dry” and “Hot”!

Classroom Highlights



Transition—Teddy Bears

The month of March has been full of art and sensory activities! The activities included paper mache moon art, dot art, stamp art, finger painting and dinosaur painting. Sensory play has also been a big hit in the classroom. The children had opportunities to manipulate real clay, play dough, and gak, which the Teddy Bears love. Water play was also very popular this month! At the beginning of the month, the weather was warm enough for all of the children to get into their swim gear and run around in the sprinklers! The kids had so much fun and loved getting wet. We are also wrapping up our Moon project by attending the Chabot Space and Science center in Oakland on Sat, March 29th! The kids, parents and teachers are very excited, especially since this is the first Teddy Bear Field Trip ever!

Preschool—Sharks

The Shark Room kids have been focusing their creative energy on leopards and cheetahs this month! Other animals spoken about during group times included elephants, hippos, rhinos and zebras. We have made a classroom Zebra that is "living" in our cubby area. The teachers will continue to support the children's ideas by providing open ended animal projects. For example, during March, we used black paper, scissors and white chalk, in the art center, to see what types of zebras the children could create. The Preschool kids have also shown a large interest in drawing and writing letters, so our language center has been very active. The children have been using little chalk boards as well as white boards to write letters, words and draw pictures! Some children have been asking the teachers to write words to go with their illustrations. We may have a group of authors and illustrators emerging. It is such a joy to observe the children grow. Their social and emotional development is blossoming. The children are engaging in conversations regarding their play, solving conflicts and sharing with one another! The teachers are looking forward to April and watching what next will unfold in the Preschool Room.

Kindergarten Prep—Dolphins

The Dolphins started out the month of March by celebrating Dr Seuss's birthday! The Dolphins listened to many different Dr Seuss books and experienced a week filled with Dr. Seuss themed activities during choice time! The Dolphins ended the week with a Dr. Seuss party! The party included Truffula Tree decorations and Dr. Seuss snacks such as Truffula seeds, red and white jello and green eggs and ham. The Dolphins enjoyed a buffet style snack on St. Patrick's Day including green seaweed, green crunchy peas, rainbow pudding, magic lemonade that turned green as they poured it, and lucky green grapes! The Dolphins continued their Pet Project by having a Visiting Expert who came to speak to the class, Miss Katy- a Vet from the San Francisco Zoo! She brought some very exciting things for the Dolphins to examine including bones from various animals, polar bear teeth, penguin and flamingo feathers, and hallowed out penguin eggs! The Dolphins also talked about the first day of spring. They began studying the butterfly life cycle and welcomed 10 little caterpillars to our classroom. The Dolphins have been observing and recording their growth each day and look forward to watching them turn into butterflies! We look forward to many fun activities in the coming month in the Dolphin room.

READY for SCHOOL Parent News: Learning to Count

Teaching children to count may seem like an easy task, but there are actually many components to this seemingly simple task which evolve over time. For example:

- The first step in counting is typically “rote counting”, or memorizing the names and order of the numbers. Often children are able to do this before age three; however, this does not mean that children understand the concepts behind the numbers. Numerical concepts follow later.
- To count higher than nine, children need to understand that a new “decade” begins and what that decade is called. In English, the “teen” numbers are the hardest to learn because they have somewhat random names. It would be easier if after ten, you had “oneteen, twoteen, threeteen” instead of “eleven, twelve, thirteen.” This requires children to memorize the numbers and sequence and this takes time. Another challenge is remembering the name of the new decade. We have all heard a child pause after counting to 29 and then say “50!” Car rides and other waiting times are good times to practice counting, but keep it light and fun and change activities when your child loses interest. You want to keep your child interested and motivated to learn to count, not turned off to numbers.
- One-to-one correspondence is another important concept for children to master. This means that a child links each number to an additional object. Initially children may count and skip items or touch more than one item as they say a number name. For practice in one-to-one correspondence, ask children to set the table and count as they put one napkin at each place, one spoon at each place, etc.
- Keeping track of what was counted is another important component to one-to-one correspondence. For correct counting, children have to have a method for remembering which items they already counted and not counting one item multiple times. A child can use the correct number sequence and use one-to-one correspondence, but still get the incorrect answer, if he counts an item more than once. Introduce methods for keeping track such as counting objects into sections of an egg carton, having your child put only one object in each section as she counts. Or use a piece of paper with a line drawn down the middle. Start with all of the objects to the left of the line. Have your child move objects to the right of the line as they are counted.
- Parents sometimes wonder whether using fingers to count is a good skill to teach. For many children, finger counting may be an excellent way for them to practice one-to-one correspondence (one finger per object).
- Reading counting books together may be another low-key way to reinforce counting concepts. There are lots available – a few suggestions are Anno’s Counting Book by Mitsumasa Anno, Teeth, Tails and Tentacles: An Animal Counting Book by Christopher Wormell, Duckie’s Ducklings: A one-to-one counting book by Frances Barry and Corduroy’s Day: A Counting Book by Don Freeman.

Resource: Copley, J. V. (2000). *The Young Child and Mathematics*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Bright Horizons News



Join Bright Horizons in Celebrating Earth Day on April 22

Mark your calendars – April 22nd is Earth Day!



We encourage you to celebrate the holiday by making one pledge or one change to be more environmentally conscious this year. We have many suggestions for green projects on our new [Bright Horizons Going Green board](#) on Pinterest. Small changes can lead to a big impact! So remember to bring your reusable bag to the store, plant a flower with your child, or bring in some supplies from home for your center to reuse for an art project.

Interested in learning more about how you can celebrate Earth Day with your child(ren)? Check out our eFamily news article: [Earth Day Activities for Families](#).

However you choose to celebrate, we hope you have a wonderful Earth Day.

Help a Friend Discover Bright Horizons during our Spring Open House Week!



This April we will be hosting an Open House Week for families to learn more about our programs.

If you have a friend or family member that might be interested in joining the Bright Horizons family, we would be happy to provide information for you to share with them! See Center Director for details.

COMING SOON: Teacher and Staff Appreciation Month

Teacher Appreciation Month is coming!



Each year, we take a month to celebrate and recognize staff whose hard work and dedication help us accomplish great things and make our center a wonderful place for children and families. Our PPG has chosen the month of April for this – watch for the details! (Bright Horizons will also be doing something in May!)