Bright Horizons at Cranberry

August 2014

Bright Horizons
Early Education & Preschool

From the Director

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of the families who helped to recognize and nominate our teachers for our annual Awards of Excellence Regional Banquet. Each year Bright Horizons centers in the Pittsburgh region highlight employees who contribute in a significant way to Bright Horizons' mission by honoring them with the Awards of Excellence. These awards recognize the many dedicated professionals who make Bright Horizons the best it can be.

The online process was used to nominate teachers, directors, regional managers, and even members of Bright Horizons' offices outside of our center, who consistently impress you with their extraordinary efforts! We would like to officially announce the winners of this year's awards at Bright Horizons at Cranberry!

Jenny
Erin
Erin A.
Karen

Thanks to *all* of our wonderful teachers for their hardwork each day, and thanks again to the families who helped us recognize their special efforts!

Important Dates

August 21- End of Summer Picnic 4:00-5:30pm

August 22- Last day of Summer Camp

August 25- First day of Kindergarten and K-Prep

September 12- Grandparent's Day Event 4:00-5:00pm (more details to come!)

September 16- Family Matters Webinar 1:00pm (see last page for more details)

September 25- Curriculum Night 4:30-5:30pm (more details to come!)

End of Summer Picnic

Please join us for an end of summer picnic on the playground on Thursday, August 21, 4:00-5:30pm!

There will be a sign up sheet in the downstairs lobby to bring a side dish or dessert. Sandwiches and drinks will be provided.

Please RSVP by August 18 to bhcranberry@brighthorizons.com.

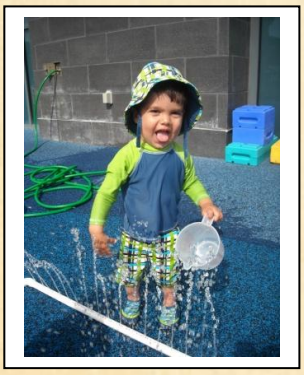
We hope to see you there!

Connect with Bright Horizons

Classroom Highlights

Infant 2

Infant 2 was very busy in July! We had a late 4th of July celebration as we put on red, white, and blue top hats and marched around the classroom like we were in a parade! While exploring the large hats we played peek-a-boo together since the hats kept falling down over the infants' eyes. All the infants got a kick out of that as they all smiled and giggled! Another exciting thing that happened in Infant 2 was the infants used their Science Rocks skills to learn all about nature. We took a walk to the pond and collected nature items to explore and make a nature collage for the room. Some of the things we gathered included flowers, sticks, leaves, grass, pine cones, feathers, bark off of a tree, and pieces of some of the plants like the grass of the cattail plants and a piece of a bush that we found laying on the ground. We first started by investigating the new items and learning all about what they were, where you can find them, and the different textures of them. Once we were all done investigating the new items we used them to make our collage. The infants picked out what item they wanted to glue down on the papers and used their small motor skills to pick up the items and set them down on the paper. Please check out the collages in the Infant 2 room!



Toddler 2

During the month of July, the Toddler 2 class loved doing water play! We filled up the sensory table with water and added some measuring cups and spoons. The toddlers enjoyed using their Science Rocks skills to fill up the cups and dump them out over and over. Some of the friends went over to the sprinklers to try and catch the water in their cups too. The toddlers also used their Sensory skills each time they splashed or ran through the water feeling the coolness on their skin!

Twos 1

In July Twos 1 learned about bubbles! To start off the bubble lesson we did a little science experiment to see what happens if we blow bubbles near a fan that is on. We remember that a fan creates cool wind and cools down the room when it is hot. We took turns blowing bubbles near the fan and our friends observed that when we blow bubbles near the fan that some of our bubbles popped while others blew high into the classroom! All of the twos loved learning about bubbles!

Kindergarten Prep

Throughout the summer Kindergarten Prep children get to investigate many fun things together. One investigation they have participated in is creating Elephant Toothpaste! This was not real toothpaste but a chemical reaction that occurred during a Science Rocks lesson, and as it flows from its tube, it looks like toothpaste. The children put on their safety goggles and took turns using their Math Counts skills to add different ingredients of soap, hydrogen peroxide, water and yeast. After all of the ingredients were added, the children watched in anticipation and excitement as the reaction began to occur creating a flow of foam from the bottle! The K-Prep children have more weeks to come before the summer is over and they look forward to many more investigations to share and learn about together!

READY for SCHOOL News

READY for SCHOOL Parent News: STEM Education in the Early Childhood Classroom

STEM education has been receiving recent attention among early childhood teachers. The acronym STEM was developed by the National Science Foundation (NSF), and refers to curriculum related to the study of science, technology, engineering, and math. Educators and policy makers have made STEM education a priority for several reasons.

Fewer students are pursuing advanced degrees or careers in related fields, which might threaten America's ability to remain competitive in a technology-driven global market. Many of the jobs of the future will require STEM skills. Finally, the world is becoming increasingly complex, and individuals must have basic competencies in science, math, and technology in order to make sense of and process information.

Initially, STEM education was found mostly in elementary and secondary classrooms, but in recent years, it has become an essential part of early childhood curriculums, as well. Typically, activities planned with a STEM focus involve at least two of the four disciplines. Below are more detailed descriptions of each STEM component and how they relate to an early childhood classroom:

Science. The study of science includes physical science, life science, earth and space science, and more. Children gain scientific literacy through hands-on experiments and explorations.

Technology. Technology learning in early childhood classrooms includes new media, such as digital photography, computers, phones, and tablets, but don't forget about older technology, including pulleys, wedges, and other simple machines. Technology is any type of man-made machine or object designed to improve or simplify life.

Engineering. Budding engineers in early childhood classrooms learn the principles of building through play activities, such as experimenting with blocks, clay, or collage materials.

Math. A STEM math curriculum includes the study of numbers and operations, algebra, geometry, measurement, and data analysis and probability. These terms sound complicated, but in the early childhood classroom, they're as simple as comparing sets of objects, counting, making patterns, manipulating shapes, or measuring classroom equipment.

Read on for simple STEM education ideas to try at home:

- Combine STEM activities with play time or story time. For example, while reading the folk tale, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff,* you might make bridges out of blocks or other materials. Perhaps you'll study goats and chart the differences between real goats and "story" goats.
- Use hands-on, developmentally appropriate materials and activities.
- Capitalize on small, daily moments to introduce STEM topics. Mealtimes, for example, are an ideal time to teach math concepts, such as half, more, and equal. Observe the natural world while you're outdoors.
- Use questions to guide inquiry and exploration. "What" questions, such as, "What do you think will happen --?" or "What could we use to make --?" work well because they have no right answer. Such questions foster an atmosphere of acceptance, curiosity, and trust. Listen carefully to children's questions. Use their interests as a springboard for future inquiries or projects.

References
Moomaw, Sally (2013). *Teaching STEM in the Early Years.* Redleaf Press. St. Paul, MN.

University of Northern Iowa Center for Early Education in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (n.d.). *CEESTEM.* Retrieved from http://www.uni.edu/coe/special-programs/regents-center-early-developmental-education/ceestem/games/math-games

Bright Horizons News

Curriculum Night 2014: "A Day in the Life"

Curriculum Night

Experience a "Day in the Life" of your child at Curriculum Night 2014. Parents in all age groups are invited to join us for an orientation into your child's upcoming year with Bright Horizons.

During the event you and your family will have the opportunity to: familiarize yourselves with your child's classroom schedule and activities, see how the various pieces of *The World at Their Fingertips*® curriculum are brought to life each day, and meet with your child's teachers to ask questions and discuss learning objectives for the upcoming year.

Share in your Bright Horizons experience and invite your friends and family to join you at Curriculum Night. Please see your Center Director or your child's teacher if you have questions or would like more information about Curriculum Night.

SAVE THE DATE: September installment of the Family Matters Webinar Series!

Family Matters
A Bright Horizons Webinar Series

Bright Horizons Family Solutions® presenting in collaboration with guest speaker Amy McCready of Positive Parenting Solutions, is bringing you the next installment of the Family Matters Webinar Series on positive school-age discipline.

Save the Date
September 16, 1:00 pm EST

Keep checking www.brighthorizons.com/webinar for the latest registration information as it becomes available!